

Informal Economy In Urban Public Space And Its Impact On Mobility, Income And Public Transport

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ABSTRACT

The informal economy has been the object of analysis for five decades, and in recent years, interest in its study has grown notably as a result of its presence, not only in cities of developing countries, but also in cities of developed countries. The objective of this article is to describe the incidence of the informal economy (specifically the activities that take place in public spaces) on urban mobility, on the income of the population that is part of this economy and on public transport in the city of Montería, Colombia. The method used is the analytical-descriptive one, because it is oriented to analyze a particular fact in order to establish its incidence in mobility, income and transport. To achieve the objective, it was necessary to resort to documentary and field techniques. The results show that the informal economy contributes to the achievement of the constitutional right to work and the obtaining of subsistence income of this population, but it also affects the collective right to enjoy public space in an equitable way and to safe mobility, especially that of pedestrians. A relevant conclusion is the change in the mode of transportation of citizens, who are significantly replacing the use of formal transportation by motorcycle taxiing.

Keywords: Informal trade, Montería, mototaxism.

1. INTRODUCTION

The informal economy is considered by the International Labor Organization (ILO) as the set of units dedicated to the production of goods or the provision of services on a small scale, with little or no technological demand, low capital investment and few access barriers (ILO, 1993; ILO, 2002). These units can be companies that do not comply with all or some of the agreements established in the legislation and/or people who work on their own account in said companies or in the public space of the cities; either as service providers or merchants.

This type of economy and its population have been the object of study for institutions and researchers since the 1970s (Hart, 1973; De Soto, 1987; Portes, Castells and Benton, 1989; ILO, 1993; Pollack and Jusidman, 1997; ILO, 2002; ILO, 2003; Portes and Haller, 2004; Perry et al., 2007; Tokman, 2007; Choy and Montes, 2011; Rodríguez and Calderón, 2015; Duclos 2017; Porrás and Climent, 2018). Both these authors and the ILO analyze the informal economy from economic, legal, sociological and political perspectives, emphasizing aspects related to the labor market, social exclusion, employment, tax policy, the costs of legality, tax evasion, income and health.

However, the ILO and the National Department of Statistics of Colombia (DANE) include within the informal economy people who are in one of the following situations: 1) private employees and workers who work in establishments that employ up to five people ; 2) unpaid family workers in companies with five workers or less; 3) unpaid workers in businesses belonging to other households; 4) domestic employees in companies with five workers or less; 5) day laborers in companies with five workers or less; 6) self-employed workers who work in establishments with up to five people, except professional self-employed workers; 7) employers in companies with five workers or less; 8) self-employed workers (ILO, 1993; ILO, 2002; ILO, 2003; DANE, 2019).

The group of self-employed workers (group 8) is in turn made up of a diversity of people, who in large numbers offer their services or carry out their commercial activities in the urban public space. Among the most visible are street vendors, stationary merchants, pedicab drivers, masseurs, street and subway musicians, human statues, painters, dancers, recyclers and advertising deliverers, independent artisans, food and beverage vendors, transporters and shoe shiners, among others (Hart, 1973; Porrás and Climent, 2018). These workers have a significant presence in the public space of Latin American, African and Asian cities as well as in the most representative places of Paris, Madrid, Rome, Brussels, New York and many other important capitals. In this sense, the informal economy has become a visible sector of society, both in industrialized and less developed countries (Portes, Castells and Benton, 1989).

According to the ILO (2013), informal economy activities are the only opportunities that this population has to obtain an income and satisfy their basic needs. Under this perspective, the urban public space (specifically streets, sidewalks and squares) is the place used by self-employed informal workers who do not have the resources to rent premises that allow them to produce, market or offer their services.

Although it is true that the informal economy is an alternative source of income for an important group of people in the world, it is also true that the development of these activities in the urban public space affects circulation and pedestrian safety, vehicular circulation and

the right to equally enjoy the platform. This situation has led local or national governments in different countries to seek alternatives for the recovery and revitalization of public space, primarily in informal sectors (Gargantini, 2019).

In the present study, the informal economy does not only refer to commercial activities, but also to the provision of public transport for passengers on motorcycles and to different services that are offered in the streets, platforms and squares of Montería, which they generate effects on mobility, the income of its participants and public transport. The study has the following structure: theoretical framework; methodology; results, which include incidence in the income of this population, mobility and transportation.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Level of informality in the city of Montería

With a rate of 58.3%, Montería is the fourth city in Colombia with the highest level of informality in the economy, after Cúcuta, Sincelejo and Santa Marta, which are the cities with the highest rates of economic informality, with 71.2%, 65.3% and 63.6%, respectively (DANE, 2019). However, the main problem is that, of 1,971 informal merchants registered by the Chamber of Commerce, 883 carry out their activities in public spaces, mainly in the central streets, the platforms and the busiest parks of this Colombian Caribbean city with close to of 400,000 inhabitants (Chamber of Commerce of Montería and Innovemp Korsperchatf SAS, 2017; Diario La Razón, 2019).



Figure 1. Informal economy on the roads and platforms of Montería. Source: own realization.

As can be seen in figure 1, stationary and semi-stationary merchants occupy not only the environment of institutions and companies located in the center of the city, but also platforms and roads in residential sectors that have achieved a strong commercial dynamic, based on the informality. Likewise, the presence of street vendors and motorcycle taxi drivers is evident, who circulate and park their carts or motorcycles on the most important roads, affecting the traffic of automobiles and public transport buses.

Informal commerce is one of the manifestations of informal economic activities, but it is not the only one that does so in the public space. Currently, non-formal commercial activity is joined by the proliferation of informal passenger transport by motorcycle (moto-taxi) and other complementary activities of services provided in workshops, car washes and parking lots, located in public spaces. Motorcycle taxiing is a phenomenon that has gotten out of hand for the municipal authorities in the last twenty years, generating obvious social tensions,

conflicts, attacks on bus drivers, theft, and even riots with serious consequences and damage to private property and affect the integrity of people.

Now, there are numerous activities of the informal economy in this city, but the most relevant, due to their effects, are trade and motorcycle taxis. Others with less impact are waste recycling, vehicle and motorcycle care in streets and urban facilities, car and motorcycle washing, as well as the services provided around the transport terminal, airport, hypermarkets, market places and supply center . These activities are heterogeneous, but with homogeneous results in terms of productivity, workers' living standards and the low qualification of the workforce (Cimolli, Primi and Pugno, 2006).

Informal activities in the public space generate income for their participants, but they cause significant effects on mobility and public transport in Montería, among which the difficulty in enjoying the platform with comfort and equal conditions, commodification of the platform, discouragement to more sustainable modes of transport and an increase in the accident rate.

2.2 Public space as the epicenter of labor informality

Public space, as an organizing and articulating element of the city, is considered an indicator of urban quality and its use is a citizen right that all the inhabitants of a city have, without any discrimination (Borja and Muxi, 2003). In Colombia, the appropriate use of public space is backed by the National Constitution of 1991, which establishes the following: "it is the duty of the State to ensure the protection of the integrity of public space and its allocation to common use, which prevails over particular interest" (Art. 82).

However, public space faces numerous problems that affect the quality of life and well-being of the inhabitants of the main Colombian cities. An important part of these problems are related to the regulation and public management of municipal governments and another part corresponds to problems associated with the lack of social appropriation, invasion of vehicles and commercial establishments, front gardens built for commercial premises and street and stationary sales (Ministry of Environment and Housing, 2005).

In this regard, Ochoa (2011) exposes the violation of the rights of the inhabitants of Barranquilla to the free enjoyment of public space, as a consequence of the improper occupation by stationary and itinerant vendors who market their products on public roads. This situation is evident in most Colombian cities and is explainable, since informal vendors tend to congregate around strategic spaces for public and private uses (Rodríguez and Calderón, 2015). That is, in the busiest streets of the traditional center, around the administrative headquarters and on the accesses to the facilities and the new centralities.

The development of informal economic activities in the public space is not exclusive to the cities of Colombia and this is demonstrated by significant studies on labor informality in the public space and its impact on the quality of urban life in cities of Mexico, Chile and Argentina (Rodríguez, Guillermo and Cordero, 2013; Human Rights Commission of the Federal District, 2016; De Souza and Bustos, 2017; De Santibañez, 2017). These, manage to show, especially the following aspects: 1) the adaptability of pedestrians to the great agglomeration of street workers, 2) the social legitimacy towards informal activities and 3) the way in which informality alters the functional order and the regular and established uses of urban space.

2.3 Informality in urban life: concept and approaches

The political constitution of a country and the legislation that derives from it have the purpose of guaranteeing the rights and duties of its inhabitants, which include basic functions for the development of material, sentimental and spiritual life in the countryside or in the city, such such as: living, working, recreating and moving (Le Corbusier, 1989). Any way of satisfying these needs outside the constitution and the law is considered informal or within the framework of informality.

Under this perspective, the most frequent cases of informality are found in the ways of living (housing informality) and working (labour informality), which obviously affects urban quality and the function of urban space. Both housing informality and labor informality are a permanent object of study, not only for their causes, but also for their effects on the quality of life of the inhabitants of a city.

Regarding the function of dwelling, Clichevsky (2000) establishes two types of urban informality: one referred to the lack of property titles of the dwelling (domain) and the other, referring to the transgression of construction regulations or regulations. urban regulations. However, for some authors (Matos 1984; Torres, 2009), this type of informality is not considered synonymous with illegality.

Labor informality, for its part, is analyzed from different economic theories, among which the institutionalist, the structuralist and the neoclassical stand out (Miranda and Rizo, 2009; León, 2018). The institutionalist current, which has among its main exponents Víctor Tokman and Raúl Prebisch, maintains that labor informality is part of the informal sector of the economy, which is characterized by low levels of training and use of physical capital, as opposed to the modern sector of the same (PREALC, 1978). The central consideration of this current suggests that decisions to belong to the formal or informal sector are made based on the cost-benefit analysis that is done, considering the costs imposed by the state and institutions.

In turn, the structuralist current, with the contributions of Castells and Portes (1989), considers that there is a mismatch, both qualitative and quantitative, between labor supply and demand, which leads people to create their own jobs, either voluntarily or forced. In contrast, the neoclassical theory maintains that the labor decisions of the workers, about whether they choose to belong to the formal or informal sector, come from the analysis that each one of them carries out on their characteristics, such as educational level, experience, age, available time. , among others; in such a way that they can maximize their utility based on the restrictions derived from such characteristics (Uribe, Ortiz and Correa, 2006).

According to these approaches, labor informality in the public space will not only be the result of technical aspects such as job supply and demand or cost-benefit analysis, but also of individual decisions that are made based on educational level, available time, personal experience and life expectancies. In other words, informality will also be the product of people's daily practices (Imilán, Osterling, Mansilla and Jirón, 2020).

As daily practices, informality thus generates alterations, inappropriate use of public space, labor informality, imaginary or reality of social problems and crisis in public space, either as an organizing element or element of continuity (Borja and Muxi, 2003; Díaz, 2015; Caquimbo, Ceballos and López, 2017; Castro, Ramírez and Serna, 2018; Velásquez, 2018). These practices, not being considered prohibited, become a source that increasingly encourages the use of public space for activities very different from the basic functions of displacement and recreation.

3. METHODOLOGY

According to the nature of its objectives, this academic work is descriptive (Sabino, 1990). The method used is the analytical-descriptive, because it is oriented to the direct observation of a particular fact to describe it (Ruíz, 2006); that is, it is focused on analyzing the informal economy in streets, platforms and squares, with the purpose of establishing its impact on mobility, on the entry of its participants and on transportation.

Documentary and field techniques are used. The documentary technique is important in the development of the work, since it contributed to the compilation of the main theoretical references, through the consultation of primary and secondary sources, among which are published research, municipal development plans and statistics and Institutional Information. For its part, the field technique allowed data to be obtained through direct observation and survey, specifically the quantitative record of informal workers who carry out activities in public space and surveys of merchants, service providers and informal transporters (motorcycle taxi drivers).

To facilitate the quantitative registration of informal workers, three categories were established in order to be able to determine the size of this population and establish the level of income obtained from their activities. The established categories are: 1) informal merchants (stationary and semi-stationary); 2) motorcycle taxi drivers and 3) service providers. This work does not consider as informal workers those wage earners who work in companies with less than five (5) employees, nor the other considerations established by DANE and the ILO, except for self-employed workers.

To achieve the established objective, the following activities were carried out: 1) documentary review to select the main theoretical references; 2) direct observation to achieve a quantitative record of informal merchants and informal service providers in the traditional center and in the residential sectors with the greatest commercial dynamics in the city; 3) quantitative record of motorcycle taxi drivers located in bays (fixed points); 4) surveys of merchants, motorcycle taxi drivers and informal service providers; 5) organization and systematization of data; 5) analysis of the incidence of the informal economy in urban mobility, in the income of this population and in public transport.

The direct observation process for the quantitative registration of informal workers, the surveys, the systematization of the information and the analysis of the effects of the informal economy was carried out by a team made up of four (4) research assistants, a principal investigator (1) and two (2) co-investigators, between 2018 and 2020. The registration of informal workers was carried out in the traditional center and in ten (10) high-traffic sectors in the north, south, east and west of the city, in the that merchants, service providers and motorcycle taxi drivers carry out their activities in public spaces. For the purposes of carrying out the survey, non-probabilistic sampling was used, which is not based on chance, but is intentional, trying to reproduce this population as faithfully as possible, according to its characteristics (López and Deslauriers, 2011).

In total, four hundred eighty (480) informal workers (436 men and 44 women) were surveyed in eleven (11) sectors of the city, who answered questions related to their age, income, contribution to the pension system, years in the activity and intention to be employed in a company in the formal sector of the economy. The data obtained through the field technique had the purpose of determining the incidence on admission, fundamentally. While the data obtained through the documentary technique (studies of the Mayor's Office, Montería Chamber of Commerce and scientific works) contributed to determine the incidence of the informal economy carried out in the public space on mobility and transport. No data were used to measure variables or perform statistical analysis.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Population and distribution of informal economy activities in public space

It was found that 1,696 informal workers (1,547 men and 149 women) use the public space as their point of sale, place for the provision of services and parking (bay) for motorcycle taxis. The highest concentration occurs in the traditional center with 439 informal workers; The Farm with 300; Cantaclaro, 238; The Prairie, 180; South Market, 174; Furatene, 165; Eldorado, 109; Alfonso Lopez, 47; Mocari, 23; Rancho Grande, 12 and Mogambo with 9 people working in public spaces.

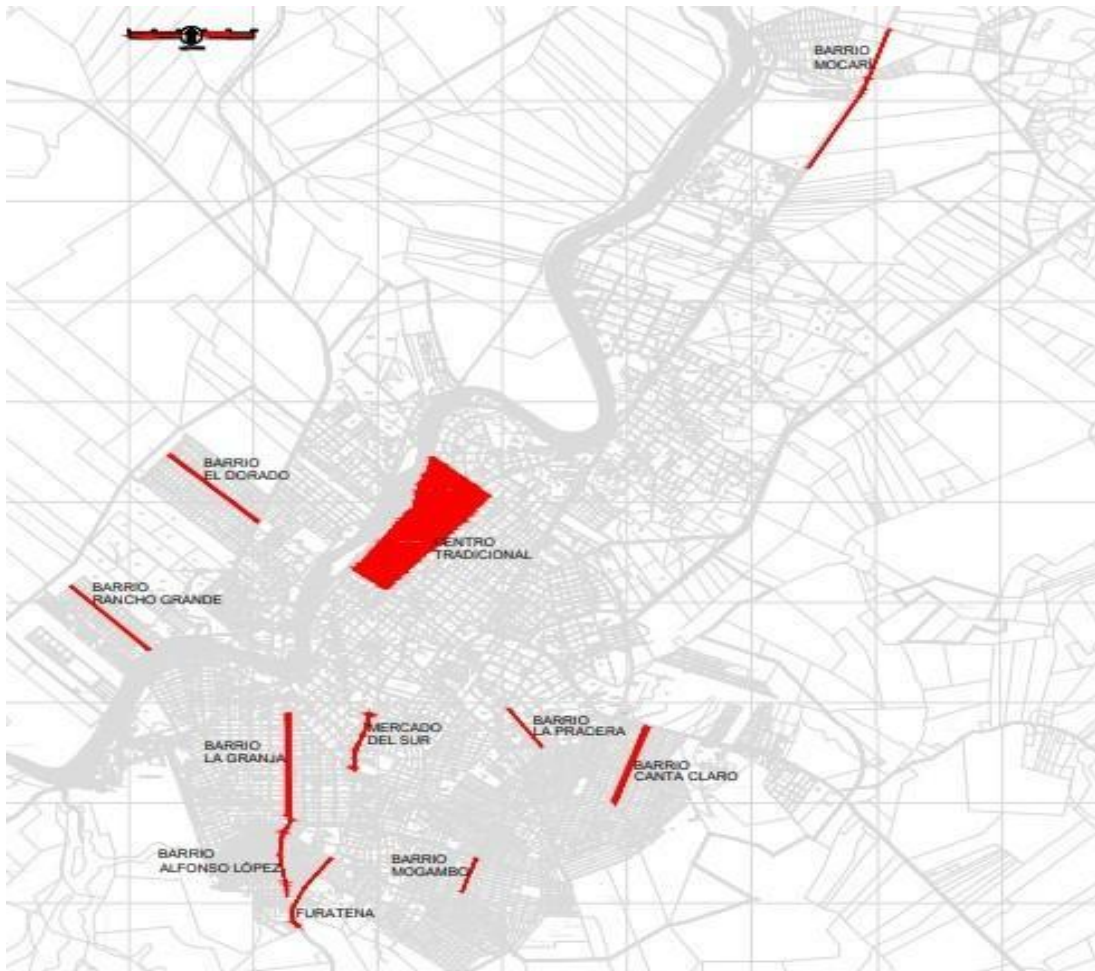


Figure 2. Sectors with informal economy in public space in Montería. Source: own Realization.

Figure 2 shows (in red) the concentration of the informal economy in the city center and the distribution that occurs in the commercial hubs of the aforementioned neighborhoods, where pedestrians and drivers are affected by the occupation of roads and merchants, service providers and motorcycle taxi drivers, who not only hinder free movement and access for all under equal conditions, but also frequently nullify the possibility of safe movement of the most vulnerable people or people with physical limitations.

Informal workers in this city are mainly dedicated to informal trade and to the provision of passenger transport services on motorcycles and to a lesser extent to the provision of other services. As reflected in table 1, the presence of 898 merchants in public spaces, 684 motorcycle taxi drivers belonging to bays and 114 people who provide the following services was evidenced: document laminators, typists, shoe lifters, telephone call sellers, repair of watches, car care, tire lifters, auto mechanics, motorcycle washers, and window washers at traffic lights.

Table 1. Distribution of the population by informal activity

Activity	Population	%
Trade	898	53%
Motorcycle taxi	684	40%
Services	114	7%
Total	1.696	100%

Source: own realization

The most representative commercial activity is the commercialization of food and beverages, among which the sales of empanadas, arepas, coffee, soft drinks, bagged water and ice cream stand out with 28%. These vendors are those with the lowest investments and income. The other commercial activities are distributed in a less representative way in sales of vegetables, fruits, footwear, clothing, toys, leather goods and handicrafts. The data on food and beverage trade are distant from those obtained by Quispe et al (2018), who found that 74% of the informal merchants of Riobamba in Ecuador, are dedicated to the sale of fruits, vegetables, and food.

4.2 Age of informal workers, time in activity and income received by economy in the public space

Regarding the age of these workers, it was possible to confirm the presence of 10 minors in these activities, despite the efforts of recent governments to keep this population in school and free them from child labor. Likewise, it was found that 26% (128) of the workers are over 51 years of age, which reduces their probability of seeking employment opportunities in the formal labor market. Of them, 25% (32) are over 60 years of age, are not retired, and there is no possibility of obtaining a retirement pension.

The age group with the highest participation in the informal sector corresponds to people between 31 and 50 years old, with 47%, who still have some probability of contributing to a pension fund, either independently or through their timely access to formal employment. The

youngest population, for its part, corresponds to 24% of the total and has the best options of seeking alternatives in the formal labor market or contributing to social security as an independent worker. The issue of pensions requires a timely decision from this population, since they only state that they are contributing, or have contributed 4% to a pension fund, including 2 citizens of Venezuelan origin who claimed to contribute in the past in their country.

This situation of present and future pension uncertainty mainly compromises the population with more years in informal activities and also our being the most numerous. In relation to the time in the activity, 76% (365) state that they exceed five years in the informal economy, and of these, 16% (61) declare that they have been in informal work in public space for more than twenty years and not be contributing to a pension fund.

Pension uncertainty is the result of the low income obtained by a large number of workers in these activities and which makes it difficult to pay a minimum monthly payment of two hundred fifty-one thousand pesos, by 2020, (approximately USD60) for social security as independent worker. These low incomes primarily affect 69%, who have an average daily income of less than \$30,000 (<USD 8) and to a lesser extent 21%, with daily income between \$31,000 and \$50,000 (8-15 USD). Only 10% earn between \$51,000 and \$100,000 (\$25) per day.

According to the level of income obtained by informal workers in the city of Montería, it is evident that only 10% of this population would be able to contribute to a pension fund, while 21% would find it very difficult and 69% % would be left with little option to do so, because this would imply allocating a little more than 30% of their monthly income. However, they would not be absolutely helpless in the future, since the State has been guaranteeing health care services to the vulnerable population for several years, through the subsidized regime (Ministry of Health, 2019) and because it also benefits (as of December 2019) to 1,675,462 older adults who do not have a pension or are homeless (Pension Solidarity Fund, 2020). Likewise, a bimonthly subsidy is being delivered to 2,323,428 families and 330,605 young people from the Families in Action and Youth in Action programs (Presidency of the Republic, 2020).

The population with the lowest daily income (USD10), as noted, is dedicated to selling candies, coffee and bagged water, cleaning car windows at traffic lights on streets near shopping centers and caring for motorized vehicles in the surroundings of urban facilities. The products require little working capital and the services do not require any capital, thus reaffirming what was noted by Duclos (2017), who describes this form of economy as not very lucrative, in which its participants have little or no possibility of accessing to the formal labor market.

A relevant fact has to do with the level of satisfaction that some people express with the activities they carry out within the informal economy, finding that 33% state that they are satisfied with the activity they carry out, arguing that they obtain income similar to or higher than the minimum wage. legally established in Colombia, with freedom in their schedules, without being accountable to a boss and because they earn daily income, they do not have to wait for a fortnight or a month to have money and they can choose their place of work, confirming in a certain way what is described by Florez (2015).

These arguments help to understand why more than half of these workers (52%) express that they have not considered another source of income through a company in the formal sector. This scenario confirms that the informal economy is not only an option for the unemployed, but that it is a real alternative for those who do not wish to join formal jobs voluntarily, due to individual criteria or according to their life project, which is consistent with what is established by Hart (1973), who argues that the informal economy is an accumulation perspective and that not necessarily all those who enter informal occupations do so as a result of the impossibility of obtaining a salaried job in the formal sector. However, the low levels of income received by this population in Montería show that it is an option for the present, but it is not an alternative for the future, mainly due to the difficulty of creating assets or contributing to a retirement pension.

4.3 Impact of the informal economy on mobility and transport

The economic activities carried out in the public space of the city of Montería significantly hinder pedestrian mobility on the platforms of the second, third and fourth avenues, between streets 24 and 41. The use of these streets and platforms for motorcycle taxi bays, despite being prohibited by Municipal Decree for fourteen years. Likewise, the co-responsibility of the Monterian population was corroborated, through their indifference or the use of motorcycle taxis, to the detriment of collective public transport and the quality of public space.

Regarding public transport in this city, according to studies by the penultimate administration, on a day without motorcycle restrictions, 81,000 people are transported by bus, 46,000 by motorcycle taxi and 22,000 by their own motorcycle (Alcaldía de Montería, 2016). Table 2 shows the total number of people transported and the modes of transport used.

Table 2. Transportation modes used in Montería (day)

Transportation mode	Transported people	%
Bus	81.000	49%

Motorcycle taxi	46.000	29%
Taxi	15.000	9%
Own motorcycle	22.000	13%
Total	164.000	100%

Source: Own elaboration based on data from the Municipality of Montería (2016)

The demand for mototaxi is, without a doubt, an important factor in the increase in the number of motorcycles in this city, which went from having 5,000 registered motorcycles in 2000 to 41,136 in 2016, that is, 9,232 motorcycles per 100,000 inhabitants (Government of Córdoba, 2017). However, neither the high demand for this type of transport, nor the figures on the increase in motorcycles, so far allow us to estimate the number of people who are dedicated to the activity of motorcycle taxis, especially since motorcycle taxi drivers arrive daily to work in the city. from rural areas and from other municipalities in the department of Córdoba.

One of the greatest negative effects caused by this informal activity is the increase in accidents and traffic violations, especially in urban areas, where in 2016 there were 608 accidents, 113 deaths, 1,005 injuries and 21,520 penalties for violations. Figures higher than the 601 accidents, 94 deaths, 1,135 injured and 18,759 sanctioned in 2015 (Gobernación de Córdoba, 2017). These figures increased for the following years, as shown by Blanco, Iglesias and Quiroz (2019) in their study for the period 2015-2018.

This study maintains that for the period mentioned there were 57,922 penalties for traffic violations against motorcyclists in Montería (73% of the total violations), of which 41,264 were associated with the activity of motorcycle taxis, for violation of the restrictions of the barbecue, driving without accident insurance and without the techno-mechanical review. They show a relative increase of 65% in the infractions committed by motorcycle taxi drivers in that period, going from 7,979 sanctions in 2015 to 13,171 in 2018.

Another negative factor caused by the increase in the use of motorcycle taxis has to do with the loss of competitiveness of the formal collective public transport companies Metrosinú and Monteriana de Transporte, which in recent years have seen their incomes decrease due to the decrease in demand. of passengers, affecting formal employment, specifically that of bus drivers. This situation is aggravated by the restrictions established by the national and municipal authorities due to Covid-19, which only allow transporting 30% of the capacity of a bus, leading these companies to operate on some occasions with just 35% of the buses. 270 buses from its fleet, as a result of the daily losses that they declare (Avendaño, 2021).

It is pertinent to note that the restrictions established to mitigate the pandemic were only complied with by the population in the informal economy during the first three months (April, May and June) when total confinement was determined in Colombia and subsidies were set for this population at through the so-called solidarity income and aid in kind to satisfy basic needs. Subsequently, with the reactivation of transportation and other sectors of the economy, informal workers resumed their activities in public spaces, without adequate control by the authorities, who are insufficient to enforce the restrictions on this population.

Finally, the data shows that informal economy activities in public spaces maintain a strong dynamic in this city despite the efforts made by administrations in the last 12 years to reduce them. In this order, the statistics presented show the incidence of the informal economy in urban mobility, in the income of this population and in public transport in Montería.

5. DISCUSSION

These problems exposed in the local context, similar to those of the national context, have been trying to solve for several years. For this reason, both the national and municipal governments and the legislative system have tried to find alternative solutions to economic informality and invasion of public space. One of these alternatives is Law 1429 of 2010, which aims to “formalize and generate employment, in order to generate incentives for formalization in the initial stages of business creation; in such a way that the benefits increase and the costs of formalization decrease” (Art. 1). The law establishes two types of informality: a) Informality for subsistence, b) Informality with accumulation capacity.

Regarding these two typologies, it must be stated that informal workers in Montería, according to their income, are in the subsistence informality typology, as described by Garzón-Duque, Cardona-Arango, Rodríguez-Ospina and Segura-Cardona (2017), when they include vendors who market their products on the streets and sidewalks of Colombian cities in this typology.

It is pertinent to point out that after Law 1429, the municipal governments of this city made and continue to make notable efforts to stimulate the formalization of economic activities and recover public space, formulating strategies, programs and projects that are now a reality, such as the Commercial Passage of the Río, in which they relocated 202 informal merchants who occupied the public space of the second race between streets 33 and 34 for more than three decades (El Meridiano de Córdoba, 2020). This shopping center was built on Avenida Primera, between 32nd and 33rd streets, with an investment of close to seven billion pesos (about 2 million dollars) and an area of 2,400 square meters, which includes 186 commercial premises, 16 food stalls, 2 cultural squares, sanitary batteries and an administrative area (Avendaño, 2019).

With these transfers, and others carried out previously, the municipal administration managed to recover approximately 8,000 square meters of public space, which have subsequently tried to invade new merchants, who cling to the omission that occurred in the past on the part of the local authorities already which is referred to in studies that identify causes of the informal economy in other contexts, specifically Sandoval (2014), who includes within these the weakness of local governments when applying the sanctioning and restrictive regulations of these activities.

Other means used, with the purpose of reducing informal activities, specifically motorcycle taxiing, are the regulatory instruments that have been implemented for 14 years, with Decree 0270 of 2006, which restricts the use of motorcycles in the urban area of Montería Tuesday of each week between 6:00 AM and 8:00 PM; the use of the motorcycle with barbecue between streets 24 and 41 and races 1 and 13 from 6:00 AM to 8:00 PM from Monday to Friday and the use of the motorcycle with barbecue on Thursdays of each week, between 6: 00 AM and 8:00 PM. These restrictive measures are maintained in 2021, but they have not managed to dissuade motorcycle taxi drivers or users, and on the contrary, in recent years there is evidence of a greater number of people dedicated to this activity and an open violation of this Decree.

As shown by the data on informality in the public space presented here, neither the municipal government programs nor the restrictive measures are effective so far to recover the main function of these spaces or to transform citizen practices, thus confirming what Imilán, Osterling stated. , Mansilla and Jirón (2020), who maintain that informality will also be the product of daily practices. Likewise, this confirms what was expressed by Murillo Pantí, Barrera Rojas and Campos Cámara (2020) when they argue that the perception of the use of public space is not circumscribed by government agencies, but by the citizens who generate experiences in the use of said spaces.

In this way, it can be recognized that informality is certainly a highly present reality in Latin American countries; especially those where there are various situations such as migration, unemployment and poverty are highly present and are what lead the population to carry out their professional activity within said environment (Muñoz-Muñoz, Matabanchoy, Pérez and Herrera-López, 2021; Durán, Guilliany and Bilbao, 2021).

6. CONCLUSIONS

The informal economy is an alternative that responds not only to the problem of unemployment in intermediate cities with few industries, but also to personal life projects in which employment is not an option. In other words, it is a response for people who deliberately rule out formal employment, because they consider that companies do not offer

the flexibility in hours, places and frequency of income that informal activities guarantee them.

Informal workers achieve, on the one hand, their constitutional right to work, but on the other, they affect the collective right to use public space in an equitable manner, evidencing in advance the weakness of the State, which constitutionally has the duty to ensure the protection of the integrity of public space and guarantee its use to the entire population.

Informal activities allow entry to satisfy the basic needs of this population but affect pedestrian mobility in the traditional center and in the sub-centralities of the most dynamic neighborhoods, as a consequence of the commodification of the platform and other public spaces, among those that stand out main roads, squares and surroundings of administrative, educational, sports and cultural facilities.

Motorcycle taxiing is a high-risk income alternative that encourages inappropriate habits such as violation of urban regulations and the codes of collective urban public transport. It is an activity that has a significant impact on the number of motorcycles in this city, on informality, accidents and the non-use of collective public transport and more environmentally sustainable means.

The informal merchants and motorcycle taxi drivers of Montería are part of the informality for subsistence and not the informality of accumulation. 69% of this population hardly receives daily income close to 10 dollars, enough to satisfy basic needs, but insufficient for social needs, savings or independent pension contribution. 21% have income amounting to 15 dollars and 10% income of up to 25 dollars, which we also consider within the informality for subsistence. However, these earnings are usually nominally higher than the current legal monthly minimum wage.

The population that participates in informal economy activities has a guaranteed income in the present, but great uncertainty in the future and high dependence on the State due to the loss of strength or productive capacity over the years. However, it is a priority population to be a beneficiary of social programs such as the "subsidized health regime", "solidarity income" "families in action" and "Older Adults", which may be unsustainable in the long term if there is no consistent public policy for the formalization of the informal economy.

The pension outlook is uncertain for 96% of informal workers, who state that they are not contributing to a pension fund nor do they consider it viable due to their income. The situation is even more complex because 76% of them have been in the informal economy for more than five years and because those under 30, who are most likely to be formally employed or to start contributing to a pension, do not exceed 27 % of this population.

Informal economy activities in the public space maintain a great dynamic, despite the efforts made by recent administrations and the global public health problem generated by Covid-19. This population continues to carry out its activities in public space, without adequate control by the authorities, who reflect impotence to fully recover the streets, platforms and squares of the city, to enforce the restrictions on this population and to guarantee the use public space in an equitable manner.

The informal economy in the public space reflects a heterogeneity in its population, which ranges from the participation of minors, internal migrants, immigrants and female participation, who jointly establish and apply organizational processes for fair competition in commerce and motorcycle taxis. Regarding female participation, it should be noted that 9% is dedicated to commercial activities, but there is no participation of women in motorcycle taxis.

Informal economic activities carried out in public spaces and their effects on the quality of urban life and on the present and future of people constitute a line of research of great interest, which should continue to be explored in this and other geographical contexts.

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