

A Review of Informal Economy in China's Urban-Rural Interfaces (URIs)—Analysis from the Angle of Historical Geography

Xianglong Chen¹

¹ School of Continuing Education, Tourism Management, Nanjing Normal University, Nanjing 210046, Jiangsu, China

Correspondence: Xianglong Chen, School of Continuing Education, Tourism Management, Nanjing Normal University, Nanjing 210046, Jiangsu, China. E-mail: HolinessDragon@163.com

Received: September 18, 2024

Accepted: November 29, 2024

Online Published: March 5, 2025

doi:10.5539/ibr.v18n2p29

URL: <https://doi.org/10.5539/ibr.v18n2p29>

Abstract

With accelerated urbanization in China, urban-rural interfaces (URIs) of varied characteristics emerge across the nation. As the frontline and a crucial link between urban and rural areas, URIs have provided an alternate position for urbanization and economic expansion. Among all the economic forms there, informal economy brings both opportunities and threats. From historical geography, this paper explored the historical development of informal economy in URIs, and reviewed previous works on the economy of URIs. Based on historical data, the features and problems of informal economy in URIs are analyzed to provide a basis for healthy development of informal economy in URIs as well as design and practice of relevant policies.

Keywords: urbanization, urban-rural interface; informal economy, historical geography, economic restructuring

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

Since the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, the nation has witnessed multiple waves of economic and social reforms, with urbanization playing a crucial role in the nation's development. In particular, massive migration of population to cities since the Reform and Opening-up¹ has exacerbated the urban-rural imbalance in population and resulted in an economic and social chasm between rural and urban regions. However, urbanization is not a process fulfilled at one strike; the large amounts of urban-rural interfaces (URIs) emerge as transitions and links between rural and urban regions. Due to outdated management and shortage of administration, these URIs become incubators for various economic forms, among which informal economy is the most popular. Against the backdrop of fast economic growth in these years, informal economy in URIs is presenting increasing complexity and diversity. Though on the face of it, the informal economy has boosted employment, increased income, and improved the economic condition in URIs, it is beyond doubt that it has incurred a range of social, economic, and environmental problems.

1.2 Research Objectives and Methods

Historical geography or historical geography is a discipline that studies the geographical environment and its evolutionary laws in the course of historical development. Essentially, historical geography is a branch of

¹ The Chinese economic reform or Chinese economic miracle, also known domestically as reform and opening-up, refers to a variety of economic reforms termed "socialism with Chinese characteristics" and "socialist market economy" in the People's Republic of China (PRC) that began in the late 20th century, after Mao Zedong's death in 1976. Guided by Deng Xiaoping, who is often credited as the "General Architect", the reforms were launched by reformists within the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP) on December 18, 1978, during the "Boluan Fanzheng" period. The reforms briefly went into stagnation after the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests and massacre, but were revived after Deng Xiaoping's southern tour in 1992. (Zhang, 2022) The reforms led to significant economic growth for China within the successive decades; this phenomenon has since been seen as an "economic miracle". In 2010, China overtook Japan as the world's second-largest economy by nominal GDP (Ma et al., 2006), (Ning & Zhang, 2014) before overtaking the United States in 2016 as the world's largest economy by GDP (PPP).

geography that incorporates the influence of time, closely aligning with the study of historical geography. From the perspective of historical geography, this study aims to explore the historical development of the informal economy in urban renewal areas (URIs) and review previous research results on the economy of URIs. The analysis of historical data reveals the characteristics and problems of the informal economy in URIs, laying the groundwork for its healthy development and the design and implementation of relevant policies.

2. Review of Research on Urban-Rural Interfaces (URIs) and Informal Economy

2.1 Definition and Characteristics of URIs

The urban-rural interface (URI), also known as the urban-rural fringe, is a concept first proposed by the German geographer Lewis Herbert in 1963, which means the transition belt and a link between rural and urban areas. [1]Economically speaking, URIs are a third type of economic carrier besides rural and urban regions, and the frontline for urban reforms and economic practice. URIs are constantly in shifts, and during urban expansion, the URIs turn into urban areas, and new URIs come into being; and the changes in urban and rural economy lead to changes in the borders between rural and urban regions. During the institutional changes in URIs, the population, land, and economic standing in this region are also in constant shifts. Changes in these aspects affect not only geographic layout, but also local life and economy.

2.2 Definition of Informal Economy and Research Subjects

Informal economy is a notion first proposed by the International Labor Organization in the 1960s as a collective noun for all forms of economy outside the scope of formal economy, and at that time, this notion is mainly used to describe the work conditions of workers in developing countries (Huang, 2021). However, informal economy has since then been interpreted in different ways by various researchers, and now no universal definition for this notion is available. Most scholars maintain that informal economy refers to the economic activities that have not been covered by official statistics and are not under legal protection and supervision, such as self-sufficient agriculture, family workshops, street vending business, and gig workers (Peng, 2006). Compared to cities that have strict legal regulations and rural areas that have a smaller population and market, URIs provide the soil for the development of informal economy. Excluding crimes, grey industries and illegal sectors, this paper takes the legitimate forms of informal economy as the research subject to explore the history, development and problems of informal economy in URIs.

3. History of Informal Economy in URIs Since the Founding of P. R. China

3.1 The Emergence of Informal Economic Activities before the Reform and Opening-up

Due to the inheritance of revolution and planned economy after the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949 and before the reform and opening-up, formal economy that is within the governmental control and supervision is the main form of economy in China. The lack of legal regulations and policies in URIs gives rise to informal economy, and some farmers have found temporary and informal jobs there, becoming gig workers, migrant workers, seasonal laborers, protocol-bound workers, and contract workers; (Huang, 2021). meanwhile, small businesses that can meet regional demands like family workshops and vending businesses also come into being. In that period, these forms of economy are small in size and have no significant impacts on the economic landscape.

3.1 Informal Economy during the Early Years after Reform and Opening-up

In the early days after Reform and Opening-up, township enterprises and private businesses grow and expand, leading to changes in the spatial structure and functionality of the URIs. The areas that used to be dominated by agriculture are now dominated by the secondary and tertiary industries. This shift increases the economic vitality of URIs, boosts integrated development of rural and urban areas, and visualizes urbanization.

3.2.1 The Rise and Development of Township Enterprises

Since the start of Reform and Opening-up in 1978, the government has relaxed constraints on private enterprises, which promoted the establishment and expansion of enterprises in rural areas. Township enterprises made use of the rich resources in the rural areas including labor and land to develop advantageous industries, which directed surplus labor in agriculture to industries, created more jobs and increased the farmers' income (Qiang, 2024). This is how the early "migrant workers" come into being. However, as the salary policies changed, some migrant workers' salary and welfare could not meet those of formal workers. Aware of this difference, many enterprises began to recognize the advantages of the more cost-efficient labor group, leading to the emergence of migrant workers as the primary source of employment. As a result, informal employment and informal economy witnessed a surge as large quantities of agricultural labor migrating to township enterprises.

3.2.2 The Rise of Private Economy

After the Reform and Opening-up, the governmental constraints over private businesses loosened further. In the early days of reform and opening-up, temporary workers, laid-offs, and farmers began to engage in private businesses, including retailing, catering services, etc. These businesses provide flexible employment and can meet the increasing needs of consumption in URIs. In December of 1982, the clause “private businesses of rural and urban workers, within the bounds of the law, serves as a complement to the socialist public ownership economy” was introduced to the Constitution, which means further loosening of policy and legal recognition of private businesses. [5]The private businesses there were sparsely distributed and had limited capital, and there was a lack of governmental management. With few constraints at the early stage of development, private businesses grew fast and expanded in several years into the main part of informal economy.

3.3 *Quick Growth of Informal Economy from the 1990s to the Early 21st Century*

In the 1990s, China went to the fast lane of urbanization, with many of people moving to cities. As cities expanded, the land of urban fringes, i.e., the URIs, began to be exploited. The land that used to be agricultural areas was turned to land for commercial, residential, and industrial purposes, and informal economic activities began to rise in this new space. For instance, the farmers began to rent the land to construction companies, enterprises, small workshops and private studios. The fast urbanization also produced large quantities of construction wastes and domestic wastes, which gave birth to new forms of informal economy like waste recycling.

3.3.1 Population Migration

From the 1990s, surplus labor in rural areas began to move to cities for new jobs, and the population of migrant workers reached an unprecedented volume (Liu). The various forms of enterprises that had grown since the start of reform and opening-up became the targets of migrant workers, and many went to enterprises in URIs. Due to the fierce competition in the employment market and limits in the household registration system, many migrant workers can only take informal jobs, and thus informal economy became the main channel of employment for the migrant workers. Generally, there were two forms of employment. The first was temporary workers: migrant workers could only take temporary jobs even in formal employment organizations, with their salaries and welfare different from the formal employees. The second was full employment in informal economic organizations, such as informal departments, small-sized enterprises, individual businesses, household service, construction companies, transport companies, etc.

3.3.2 Diversity of Informal Economy

After the 1990s, as the system of market economy improved, governmental intervention in the market declined, and the market played a stronger role in resource allocation (Zhang, 2022). In this context, the informal economy in URIs diversified. Thanks to geographic advantages, industries like production and processing of agricultural products and manufacturing of small goods continued to develop; meanwhile, as the needs of cities grew, new informal economic forms like service and construction industries began to rise. These economic activities were realized in forms like family workshops and vending businesses, which not only provided more employment chances, but met the diversified needs of consumers.

3.4 *Transformation of Informal Economy in the New Era*

During urban expansion in the 21st century, the informal economic activities in URIs began to be incorporated into the urban landscape. The once dispersed regions of informal economic activities began to concentrate in urban centers and transport hubs, giving birth to new commercial and industrial agglomerations. In 2003, the notion of urban-rural integration was proposed to reduce the economic gap between rural and urban regions, and promote urban-rural balance and complementation of industries. The spatial structure of URIs began to see substantial changes, which not only increased the efficiency and scale of informal economy, but optimization of economic resources in rural and urban regions. As a result, some informal economy began to turn into formal economy.

3.4.1 Industry Restructuring and Upgrading

In the 21st century, the informal economy in the URIs began to transform into diversified and technology-intensive industries from lower-end manufacturing and service industries. Transformation and upgrading swept all the three industries. In the primary industry, tourism agriculture like flower planting and agritainment were introduced to supplement the original vegetable planting business. In the secondary industry, high-tech industries were introduced to improve the management, product competition and innovation of informal economic entities like township enterprises and private businesses. In the tertiary industry, information

service and community service were introduced to improve the market structure and distribute the main functions of the cities. In this process, information technology and the Internet penetration played an important role, and many informal economic activities began to adopt new technologies like e-commerce and mobile payment to increase their competition and market reach. Meanwhile, some entrepreneurial incubators and innovation centers began to emerge in some regions to support start-ups, especially the small- and micro-sized enterprises in URIs (Zheng, 2020).

3.4.2 Standardization and Normalization of Informal Economy

As informal economy advanced, the standardization of informal economy from the angles of market needs and self-development began to develop, and some standardization was voluntary, while others were forced. In the voluntary standardization, the market was the main drive, and this occurred mainly in individual businesses and small-sized enterprises that encountered limitations in capital, policy, and management talents, and voluntary standardization was hardly attainable. Forced standardization was mainly realized by the government by issuing policies and regulations to direct these informal economic entities to healthy development. For instance, the government stipulated the registration, taxation, and supervision of informal economic activities to realize standardization of informal economic entities, departments, and individuals. The government also incorporated informal economy into the system of informal economy to make it more transparent and sustainable. For instance, the government provided training and technical support to help improve the managerial and operational efficiency of informal economic entities.

Since the founding of the P. R. China, reforms of the informal economy in URIs have never ceased. At the start, the formal economy was the focus of development, but the development of informal economy could not be curbed. Due to some historical reasons, the informal economy could not release enough energy to gain enough attention. After the reform and opening-up, the demand of cities grew, people began to migrate from the rural areas to cities or urban-rural transition areas where the constraints were more relaxed, which provided labor and market for informal economy, and led to prosperity of informal economic activities including township enterprises and individual business. When the small- and medium-sized enterprises grew in scale, the enterprises began to transform from lower-end manufacturing and service industries to diversified and technology-intensive industries in the short term thanks to the open market environment, with the industry structure upgraded. The enterprises and individuals in the informal economy, driven by the market needs and its demand for self-development, began to see a trend of shifting to formal economy. In the new era, informal economy gained attention from the government as an important part of national economy, and the enterprises and individuals in the informal economy sector that had grown in the URIs began to develop on a healthy, transparent and sustainable track under the guidance of the government. China was late comer in terms of informal economy, and without experience to learn from afore, the development of informal economy relied on the theoretical and practical exploration of the national leaders and decision-makers. Thanks to the geographic advantages of the URIs, informal economy grew more widely recognized and open, which provided historical evidence and the Chinese models to enrich the market economy and economic diversification.

4. Overview of Spatial Changes in the Development of Informal Economy in URIs

4.1 Spatial Distribution of Informal Economic Activities

As economic policies loosened since the founding of the nation, informal economic activities showed a trend of agglomeration in the URIs. Especially after the reform and opening-up, the URIs drew population from agriculture and other regions and evolved to “urban villages” (Yin et al., 2006). These functions of these villages are closely correlated to the cities, and regions of loose regulations and lower rent occur in these villages. These villages are usually located near the commercial and industrial regions, allowing the business owners there to take advantage of the commercial environment, traffic convenience, and consumer group while cutting the operating cost (Ma et al., 2006). The spatial location of the informal economic activities is closely related to the distribution of residential areas, and there are informal vendors who provide daily service for residents in the URIs, which lead to a trend of formal economic regions and activities into the informal economic regions and activities. There are also residential areas formed by taking up land for other purposes, which are dispersed in different parts of the URIs. Economic activities related to the construction industry often occur in the urban fringes, and the processing and sales of agricultural produce are usually found near agricultural production zones, family-sized catering and repairment services are centered in population-intensive regions. These regions are often where informal economic activities grow and thrive, and bear the tags like “dirty”, “messy”, and “bad”. In urban expansion, the attributes attached to the URIs become fuzzy and disorderly (Ning & Zhang, 2014).

4.2 Regional Differences in the Spatial Pattern of Informal Economy

Overall, the informal economy presents regional imbalance across China, with the northwest and southeast marking a higher level of development, whereas the southwest and the northeast showing a lower level of development, (Xing et al., 2022) which also indicates the imbalanced development of URIs. The reasons behind this distribution pattern are multifold, with geographic conditions being the primary factor. For instance, the mountainous and remote areas that have poor accessibility, a less open market and slow updating of information, informal economy relies on local resources and handicraft, which is small in size and dispersed. In comparison, the flatlands and coastal areas which have better traffic accessibility and a more developed market see higher concentration of informal economic activities, which give rise to large industry clusters.

Second, the industry type, economic scale, and development stages of informal economy vary with the regions. Specifically, the informal economy in coastal areas is dominated by the tertiary industry and light industries, such as housekeeping service and street vending businesses, thanks to the open atmosphere and improved market mechanism. In contrast, the informal economy in the inland and underdeveloped regions are dominated by the processing of agricultural produce and small-sized manufacturing businesses. These differences directly affect the spatial distribution and development motive of informal economy (Liu et al., 2015).

The spatial distribution of informal economy in URIs is mainly susceptible to two factors: changes in land use and population migration. For one thing, urban expansion leads to changes in the functions between the URIs and cities and rural areas; the farmland in the past turns into land for commercial, industrial and residential purposes, which provides space for informal economic activities like small factories, family workshops, and temporary markets; it also offers venues and solutions for the urban economic development, with informal economic activities expanding between cities and URIs at a lower cost. Improving the traffic networks can increase the logistical efficiency and cut the transport cost between cities and URIs, which allow the informal economy in URIs to attract more customers and labor. For another, massive population migration, especially the migration from rural areas to cities, provide sufficient labor for informal economy (Yang & Ding, 2005). The group of labor that have lower technical strength and lack chances for formal jobs find sources of income or increase their income from informal economy. The informal economy, because of its low threshold and high flexibility, become the main channel of employment for urban residents. Meanwhile, changes in the demand-supply relations in the labor market prompt the informal economy to make spatial adjustments to meet the needs of the labor market.

5. Influences and Challenges of the Development of Informal Economy in URIs

5.1 Influences on the Socio-Economic Development of URIs and Challenges

The informal economy in URIs has left far-reaching impacts on the socio-economic structure of the region and surrounding areas. The most prominent impact is its positive role in boosting employment and increasing income. Informal economy not only provides more jobs for residents in the URIs, but also attracts labor from rural and urban areas because informal economic activities have a lower threshold and do not ask for technical expertise. It provides economic support and a buffering zone for migrant workers, allowing them to survive and blend into the urban life by improving their economic conditions and living standards (Zeng & Tang). Moreover, informal economy in URIs also plays a role in promoting urban-rural economic integration: first, it attracts capital and technology from cities to surrounding rural areas, which accelerates urbanization and the modernization of rural areas; second, it allows the industries in rural areas, such as processing of agricultural produce, rural tourism, and experience industry, to expand to cities, which boosts two-way economic connection between rural and urban areas, improves industry restructuring and upgrading of the industry chain, and adds to the economic vitality of the URIs. That said, the informal economy in URIs also poses challenges like social differentiation and industry upgrading. Informal economic activities are fuzzy areas of legal supervision, and the URIs are often notorious for lack of legal intervention and supervision, inflicting individuals and enterprises engaged in informal economy with high risks and strong uncertainty. The laws and governmental regulations often fail to work on informal economic activities, especially when it comes to taxation and labor right protection. Employees engaged in informal economy often suffer worse working conditions, such as less pays and insufficient social security protection than those in formal economy because of the lack of legal supervision and protection. Because of these differences, employees in informal economic activities have unstable income, lower social standing, and cannot get their rights protected, which limits the development of these employees and informal economy, and exacerbates social inequality. Meanwhile, with socio-economic development, the informal economy in URIs dominated by the traditional handicraft, manufacturing and sales of agricultural and sideline products will see more challenges for development. Industry upgrading and technological innovation, despite the new economic

drive they provide, pose substantial pressure on the informal economic activities that rely on lower-cost and lower-technical-expertise labor and resources.

5.2 Influences on Urban Spatial Structure and Challenges

The development of informal economy, especially in URIs, will have significant impacts on the urban spatial structure. The most salient impact is that it restructures the regional functions along the fringes of cities. As the informal economic activities increase, regions that used to be dominated by agriculture shift to areas for industrial and commercial purposes. For instance, small-sized manufacturing factories, low-cost warehousing facilities, and temporary services like street vending and repairment shops take up the land that was farmland in the past. This shift increases the land use efficiency and contributes to diversity of regional economic activities. Informal economy in URIs also plays a role in the spatial expansion of cities and promotes "urban expansion". Not very sensitive to geographic locations and land costs, informal economic activities favor urban fringes or regions with less legal constraints. This leads to an increased number of towns and villages, together with residential, industrial, and commercial zones, along the fringes of cities, and such expansion of cities boosts the construction of infrastructure like roads and public transport networks.

Besides what is stated above, informal economy is also considered to play a role in environmental problems. Without efficient legal supervision, informal economic activities, especially the industrial activities, often do not take environmental protection measures, and emit waste gases and wastewater, exacerbating environmental pollution. Unplanned construction of buildings and layout of business zones undermine the cityscape, and the unplanned construction activities and unregulated land use affect the ecological well-being along the urban fringes, which have been frequently covered in news. Furthermore, as urbanization speeds up, the URIs are feeling pressure from redistribution and use of spatial resources. Urban expansion needs more land to accommodate and support residential, commercial, and industrial development. This directly affects the layout of informal economic activities, especially those that rely heavily on low-rent land and specific locations. When new land use policies are released and the functional zones are re-partitioned in urban planning, the informal economic activities are likely to be dispelled or removed from the original location, which directly affects the life and economic conditions of employees engaged in the informal economic activities, and poses new requirements for policy-making and management of URIs (Rong, 2016).

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

The history, development and impacts of urban-rural interfaces (URIs) are reviewed and analyzed in this paper. Based on the research mentioned above, this study can draw the following conclusions:

(1) Historical evolution level: After the founding of the People's Republic of China, the informal economy in urban-rural fringe areas (URIs) has gone through several stages of development. Before the reform and opening up, the absence of laws and policies led to the emergence of some temporary informal jobs and small businesses that met regional needs, but their scale was small and their impact was minimal. In the early days of reform and opening up, township enterprises and the private economy emerged; informal employment and the economy surged as agricultural labor migrated to township enterprises. From the 1990s to the early 21st century, with the acceleration of urbanization, the informal economy grew rapidly in the process of land development and utilization on the edge of cities, and its forms became more diverse. In the 21st century, under the background of urban-rural integration, informal economic activities began to integrate into the urban landscape and partially transformed into the formal economy.

(2) Spatial distribution: Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, with the relaxation of economic policies, informal economic activities have shown a trend of agglomeration in URIs. Especially after the reform and opening up, URIs have attracted populations and evolved into "urban villages." These areas function closely with the city, offering low rents and lax regulations. Residential area distribution closely correlates with the spatial location of informal economic activities, resulting in the distribution of different types of economic activities across different regions. Simultaneously, factors such as geographical conditions, industry type, economic scale, and development stage influence the regional imbalance in China's informal economy. Land use changes and population migration primarily influence its spatial distribution.

(3) Impact on the socio-economic level: The informal economy of URIs has a profound impact on the socio-economic structure of the region and its surrounding areas. On the positive side, it promotes employment and income growth, provides economic support and buffer for migrant workers, and promotes the integration of urban and rural economies. On the negative side, it operates in an area characterized by legal ambiguity, poor working conditions, unstable income, and low social status for employees. Additionally, as socio-economic development progresses, it confronts the challenges of industrial upgrading and technological innovation.

Given all the information presented before, the following recommendations are proposed:

First, the household registration system for URIs should be optimized, and a resource allocation system with a fairer and more reasonable mechanism should be established to provide legal space and chances for individuals and enterprises in informal economy. Supervision and guidance for informal economic activities should be strengthened to direct it to formal development, with more strict standards for environmental protection and labor right protection. Last, measures like technological innovation and industry upgrading can be taken to promote transformation of the traditional informal economy so that informal economy can be deeply integrated into the rural and urban economic landscape, thereby achieving the goal of sustainable development.

The informal economy in the URIs have evolved from the stage of emergence to expansion and then to transformation, leaving far-reaching impacts on the spatial structure, economic morphology, and social relations in the URIs. Since the start of the reform and opening-up, the informal economy has not only boosted employment and increased people's income, but demonstrated strong vitality and adaptability in promoting the development market economy and urban-rural integration. However, the development of informal economy also triggers some risks and problems like social differentiation, environmental pollution, and absence of legal constraints. The spatial pressure of informal economy becomes particularly salient as urbanization speeds up, which prompts the policy-makers to control the negative impacts of informal economy and meanwhile lead the informal economy to a healthy and sustainable path of development.

Acknowledgments

I am very grateful to Weiyuanhu Academy for this opportunity, which allowed me to get in touch with the research project of urbanization and informal economy, and let me learn a lot of useful knowledge about economics, urbanization and urban construction. I would also like to thank the project teacher, Professor Huang Gengzhi from Sun Yat-sen University. His courses and practices have helped me to have a more clear theoretical system of urbanization and informal economy, and my research direction has been recognized.

Authors' contributions

Not applicable. This paper was completed independently by the author, and no other person participated in the writing and design process. The author has no other special status. The collection of data, the construction and writing of the paper are all completed by the author himself.

Funding

Not applicable.

Competing interests

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

Informed consent

Obtained.

Ethics approval

The Publication Ethics Committee of the Canadian Center of Science and Education.

The journal's policies adhere to the Core Practices established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

Provenance and peer review

Not commissioned; externally double-blind peer reviewed.

Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

Open access

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

References

- Fan, J. W. (2022). Sustainable development of urban-rural fringe areas under the background of rural revitalization strategy [J]. *China Price Journal*, 5, 27-30.
- Huang, Z. Z. (2021). Informal economy in China [J]. *Beijing Cultural Review*, 6, 64-74.
- Liu, G. B. Exploration of China's rural development at the present stage[M].Wuhan: Hubei People's Publishing House.
- Liu, Y. H., Chen, H. L., Lin, Z. P., & Wu, D. F. (2015). Spatial evolution of informal economy in urban villages and its impact on land use: A case study of Nanting Village in Guangzhou University City [J]. *Economic geography*, 35(5), 126-134.
- Ma, Q. Y., Ma, J. H., & Zhang, C. (2006). Traffic network evaluation based on network analysis and its relationship with regional economic development [J]. *Human Geography*, 4, 113-116+78.
- Ning, Y. X., & Zhang, Z. T. (2014). Review and outlook on research of informal urban spaces in China [C]// Urban-Rural Governance and Planning Reforms—Proceedings of the 2014 Annual Conference of the Chinese Urban Planning Society (12—Residential Area Planning). *School of Architecture and Urban Planning, Chongqing University*, 11.
- Peng, Y. L. (2006). Flexible employment is an important approach to alleviate employment pressure [J]. *Journal of macroeconomic management*, 8, 25-27.
- Qiang, H. (2024). Causes for the rise of township enterprises in China after the Reform and Opening-up and development strategies [J]. *Shanghai Enterprise*, 6, 31-33.
- Rong, Z. (2016). From disorder to order: Analysis of causes and countermeasures of social governance dilemma in urban and rural integrated areas [J]. *Journal of Shanghai Administration University*, 17(1), 29-38.
- Xing, Z. G., Huang, G. Z., Xue, D. S. (2022). The development pattern of informal economy in China and its relationship with urbanization: A study based on the Multi-indicator and Multi-Cause (MIMIC) model [J]. *Geographical Research*, 41(3), 597-615.
- Yang, S. G., & Ding, J. H. (2005). The floating population of urban employment effect [J]. *Journal of east China normal university (philosophy and social sciences edition)*, 3, 82-87+124.
- Yin, X. Y., Xue, D. S., & Yan, X. P. (2006). Formation and development mechanisms of the informal sector in “urban villages”—a case study of Caiwuwei in Shenzhen [J]. *Economic Geography*, 6, 969-973.
- Zeng, S. Y., & Tang, X. T. Peasant mobility in social change[M]. Nanchang:Jiangxi People's Publishing House.
- Zhang, H. M. (2022). Experience and Suggestions on the relationship between government and Market [J]. *Development Research*, 39(09), 47-51.
- Zheng, X. (2020). Socioeconomic harmonious development issues in rural-urban interfaces [J]. *Rural Economy and Science-Technology*, 31(6), 248-249.
- Zhou, W., & Bai, J. (2023). The development of the private economy and Chinese-style modernization [J]. *Social Science Research*, 6, 1-11.