

Industrial employment in the Lacq basin: data and statistical tools

Post-doctoral research

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This research work was requested and funded by the Lacq Conurbation. The aim was to create a database concerning employment in the Lacq basin (the former conurbation comprising 16 towns & villages) from 1980 to the present and to use these data to analyze the evolution and structure of industrial employment throughout this period. The original nature of this project lies in the subtleties of the data and the subsequent research possibilities they offer. The data concern the workforces employed per establishment and by main activity code for each company present or having been present on the site between 1980 and 2010 and will provide a basis for unprecedented analyses at such a fine level of itemization for this region. Nonetheless, as there were no employment statistics available prior to 1988, we were obliged to restrict our database to the analysis of the period 1988-2010.

Over 150 industrial companies were counted over the period 1988-2010 and historical data collected on their payroll employees. The project continued with a detailed analysis of industrial employment, at a global geographical level, by branch of activity, by APE code and finally on a local level, by branch of activity and APE code. The analyses of these data showed that 1,524 industrial jobs were eradicated, 1,420 of them in the extractive industries and 104 in the manufacturing industries. Of the 1,524 jobs eradicated, 169 were recovered owing to the creation of jobs in the other industrial branches. 94 in the construction industry and 75 in the production and distribution of water and electricity. This therefore generated a net loss of 1,355 industrial jobs.

Among the industrial branches, apart from the very significant, though nonetheless decreasing influence of gas production, it's the fine chemicals industry that comes out on top, especially over the last few years. A significant share of industrial employment is also represented by the metalwork industry or the repair and installation of machines and equipment. During this period, there was an overall decrease in industrial employment in the Lacq basin, an area buoyed up essentially by the extractive industries and partially offset by the other industrial branches and the restructuring of industrial activity: the extractive industries' share in industrial employment has decreased in favor of the construction and manufacturing industries.

The manufacturing industry is extensively represented by the chemical and metalwork industry or the installation and repair of machines and equipment. Most of the employment in the chemical industry is concentrated in basic chemicals, but this sector is beginning to lose its influence, especially during the 2000s, in favor of fine chemicals. The metalwork industry registered a sharp decrease in employment at the beginning of the 1990s, whereas the installation and repair of machines and equipment recorded an increase of 216 jobs between 1993 and 2010. In construction, a particularly dynamic branch, 94 jobs were created between 1988 and 2010 thanks to electrical installation and plumbing works, and other installation interventions. Finally, the production and distribution of water, and the production and distribution of electricity, gas, vapor and air conditioning are two very minor industrial branches in the Lacq basin, but between 1993 and 2020, they generated 18 and 13 new jobs respectively, most of them in waste recovery and the production and distribution of vapor and air conditioning.

Most of the employment is concentrated in Lacq, Artix, Mourenx, Pardies and Abidos (owing to the production of gas reservoirs), even though the influence of Lacq is decreasing (due to the decrease in activity of the extractive industries), whereas that of Mourenx and Artix is on the increase.

Lacq has been strongly affected by the decrease in activity in the extractive industries and consequently suffered a very significant drop in the industrial employment. Contrary to the construction and extractive industries that have seen their workforce dwindle, the manufacturing industry has recorded a significant increase in employment owing to the basic chemicals industry. Employment in the construction industry is concentrated in installation work and a small increase in activity was noted at the end of the 1980s, followed by a more significant decrease at the end of the 1990s, before levelling out.

In Mont, employment figures increased slightly between 1988 and 2010, with a relatively stable sectoral distribution. With a payroll on the increase, the manufacturing industry is dominated by the basic chemicals industry and the manufacturing of light, metal packaging, whereas construction is dominated by electrical installation and plumbing works, as well as other installation work. The chemical industry saw an increase in its workforce at the end of the 1980s, followed by a subsequent decrease, during which the manufacturing of light metal packaging enjoyed a marked increase in activity at the end of the 1980s, which slowed down a little afterwards. The construction industry recorded job losses between 1988 and 1992, but its workforce increased, in particular as from 2003.

Mourenx recorded a marked increase in total employment. Industrial employment is on a slight increase, thanks to the construction and manufacturing industries, which grew slightly between 1988 and 2010. On the decrease between 1988 and 1992, employment in the manufacturing industry increased significantly between 1993 and 2010, thanks to the pharmaceutical industry and the repair and installation of machine and equipment. Between 1988 and 1992, employment in the construction industry was concentrated in installation works, whereas between 1993 and 2010, general building work and the assembly of metal structures were the dominant activities.

A sharp increase in employment was also recorded in Artix. The manufacturing and construction industries were responsible for this increase, essentially owing to the installation

of metal structures, sheet metal work and piping, electrical installation work, general building work and structural building work.

As in Lacq, Pardies has seen a general decrease in total employment. This is due to the decrease in employment in the basic chemicals industry that was not offset by the increase in employment in the service or construction industries. Almost non-existent between 1988 and 1992, the construction industry saw serious development begin as from 1999. All branches of the construction industry are concerned, though the most significant developments were in electrical installations.

Finally, employment also increased in Abidos, mainly in the manufacturing industry. Between 1998 and 1992, work in manufacturing was concentrated essentially in the chemical industry, where there was a slight increase in salaried workforce, and in the metalwork industries, a strong increase in salaried workforce was noted. Between 1993 and 2010 employment in manufacturing was concentrated in the production of information technology, electronic and optical (an activity that stopped definitively in 2006) products and subsequently, in the manufacturing of non-metallic mineral products.

Lacq-Orthez Local Council - CCLO

16 months.