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## Study of the Economic Factors Affecting Labor Mobility in the United States from 1950 Through 01/01/1959

Hazel M. Price  
*Fort Hays Kansas State College*

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A STUDY OF THE ECONOMIC FACTORS AFFECTING LABOR MOBILITY  
IN THE UNITED STATES FROM 1950 THROUGH 1959

being

A Thesis Presented to the Graduate Faculty  
of the Fort Hays Kansas State College in  
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Degree of Master of Science

by

Hazel M. Price, B. S.

Drake University

Date 7-21-60

Approved

Richard Levitt  
Major Professor

Approved

Ralph S. Coan  
Chairman, Graduate Council

A STUDY OF THE ECONOMIC FACTORS AFFECTING LABOR MOBILITY  
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by

Hazel M. Price

(An Abstract)

The purpose of this study was to consider the influence of the economic factors upon the individual worker in his decisions concerning mobility. Research materials were used from Forsyth Library, United States Commissioner of Labor Statistics, and the Hays Employment Security Division.

An analysis of the size and distribution of the labor force preceded a discussion of the different types of labor mobility. Wages, family and financial status, and improved worker benefit programs were selected as the economic factors affecting mobility. Attitudes of the individual worker, knowledge of the worker concerning available opportunities, nature of the present job, and skill of the employee were closely related social and psychological factors from which the economic factors could not be completely isolated. It was found that an increased demand for higher levels of skills created a demand for additional mobility among the labor force during the years 1950 through 1959. Meanwhile, the above mentioned economic factors were working toward reducing movement of the worker.

At the end of the 1950's a need existed for workers to become better educated and trained in order that they might have the willingness and ability to become more mobile. Increased mobility of the United States labor force would work toward a more efficient use of the available labor resource and a higher standard of living for the American people through increased national productivity.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The American labor force in our economy has changed from one engaged primarily in agricultural production to one in which the majority of the population are employed in industrial occupations. As economic development has brought about increased specialized labor, mass production, and more service industries, the demand for skills has changed. However, the supply of available labor with the necessary skills has not been sufficient to meet this new demand for labor. Economic factors have prevented the worker from moving to the jobs as new industries in new locations develop and old industries go out of existence.

#### I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. One of the major problems in any economic system is the allocation of the factors of production. In the United States, where labor has been a scarce resource, the distribution of the labor force has had a strong influence on the efficiency of productivity. In recent years, mobility of the individual worker has become an important element in determining the use of the available labor supply in the most efficient combination with other

resources for production. A shift in the locale of the industrial centers, and an adjustment in the skills required of the worker, make necessary the problem of decreasing immobility in order to satisfactorily meet the new development in economic growth.

Purpose of the study. In the following study the intent has been to discuss the influence of the economic factors upon the individual worker in his decisions concerning mobility. This knowledge should be an assistance in understanding the problem of a need for decreasing immobility of the labor force in order to provide a more adequate distribution of the labor supply.

## II. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Because of the complexity of the problem of increasing mobility among the United States labor force, it has been found necessary to limit this study to an analysis of the economic factors influencing the worker and contributing to the lack of mobility during the period from 1950 through 1959.

Economic factors. The following study is limited to an analysis of economic factors and certain related social and psychological attitudes of the worker. No attempt was made to analyze non-economic factors. The economic factors

to be considered are wages, family and financial status, and improved worker benefit programs. Other related social and psychological factors to be discussed include knowledge of the worker concerning available opportunities, the nature of the present job, and the skill of the employee.

Mobility. The general classifications of geographical and industrial movements cover the many areas of labor mobility. Changes from one employer to another, from one industry to another, or from a certain type of skill to another were usually considered industrial; however, a movement of this type might also involve a geographical change.

Geographical mobility is ordinarily distinguished from industrial movement by the fact that a worker changes his place of residence when geographical mobility occurs. Industrial mobility is the movement of the worker from one job to another.

Vertical, horizontal, and occupational mobility were included in the study under one general heading. Vertical mobility is the movement of the worker within his present industry, company, or plant, either up or down. Horizontal movement consists of the movement of the worker from one job to another without changing his skill or occupation. Occupational mobility occurs when a son does not follow the paternal occupation. A movement of any of these three types usually occurs simultaneously with geographical or industrial mobility.

Segments of the labor force. This study was limited to include only wage and salary workers in private industry and government. Management was excluded for the reason that this group is affected by a different set of factors and should be a separate study.

The industrial groups chosen included mining, contract construction, manufacturing, transportation and public utilities, wholesale and retail trade, finance-insurance-and real estate, service and miscellaneous, and government. The Bureau of Labor Statistics uses these classifications for non-agricultural workers.

The years 1950 through 1959. In view of the large amount of material available on this subject, it was necessary to limit the problem to the past decade, or from 1950 through 1959. With the changing industrial picture, the emphasis on national defense, and the adjustments necessary because of the fact that the anticipated post-war depression of the late 1940's failed to materialize, labor established a slightly different pattern during this period.

Sources of materials. The Research Departments of the Teamsters' Union and AFL-CIO, Ewan Clague, Commissioner of Labor Statistics, and the Superintendent of Documents were contacted by letter for information concerning this problem. A bibliographical essay was compiled on the materials available in Forsyth Library. Research materials from the Hays Employment Security Division were also used.

### III. PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING THE STUDY

Five chapters are used for an analysis of the research problem. Chapter I consists of a general introduction which includes a statement of the problem and the purpose of the study, followed by the limitations.

An analysis of the United States labor force is given in Chapter II, using reported statistical information to signify the size, distribution and importance of the labor force to the entire economy. Classifications were made on the basis of sex, age, color groups and occupations.

Chapter III is concerned with the types of labor mobility under the general headings of geographical, industrial, and other types of labor movements. Particular attention is given to certain industrial areas of the country.

The economic factors which affect labor mobility are considered in Chapter IV. Closely related social and psychological factors are also discussed.

Chapter V contains a summary of the purpose and the findings of this study, and includes conclusions and recommendations.

## CHAPTER II

### AN ANALYSIS OF THE UNITED STATES LABOR FORCE

Various factors determine the actual proportion of the population which can be considered participants in the labor force. The population has continued to grow and the pattern of human wants keeps changing. More women are seeking employment outside the home. Higher educational levels, along with retirement plans, have shifted the age groups of employees. The growth of large units through combinations, consolidations, and chain operations has brought about changes in the methods of production, processing, and distribution. Technological improvements necessitate new and additional skills. As a result, the figures which represent the number of people in the labor force are never stable.

Government statistics concerning employment and unemployment are compiled from three major sources.<sup>1</sup> The United States Bureau of Census obtains data based on household interviews from sample surveys conducted each month. Compiled data from payroll records are prepared monthly by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. Administrative records and

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<sup>1</sup>United States Congress, Joint Economic Committee, Employment, Growth, and Price Levels, Hearings Before the Joint Economic Committee, 86th Congress, 1st Session, April 25, 27, and 28, 1959 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1959), p. 468.

unemployment insurance systems are a source of data as a by-product of the Federal and State Employment Program. This report is issued weekly by the United States Bureau of Employment Security. Each of these three sources indicate, that even with the possibility of future business cycles and economic depressions, the basic trend is for expansion of the labor force in a relatively strong economy.<sup>2</sup>

I. REPORTED STATISTICAL INFORMATION  
CONCERNING THE LABOR FORCE

A definition of the labor force. The Bureau of Labor Statistics defines the labor force as consisting of the aggregate of all employed, in addition to the unemployed who are looking for work, waiting to be called back to a job from which they have been temporarily laid off, waiting to report to a new job scheduled to start within thirty days, temporarily ill, or persons believing there is no work, in their particular line, available in their community. Included in the total labor force are also members of the Armed Forces currently in the Continental United States, living either off the post, or with their families on the post.<sup>3</sup>

Changes in the size of the labor force during the last decade. In 1950, the total labor force was approximately

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<sup>2</sup>Joseph Scherer, "Labor Force: Concepts, Measures and Uses of Data," Journal of Business, XXXI (January, 1958), 38-62.

<sup>3</sup>United States Department of Commerce, Mobility of Population in the United States, March 1957 to 1958, Current Population Reports: Population Characteristics (Washington: Bureau of Census, 1958), pp. 5-6.

sixty-five million, which included almost forty-five million non-agricultural employees. By 1955, this total had increased to a little less than sixty-nine million, with fifty million of these workers employed in industry.<sup>4</sup>

The recession of 1957-1958 caused non-agricultural employment to drop slightly below fifty million; however, by the middle of 1958, this segment of the labor force was again increasing in number, and had almost reached fifty-two million by the summer of 1959. The 1950's had a series of record breaking employment totals.<sup>5</sup>

Indications for future changes. In order to provide information to the Department of Labor and other government agencies concerned with manpower problems, the Bureau of Labor Statistics has for several years conducted research on trends in the size and composition of the labor force. The projections indicate that the blue collar, skilled workers, after showing rapid growth in number during the 1940's, and increasing at about the same rate as the total labor force during the 1950's, will continue to increase through 1965.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Employment, Growth, and Price Levels, op. cit., p. 489.

<sup>5</sup>Manpower and Education, Education Policies Commission, National Education Association of the United States, and American Association of School Administrators (Washington: National Education Association, 1958), pp. 16-21.

<sup>6</sup>"AFL-CIO Meeting on Industry and Labor Force Changes by 1965," AFL-CIO Conference on Changing Character of America's Industry, Monthly Labor Review, LXXXI (March, 1958), 287-90.



One of the major areas of anticipated increase was construction worker employment, which should create a growing need for skilled installation, maintenance, and repairmen for complicated machinery and equipment. There was indication for growth of more than one and a half million workers in this area from 1955 to 1965. Operators were expected to show an increase of about 1.7 million during these years, and service workers should probably grow in number by 1.6 million.<sup>7</sup>

Blue collar workers, as a whole, were expected to decline slightly in percentage, but due to technological changes, there should be shifts within the group. It was predicted that demand would continue to decline in relation to unskilled labor and increase in relation to skilled workers.<sup>8</sup>

## II. DISTRIBUTION OF THE LABOR FORCE

Distribution by industry. Until 1953 more people were employed in the goods industries than in the service industries. But from that year, through the remainder of the 1950's, service industries boasted a higher total employment.<sup>9</sup> Goods production industries include agriculture,

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Ewan Clague, "The Shifting Industrial and Occupational Composition of the Work Force During the Next Ten Years," AFL-CIO Conference on Changing Character of American Industry (Washington: Government Printing Office, January 16, 1958), p. 15.

<sup>9</sup>Ewan Clague, Breaking the Manpower Shortage, U. S. Department of Labor, American Society of Training Directors (Washington: Government Printing Office, November 21, 1958), pp. 5-6.

mining, manufacturing and construction; service industries are made up of trade, finance, service, government, transportation, and public utilities.

Employment in the trade and service industries increased more rapidly than total non-agricultural employment. Transportation and public utilities showed a smaller increase than most other industries, while mining employment declined. Contract construction fluctuated sharply with changes in the general business conditions; however, it has been the fastest growing industry division in the post World War II period.<sup>10</sup>

Manufacturing, the largest industry division, also fluctuates in response to changing economic conditions and defense mobilization. There has been a noticeable increase in automobiles, aircraft, and electrical machines. The textiles, which usually employ from fifteen to thirty percent of the labor force, has continued to decline, along with costume jewelry and shoe manufacturing.<sup>11</sup> However, this decline has been somewhat offset by an increase in electronics and apparel industries.<sup>12</sup> In general, manufacturing has fairly well held

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<sup>10</sup>Clague, "The Shifting Industrial Occupational Composition," op. cit., p. 8.

<sup>11</sup>The Measurement and Behavior of Unemployment, A Report of the National Bureau of Economic Research (New York: Princeton University Press, 1957), pp. 349-51.

<sup>12</sup>William H. Miernyk, "Labor Mobility and Regional Growth," Economic Geography, XXXI (October, 1955), 321-30.

its share of non-agricultural wage and salary employees. Non-production workers represented a total increase in employment in manufacturing which was faster than average growth among the service workers.<sup>13</sup>

Labor efficiency increased during this period, especially in the service industries. The labor force worker spent less hours on the job and produced more goods than previously.<sup>14</sup> Industrial workers found themselves in a situation in which the ability to be mobile was an increasing necessity in order for the workers to be able to meet the changes occurring within the industry.

Distribution by location. The United States population is by no means evenly distributed, nor is the present distribution static. The gradual shift of the population center toward the West has been due to the high rates of movement of the industrial centers in the North Central States, and in the Far West. And this rate of change seems to be accelerated with each generation.<sup>15</sup>

Major gains in employment have occurred in the West, South Central, and Pacific regions, with the New England areas

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<sup>13</sup>Clague, "The Shifting Industrial and Occupational Composition," op. cit., pp. 11-13.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Manpower and Education, op. cit., pp. 15-21.

showing the greatest loss. Even with a reduction in the number of regions reporting an excessive labor supply, Massachusetts, New York, Rhode Island, and Pennsylvania still had surplus labor. Much of this was caused by a decline in the textile industry.<sup>16</sup>

### III. DIFFERENT METHODS OF CLASSIFYING THE LABOR FORCE

Type of occupation. The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics groups non-agricultural employees by the following industries: mining, contract construction, transportation and public utilities, wholesale and retail trade, finance-insurance-real estate, service and miscellaneous, and government. Goods producing industries include the extractive--coal, oil, gas, lead, zinc and any other mining; construction--building of homes, highways, factories, and offices; and manufacturing which is composed of steel, clothing, machinery, automobiles, and chemicals. Agricultural industries--food, feed, and fibers--are also goods producing industries. The service producing segment include activities which involve selling, buying, financing, transporting, servicing and teaching.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Neil W. Chamberlain, Sourcebook on Labor (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1958), p. 5.

Occupation classifications themselves are subject to change; as new areas are opened, new combinations of work develop, and new skills are urgently needed.

Dual and part-time employment. Since women are generally supplementary earners, and men tend to be the primary workers, it seems reasonable to find that in 1955, almost thirty percent of the men in the total labor force held two jobs at the same time, compared to only a little more than nineteen percent of the women employees.<sup>18</sup> Among male employees, the largest proportion of dual workers occurred in the sixty-five and over age bracket, with the smallest percentage between the ages twenty and twenty-four. Women between forty-five and fifty-four years of age tended to have greater dual employment, and the smallest percentage of dual employment of women occurred in the age group of from eighteen to nineteen years.<sup>19</sup>

According to the Census Bureau of work experience for 1955, part time workers included women and students in a larger proportion than other groups. Women between the ages of twenty and forty had home responsibilities which prevented them from becoming full time employees. Eighty percent of

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<sup>18</sup>"AFL-CIO Meeting on Industry and Labor Force Changes," loc. cit.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

the youth between fourteen and nineteen years of age worked part time, or intermittently during the year; school was the chief reason for their irregular attachment. Only ten percent of the men between twenty-five and sixty-four years of age were part time laborers. This group, with their multiple entrances and departures, were often referred to as the Secondary Labor Force.<sup>20</sup>

Projections for the future indicate that with a more than ten million increase in the total labor force by 1965, almost four million of these workers will be part-time employees.<sup>21</sup>

Personal characteristics of workers. Age, even though not the sole criterion for inclusion, is an important factor in the labor force. Persons between the ages of fourteen and sixty-four represent the potential labor force; the remainder of the population are classified as dependents. Population figures for the United States show a heavy concentration in these potentially productive years. The Bureau of Labor uses the following age classifications: 14-24, 25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65 and over.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Irvin Sobel, "Manpower Measures and the Secondary Labor Force," Monthly Labor Review LXXXI (October, 1958), 1113-20.

<sup>21</sup>Clague, "The Shifting Industrial and Occupational Composition," op. cit., pp. 5-6.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

Since World War II, there has been a steady increase within the age group fourteen to twenty-four, which is partly due to early marriages as well as part-time work of students. The age group of forty-five and over has shown slight increase because they are more "job stabilized" and less mobile than younger employees.<sup>23</sup>

Participation of female workers was generally found to be a separate category from participation of male workers. Married women with children of school age have shown a rate of increase in employment in recent years, especially in part-time work.<sup>24</sup>

Facts concerning other minority groups usually paralleled the Negro in many respects, and were seldom given separately. The Negro has moved from the South to the upper Midwest and Far West. But more significant was his movement from the farm to urban areas in both the South and the North. According to the 1950 Census Report, the urban Negro population was greater than farm Negro population. All previous reportings had shown the reverse situation to be true. The 1920 Census listed white urban population greater than white farm population. As the urban population of the Negro continues to increase, his participation in the non-agricultural labor

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<sup>23</sup>"AFL-CIO Meeting on Industry and Labor Force Changes," loc. cit.

<sup>24</sup>Labor Market Developments: Review of 1952 and Early 1953," Federal Reserve Bulletin, XXXIX (June, 1953), 581-7.

force also grows.<sup>25</sup>

The labor problem is not merely a matter of the number of people involved, nor of the distribution of these workers. There is need for full employment and wise use of each person's abilities.

Under emerging occupational conditions, persons must have an expectation of change, a flexibility of skills, a general upgrading in ability, and an adaptability to adjust to changing circumstances.<sup>26</sup>

Technological developments bring enormous benefits to our society. At the same time there are many necessary alterations in work and occupational patterns throughout the country which require a high degree of flexibility in the labor force.

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<sup>25</sup>Manpower and Education, op. cit., p. 49.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 35.



## I. INDUSTRIAL MOBILITY

Industrial mobility is the movement of workers from one job to another job, from one company to another company, or from one industry to another industry. In an economy which strives for economic growth and development, the condition of labor mobility is an essential element. It may not always be so much the actual movement which is important, as the willingness and ability of workers to be flexible in relation to their work.

The influence of technological advances on industrial mobility. New techniques for production alter business demands for productive services, which often require a redistribution of the labor force. The manufacturing of new products, the use of new processes, and an increase in the scale of plants have created a situation in which numerous shifts in industry are essential for a more efficient use of the available labor supply.

In the last few years one of the most mobile groups of workers in the United States has been the operatives.<sup>2</sup> The Census designation for these employees is semi-skilled workers, including single machine operators or tenders, assembly workers in industry, truck drivers, and similar occupations. In past

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<sup>2</sup>Clague, "The Shifting Industrial and Occupational Composition," op. cit., p. 15.

decades, gains in production due to the effects of mechanism meant gains in employment for this group of the labor force. However, in recent years, technological advances have increased productivity without a comparable increase in the number of semi-skilled workers. Simple repetitive feeding and manipulation of machines have been taken over by automatic and semi-automatic devices. The introduction of these machines and equipment have resulted in a rapid increase in new occupational areas requiring more skill and education. New training programs then become necessary before these workers are adequately equipped with high levels of skills for operating, maintaining, and repairing these complex machines.<sup>3</sup>

The fact that farm employment continues to decline because of technical advances has been common knowledge, and yet it has frequently been overlooked that the intensive use of numerous kinds of new farm machinery, and the development of fertilizers and insect killers have created a need for increases in employment in other industries, which has a tendency to offset the decline in farm workers.

Finance, insurance and real estate have shown the most rapid increase in numbers employed, followed by construction, services and trade, public utilities and communication. Mining, manufacturing, and government have also shown an increase in employment, with transportation reporting the least

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

amount of increase.<sup>4</sup>

In the engineering field there has been a growing need for skilled technicians in auto mechanics. Industrial machine repairmen, electricians, instrument repairmen, business machine repairmen, carpenters, bricklayers, and other building trades have shown an increase in demand for employees.<sup>5</sup> Atomic energy development has called for additional trained technical workers and skilled craftsmen in considerable numbers in plants manufacturing reactors, control equipment, radiation, recording and detection instruments, as well as more workers in research and development laboratories. The space age in general has created thousands of new and interesting jobs in aircraft, missile, and spacecraft fields, including engineers, technicians, and skilled craftsmen.<sup>6</sup> However, these new opportunities require new and additional skills which many of the present semi-skilled laborers do not have, and they do not feel they can afford to acquire these skills.

As the economy has grown, population and the number of households have increased, the government has spent larger amounts for schools, highways, and defense programs, and the general volume of business activity has continued to climb. These factors require a large expansion in power and steel

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 13.

<sup>5</sup>"Outlook in Particular Occupations," Occupational Outlook Quarterly, III, 3 (Washington: Department of Labor, September, 1959), 5.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

industries, and the needs for overall mining employment have increased.

Additional military requirements for aircraft and guided missiles have brought about an increased demand for labor supply in these industries. The growth of military transportation equipment industries has also opened new occupational opportunities for the labor force.

A moderate rise has also been felt in the automobile industry. Electrical machines, particularly the communications equipment, and the machinery and fabricated metal products are other metal working industries which have shown an increase in demand for labor. Employment in industrial chemicals and paper industries has also grown.<sup>7</sup>

A voluntary attempt has been made by the group of workers classified as operatives to fill these new demands caused by technological advances in the modern industrial world. While this voluntary attempt on the part of the workers has been partially successful, there is still a need for an organized transition of these workers into occupations requiring new and additional skills.

The influence of cyclical and seasonal fluctuations on industrial mobility. In cyclical fluctuations, as the

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

economy contracts, workers lose their jobs. Labor is considered a resource in an economic system, and like all other valuable items, the premium we place upon our labor is determined by supply and demand of the product. When the demand for labor recovers in a period of revival, the labor force increases so that jobs need to be available for the new labor force additions as well as jobs for workers who are unemployed because of economic conditions. This means that the labor market must be flexible in response to peacetime booms and recessions.

During the recessions of 1954 and 1957-1958 some firms went bankrupt, departments were shut down, occupations were displaced by machines, industries lost their markets, and entire towns and regions found themselves bypassed in the march of technological advancements as the economy began to climb back to a more normal procedure. The situation resulted in a need for increasing mobility among the labor force in these areas.

In 1956-57 manufacturing was still experiencing a decline in production workers. During this time, for the first period in history, white collar workers, including professional, technical workers, managers, officials and proprietors, clerical and sales workers, exceeded in number blue collar workers which included craftsmen, operatives, and laborers.<sup>8</sup> However,

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<sup>8</sup>Clague, "Shifting Industrial and Occupational Composition," op. cit., p. 14.

the increase in unemployment was sharper and longer lasting after the recession of 1956-1957 than during 1954. In March of 1959 certain areas were still feeling the effects in their continuing substantial surplus of labor. Factories producing automobiles and other steel products in Buffalo, Charleston (West Virginia), Detroit, Providence, and Pittsburgh were experiencing a long duration of unemployment.<sup>9</sup>

But even in years of the last decade when employment has been near normal, certain areas of the country have experienced a high level of unemployment and workers have felt the need to become more mobile. In taking steps to stabilize employment by smoothing out the cyclical influences, the government has reduced the normal occurrence of labor migration through enforcement of nationwide minimum wages and government contracts. Government subsidies in shipbuilding industries, tariffs and quotas frustrate the normal development of wage differentials in job opportunities.

Building trades have a large seasonal variation. A major portion of workers in these industries are forced to hold more than one job during the year.<sup>10</sup> This group feels the necessity to become more mobile than they are at the present

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<sup>9</sup>Clarence D. Long, "Labor Force, Employment, and Economic Change," Hearings Before the Joint Economic Committee, Congress of the United States, Eighty-Sixth Congress, First Session (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1959), p. 555.

<sup>10</sup>United States Department of Commerce, Job Mobility of Workers in 1955, Current Population Reports, Series P-50, No. 70 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1955), p. 5.

time. Government influences, contrasted with cyclical and seasonal influences, tend to affect mobility of the worker by increasing immobility, at a time when the natural forces of supply and demand would encourage movement of the labor force.

In some parts of the United States, migration tends to be guided by laissez faire. When the factory closes, or moves to another area, the workers lose their jobs and are left to solve the problems of unemployment by whatever means they have available. As they go in search of work, some have been fortunate enough to be able to follow their previous line of skill. In any sense, the present situation creates a very unorganized job market which is wasteful of human resources.

Other influences affecting industrial mobility. Personal characteristics of the worker have a great deal to do with his ability and his willingness to change employers, occupations, or industries. Advancing age has an inverse effect on job changing, and the learning of new skills, while higher levels of education seem to increase mobility. Men tend to change jobs more than women, and single men and single women show evidence of greater mobility than those who are married. This is due to less responsibility in relation to other members of the family.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

To a considerable extent the possibility of a worker's becoming mobile is determined by the nature of the person's occupation. Unskilled, non-farm employees do not seem to feel the importance of continued responsibility in their work, and being subject to frequent layoffs, these workers show the highest rate of voluntary job shifts. During the year, 1955, about one-fourth of this group held more than one job.<sup>12</sup>

Industrial mobility may be voluntary, or it may be forced upon the worker. The shift may be only a change in jobs, or it is possible that the movement involves a new skill, and a new industry. At any rate, if the worker is able to become mobile in relation to the industry, a more efficient use of the labor force has been obtained.

## II. GEOGRAPHICAL MOBILITY

Geographical mobility occurs when the worker finds it necessary to change his place of residence because of his work. This movement does not always include industrial mobility, for the worker may be moving with his job and industry to another location.

It has been stated that there is no "free geographical mobility," but rather a pull toward greater opportunity for the worker.<sup>13</sup> The potential labor force has felt the need to be

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

<sup>13</sup>Wilbert E. Moore, Industrial Relations and the Social Order (New York: MacMillan Company, 1956), p. 464.



in the right place at the right time, so they have attempted to move from the rural to urban areas, then Westward, crowding the armament producing cities across the nation. However, the semi-skilled worker has not had the ability to keep pace with the growing economy.

When main industries in an area are operating at low levels, the other nearby industries are generally affected. Scarce job opportunities in the community force workers to move to new communities to seek employment. And even when most businesses are expanding, in such a dynamic economy as in the United States, there are always other industries within the same locale which are declining. Examples are the recent sharp contraction in coal and mining employment opportunities in areas of Pennsylvania and West Virginia because of the increase in the use of oil and natural gas for fuel. The decline in agriculture has continued to furnish a flow of workers from rural to urban areas seeking semi-skilled employment.

The Bureau of Census data on population characteristics for 1957 to 1958 show that of the total population one year and over in the United States, one out of each five persons changed residence between March 1957 and March 1958. One out of each eight persons had only one move; one out of twenty moved twice; and one-third of the population moved three times or more during this period. There appeared to be no net slackening of geographical mobility because of the economic

downturn that began in the last part of 1957.<sup>14</sup> This amount of geographical movement was necessary, but it was not sufficient to adequately distribute the labor force for the most efficient use of the available labor supply.

The Bureau of Census uses the following three classifications for geographical labor mobility: intracounty moves, intrastate migrants, and interstate movements.<sup>15</sup> These terms have been used in the following sections of Chapter III in this study.

Geographical mobility in particular regions. Recent studies have centered on relatively large cities or urban manufacturing areas, with less attention being given to patterns of labor movement in smaller populated centers, or in regions dominated by single, basic non-manufacturing industries. However, geographical mobility is an essential element in these smaller centers because of the shift of industry to larger centers of population. According to data released by the Office of Defense Mobilization, in November, 1953, many firms in areas with labor surplus were being given special help in obtaining governmental assistance for research concerning the problem of aiding labor to become more mobile.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Mobility, March 1957 to 1958, op. cit., p. 1.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Gerald Somers, Mobility of Chemical Workers in a Coal Mining Area, Morgontown College of Commerce (Morgontown, West Virginia: Bureau of Business Research, 1954), pp. 5-10.

This was a step in the right direction, but research alone was not sufficient to solve the problem.

In small communities with limited employment opportunities, a change in employers may mean, for the worker, a necessary movement between localities. When this situation becomes essential, those unwilling, or unable to move, become unemployed or have to accept lower wages in some other occupation. The younger workers usually seek that pull toward greater employment opportunity in other places. However, the older, more experienced, and better skilled worker may not be able to move because of his financial status.

The North East sections of the country have shown the least geographical mobility in recent years. New England and Mid-Atlantic regions, due to their decline in coal mining and textile industries have been slow to absorb workers into new industries, and the workers in these sections have hesitated to move to other areas.<sup>17</sup> Lack of education, lack of knowledge of available opportunities, and their present financial status have usually been the reasons given by workers in these areas for their immobility. Midwestern areas, including East North Central and West North Central sections have shown only a minor amount of increase in mobility over the Mid Atlantic regions.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>Mobility, March 1957 to 1958, op. cit., p. 4.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

Mobility among the labor force has been highest in the South, including South Atlantic, East South Central and West South Central, and in the Far West including Mountain and Pacific States. Migrants from the South have predominantly shifted into the North East and Western Areas. Interstate movers from the West shifted to the South and North Central Areas. The North Central migration has, along with Southern movements, comprised the West's migrant population.<sup>19</sup>

The general conclusion is that over the last ten years the net migration has been to the West, from the South, with only a minor shift from the two Northern regions. The cities of Atlanta and Los Angeles have experienced the most mobility among the labor force, with Chicago, New York, and Philadelphia reporting the least movement among workers. The labor force has felt the pull toward these new industrial centers.<sup>20</sup>

The influences of color, sex, and age upon geographical mobility. Non-white laborers have been found to be more mobile than white employees; however, the non-whites generally move a shorter distance and come under the Census classification of intracounty movers. The greatest proportion of non-white mobility has occurred in the South and West.<sup>21</sup> Racial barriers

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 2.

and family ties have contributed to immobility in geographical areas of the country.

In interstate movements, female workers tend to show less mobility than male workers. This seems reasonable since the female employee is generally not classified as a primary breadwinner. The difference between the amount of male and female labor movements in local situations has been very slight in recent years.<sup>22</sup>

The age group twenty to twenty-four years old was the most mobile among the labor force in the past ten years. Fewer family responsibilities, and less attachment to job and community have influenced young workers in becoming more adaptable to movement in response to economic pressures and opportunities. This group also had a competitive advantage in the job market in trying to find new work in new communities.<sup>23</sup> But again, older workers were often more experienced and had the necessary skills without additional training.

The influence of labor force status upon geographical mobility. Skilled workers make fewer voluntary changes in geographical locations. This has been found to be particularly true with the increasing number of years of experience and with the number of years of seniority in the company.

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., pp. 2-3.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

Labor unions have been a strong influencing factor in decreasing geographical mobility. They have placed strong emphasis upon worker benefit programs and seniority plans.<sup>24</sup> The financial status of the worker has a strong impact upon mobility for the individual worker. Semi-skilled workers are often in a position in which their financial resources force them to be immobile.

The factors which cause unemployment in some areas of the country and will at the same time cause a shortage of labor in other areas will make geographical mobility necessary in relation to the worker's ability and willingness to change his place of residence. If the worker can make this change satisfactorily, then society has benefited.

### III. OTHER TYPES OF LABOR MOBILITY

Occupational mobility. Occupational mobility occurs when a son decides against pursuing the same occupation as his father. Studies have shown that this does not usually happen; rather, sons have a tendency toward following an occupation on the same level as their father's occupation. There has been a traditional resistance on freedom of choice; sons follow the line of least resistance, taking into account neither their opportunities nor their abilities in choosing a

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<sup>24</sup>James J. Treires, "Mobility of Electronic Technicians," Monthly Labor Review (March, 1954), pp. 263-6.

lifetime occupation for themselves. This has been particularly true in the upper social classes of our society.<sup>25</sup>

Vertical and horizontal mobility. Vertical mobility is the movement of a worker within a plant, either up or down, in relation to his job. Economists have often stated that without labor mobility our flexible economy couldn't exist. As a result of the severe criticism of labor unions for their efforts to decrease interplant mobility, or mobility which involves a geographical migration, unions have attempted to stimulate vertical mobility, or mobility within the plant or company, through their seniority programs. George Hildebrand, Director of the Institute of Industrial Relations at the University of California, describes the organization of the labor market and mobility in the following manner:<sup>26</sup>

A growing economy inevitably invokes continuous shifting in the pattern of industry and occupations, not to mention shifts in the geographic distribution of employment. Without labor mobility a flexible economy could not exist. Here the contribution of modern unionism has been a mixed one. It has improved the organization of the labor market itself. At the same time it has helped reduce the interplant mobility of workers while probably increasing vertical mobility within the plant.

At the same time, craft unions undoubtedly have increased the horizontal mobility of workers within the same occupation, particularly in casual trades, serving as labor exchanges to improve the organization

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<sup>25</sup> Moore, op. cit., pp. 476-85.

<sup>26</sup> George H. Hildebrand, "The Economic Effects of Unionism," A Decade of Industrial Relations Research, 1946-1956 (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958), p. 128.

of local labor markets and to increase the utilization of skilled labor. By contrast, industrial unions probably have further reduced the lateral mobility of workers from employer to employer, while fostering vertical mobility within the plant, up the occupational ladder. They have accomplished this with the seniority rule and negotiation of an impressive array of fringe benefits. Seniority in promotions, layoffs, and recalls increase job security and help tie the employee to the plant. This also leads to the rule of hiring in at the bottom with promotions from within. Fringe benefits also increase attachment to the plant, particularly where the scale of particular benefits is geared to length of service, as in paid vacations, pensions and eligibility provisions for health and layoff compensation plans.

Horizontal mobility is shifting from one job to another within the same occupation, or on the same level. The range of horizontal transferability appears to decline with an increase in skills. High ability developed in one area tends to make a worker incapable of performing other tasks. And when the industrial order changes to demand different skills or new proportions of the existing skills, there occurs an inelastic distribution of labor.

#### IV. SUMMARY OF THE TYPES OF MOBILITY

The degree of occupational and residential movement is determined by the effects of learned behavior upon an individual. Customs, habits, and traditions tend to retard growth. Inertia on both the part of the employee and the employer has been an important impediment to mobility.

Demand has not been constant for the labor force. Changes in the industrial process are made in view of mechanical



and technical developments rather than for the quality and quantity of the labor force. In order to keep pace with these changes, the worker needs to become more flexible in relation to his job so that he can be mobile whenever necessary.

In voluntary mobility, the pull of greater opportunity must be strong enough to offset the factors producing immobility. Since the conditions of supply and demand regulate the markets for labor, individual employers urge in-migration of potential workers, and local workers tend to send hopeful immigrants elsewhere. This interferes with automatic mobility of the labor supply. These combinations of pushes and pulls help produce surplus labor in some areas, and shortages of labor in other areas.

Traditional economists assumed "fluidity" of the labor market, or free mobility in accordance with differences in economic opportunity. The shift of labor into new industries and new areas should be even easier in our present expanding economy with increasing opportunities for the worker.

Adaptability of the labor supply to the changing manpower requirements is a major need in a dynamic economy, giving rise to considerable interest in the characteristics of labor mobility. Knowledge of the types and amount of labor mobility is of crucial importance for success in policies to maintain full employment, to secure the most efficient production, and to obtain national security.

## CHAPTER IV

### FACTORS AFFECTING MOBILITY

In Chapters II and III of this study a broad view has been presented of the American labor force and the amount of mobility which has occurred in the past decade. It has been brought to attention that there is need for increasing the possibility of mobility among the workers. However, many factors have been working toward increasing immobility. This chapter is devoted to a discussion of those factors which are classified as economic factors and other closely related social and psychological factors which affect mobility of the United States labor force.

#### I. ECONOMIC FACTORS WHICH AFFECT MOBILITY

In a growing economy with a shortage in skills as well as shortages in the number of workers in the labor force, the extent of flexibility of the worker in relation to his job determines how efficiently the labor resource is used in production. The extent of flexibility of the United States labor force was curtailed within the last decade by the following important barriers to free occupational mobility which affected the quality of available labor supply: wages, family responsibilities, financial status, and worker-benefit programs.

Wages. When a worker is currently employed the amount of wages which he receives is a tangible thing for him. When he contemplates changing jobs, the possibility of a different amount of wages is an intangible thing. This leaves a feeling of insecurity with the worker.

In an analysis of eight major studies of mobility concerning the reasons for workers taking jobs, and the restraints on job changing, wages was listed as the first major reason for immobility.<sup>1</sup> It was found that the worker preferred the security of the certainty of the present wage scale to the uncertainty and insecurity of a change to a new situation, and possibly a move to a new location. There was also the possibility of real income being lowered because of increased living expenses. This situation was found to be especially true when the worker moved from a small community to a larger metropolitan area.

Today many groups in the economy are striving toward increased security of the worker. Enforcement of nationwide wage standards through government contracts and nationwide minimum wage standards have reduced the amount of labor migration that would normally occur. The Employment Act of 1946 is an example of national support for economic stability in

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<sup>1</sup>Abraham Bluestone, "Major Studies of Worker's Reasons for Job Choice," Monthly Labor Review, LXXVIII (March, 1955), 301-6.

preference to the more efficient use of the existing labor supply.<sup>2</sup>

The traditional analysis in the wage employment field assumed that there was a definite relationship between wages and labor mobility.

The neo class theory assumes observable behavior on the part of the worker, without being concerned with underlying motives, and they demonstrate the worker movement in the direction of higher pay. The worker uses this. And then it is immaterial whether the real motive is security, prestige, or a higher standard of living.<sup>3</sup>

However, other conclusions and findings show that fringe benefits are more important than wage differentials, and that this importance increases with length of time on the job and with additional family responsibilities.<sup>4</sup> These fringe benefits meet intense demand for security of income against the common hazards of health, welfare, retirement, and supplemental layoff.

A rising demand for higher skills also affects mobility of the worker. Time spent in training for these additional skills might mean a loss of current wages during the training interval, as well as the expense of the training program.

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<sup>2</sup>Committee on Economic Policy, The Promise of Economic Growth (Washington: Chamber of Commerce of the United States, 1960), pp. 23-6.

<sup>3</sup>Herbert H. Parnes, Research on Labor Mobility: An Appraisal of Research Findings in the U.S. (New York: Social Science Research Council, 1954), pp. 145-50.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., pp. 161-189.

The conclusion is that it has not been the actual wages which were a barrier to mobility in the 1950's, but rather the lack of a positive, sure differential in wages which would compensate for fringe benefits and the fear of economic insecurity.

Family responsibilities. A worker's ability to become mobile decreases as his family responsibilities and his number of dependents increase. The late teens and early twenties are years of limited family responsibilities for most employees. This is a time when the worker might feel more inclined to try different kinds of work, in new locations. Temporary jobs are often filled by these younger workers. However, only a small percent of the labor force fall within this age group, and a noticeable tendency was found for job mobility to decrease and employment patterns to become more stabilized as the worker grows older.<sup>5</sup>

Family adjustments are another element to be considered by the worker before he makes a decision to move. If geographical migration is involved, family ties in the present community must be broken, and new acquaintances and ties will have to be made. Today, eighty-five percent of the children between the ages of five and fourteen years attend a public school compared to approximately fifty-five percent of the

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<sup>5</sup>Mobility of Workers in 1955, op. cit., p. 9.

children of a century ago.<sup>6</sup> Entire families develop links with their school, neighbors, and even with the PTA which tend to reduce geographical mobility among the labor force.

As industry has moved to larger areas of population, the housing situation for workers has become an acute problem. Many of these areas are overcrowded and living conditions are unsatisfactory. Even after the worker has found adequate housing facilities for his family he must consider the expense of transportation to and from his work.

Increasing family responsibilities have a strong tendency toward causing a worker to seek greater financial security. And the worker seems to feel that he can come closer to gaining this financial security through immobility, rather than being willing and able to move in relation to the job.

Financial status of the worker. The current financial status of the worker plays a large part in determining his ability and willingness to become flexible in relation to his employment. When a tenant becomes a homeowner his tendency toward migration is automatically reduced.

Men who become homeowners develop neighborhood ties and other commitments that keep them from picking up as readily as a renter and heading for areas where alternative opportunities may beckon.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>"The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850" (1954), p. lx, xlii-xliv.

<sup>7</sup>Lebergott, loc. cit.

At the beginning of the century only thirty-six percent of the nonfarm families owned their own homes<sup>8</sup> compared to a ratio of half again as many in 1954.<sup>9</sup> Improved construction techniques and higher real incomes have contributed to this situation. Other significant elements have been the FHA insurance program of the late 1930's and the VA loan program of the late 1940's. These large assets of real estate have a tendency toward reducing the worker's mobility, especially when a geographical move is involved.

If the worker has not been able to accumulate a relatively adequate amount of liquid savings, he will be even more influenced by the thought of losing his built up equities in the interval between jobs, as well as the thought of losing wages during his period of transition.<sup>10</sup> Again, if additional training for new skills is necessary, the worker will be strongly influenced by the extent of his ability to stand the financial strain of bearing the burden of the expense for this training.

The current financial status of the worker may be classified as an economic factor because of its effect upon income of the worker. At the same time this factor may also

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<sup>8</sup>"Historical Statistics of the United States, 1789-1945," p. 174.

<sup>9</sup>"The 1957 Statistical Abstract," p. 771.

<sup>10</sup>George B. Baldwin and George P. Shultz, "Automation: A New Diminution to Old Problems," Monthly Labor Review, LXXVIII (February, 1955), 165-9.

be designated as a closely related psychological consideration owing to the strong influence on the attitude of the worker concerning mobility. The financial status of the worker is also closely related to worker benefit plans and vested interest programs for employees.

Worker benefit programs. The worker's willingness and ability to seek new skills and new opportunities are usually determined by the nature of the present working conditions. It was found that severance pay, guaranteed annual wage and unemployment benefits wielded a strong influence on members of the labor force. Mobility has proved to be expensive for the worker, and as a result the growing immobility of the United States labor force has often been attributed to the spread of unionism and the increasing effect of unions in relation to the aging labor force and the impact of seniority rules.<sup>11</sup>

In 1933, three million workers, or six percent of the labor force were members of a union; in 1956, the number had risen to eighteen million members, or twenty-five percent of the labor force.<sup>12</sup> This fact has had particular significance in large scale production in manufacturing because of the proportion of the labor market involved.

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<sup>11</sup>Jack Barbash, Labor Movement in the U.S., Public Affairs Pamphlet No. 262 (New York: Public Affairs Committee, Inc., 1958), pp. 1-28.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid.



Worker benefit programs, or vested interest plans, have been a chief selling point for unions. These programs include enforced seniority of workers, deliberately making it too costly for an employee to change jobs. Continued union membership for long periods of time to qualify for benefits increased tenure of employees and gave the unions added influence in relation to wages, hours, and working conditions. Consequently, many workers preferred to be idle, rather than lose seniority and pension rights by moving into other industrial areas of employment.

Those workers young in years and low in service were not so much affected by union influences; however, during the last decade, there was a lack of young workers who could afford to change jobs.<sup>13</sup> It is possible that in the next few years, as war babies reach employment age, this problem may receive further adjustment.

A general conclusion seems to be that unionism has had a direct adverse effect upon the worker's willingness to become mobile, and his ability to change and shift with the changing economy. An example of this situation is shown in the industrial centers of the South where workers have been found to be quite mobile. The Southern shoe textile and furniture industries still show strong resistance to union

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<sup>13</sup>"Why Workers Stay Put," Fortune (October, 1958), pp. 199-200.

organization.<sup>14</sup> The result has been that, due to the influence of these worker benefit programs in increasing immobility, our economy has lost many valuable manpower hours.

## II. CLOSELY RELATED SOCIAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS WHICH AFFECT MOBILITY

While it was the original purpose for this study to be concerned only with the economic factors which affect mobility of the labor force, it was found that there also existed several social and psychological factors which were closely related to the economic factors. It was impossible to completely isolate the economic factors without considering the attitudes of the worker concerning mobility, knowledge of the worker concerning available opportunities, nature of the present job, and skill of the worker.

Attitudes of the worker concerning mobility. It is common knowledge that in a large sense the attitude of the individual worker is influenced by the attitudes of society. Many traditional restrictions on freedom of the worker to choose his employment exist in the United States. Custom, habit, and tradition tend to retard freedom of movement or a change to something new and different, especially when the worker's lifetime occupation is at stake. Inertia was found

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<sup>14</sup>"Why Workers Hate to Change Jobs," Business Week (June 6, 1959), pp. 83-4.

to be characteristic of a large part of all business behavior.

Many workers have residential and regional preferences due to familiar bonds. Community ties add to the inertia to become a stranger in a new land, while the potential cost in changing jobs, occupations, and place of residence has a strong influence on the worker's attitudes concerning mobility.

Knowledge of the worker concerning available opportunities. The worker's knowledge of employment conditions are limited to the few jobs which he has held, and unless he is extra mobile, the average worker can never become an expert in locating and appraising various other jobs. A set of basic attitudes concerning employment are developed from this limited experience, to be carried by the worker along with his attitudes of mobility.

Each individual worker forms a concept of a good job, even though he may feel that good jobs are scarce with very little chance existing for promotion. An inherent resistance to change and departure from the typical behavior patterns exist, partly because of the limited objectives of job hunting techniques. The worker's behavior is, in general, a rational adaptation to circumstances as each individual employee visualizes his own situation.

As the educational level of the work force continues to rise, the knowledge of available opportunities among the workers also has a tendency to increase. And with this increasing knowledge of working conditions in other industries

and other geographical locations, the worker is inclined to become somewhat more mobile. Nevertheless, with the increase in the total labor force, this factor has not created a noticeable change in the amount of mobility for all workers.

Skill of the worker. In our industrial development it has been assumed that the work force is completely flexible in relation to the skills which are demanded for production. The question is often heard, "Why don't the unemployed who are living in distressed areas shift to an expanding industry or move to other areas where there are jobs?" Ewan Clague, Commissioner of Labor Statistics, U. S. Department of Labor, gives the following answer:<sup>15</sup>

It is often difficult for an unemployed worker to shift from his regular line of work into a new field. Even when there are openings in his community, they may be in trade and service industries which hire mostly women and young workers. Moreover, employers may be reluctant to hire workers whose experience and training has been in mining or manufacturing, particularly if they have reached middle age. The problem then becomes even more intense when the unemployed worker is living in a distressed area where jobs of any kind are likely to be scarce.

Frequently, the unemployed worker has to make a choice as to whether he will accept wages considerably lower than those he is accustomed to getting, or keep on looking for a job which matches his old one. If a skilled worker in

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<sup>15</sup>Ewan Clague, "Why Are Unemployed Workers 'Stuck' in Distressed Areas?" Hearings Before the Joint Economic Committee, Congress of the United States, Eighty-Sixty Congress, First Session (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1959), p. 478.

manufacturing, mining, or railroading finds another job in trade or service activity, a sharp cut in wages is almost inevitable. This affects the level of living for the worker's family. And the obstacles become even greater when the worker is forced to consider leaving his hometown for employment opportunities in other areas.

Productivity-increasing innovations have released workers and created a situation in which a reallocation of the labor resources are necessary; however, the time factor has not been considered. The present labor force cannot immediately possess the necessary skills to satisfy the new demands of industry.

The nature of the present job. Usually the worker's willingness and ability to seek new skills are determined by his present employment conditions. Different occupations require varied skills, and acquiring these necessary skills command varying degrees of sacrifice on the part of the members of the labor force. The longer a worker remains on one job, the more efficient he ordinarily becomes for that particular type of work, and yet the more "trained incapacity" the worker possesses for other opportunities.<sup>16</sup>

In recent years, emphasis has been placed upon job security, with the assumption being that stability in

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<sup>16</sup>Barbash, loc. cit.

employment would bring forth the most efficient use of the labor resource. Yet, productivity has not become stabilized. Job security has a tendency to increase immobility of the workers. Job security is also closely correlated with the nature of the present job, which in turn, bears a relation to the skill possessed by the worker and his flexibility in regard to the present employment.

### III. SUMMARY OF THE FACTORS WHICH AFFECT MOBILITY

In this chapter an attempt has been made to examine the factors which affect mobility of the United States labor force. The introduction of new techniques and new products requires a continual reallocation of the labor resource from low-productivity to high productivity areas and industries.

The behavior of the individual worker tends to be strongly influenced by habit, custom and tradition; however, an economy dominated by these traits cannot realize its full potentialities for growth. Competition plays an important part in this connection. Nevertheless, we have hindered the free movement of the worker by substituting monopolistic practices and government interferences for competition.

The primary economic factor which affects mobility was classified as wage differentials. This factor is often used as a substitution measure for employment security; the same substitution is made for financial status of the worker

and worker benefit programs. Family responsibilities tend to decrease mobility of the labor force both from an economic standpoint and a social and psychological view. These economic factors are also closely interwoven with the attitude of the worker concerning mobility as well as his knowledge of available opportunities in the employment world. Skill of the worker and nature of the present job also influenced the attitude of the worker from both an economical and psychological point of view.

In order for immobility to decrease and the economy to reap the rewards of a more efficient use of the available supply of the labor resource, the pull for greater opportunity must be strong enough to assure mobility of the labor supply despite the natural inertia of the individual members of the labor force.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to determine which of the economic factors affected mobility of the worker, and the extent to which these factors prohibit labor mobility. National productivity and standard of living are affected by the amount of mobility which occurs.

#### I. SUMMARY

It was found through an analysis of the distribution of the labor force, that the labor problem was more than a matter of the actual number of workers involved. A high degree of worker flexibility was necessary.

In the past decade there has been a great amount of shifting in the labor force; however, this mobility has not been sufficient, nor has it been directed, and it occurred in a very haphazard manner. The effects of demand have strong influence upon the composition of the labor force, and demand has not been stable. The pull of greater opportunity has worked to increase the fluidity of the labor market. Additional knowledge of the possibilities of increased labor mobility and a flexible labor market are closely connected to successful economic growth through a more efficient use of



the available labor supply.

At the same time barriers were at work to reduce and prevent movement of the worker. Sometimes the factors were lack of knowledge and fear of potential insecurity. However, fear of economic insecurity seems to be a growing element in modern living.

Even though lack of wage differentials were often given as the motive for lack of mobility of the worker, more real motives were found to be present. These motives include worker benefit programs and financial status of the worker which have had a stronger influence upon the worker than the pull of greater opportunity.

As the industrial order has expanded and new areas have opened, there has been an increasing demand for higher skills requiring more training and a higher level of education among workers. Industrial development has shifted from the East and Northeast to the South and West. Many times the worker has found himself in a situation in which he feels that he cannot afford to change occupations, or change his geographical location.

It was found that family and financial status influenced the worker in his ability to become mobile, while worker attitudes seemed to be the determining factor in relation to a worker's willingness to move. Loss of manpower hours because of unorganized mobility, and lack of adequate knowledge on the part of the worker concerning opportunities

were elements contributing to economic waste in the United States in the past decade.

## II. CONCLUSIONS

Because of the preceding information, the following conclusions have been drawn:

1. The United States labor force was moderately mobile during the last decade.
2. The most influential factor contributing to mobility of the labor force was the potential greater opportunity for the worker.
3. The increased demand for higher levels of skills created a demand for additional mobility among the labor force.
4. Family responsibilities and financial status were often given by the worker as influencing factors which prohibited his ability to become mobile.
5. Traditional attitudes on the part of the worker prevented the labor force from becoming more mobile.
6. The need existed for workers to become better educated and trained in order that they might have the willingness and ability to become more mobile.
7. Increased mobility of the United States labor force would work toward a more efficient use of the available labor resource and a higher standard of living for the American people through increased national productivity.

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