

female employees 45 years and older in textiles was 37.2% compared with 34.2% for all manufacturing.⁶ These disparities have worsened since 1960 as a result of the greater increase in employment of young people by other manufacturing industries than by textiles since 1960.

The educational attainments of textile workers tend to be appreciably below the averages for all manufacturing industries and the civilian labor force as a whole (Table 5). The median years of school completed by textile workers run between 2% and 23% below the corresponding medians for workers in the same occupational groups in manufacturing and the civilian labor force, with the most numerous textile occupation (Weavers) falling 12% below the median for Operatives in the case of males and 9% below in the case of females. Moreover, the high proportions of textile workers employed in unskilled and semiskilled occupations reinforces the tendency of textile workers to suffer from educational handicaps to mobility.

The importance of education to labor mobility is evident from the following findings of the aforementioned Labor Department appraisal of the geographic mobility of American workers:

"In general, migrants have an above-average level of education. Of the 25- to 29-year-old men who migrated between 1955 and 1960, for example, 25 percent were college graduates, as compared with 9 percent of the nonmigrants. And a lower proportion of the migrants than of the nonmigrants in this age group had completed only 8 years or less of school (14 and 23 percent, respectively). To look at the figures a different way, 55 percent of all male college graduates 25 to 29 years old lived in a different county in 1960 than in 1955, compared with only 29 percent of the men who had completed but not gone beyond high school. It is apparent that geographic mobility drops off sharply with decreasing education."⁷

The proportions of textile workers employed in unskilled and semiskilled occupations are much higher than for manufacturing as a whole. In 1960, 66.6% of textile employees were in semiskilled occupations (Operatives and Kindred Workers) compared with 42.6% for all manufacturing employees (Table 6). The addition of unskilled occupations brings the total for semiskilled and unskilled groups to 72.4% of total employment for textiles compared with 50.1% for manufacturing as a whole.

The heavy concentration of textile workers in the unskilled and semiskilled occupations is a highly significant barrier to the mobility of textile workers. As noted in the aforementioned Labor Department study of geographic mobility, unskilled and semiskilled workers "have much lower rates of migration because they usually lack information about job opportunities, seldom have the resources for moving, and have limited employment opportunities in other areas, as well as locally. The barriers to migration of unskilled workers make it very difficult for them to move even from the worst depressed areas, where their competitive difficulties in finding jobs are compounded by the presence of jobless workers with higher qualifications."⁸

It is especially significant that the Labor Department found that Operative and Kindred Workers (the predominant occupational group in textiles) had the lowest rate of out-migration of all groups in the ten areas of high unemployment whose migration experience was studied. While 9.0% of all male employees in these areas migrated out of the areas in the period from 1955 to 1960, only 6.2% of the male Operatives and Kindred Workers did so.⁹

The distinctive character of the labor force which militates against the mobility of textile workers has long been recognized. Numerous studies over the years have confirmed the existence of this special problem.

Gladys L. Palmer conducted an intensive analysis of the experience of 862 weavers in three cities during the decade of 1926-35 for the purpose of ascertaining the transferrability of their skills to other industries.¹⁰ The following findings are relevant:

1. The experience of the weavers in all three cities (Manchester, N.H., Paterson, N.J., and Philadelphia, Pa.) "was highly specialized in character. For

⁶ Computed from *U.S. Census of Population: 1960*, Vol. I, Characteristics of the Population, Table 212.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 148.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 152.

¹⁰ "The Mobility of Weavers in Three Textile Centers," *The Quarterly Journal of Economics*, May 1941, pp. 460-487.