

# MIGRATION OF WORKERS TO MICHIGAN

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*Though labor mobility is a factor of importance to many activities in the field of social security and especially to the administration of unemployment compensation, information on this subject is fragmentary. The Social Security Bulletin therefore welcomes the opportunity to publish this article, based on a special tabulation of the mobility data derived from the 1935 Michigan Census of Population and Unemployment, which was made as a cooperative undertaking of the Michigan State Emergency Relief Administration, the Michigan Works Progress Administration, and the Division of Social Research of the Works Progress Administration, Washington, D. C.*

AN EXAMINATION of the economic aspects of labor mobility in Michigan suggests that the net effect is beneficial both to industry and to the migrant. The Michigan data on labor mobility indicate not only the relative success and failure of migration as a means of obtaining employment but also differences in this respect among migrants according to type and industrial attachment. Previous analyses<sup>1</sup> based on this study have dealt with both intrastate and interstate mobility; this article singles out the interstate migrants to Michigan for special treatment because information on their mobility has considerable relevance to the social security program, and particularly to unemployment compensation.<sup>2</sup>

Interstate migration differs in several important respects from intrastate migration. The Michigan data show that migrants within the State were considerably more successful in finding employment than were migrants from outside the State, principally because intrastate migrants were generally in closer touch with employment opportunities in Michigan. Yet when the migrants failed to find employment, only half as many interstate migrants were able to obtain assistance as were intrastate migrants. This, of course, is only another way of stating the ever-

present problem of the unemployed nonresident.

But differences appear also among interstate migrants. The industrial attachment of the migrant plays an important part in his success or failure in obtaining employment. For example, workers in transportation and communication and in the construction industries found it particularly difficult to obtain employment after moving to Michigan. In general, the incidence of unemployment after moving was greater among workers from industries now covered by unemployment compensation than among those from noncovered industries. Workers in covered industries showed much less tendency to enter noncovered employment than did workers in, say, agriculture, for whom jobs in the manufacturing industries provided alternative opportunity to employment in their usual industry.

Although the unemployment compensation program under the Social Security Act was not in effect when the Michigan census was taken in January 1935, it is believed that the problem of the migratory worker was not greatly different from that at the present time. Moreover, the pertinence of this study is not confined to the State in which it was conducted, because the wide variety of industries in Michigan gives rise to mobility problems not unlike those that exist in other industrial States east of the Mississippi River. It is hoped therefore that the findings presented here may provide useful information on various aspects of labor mobility related to the social security program.

## *The Michigan Census and the Mobility Study*

The Michigan Census of Population and Unemployment was conducted as a special work project of the Michigan State Emergency Relief Administration. The enumeration was on the basis of a

\*Works Progress Administration, Division of Research.

<sup>1</sup>"Labor Mobility and Relief," *Monthly Labor Review*, Vol. 48, No. 1 (January 1935); *Michigan Migrants*, Division of Research, Works Progress Administration, March 1935; and "Industrial Aspects of Labor Mobility," *Monthly Labor Review*, Vol. 48, No. 4 (April 1935).

<sup>2</sup>An approach to some problems of interstate migration has been made in the interstate benefit-payment plan, adopted by the Interstate Conference of Unemployment Compensation Agencies in March 1938 and designed to implement payment of benefits to unemployed individuals who have earned benefit rights under the law of a State or States different from that in which the individual is living while unemployed. See *Social Security Bulletin*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (April 1938), pp. 18-19, and Vol. 1, No. 5 (May 1938), pp. 7-10. For articles touching on various aspects of mobility in relation to social insurance see Clague, Ewan, and Levine, Louis, "Unemployment Compensation and Migratory Labor," *Social Security Bulletin*, January 1938 (processed), pp. 11-16; and Levine, Louis, "Unemployment Compensation Statistical Reporting," *Social Security Bulletin*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (February 1939).

20-percent random sample in some types of communities and a 100-percent coverage in others. About 522,000 schedules, each representing a household, were taken; these covered about 40 percent of the total population of the State. The labor-mobility study was in turn based on a sample of 120,247, or 23 percent, of the schedules taken in the Michigan census. These schedules were carefully selected to yield a representative cross section of the State's population.

**Table 1.—Employment status and industrial attachment before and after migration to Michigan**

Employment status and industry	Number of persons in specified status—		Percentage distribution	
	Before migration	After migration	Before migration	After migration
Total.....	7,348	7,348	100.0	100.0
Employed.....	5,436	4,283	74.0	58.3
Covered industries.....	3,763	2,930	51.2	39.8
Mining.....	121	85	1.6	1.2
Construction.....	329	124	4.5	1.7
Manufacturing.....	1,245	1,627	16.8	22.0
Transportation and communication.....	798	177	10.9	2.4
Trade.....	710	556	9.7	7.6
Finance.....	122	52	1.7	.7
Service.....	434	309	6.0	4.2
Noncovered industries.....	1,673	1,353	22.8	18.5
Agriculture, forestry, and fishing.....	783	770	10.7	10.5
Public and professional service.....	506	321	6.9	4.4
Domestic and personal service.....	384	262	5.2	3.6
Unemployed.....	1,237	2,319	16.8	31.5
Not seeking work.....	676	746	9.2	10.2

The mobility data were obtained from the work-history section of the census schedule. The work history was filled in for each person in the household who was over 15 years of age at the date of enumeration—January 14, 1935. The following information, covering the period April 1930 to January 1935, was entered: each job lasting a month or more, and similarly each period of unemployment or period of "not seeking work," the corresponding place of work or place of residence for periods of unemployment or "not seeking work," and the dates of each activity. An unemployed worker, it should be noted, was defined as one seeking work but having less than 4 full days of employment with the same employer in a given month.

An interstate move was recorded whenever the work history showed a shift across a State line.

Therefore, with the exception of some moves that occurred near the State border—"commuting" moves which did not involve a definite transfer of workers from one place to another—interstate mobility in this study means changes of residence as well as changes in the place of work.

The 120,247 households covered by the study contained 188,757 persons who worked or sought work during all or a part of the 57-month period studied. These persons made a total of 10,146 interstate moves of the following types: into Michigan, 7,348; out of Michigan, 2,265; between other States, 533. It is not intended that these figures supply an estimate of the gross or net volume of migration to Michigan from 1930 to 1935. From the quantitative point of view there are limitations arising out of the fact that movement out of Michigan could be recorded only in cases in which the person returned to the State before the census date. Furthermore, the basis for including persons in the study was labor-market participation during all or a part of the census period; the results therefore cannot be compared with census figures or the findings of other studies. However, the 7,348 moves into Michigan do furnish unbiased information about certain *qualitative* aspects of labor mobility across a State line. It is this migration that is analyzed in this article.

In the industrial classification in the accompanying tables, the original census classes used in the mobility study have been regrouped to correspond as closely as possible to the classification established in the Social Security Board.<sup>3</sup> The study includes under the construction industry both building and highway construction. Finance comprises banking, brokerage, insurance, and real estate. Covered service industries include recreation and amusement; semiprofessional pursuits; hotels, restaurants, and boarding houses; and laundries, cleaning, dyeing, and pressing shops. Forestry and fishing, because of the very small numbers of workers involved, are combined with agriculture. Unemployment includes a few cases of casual work or employment in nonascertainable industries.

<sup>3</sup> For a general description of the development of this code, see Sogge, Tillman M., "Industrial Classification in Relation to Unemployment Compensation," *Social Security Bulletin*, Vol. 1, Nos. 1-3 (March 1933), pp. 19-22.

### Employment Status and Industrial Attachment Before and After Migration

Interstate migration redistributes workers according to opportunities for employment in the new locality. A general idea of the redistribution that resulted from the migration of workers to Michigan is provided by a comparison of the employment status and industrial attachment of the worker immediately before and after moving.

Table 1 shows several striking changes both in employment status and in industrial attachment after migration. In the first place, almost twice as many migrants were unemployed immediately (within 1 month) after arrival in Michigan as were unemployed before leaving their last place of residence. This difference does not mean, of course, that workers with secure employment quit their jobs in order to try their luck in Michigan. Rather, it means that workers whose jobs were poor or of uncertain tenure moved to Michigan in the belief that they would there find better employment opportunities. This group would be excluded from the protection of unemployment compensation because of the voluntary-leaving dis-

qualification. If, however, they displaced Michigan workers, the claims load in Michigan would rise. Finally, it should be noted that the higher incidence of unemployment after migration than before is evidence of the largely undirected nature of migration during the period studied. The need for adequate information about employment opportunities, if the liability side of migration is to be reduced to a minimum, is obvious.

In the second place, there were notable changes in industrial attachment among workers who found jobs immediately after entering Michigan. Every industrial group except manufacturing had fewer workers represented in it after moving than before. The increase in the manufacturing group was largely due to the upswing in the automobile industry in the early part of the period studied, which not only took back former workers but also attracted workers formerly employed in other industries. The most striking decline in industrial attachment after migration was among workers in the transportation and communication industries; in this instance the seasonality of lake shipping was of major importance.

Table 2.—Change in employment status and industrial attachment after migration to Michigan

Employment status and industrial attachment after migration	Employment status and industrial attachment before migration														
	Total	Covered industries								Noncovered industries				Unemployed	Not seeking work
		Total	Mining	Construction	Manufacturing	Transportation and communication	Trade	Finance	Service	Total	Agriculture, forestry, and fishing	Public and professional service	Domestic and personal service		
Total number.....	7,348	3,763	121	320	1,245	798	710	122	438	1,673	783	500	384	1,237	675
Percentage distribution.....	100.0	51.2	1.6	4.5	16.8	10.9	9.7	1.7	6.0	22.8	10.7	6.9	5.2	16.8	9.2
	Percentage distribution														
Total.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Covered industries.....	39.9	40.4	55.4	30.8	44.2	20.3	47.0	39.4	38.8	20.4	37.7	19.0	13.3	55.2	41.6
Mining.....	1.2	1.3	25.6	.9	.6	.5	.7	.8	.7	.4	.8	.2	.3	1.9	.6
Construction.....	1.7	1.9	1.7	10.3	1.1	1.1	1.3	1.6	.7	1.1	1.0	.6	.3	1.8	1.5
Manufacturing.....	22.1	20.6	23.1	17.1	34.2	13.9	12.8	7.4	11.2	17.1	26.4	11.0	6.0	36.7	17.8
Transportation and communication.....	2.4	2.8	1.7	2.1	1.3	8.1	1.6	1.0	.7	1.5	1.9	1.4	.8	3.0	1.3
Trade.....	7.6	9.2	.8	4.0	5.0	4.4	28.1	10.7	5.7	3.3	3.6	3.8	2.3	6.1	11.8
Finance.....	.7	.8	.8	.4	.4	.8	.8	14.8	5.5	.4	.4	.4	.3	.5	1.8
Service.....	4.2	3.9	2.6	2.4	1.7	1.3	1.8	2.5	20.0	2.6	2.7	1.6	3.0	5.2	8.8
Noncovered industries.....	18.4	11.9	5.8	19.8	11.5	10.0	10.8	10.4	12.1	27.0	23.6	30.8	28.9	18.0	34.4
Agriculture, forestry, and fishing.....	10.4	9.3	4.2	18.0	9.7	8.6	8.1	10.7	5.7	13.0	22.4	4.2	5.2	12.3	7.4
Public and professional service.....	4.4	1.4	.8	1.2	1.0	.8	2.0	4.9	1.8	8.3	.4	20.2	.8	1.4	16.8
Domestic and personal service.....	3.6	1.2	.8	.6	.8	.6	.7	.8	4.6	5.7	.8	.4	22.9	4.3	10.2
Unemployed.....	31.6	37.5	31.4	41.6	33.6	54.7	29.7	26.2	32.0	29.4	32.8	25.7	27.1	20.7	24.0
Not seeking work.....	10.2	10.2	7.4	1.8	10.7	6.0	12.5	18.0	17.1	17.2	5.9	24.5	30.7	6.1	-----

In spite of the increased number of persons in manufacturing after moving, the broad group of industries now covered by the Social Security Act was relatively less well represented after migration than were the noncovered industries.

**Table 3.—Comparison of industrial distribution of employed migrants before and after migration to Michigan, and of employed residents**

Industry	Employed migrants		Em- ployed <sup>1</sup> residents
	Before migra- tion	After migra- tion	
Total number employed.....	5,436	4,283	165,310
Percentage distribution			
Total.....	100.0	100.0	100.0
Covered industries.....	69.2	68.4	69.3
Mining.....	2.2	2.0	1.3
Construction.....	6.1	2.9	4.3
Manufacturing.....	22.8	38.0	36.0
Transportation and communication.....	14.7	4.1	5.7
Trade.....	13.1	13.0	14.2
Finance.....	2.2	1.2	2.4
Service.....	8.1	7.2	5.4
Noncovered industries.....	30.8	31.6	30.7
Agriculture, forestry, and fishing.....	14.4	18.0	17.2
Public and professional service.....	9.3	7.5	7.5
Domestic and personal service.....	7.1	6.1	6.0

<sup>1</sup> Includes workers who made no move or who moved only within the State. These workers are classified by the industry in which they worked longest during the period studied.

The relatively smaller change in the proportion of workers in noncovered industries was primarily the result of few changes in employment among workers in agriculture, forestry, and fishing.

#### Industrial Shifts Resulting From Migration

It is possible to analyze the character of migration in greater detail by examining a cross classification of shifts between specific industry groups. In table 2 the employment status and industrial attachment of each migrant before moving is compared with his status immediately after arrival in Michigan. From this comparison it is possible to see the exact nature of the industrial shifts that took place as a result of migration. For example, table 2 shows that, of all workers employed before migration in what are now covered manufacturing industries, 44.2 percent found employment in covered industries immediately after arrival, and most of this employment—34.2 percent—was in manufacturing. In contrast, only 29.3 percent of the workers employed in transportation and communication before migration

found employment in covered industries after arrival, and less than one-third—8.1 percent—of this employment was in the transportation and communication industries.

Table 2 also shows the relative incidence of unemployment after arrival in Michigan of workers from both covered and noncovered industries. Over half—54.7 percent—of the workers employed in transportation and communication before migration were unable to find work immediately after arrival in Michigan, compared with about one-fourth—26.2 percent—of the workers formerly employed in finance. Among the noncovered industries the incidence of unemployment was generally smaller than was the case among covered industries.

It is interesting to note that almost three-fourths—73.2 percent—of the workers who were unemployed immediately before migration found jobs when they arrived in Michigan, and that three times as many of these jobs—55.2 percent—were in what are now covered industries as in noncovered. Thus the increase in total unemployment after migration was the net result of

**Table 4.—Distribution of migrants in specified employment status in Michigan by place of residence<sup>1</sup> before migration**

Place of residence before migration	Employment status in Michigan				
	Total	Covered employment	Non-covered employment	Unem- ployed	Not seeking work
Total number.....	7,348	2,930	1,353	2,319	746
Percentage distribution					
Total.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
New England.....	1.4	1.9	.7	1.3	1.3
Middle Atlantic.....	9.1	10.4	7.8	8.4	8.7
East North Central.....	49.9	48.6	58.4	45.3	54.0
West North Central.....	8.6	8.2	8.0	8.2	10.6
South Atlantic.....	4.1	4.0	3.0	3.8	3.9
East South Central.....	4.9	6.8	3.5	3.5	4.4
West South Central.....	3.0	3.7	2.4	2.8	2.3
Mountain.....	2.1	1.9	2.8	1.7	2.3
Pacific.....	3.4	3.2	3.8	3.8	2.5
Canada.....	1.8	1.7	1.6	1.7	2.5
Other foreign countries.....	2.2	2.5	1.5	2.3	2.0
Unknown.....	9.5	6.2	5.6	17.2	5.5

<sup>1</sup> U. S. census regional classification.

important shifts in industrial attachment, with many formerly unemployed workers moving to jobs and many formerly employed workers moving to unemployment. From the point of view of unemployment compensation administration, it

would seem important to point out that distinctly more workers—37.5 percent—from covered industries were unemployed after interstate migration than were workers from noncovered industries—29.4 percent. Not only was the covered-industries group most subject to unemployment after migration, but it was also the largest group in the migrant population studied. These facts indicate the magnitude and the importance of the task confronting the interstate benefit-payment plan. The further working out of problems arising in connection with this plan is necessary to ensure benefits to unemployed multistate workers when due, so that as few as possible will need to resort to less desirable forms of assistance, namely, relief in one form or another.

### *Industrial Attachment of Interstate Migrants and of Residents*

In analyzing the flow of incoming migration, it is of interest to know not only what industrial shifts occurred among the migrant group but also how the resulting industrial distribution compares with that of residents enumerated at the same time, i. e., workers who made no move or who moved only within the State during the 57 months covered by the census.

The essential point in table 3 is that the industrial distribution of the interstate migrants after moving to Michigan conforms more closely to the industrial distribution of workers resident in Michigan than to that of the migrants themselves before moving. It seems clear, therefore, that much of the industrial shifting mentioned in connection with table 2 resulted from the fact that the industrial employment pattern in Michigan differed somewhat from the pattern represented by migrants before entering Michigan. Obviously, the migrant must conform to the industrial opportunities in the State of destination if he is to find employment.

Of the covered industries, manufacturing and transportation and communication show especially clearly the point just made. Outside Michigan 22.8 percent of the employed interstate migrants worked in manufacturing; in Michigan, however, the percentage was 38.0 as compared with 36.0 for the resident population of the State. In transportation and communication the corresponding relationships are: in other States, 14.7 percent; after arrival in Michigan, 4.1 percent; resident

population, 5.7 percent. Likewise in the case of each of the non-covered-industry groups, the industrial distribution of the migrants after moving to Michigan is more nearly like that of the resident population than that of the migrants themselves before moving.

**Table 5.—Distribution of migrants by period of move<sup>1</sup> and by place of residence<sup>2</sup> before migration**

Place of residence before migration	Number migrating			Percentage distribution		
	Total	First period	Second period	Total	First period	Second period
Total.....	7,348	2,054	4,004	100.0	100.0	100.0
New England.....	104	30	74	1.4	1.1	1.6
Middle Atlantic.....	608	247	421	0.1	0.3	0.0
East North Central.....	3,604	1,307	2,267	40.0	52.7	48.2
West North Central.....	632	203	429	8.0	7.0	0.1
South Atlantic.....	301	108	193	4.1	4.1	4.1
East South Central.....	362	84	278	4.9	3.2	5.0
West South Central.....	224	62	162	3.0	2.3	3.5
Mountain.....	151	63	88	2.1	2.4	1.0
Pacific.....	252	85	167	3.4	3.2	3.6
Canada.....	131	54	77	1.8	2.0	1.6
Other foreign countries.....	161	68	93	2.2	2.6	2.0
Unknown.....	698	253	445	9.5	9.5	9.5

<sup>1</sup> The first period covered the time from April 1930 to October 1932, the second from November 1932 to January 1935.

<sup>2</sup> U. S. census regional classification.

### *Geographic Origin*

The data presented thus far have dealt only with the employment status and industrial attachment of interstate migrants. It is important also to know something of the geographic pattern of mobility in terms of the place of origin. Table 4 supplies both kinds of information by relating the previous residence of the worker to his employment status immediately after moving to Michigan.

Half of the migrants to Michigan came from the adjacent States of the East North Central census region, namely, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin. The Middle Atlantic and the West North Central regions were next in importance, but neither contributed as much as 10 percent of the migrants. The migration from the southern States, which attracted much attention during the twenties, was of comparatively little importance during the first half of the thirties. The relatively large number of moves for which the State of origin was unknown represents principally the migration of unemployed sailors whose former place of work was reported as the "Great Lakes."

### *Time of Migration*

The migration reported in this article was initiated primarily by economic expulsions and attractions. Since the 57-month period covered by the

Michigan census included both a period of decline and a period of rise in economic activity, there is a question as to whether the region of origin of migrants to Michigan was markedly different for these two phases of the economic cycle. In making this analysis, the census period of April 1930 to January 1935 was divided into two parts on the basis of indexes of employment in Michigan furnished by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. The first period was from April 1930 to October 1932, the second from November 1932 to January 1935.

There is a marked similarity in the percentage of migrants originating in each of the nine regions for the two periods despite the change in economic conditions. (See table 5.) The only important difference is the slightly greater proportion of migrants coming from the States close to Michigan

during the earlier of the two periods. Probably this difference reflects some check on moves from more distant States when economic conditions were growing steadily worse and a resumption of migration from these States when economic conditions began to improve. Space does not permit reporting this information by individual States, but it can be added here that even a State-by-State comparison does not alter the close conformity of origins for the two periods.

It is a well-known fact that short-distance moves easily outnumber long-distance moves. The Michigan data not only agree in this respect but suggest, in addition, that for limited periods of time the attraction that one State exercises for workers in other States generally results in fairly fixed proportions of migrants from each geographic area.