14 Occupational Migration and Training as Conditions and Consequences of Progress*
Alfred Sauvy
INSTITUT NATIONAL D'ETUDES DEMOGRAPHIQUES, PARIS

I INTRODUCTION

We have recently begun to know more about the relations between the level of technique and occupational distribution: the works of Colin Clark and Fourastié have shown how a process of development involves migration\(^1\) from the primary towards the secondary and the tertiary sectors. We know that distribution must have remained more or less the same during several centuries, and that it 'began to move' between the seventeenth and twentieth centuries, varying according to countries.

As in all cases of correlation between two social phenomena, we have to enquire which is cause and which is effect, and to what extent they can diverge from each other.

II OPTIMUM OCCUPATIONAL DISTRIBUTION

Let us imagine a group of workshops, fields, factories, etc., the technical possibilities of which are exactly known and measured. The

* Translation by Elisabeth Henderson

277

L. H. Dupriez et al. (eds.), *Economic Progress* © The International Economic Association 1987
optimum occupational distribution of those who run this aggregate would then be fairly accurately determined.

But optimum occupational distribution can also be defined from another point of view as a function of the tastes and desires of the community considered as consumers. Let us distinguish the actual distribution of the occupied population from the distribution required to satisfy consumers’ wants.

Let us, then, consider a productive population possessed of a given technique and distributed between occupations in a given way. Such an occupational population is capable of producing a given volume of output which corresponds to its capacity and the technique of that period. In other words, if all the individuals work full time in their occupation, their work will result in a given number of tons of coal and wheat, yards of textile piece goods, etc. This is the total possible production. With a given set of prices, this production represents a given aggregate value, for example 10 billion dollars.

Let us now examine the problem the other way round, from the point of view of the consuming population. It is not enough to distribute 10 billion dollars amongst it to ensure full consumption of all products.

On the basis of the given prices, each consumer will wish to consume a certain amount of products. Everything happens as if he ‘ordered’ a certain number of working hours from various occupations. The sum of all these individual ‘orders’ provides for a certain number of working hours in each occupation, and, on the assumption of normal working time, calls for a certain occupational population. This is the desirable, the required population. This required population is not necessarily identical with the actual occupational population. It may include, for instance, more domestic servants and handymen, but, on the other hand, fewer motion picture supers and lawyers.

III AUTOMATIC ADJUSTMENTS

The discrepancy between the actual population and the ‘required’ population can be corrected in many ways. We shall leave aside foreign trade and external migrations. They can obviously solve, theoretically, every problem of distortion, but we shall make the very frequent hypothesis that they are insufficiently elastic.

We shall also leave aside a possible change in consumers’ tastes,