

**With reference to case studies discuss the importance labour plays in the location of industry.**

Labour is an important locational factor for industry, however in some industries it is of greater importance than others.

In the high-tech quaternary sector highly skilled labour is essential, more so than other factors such as energy or raw materials. For this reason high-tech companies choose to locate near their labour force, often around large cities and university towns. Cambridge is a good example of this trend. As an attractive city with the prominent Cambridge university at its centre it is an ideal location for high-tech industry. These factors have led to the development of the Cambridge Science Park, 3km North of the city centre, founded by Trinity college. The group of science and technology related businesses benefits from close links with the university where it is provided with a constant flow of skilled, enthusiastic labour. Similarly in East Anglia, where there is the highest concentration of high quality software engineers and developers in Europe, there has been an influx of technology companies, this is evident with the recent development of Ipswich, a town in the South East once renowned as a port. Ipswich itself has a skilled and flexible workforce and serves a wide area with a third of a million people living within 12 miles and now has the greatest concentration of IT scientists in Europe.

Thus proving that labour to be a very important factor in the location of quaternary industry, high-tech industry will locate near large groups of skilled individuals regardless of labour costs. However, for secondary industry where only semi-skilled workers are needed, labour does not take priority over other factors.

In the 19th century the textile industry began to make cloth by power driven looms to increase productivity, skilled craftsmen were no longer necessary as making cloth in a workers home became inefficient and therefore unable to compete. The textile industry moved to energy sources such as coal to drive the looms and labour became of little importance in the industries location. However, in the 1970s, when the textile industry was no longer tied to natural resources due to a decline in transport costs, labour became a more important locational factor once again. Although it was labour costs, as apposed to the type of labour which drew a company to an area.

Since semi-skilled labour is less difficult to find, the industry can take advantage of locating in other countries where labour costs are much lower. This has led to the global shift of manufacturing industries from MEDCs, such as the United Kingdom, to LEDCs such as China. In China, a lack of Health and Safety restrictions, along with a non-unionised labour force allows a great increase in productivity, an attractive prospect to the textile industry, as well as processing

and assembly industries. Where large numbers of workers are needed labour costs rise in importance. However in some cases cheap labour costs may be overlooked due to an overriding need for a different factor such as Toyota breaking into the French market.

In 1996 when Toyota, Japans biggest car maker, wished to open another car manufacturing plant in Europe. Although there was an existing Toyota car plant in the UKs midlands with an abundance of experienced workers, Toyota chose to locate in Valenciennes, near Lille allowing it to break into the french market. This demonstrates that although labour is usually an important factor in the location of industry it is not necessarily the deciding factor in the location of industry.