

# U.s. textile industry localization

[Science](#), [Geography](#)



U. S. Textile Industry Localization It is well known that localization of the industrial enterprises depends on a number of factors such as power supplies, availability of resources and raw materials, proximity to the market and others. Particularly, textile industry of the U. S. was originally dependent on these factors, with the majority of raw materials concentrated in the South of the country due to favorable climate conditions. However, the industry was initially located in New England with machinery imported from Europe and the first cotton mill founded in 1790 (Wheeler, 1998). This tendency was also caused by availability of energy resources for production - waterpower sites - and concentration of the population's major part (which means that it was close to the market and labor force). In the last decades of the 19th century, the six states of New England produced around 80% of cotton nationwide (Simpson 1966). However, with the dawn of the 20th century, the localization trends in the U. S. textile industry began: numerous entrepreneurs came from the North to open their subsidiaries in the South, other southern entrepreneurs saw the potential of the region and opened their own textile factories, and some Northern companies relocated their mills. South was climatically favorable and provided abundance of raw materials, while the level of wages was lower there (which was good for the entrepreneurs). At the same time, technological advance sparked rapid modernization in the southern factories.

On the other hand, the industry has undergone considerable changes in location of the factories due to globalization of international markets and trade relations as well as growth of mass production. The demand for fabrics and apparels has been growth at a high pace since the beginning of the 20th

century, while apparel manufacturers have been seeking to reconstruct their enterprises in order to get higher revenues and greater output at lower costs. Therefore, production capacities of many U. S. textile companies are now relocated to the developing countries with lower wage rates (as they were earlier relocated from North to South of USA). On the other hand, a great factor is the shift in the traditional production chain from the raw material producer to the retailer due to scientific and technological progress. This means that there is no longer the need for availability of the raw materials when considering the production site localization, for “ agricultural producers are being replaced by chemical companies who manufacture synthetic fibers (U. S. Congress, Office of Technology Assessment 31). Synthetic fibers can be produced autonomously from the places, where e. g. cotton is grown, depending only on power supplies and making the industry more fragmented. Wheeler (1998) states that the number of factories that process natural fibers is therefore smaller than of those producing synthetic fibers like polyester. Moreover, the main factor for modern textile industry is - again - proximity of the immediate domestic market (and textile import is rather low in the U. S.) and proximity to the population. On the other hand, there is certain similarities in localization patterns between the factories that produce artificial and natural fabrics, as they can often merge or mix natural and synthetic fibers in order to produce one combined type of fabric. Thereby, mills processing natural fabrics are still dependent on raw materials' sources and thus are located in the states providing access to ports that supply them fibers from overseas - for instance, “ 60% of silk fiber mills are located in Pennsylvania, New York, Virginia, and Massachusetts,

with another 16% in South Carolina and California” (Wheeler, 1998).

#### Works Cited

Wheeler, James O. " Locational Factors In The New Textile Industry: Focus On The U. S. South." *Journal Of Geography* 97. 4-5 (1998): 193-203. Education Source. [http://web.a.ebscohost.com.adams.idm.oclc.org/ehost/detail/detail? sid= a4d5f1b6-eaea-4b33-8dee-fdd4dd18654a](http://web.a.ebscohost.com/adams/idm.oclc.org/ehost/detail/detail?sid=a4d5f1b6-eaea-4b33-8dee-fdd4dd18654a%40sessionmgr4002&vid=0&hid=4212&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWwhvc3QtbGl2ZSZzY29wZT1zaXRI#db=eue&AN=507652268)

[%40sessionmgr4002&vid= 0&hid= 4212&bdata=](http://web.a.ebscohost.com/adams/idm.oclc.org/ehost/detail/detail?sid=a4d5f1b6-eaea-4b33-8dee-fdd4dd18654a%40sessionmgr4002&vid=0&hid=4212&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWwhvc3QtbGl2ZSZzY29wZT1zaXRI#db=eue&AN=507652268)

[JnNpdGU9ZWwhvc3QtbGl2ZSZzY29wZT1zaXRI#db= eue&AN= 507652268](http://web.a.ebscohost.com/adams/idm.oclc.org/ehost/detail/detail?sid=a4d5f1b6-eaea-4b33-8dee-fdd4dd18654a%40sessionmgr4002&vid=0&hid=4212&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWwhvc3QtbGl2ZSZzY29wZT1zaXRI#db=eue&AN=507652268)

[Web. 2 July 2015.](http://web.a.ebscohost.com/adams/idm.oclc.org/ehost/detail/detail?sid=a4d5f1b6-eaea-4b33-8dee-fdd4dd18654a%40sessionmgr4002&vid=0&hid=4212&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWwhvc3QtbGl2ZSZzY29wZT1zaXRI#db=eue&AN=507652268)

U. S. Congress, Office of Technology Assessment. *The U. S. Textile and Apparel Industry: A Revolution in Progress-Special Report*, OTA-TET-332. Washington, DC: U. S. Government Printing Office, April 1987. <https://www.princeton.edu/~ota/disk2/1987/8733/8733>. PDF Web. 2 July 2015.

U. S. Congress, Office of Technology Assessment. *The U. S. Textile and Apparel Industry: A Revolution in Progress-Special Report*, OTA-TET-332. Washington, DC: U. S. Government Printing Office, April 1987. <https://www.princeton.edu/~ota/disk2/1987/8733/8733>. PDF Web. 2 July 2015.

Washington, DC: U. S. Government Printing Office, April 1987. <https://www.princeton.edu/~ota/disk2/1987/8733/8733>. PDF Web. 2 July 2015.