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# Structural and Exchange Mobility in the Assimilation of Immigrants to Brazil

By BERTRAM HUTCHINSON

Studies of social mobility have, in general, been concerned with overall rates of movement in the society as a whole, and with differential rates as between one status category and another. Less attention has been paid to possible differences in social mobility which might be evident between other categories of the population. In societies which are relatively homogeneous in their composition, as for example, in respect of national origin, the problem may be a marginal one. In others, whose population is heterogeneous in origin it is of central significance, particularly in the study of the assimilation of immigrant groups. Its interest is heightened because it is in exactly this field that conflict between immigrant and domestic populations has most readily occurred. The real or imagined danger of economic competition from the immigrant, which the domestic population often fears, may create, at the best, a reinforcement of prejudice against the unassimilated immigrant; at the worst it may cause physical conflict between the two groups. It is a common source of resentment that the immigrant is more successful economically than he "should" be, and he is popularly pictured as an individual of ambition intent upon pushing as rapidly as possible to the higher reaches of the social and economic scale.

While the histories of notable immigrants who have been economically and socially successful in their country of adoption are well-known, it is possible that their familiarity arises from their having been so much an exception to a general rule. Can it be shown that immigrants as a whole are significantly different from the domestic population in the ambition they feel, and in their success in achieving it? The first part of this question is clearly a problem for psychological study, and as such need not detain us here.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, an indication of ambitions successfully realised may be found in differential rates of vertical social mobility as between the domestic and the immigrant populations. It is these differences which, apparent in the male adult population of the Brazilian city of São Paulo, it is the purpose of this paper to discuss. The analysis has been extended further in such a way as to show not only that there exist differences in mobility rates as between immigrant and Brazilian-born sections of the population, but also according to the degree to which an individual's ancestry is of predominantly foreign or predominantly Brazilian, origin. In short, our analysis seeks to show how far an immigrant population, as it becomes assimilated, ceases to differ from the host population in the rate of vertical social mobility it displays.

<sup>1</sup> Psychological studies of socially mobile and immobile individuals carried out by Carolina Martuscelli as part of the general study of social mobility which the writer has been pursuing in the city of São Paulo, in fact provide clear evidence of just such personality differences between the immigrant and the Brazilian. Dr. Martuscelli's analysis forms Chap. 10 of the report on this general study: B. Hutchinson (ed.), *Trabalho, Status e Educação*, Rio de Janeiro (Brazilian Centre of Educational Research), to be published in 1958.

These problems are of particular significance in a study of the Brazilian city of São Paulo, whose population (2·25 million) is very largely of foreign birth or origin. Approximately one-quarter of the adult population in 1956 were of completely Brazilian origin, in the sense that the subject, his parents and his grandparents were all born in Brazil. Moreover, the city has been the setting, during the past half-century, for commercial and industrial growth remarkable both for its size and its rapidity. This development has to a considerable degree flowed from the diligence of the immigrant population: it has also been a centripetal force encouraging a further inflow of foreign immigrants, and setting up migratory movements within the domestic population of Brazil. São Paulo is to-day strikingly cosmopolitan in character; yet Brazilian culture, while it is malleable, has retained its pre-eminence, so that despite the numerical dominance in the population of people of foreign origin, the onus of adjustment falls more heavily upon the newcomer than upon his hosts.

## I

The material on which the following discussion is based arises from a study, made in August 1956, of a sample of the adult population of the city, and which formed part of a general inquiry into the processes of vertical social mobility in São Paulo. A comparison of the distribution by sex, marital status and age of the sample with the distribution according to the most recent census figures (1950) showed that, with the exception of a significant, though small, under-representation of the youngest (20–26 years) age group, the sample distributions approached the true distributions very closely. With some qualification, therefore, the sample may be regarded as representative of the adult population as a whole. In the present analysis only male subjects have been considered, constituting a total (after setting aside subjects for whom our information was incomplete) of 1,056 men who, when interviewed, were aged 20 years or more and permanently resident in the city of São Paulo.

In determining the social status of the subject and of his father six status categories based upon occupation were employed, whose validity had been ascertained earlier through studies of the status grading of occupations.<sup>1</sup> Social mobility for our purposes, therefore, was held to have occurred where the status category, thus defined, of the subject differed from that of his father. The subject's birthplace was recorded, together with that of each of his parents and grandparents, so that subsequently subjects could be divided into categories according to the degree to which they were of Brazilian or foreign origin. These ancestry categories, four in number, were as follows: (i) subject and all his parents and grandparents foreign-born (FF); (ii) subject born in Brazil; all parents and grandparents foreign-born (BF); (iii) subject born in Brazil; some

<sup>1</sup> The results of these studies may be seen in B. Hutchinson, "The Social Grading of Occupations in Brazil", *British Journal of Sociology*, VIII, 1957, and C. Castaldi, "Nota sôbre a hierarquia das ocupações segundo os imigrantes italianos em São Paulo", *Educação e Ciências Sociais* (Rio de Janeiro), 1, no. 3, 1956. The six status categories were as follows: (1) professional and high administrative; (2) managerial and executive; (3) higher-grade inspectional, supervisory and other non-manual; (4) lower grades of inspectional, supervisory and routine grades of non-manual; (5) skilled manual; (6) semi-skilled and unskilled manual.

relatives born abroad, others in Brazil (BM); (iv) subject, parents and grandparents all born in Brazil (BB). With one exception, each of these categories is adequately defined. The BM group, however, is something of a residual group made up of Brazilian-born subjects whose Brazilian ancestry varied both in number and in generation. To have sub-divided this category further, according to the actual number and the generation, of the Brazilian-born relatives, while otherwise preferable, was rendered undesirable by the inadequate marginal totals that such an analysis would have produced. In interpreting the results, therefore, it must be borne in mind that, in respect of the BM group, global figures may well conceal significant differences within this category. Nevertheless, the four ancestry categories together constitute a rough scale of national assimilation, between the extremes of the completely foreign (FF) and the completely Brazilian (BB).

A preliminary analysis of the material revealed considerable differences in mobility history that seem related to ancestry (Table 1). The rate of upward mobility declines while that of downward mobility increases, the greater the Brazilian ingredient in the subject's ancestry, and immobility is greater among the purely Brazilian (BB) group than in any other. To this extent, therefore, the belief that social mobility is greater among immigrants and their children than in the domestic population has an objective basis. But though this simple analysis is revealing, its value is limited, ignoring as it does variations in opportunities open to the several ancestry groups. A method of dealing with this variable may be found in the Index of Association used effectively in the British

Table 1. *Subject's status relative to that of his father, in relation to ancestry*

Subject's status	Subject's ancestry				Total	Great Britain*
	FF	BF	BM	BB		
	% (i)	% (ii)	% (iii)	% (iv)	% (v)	% (vi)
Higher ...	46.5	49.0	41.4	27.9	40.9	29.4
Same ...	41.5	39.0	38.9	50.0	42.5	35.1
Lower ...	12.0	12.0	19.7	22.1	16.6	35.5
Total (100%)	241	259	280	276	1,056	3,497

\* Percentages computed from D. V. Glass (ed.), *Social Mobility in Britain*, Table 2, p. 183.

study of social mobility<sup>1</sup>: it will be remembered that, making use of the concept of perfect mobility, the index of association abstracts from the influence of structural change upon social mobility. If we calculate such an index for each of the four ancestry groups it becomes clear that our preliminary analysis was in fact very considerably influenced by differences in opportunity. On the basis of these indices<sup>2</sup> one significant difference in mobility rates remains:

<sup>1</sup> R. Mukherjee, and J. Hall, "A Note on the Analysis of Data on Social Mobility"; in D. V. Glass (ed.), *Social Mobility in Britain*, London, 1954, pp. 218-241.

<sup>2</sup> For São Paulo as a whole calculating the index of association gave a value of 2.215, compared with 1.440 for Great Britain, suggesting a greater overall degree of class self-recruitment in this city.

subjects who were of purely Brazilian ancestry display less vertical mobility than subjects whose ancestry was in any degree foreign (Table 2).

Table 2. *Indices of association between paternal and filial generations, related to subject's ancestry*

Subject's ancestry			
FF	BF	BM	BB
1.96			
o	1.84		
o	o	2.09	
*	*	*	2.71

\* Difference between indices significant.

o Difference not significant.

However, we must ask whether, in abstracting from differences in opportunity, the index of association does not conceal differences in social mobility which, in the present case, are of significance. It is clear that in São Paulo as a whole, and in each of the ancestry groups, the proportion of subjects who moved above their hereditary status considerably exceeds the proportion who fell below it (Table 1). In other words, these figures reflect a situation in which social mobility is occurring, not only through *exchange* of positions between persons moving up and others moving down, but also through the occupation of new positions created by socio-economic change. A re-examination of Table 1 gives a rough estimate of the contribution of structural change to the general rate of social mobility. In the total figures for São Paulo (Column v), the percentage of subjects who moved upwards greatly exceeds the proportion moving down. But in conditions of structural stability (and ignoring possible effects of differential reproduction between the various social classes) these proportions must be equal. Hence, if we assume that the proportion of the filial generation maintaining their hereditary status remains constant at 42.5% then in conditions of stability 28.75% must move down in order that an equal percentage may move up. The difference between these theoretical percentages and those actually seen in Table 1 must have arisen, therefore, from the influence of structural change. In other words, the application of this reasoning to the data in Table 1 suggests that roughly one-third of the sons who moved to status categories higher than those of their fathers could not have done so had structural change not occurred.

However, the unreality of this procedure is immediately evident: in circumstances of structural stability the number of immobile sons would not have remained constant; and this must be taken into account in estimating the effect of structural change upon the dimensions of social mobility. It was necessary to return to the original material in order to reach a final conclusion. The procedure adopted was to offset from the contingency tables showing filial

related to paternal status, and for each status category, the number of subjects moving upwards against the number moving down. The difference between the two numbers—that is, movement for which no compensating movement was evident—was movement due to the creation of new positions, and is attributable to structural change. This procedure is illustrated in Diagram 1.

Diagram 1

Father's Status Category	Son's Status Category					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1 ... ..		a <sub>1</sub>	a <sub>2</sub>	a <sub>3</sub>	a <sub>4</sub>	a <sub>5</sub>
2 ... ..	A <sub>1</sub>		b <sub>1</sub>	b <sub>2</sub>	b <sub>3</sub>	b <sub>4</sub>
3 ... ..	A <sub>2</sub>	B <sub>1</sub>		c <sub>1</sub>	c <sub>2</sub>	c <sub>3</sub>
4 ... ..	A <sub>3</sub>	B <sub>2</sub>	C <sub>1</sub>		d <sub>1</sub>	d <sub>2</sub>
5 ... ..	A <sub>4</sub>	B <sub>3</sub>	C <sub>2</sub>	D <sub>1</sub>		e <sub>1</sub>
6 ... ..	A <sub>5</sub>	B <sub>4</sub>	C <sub>3</sub>	D <sub>2</sub>	E <sub>1</sub>	

In the diagram, a<sub>1</sub> indicates sons who, born into category 1, fell to category 2 ; A<sub>1</sub>, sons who moved from category 2 to category 1. Hence if a<sub>1</sub>=A<sub>1</sub>, only exchange mobility takes place. But if the observations in each pair of cells are unequal, the difference must be due to structural change, so that if A<sub>1</sub>>a<sub>1</sub>, structural change has created new positions in status category 1, causing net upward mobility ; while if, on the contrary, A<sub>1</sub><a<sub>1</sub>, new positions have been created in category 2, resulting in a net downward movement. Repeating this procedure for each pair of corresponding cells throughout the contingency table, summation of the results showed the number of sons who had exchanged positions and the number who had moved to newly-created positions. In other circumstances the analysis would be complicated by the necessity of allowing for multilateral, compensating movements,<sup>1</sup> although inspection of the São Paulo material discussed here showed that in this case it could be neglected.

The contingency table showing filial in relation to paternal status is shown in Table 3 ; and from these observations we may, by applying the procedure just described, arrive at an estimate of the relative importance of exchange and structural mobility in São Paulo.

Of the 432 sons who had moved to status positions above those of their fathers, 160 had exchanged positions with others who had moved to a status below their hereditary one. The remainder of the upwardly mobile had moved to positions for which there was no compensating downward movement. The effect of this may be seen more clearly in Table 4. In other words, looking at the adult sample as a whole, of all those in the filial generation who moved

<sup>1</sup> I am indebted to Sr. Juarez R. B. Lopes for much useful discussion of the problems involved in this procedure.

Table 3. *Subject's status relative to that of his father*

Father's Status Category	Son's Status Category						Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
1 ... ..	33	12	10	3			58
2 ... ..	14	25	16	3	2		60
3 ... ..	13	16	68	21	16	1	135
4 ... ..	6	30	39	74	61	7	217
5 ... ..	5	16	26	45	132	24	248
6 ... ..	1	9	29	41	142	116	338
Total ... ..	72	108	188	187	353	148	1056*

\* Total excludes 43 subjects whose mobility history is known, but for whom ancestry data were incomplete.

upwards, at least two-thirds could not have done so had there not been new opportunities created by the changing economy of the city. The position among the downwardly mobile is somewhat different, since only 9% of these failed to exchange with others moving up to take their place. If we neglect the direction of movement and look at the mobile as a single category, it seems that no less than 47.4% of all mobility was made possible by structural change. This is, of course, a minimum estimate which does not take into account exchange mobility stimulated in its turn by structural change, but whose dimensions we have no means of ascertaining.

Table 4. *Proportion of observed social mobility due to structural change and proportion due to the exchange of positions*

Son's status relative to that of his father	Positions Exchanged	Positions not Exchanged	Total Movement
Higher ... ..	37.0	63.0	432
Same ... ..	—	—	(448)
Lower ... ..	91.0	9.0	176
Total ... ..	52.6	47.4	608

We may now ask what the mobility rate in São Paulo would have been had there occurred no change in the socio-economic structure of the city. It is well to repeat that any answer to such a question must be a cautious one; but, bearing in mind that (for example) our figure for exchange mobility may have been inflated by the stimulus of the structural change that actually took place, we may nevertheless arrive at a first estimate of the dimensions of mobility had the structure been stable. By assuming that those individuals whose movement

was known to have resulted from structural change (that is, those for whom there was no counterpart movement) were immobile, and adding these to the total of immobile individuals, what remains of the sample must be those who moved upwards or downwards by exchanging positions with counterparts. These figures are set out in Table 5, where they are also compared with the actual mobility position in São Paulo.

Table 5. *Social mobility on the assumption that no structural change occurred, compared with observed mobility*

Son's status relative to that of his father	Assuming no structural change	Observed mobility
	%	%
Higher ... ..	15.2	40.9
Same ... ..	69.6	42.5
Lower ... ..	15.2	16.6
Total (100%) ... ..	1056	1056

In the absence of structural change, upward mobility would have been very considerably less, although the rate of downward movement would have remained virtually the same. Indeed, Table 5 suggests that beneath the heavy contemporary stream of upward mobility in São Paulo there persists a basically rigid social-status structure which, left to itself, would make movement from one status position to another appreciably rarer than it is in Great Britain. The heavy rate of observed upward mobility in São Paulo is very probably due, not to increasing class permeability or the breaking down of class barriers, but to the creation of new status positions.

We may take this analysis a stage further by applying the same procedure to the paternal-filial status contingency tables for each of the four ancestry groups. We have already shown that the pure Brazilian tends to be less socially mobile than persons of wholly or partially foreign origin. What now seems clear (Table 6) is that the degree of exchange mobility which occurs is also closely related to national origin. Among the upwardly mobile, the two ancestry groups whose ancestry is entirely, or to a great extent, Brazilian (groups BM and BB), display exchange mobility more often than the foreign groups (FF and BF). Moreover, the pure Brazilian exchanges his position more often than *any* other group. Among the downwardly mobile the reverse happens: there is a tendency for exchange mobility to occur less frequently the greater the Brazilian ingredient in ancestry. Ignoring the direction of movement, it is clear that individuals of foreign birth or of entirely foreign ancestry exchange positions significantly less frequently than others who are wholly or partially Brazilian in ancestry (Table 7).

On the other hand, it must be remembered that this analysis restricts exchange to individuals *within* the same ancestry group: it does not take into account the possibility of exchange of positions *between* groups. In certain circumstances



the differences in exchange mobility rates may disappear entirely after cross-group exchanges are accounted for. However, this matter is rapidly settled. In the sample as a whole, 320 individuals moved as result of exchanging positions. Summing the number of individuals who exchanged within each of the four

Table 6. *Social mobility due to structural change, and to exchange, in relation to subject's ancestry*

Subject's status relative to that of his father	Subject's Ancestry			
	FF	BF	BM	BB
	%	%	%	%
<b>HIGHER—</b>				
Exchanged ... ..	23·2	23·6	40·5	55·8
Not exchanged ... ..	76·8	76·4	59·5	44·2
<b>TOTAL (100%)</b> ... ..	<b>112</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>LOWER—</b>				
Exchanged ... ..	89·7	96·8	85·5	70·5
Not exchanged ... ..	10·3	3·2	14·5	29·5
<b>TOTAL (100%)</b> ... ..	<b>29</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>61</b>

ancestry groups, we obtain a total of 292. The difference between the totals is 28, which must be the total of individuals to whom exchange mobility is possible through movement outside the ancestry group. In short, of all exchange mobility that took place, 91·2% was possible within the subject's ancestry group, and 8·8% possible only through inter-group movement.

Table 7. *Proportion of each ancestry group whose mobility would be possible within itself, and the proportion whose mobility was possible only because of structural change.*

	Ancestry group			
	FF	BF	BM	BB
	%	%	%	%
Positions exchanged ... ..	36·9	38·0	55·0	62·3
Not exchanged ... ..	63·1	62·0	45·0	37·7
<b>Total changing status (100%)</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>138</b>

If we divide these 28 individuals equally among the four ancestry groups, the proportion of exchange mobility occurring in each is increased by between 4 and 5%, leaving the differences between the groups virtually unchanged. In fact, 18 of these inter-group exchanges could have taken place (as further analysis of the raw data showed) only between the BF group and the three others, which again leaves the important differences unaltered: on the contrary, it emphasises the trend towards an increasing rate of exchange mobility with increasing assimilation to the Brazilian population. When we take inter-group

exchange into account, therefore, the differences between groups in the amount of possible exchange mobility are not significantly affected.

However, whether exchange or structural mobility takes place is not a matter of personal choice: in a specific instance neither we, nor the individual involved, have any means of telling whether old positions have been exchanged or a new one occupied. But it is obvious that, for a given population, exchange mobility can take place only within the limits of its extension over the status scale: that is, the degree to which exchange is possible is limited by the status distribution of the population. If this distribution varies significantly from one ancestry group to another, we have a key to the observed differences in the rate of exchange mobility.

Table 8. *Distribution of subjects in each ancestry group according to father's status*

Status of Subject's father	Ancestry group			
	FF	BF	BM	BB
	%	%	%	%
1 ... ..	1.7	7.0	6.8	11.2
2 ... ..	6.6	9.3	15.0	9.4
3 ... ..	12.4	18.5	24.6	14.9
4 ... ..	27.8	17.4	13.6	13.4
5 ... ..	35.7	40.9	30.0	27.9
6 ... ..	15.8	7.0	10.0	23.2
Total (100%) ... ..	241	259	280	276
Coefficient of Variation (V) ...	25.6	26.6	34.3	40.5

Inspecting the percentage distribution of subjects in relation to their father's status category (Table 8) we find certain differences between ancestry groups in dispersion; and calculation of the coefficient of variation (V) for each ancestry group confirms this impression. Indeed, there is a clear trend toward increasing dispersion associated with increasing assimilation to the Brazilian population. It is noticeable also that the rate of increase of dispersion is closely similar to the rate of increase of exchange mobility (Table 7). Differences between ancestry groups in the rate of internal exchange mobility they display are thus the result of differences in dispersion.

## II

Have then the differences between ancestry groups in the relative importance of exchange and structural mobility any real sociological meaning, or are they mere statistical artifacts brought into being by the method of analysis we employed? Since, as we have just seen, dispersion through the status scale varies directly with the degree of Brazilian ancestry, it follows that the *possibility* of exchange mobility within ancestry group increases with greater assimilation. Conversely, the more foreign the ancestry, the less is internal exchange mobility possible—in the sense that movement to status positions where the ancestry

group is underrepresented, or not represented at all, must depend to a corresponding degree upon the opening of new positions. On the other hand, the overall rate of social mobility is greater among the immigrant group than among the pure Brazilians, and since such a higher overall rate could not be supported by internal exchange, it must have been made possible either through inter-group exchanges, or by the occupation of new positions by the immigrant. This is the crux of the matter so far as the domestic population is concerned: are the highly mobile immigrants ejecting them from their positions, or occupying new ones which formerly did not exist?

We need not raise the question of how far exchange mobility does in fact take place within ancestry groups. If the possibilities of internal exchange are equal for each group, then none will be affected adversely by inter-group exchange unless the overall mobility rate of one or more is greater than could be supported by the possibilities of exchange. In such circumstances (and in the absence of structural change) the highly mobile group could only maintain its rate of movement by the ejection of others through inter-group exchange. In the present case, however, we have seen that the possibilities of inter-group exchange were few. The differences that are left, therefore, must have been made possible by the creation of new status positions: in short, the higher mobility rate among the immigrant groups was almost entirely supported by the emergence of new positions. In São Paulo generally we have shown that a considerable part of the observed mobility was due to changes in the socio-economic structure. It is now clear that the immigrant groups profited most by these changes, and had they not happened the immigrant, more than the pure Brazilian, would have suffered from the rigidity of the structure.

The process of immigrant assimilation, then, is marked by an initially high rate of social mobility, decreasing as assimilation continues through subsequent generations, and as the dispersion of the immigrant groups through the status scale gradually approximates the dispersion among the native population. In São Paulo some three-quarters of all upward mobility among immigrants and their children was only possible because of the emergence of new status positions, following the economic growth which the immigrants themselves did much to inaugurate. For the domestic population the danger of socio-economic competition from the energetic immigrant is comparatively small, and the confidence which this creates may partially explain the good relations which on the whole have marked the processes of immigrant absorption in São Paulo.