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CONDITIONS OF IMMIGRANT ASSIMILATION
IN URBAN BRAZIL

by Bertram Hutchinson

Director, Social Sciences Division,
Brazilian Centre of Educational Research

In the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Brazil was
a competitor of the United States for the contemporary resources of
immigrant people from Europe; but she, like Australia, Canada and
other empty territories of the world, failed to attract a number equal-
ling the millions whose preference was for the United States. Never-
theless, between 1874 and the present day, some 4.75 million foreign immi-
grants (not all of them Europeans) have entered Brazil, bringing with
them many, though not all, of the problems of adjustment and absorption
which have attracted so much attention in North America. Yet, perhaps
merely because the stream was smaller than that flowing towards the
cities of the United States, or perhaps because the course of immigrant
assimilation has not, in Brazil, created either the strident conflicts
with law and order, or the degree of social and personal maladjustment,
which form so large a part of immigrant history in North America,
Brazilian immigration as a study in social change has suffered relative
neglect. 1/ Brazilian literature has no real counterpart to the novels
of immigrant life in the USA which were once popular; while, among other
factors, the lack of a flourishing film industry has prevented the
production in Brazil of films dealing, in fictional form, with the

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1/ Notable exceptions to this generalisation are the works of Willems, E.,
A aculturação dos alemães no Brasil, São Paulo, 1946, and Aspectos
da aculturação dos japoneses no Estado de São Paulo, São Paulo, 1948.
Prof. E. Schaden, of the Department of Anthropology in the University
of São Paulo, has also worked in this field. Statistics on immigration
are fairly freely available, however, as for example in the São Paulo
Boletim do Departamento de Imigração e Colonização. G. Mortara has
carried out diverse statistical studies of the immigrant population,
but these are largely approached from the demographic standpoint.
Recently published volumes of the 1950 Census of Brazil contain much
interesting material, previously not obtainable, analysed according
to national origin. Some aspects of the process of the absorption of
foreign and internal immigrants in São Paulo are at present being
studies, as part of the research programme of the Centro Brasileiro
de Pesquisas Educacionais, by Carlo Castaldi, Juarez Rubens Brandao
Lopes, Carolina Martuscelli and the present writer, in the social
mobility project referred to in the text of this article.

problems of the immigrant, though these were familiar features of the
American cinema during the 'twenties and early 'thirties of the present
century.   In short, Brazil, in comparison with the United States, has
been less self-conscious about her immigrant population.   They were, of
course fewer in number; and they were perhaps concentrated sufficiently in
certain regions of the south of Brazil to make their presence of small
interest to Brazilians living elsewhere in their immense territory.   Never-
theless, the outwardly calm, perhaps even apathetic, acceptance of the
immigrant, with occasional but shortlived outbreaks of nationalism, that
is present in Brazil provides an environment more congenial to his rapid
adjustment than the antagonism, competition and resistance for which his
arrival in the USA seems often to have been the signal.

This situation has its parallel in the manner in which the problem
of race relations has been met in Brazil.   In comparison with the violence,
psychological and physical, which has from time to time characterised
race relations in the United States, in Brazil these relations are easy,
black and white living together on terms which avoid obvious manifestations
of prejudice.   Yet many problems which vex the people of the United States are
present in Brazil, though largely concealed.   While there is no Jim Crow law
in Brazil, there are hotels in which a coloured guest will be refused.
Although in daily life whites do not ordinarily discriminate against the
Negro, nevertheless many clubs will not admit him many whites would regard
a mixed marriage as a family misfortune, and most would regard the Negro
as suitable only for unskilled manual labour.   But such is the care
which Brazilians devote to formal courtesy in personal (though much less
so in impersonal) social relations that these manifestations of prejudice,
and others like them, are so disguised by the exercise of tact that
relations between black and white are almost continuously amicable.
Moreover, intermarriage and miscegenation between white, mulatto, Negro
and Indian, although not regarded in individual cases as wholly desirable,
has continued throughout Brazilian history, with the result that the
boundaries of prejudice have become increasingly difficult to locate.
In short, while there is no doubt that generally speaking the Negro is

regarded by the whites as an inferior (a belief which creates certain social problems basically similar to, if less acute than, those in existence elsewhere), because of the Brazilian's reluctance to allow personal strife or clash of interests to appear more than is necessary above the surface, an outwardly calm mutual acceptance prevails. [2]

The Brazilian social milieu, by placing a premium upon courtesy and inoffensiveness in personal relations among a population already accustomed to ethnic intermixture, consequently provides a setting more favourable to the easy assimilation of immigrants. Many problems of immigrant assimilation nevertheless remain; but they are problems with which hosts and new arrivals tend to struggle separately and apart. While the Brazilian expects the immigrant ultimately to merge himself with the Brazilian culture, he is content, on the whole, to leave him to achieve this by his own efforts. Formal scenes of declaration of loyalty, for example, do not play a part in Brazilian naturalisation procedure, nor has there been an effective counterpart to the campaign for "Americanisation" which assisted the cultural assimilation of the immigrant to the USA. Within wide limits the Brazilian, unlike the North American, is content for the moment to allow the immigrant to be different, is tolerant of cultural differences and in general leaves to the passage of time the main responsibility for bringing about assimilation. Only in extreme cases where groups of immigrants, chiefly the Germans and the Japanese, have gone too far in emphasising and in seeking to preserve their separation

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[2] Pierson, D., Negroes in Brazil, Chicago, 1942, seems to deny the existence of race prejudice in the city of Bahia and to substitute for it distinctions of social class. While it is true that class and skin colour are closely associated in Brazil, common observation of the existence of race prejudice seems confirmed by a number of more recent sociological studies, e.g., Wagley, C., (Ed.), Race and Class in Rural Brazil, Paris (Unesco), 1952; Costa Pinto, L.A., O negro no Río de Janeiro, São Paulo, 1953; Bastide, R., and Fernandes, F., (Eds.), Relações raciais entre negros e brancos em São Paulo, São Paulo (UNESCO), 1955.

from Brazilian life has the Brazilian government felt obliged to intervene. 3/

It is necessary, of course, to remember that within the boundaries of Brazil itself migration has been for many years continuous, while industrial development in the southern half of the country in recent decades has stimulated this movement. A recent study carried out by the writer showed a high proportion of workers in urban employment in Sao Paulo to be of rural origin, as indicated by a comparison of their present employment with that of their fathers. 4/

In a country of such immensity as Brazil, having poor communications, the cultural differences between one State and another can be great. Between the vaqueiro or cowboy of the south, for example, and the worker in the sugar districts of the north differences in behaviour, outlook and even in language, may be more important than the characteristics they share, while cutting across such diversities are others arising from the contrasting conditions of rural and urban life. It is not too much to suggest, therefore, that the Brazilian has a familiarity with the presence of unassimilated migrants and their problems stemming from population movements within Brazil itself. Where internal migrants display such diverse characteristics, the step is a small one from understanding their problems and accepting their peculiarities to doing the same in respect of immigrants from abroad.

Consequently, his training in personal relationships and his experience of cultural differences within his own country, has made it easier for the Brazilian to accept the foreign immigrant with equanimity. There were also economic reasons. Many assisted

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3/ Such intervention was most significant during the period of heightened Brazilian national feeling coinciding with the dictatorial régime of Getulio Vargas. This régime was responsible for a number of decrees (since modified or repealed) restricting publication of books and periodicals in foreign languages, and subjecting foreign-language schools to government control.

4/ Of male urban workers in São Paulo the proportions who were of rural origin, according to date of birth, were 30.3 per cent (born 1900-09), 22.4 per cent (1910-19) and 17.8 per cent (1920-29).

/immigrants, in

immigrants, in being given free passages by the Government of Brazil, were
required, as a condition of such assistance, to accept agricultural
employment for a limited period after their arrival in Brazil - indeed,
it was the demand for agricultural labour from the coffee and cotton-
growing industries that first suggested the initiation of assisted
immigration to Brazil. Agricultural employment, and the economic
restriction which it involved, was unpopular, and the majority of immigrants,
after the completion of their obligatory term on the land, drifted to urban
centres, particularly São Paulo. [5] There they joined immigrants who
were not bound by an obligation to work in any particular sector of
industry. But the original demand for unskilled and semi-skilled
labour had come, in Brazil, from agriculture, not, as in the United
States, from growing industries already on the way to process rational-
isation and mass production. At this time Brazilian industry had still
to be developed, and it was characteristic of the foreign immigrant that
he played a major, and not merely a wage-earning, role in this development.
A cursory knowledge of industry and commerce in Sao Paulo today reveals
sufficiently the dominant position which the foreign-born have occupied,
and are still occupying, in its growth. On the other hand, since during
the period of the main influx of foreign immigrants the chief economic
interests of Brazil were centred upon the land and the production of
such primary products as sugar, coffee and rubber for the world market,

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[5] So unpopular was agricultural employment that not all those who came ·
to Brazil as assisted immigrants carried out their obligatory service.
Many never arrived on the fazendas of the rural interior,either
having jumped ship on docking at Santos, or having been "liberated"
by some relative or friend already living in Brazil. Castaldi, C.,
"Mobilidades ocupacional de um grupo primário de imigrantes italianos
na cidades de São Paulo," Educação e Ciências Sociais, (Rio de Janeiro),
March, 1957.

the interests of the entrenched Brazilian economy were in consequence
not immediately endangered by industrial development.   It is largely
because of this that the immigrant has enjoyed economic freedom to a
remarkable degree; and although he has often displayed an enterprise and
a financial success which is less common among the Brazilians themselves,
this has not provoked the same degree of envy and antagonism among the
native-born which manifested itself in countries whose thriving commerce
and industry had more to fear from competition.   On the contrary, as
immigrant enterprise multipled opportunities for employment, accumulated
capital and made possible new investment in further industrial undertakings,
native-born Brazilians themselves reaped tangible advantages.   All stood
to benefit from commercial and industrial development, while the rigours
of competition fell more upon the immigrants themselves than upon the
native born.   The population, irrespective of its origin, was caught up
on the wave of development and relative prosperity which, largely initiat-
ed in Sao Paulo by the immigrant, merged all in the forward movement of
economic growth.

     Differences in the economic opportunities available to immigrants,
coupled with a more complete social acceptance by the Brazilian-born
population, were associated with a set of stereotyped conceptions of
national character at variance with those existing, for example, in the
United States.   Perhaps the most notable is the variation in the stereo-
typed concept of the Italian immigrant who, it will be remembered, was
regarded in the USA as dirty, lazy and unreliable.   Largely in consequence
of the social pressures which thus bore upon him, the Italian in the USA
very often displayed the very characteristics which were attributed to
him.   In Brazil the Italian has not suffered from the same derogatory
caricature, but on the contrary enjoys a reputation, largely justified,
for energy, hard work and enterprise.   Likewise, anti-semitism is largely
absent from Brazil, the Jews themselves (like many Levantine immigrants)
being as a rule, socially and often physically indistinguishable from
Brazilians of other origin.   On the other hand, the Portuguese immigrant,
though generally admitted to be a hard worker, is laughed at and is the

the object of some condescension on the part of the Brazilian. It is
interesting that a reputation for dirtiness, laziness and unreliability
which in the USA is borne, among other national groups, by the Italian,
in Sao Paulo is attributed to the internal immigrant, the nordestino
and the bahiano, who arrives in the city poor, uneducated, unfamiliar
with urban ways, and is often the subject of jocular comment, much as
the Irish were once laughed at in Britain (for similar reasons).

Nevertheless, in an important sense there was in the economic, or
industrial, development of sourhtern Brazil an approach to equality of
opportunity for each of the various ingredients of the population which
took part in it. Foreign immigrants, though in general entering the
economy at the bottom rung of the ladder, have not found their way
upwards significantly blocked by prejudice and antagonism from the native-
born. Neither, as we have seen, were the Brazilians themselves denied
participation in the development of the country, for though the influence
of foreign investment and of immigrant enterprise was crucial, Brazilians
who could match foreign enterprise and efficiency have found no difficulty
in enjoying fully the fruits of economic growth. The economic field has
been a comparatively open one, in which the personal characteristics of
the individual had freer play in the search for success than was the case,
for example, even in the United States, where an already entrenched
industry and a rigid set of national prejudices modified severely, for
the immigrant, the claim of equality of opportunity. The ultimate
prizes, perhaps, were bigger and more numerous in the United States than
they have been hitherto in Brazil; yet in Brazil the difficulties involved
in attaining them have been more closely the same for everybody. To
this generalisation, of course, a notable exception must be made for
the Negro, who, whatever may be the basic reasons, has failed to enjoy
the advantages of economic development to the same degree as others in
Brazil. We have already made reference to the tacit handicap under
which the Negro in Brazil suffers: yet these social pressures in themselves
are not such as to prevent the Negro from succeeding in private enterprise
had he an active desire to do so, while the handicap of education has

/not been

not been necessarily greater than that of many European immigrants to Brazil. [6/] The answer to this problem must therefore be sought elsewhere, particularly, perhaps, in the personal and the social factors which lead some individuals in an expanding economy to success and others to failure.

It must not be thought, however, that such equality of opportunity as has existed in the growing urban centres implies the presence, in Brazil, of a spirit of egalitarianism. Indeed, in so far as any general social philosophy can be said to inform the life of Brazil, its tendency is rather towards the emphasis of differences in social status and not their denial. Although Brazil no longer possesses a titular aristocracy, there nevertheless remains a "lay" aristocracy consisting of members of "old" families, some tracing their ancestry to the Portuguese nobility, but the majority basing their claim to notability largely upon the fact that their forefatehrs were early settlers in Brazil: the "four hundred years" families of Sao Paulo are examples of this. But such matters concern a small minority of the population. It is more immediately significant to note the explicit manner in which differences in social status are manifested, from the top to the bottom of the social hierarchy. It may be observed in the relationship between customer and waiter, between fare and taxi-driver, between housewife and servant, purchaser and shop assistant, pedestrian and policeman: the

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6/   In this connection it is perhaps worth noting that a preliminary
      analysis of material arising from the writer's current study of
      social mobility in São Paulo shows that illiteracy is by no means
      an insuperable barrier, in this environment, to upward mobility.
      Using six status categories, it can be shown that nearly 3 per cent
      of informants' fathers in Categories 1 and 2, (the highest), 5 per
      cent in Category 3 and 15 per cent in Category 4, were illiterate.
      In the younger generation represented by the male informants them-
      selves, however, these proportions are very much smaller, and
      among those aged 20-26, none who were illiterate had achieved a
      status higher than Category 5. Educational attainment thus
      seems to be of increasing significance as the economy reaches
      higher levels of development and a more rigid structure.

relationship may be friendly, but the personal inequality is left in no doubt. The same pattern is visible in the public service where, despite attempts at reform, the personal favour of departmental superiors remains important in appointment and dismissal (although the latter power is rarely exercised), and generally speaking a high administrative post is looked upon as a source of personal power which may be exercised on behalf of the holder and his friends. Many observers have noted the survival of a "feudal" class system in Brazil; and it is true that in the rural areas particularly there can be found examples of a relationship between landowner and tenant which exhibit some of the characteristics of medieval feudalism in Europe. It is perhaps from this origin, and from the tradition of slavery, [7] that the unquestioning recognition of status differences has come. There is no doubt that the weighting of the educational scales in favour of the upper status groups does much to perpetuate it. [8] In Brazil, therefore, a rise in social status is probably a more significant and more dramatic experience to the individual than is the case in Europe or the United States, because he has greater liberty to enjoy to the full its social and economic advantages. The Brazilian community does not demand of its richer or more powerful members the pretence that they are "just the same" as others. The rich and the

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[7] The abolition of slavery in Brazil dates from as recently as 1888.

[8] In the social mobility study in São Paulo, preliminary analysis shows that the fathers of illiterates were almost invariably of status Category 6 (the lowest). Secondary schools had been attended by roughly 8 per cent of those whose fathers were of Category 6, by some 35 per cent of those of Category 3 and 4 origin, and by nearly 100 per cent of those of Category 1 origin. Among University students less than ten per cent were, in 1956, of Category 5 or 6 origin: Hutchinson, B., "Origem sócio-economica dos estudantes universitários de São Paulo", Educação e Ciências Sociais, I, N° 3, 1956.

powerful advertise rather than conceal their advantages, and feel
little inhibition in exploiting these for the social, financial or
political aggrandisement of themselves or, more rarely, of their
friends.

It follows that an individual intent upon climbing to the
higher ranges of the social hierarchy will, if he can, knock away
the ladder up which he has come.   He will feel little obligation
(as he might do, for example, in the United States) to identify
himself with, or even to recognise, the humble class of his origin;
nor will he feel that he has blazed a trail upwards which others
can follow.   On the contrary, his preoccupation will be to
emphasise his difference from the man in the street, and to attribute
his success to the fact that he is notably different, and not the
same as other people.   A recent study in Sao Paulo has shown 2/
that for the Brazilian the prestige of an occupation is dependent
not only upon the nature and functions of the work itself but also,
and perhaps even more, upon an appreciation of the type of individual
who occupies it.   That is to say, an occupation will have high prestige
not merely because it requires special skill or training, but because
the type of person who has such an occupation is out of the ordinary.
The converse holds for occupations of lower prestige.   Such an
emphasis upon the individual, combined with the slow development
in Brazil of sense of responsability to the community, gives to
the successful man the means of maintaining and furthering his
position which are far greater than those to which he could have
recourse in Europe or North America, where the "ethics" of business
and even of politics serve to limit self-interest.

2/   Martuscelli, C., "O julgamento de ocupações: um estudio preliminar",
     Educação e Ciências Sociais, March, 1957.   This forms part
     of the social mobility project to which reference has already
     been made.

In these several ways, then, the Brazilian, and the immigrant to Brazil, has great freedom both in acquiring and in enjoying higher social status. It is a situation in which individual advantages, of personality, of shrewdness, of education, of financial resource, may be fully utilised. It is a social milieu in which upward social mobility is admired and encouraged even by those who realise that their successful relatives and friends will ultimately discard them; and it is a situation in which the frequency and the degree of movement between one status level and another might be expected to be considerable.

A preliminary analysis[10] of social mobility data arising from the Sao Paulo inquiry shows, from a comparison of the son's status category with that of his father, that a large amount of vertical mobility is occurring among the city's population. A comparison with corresponding figures referring to the British population (table 1) shows also how much greater is the degree of upward mobility in Sao Paulo.

It will be noticed that the Sao Paulo figures have a generally upward tendency, while those for Great Britain are more consistent with a hypothesis of "exchange" of status categories - that is, that in Britain those who move upward take the place of those who move down. Such a conclusion seems reasonable in view of the rapid rate at which commerce and industry are developing in Brazil, thus throwing open a large number of new higher status positions. In Britain, on the other hand, a slower rate of economic change produces new positions more rarely.

It is possible, however, that these global figures conceal a greater degree of mobility in certain national groups of the Sao Paulo population than in others. There seems some justification, for example, for expecting vertical mobility to be less common among persons of Brazilian, than among those of foreign, parentage, a smaller rate of movement among persons of Brazilian origin possibly being related to the higher than average proportion of these in the two extreme status categories (1 and 6), who (apart from

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10/ For the studies of occupational grading upon which the six status categories used in the analysis were based, see: Hutchinson, B., "The social grading of occupations in Brazil, "British Journal of Sociology, viii, 1957; Castaldi, C, "Nota sobre a classificaçao das ocupaçoes quanto ao prestigio social, entre um grupo de emigrantes italianos e seus descendentes na cidade de Sao Paulo, "Educaçao e Ciencias Sociais, December, 1956.

Table 1

THE PROPORTION OF ADULT MALE SUBJECTS WHOSE STATUS CATEGORY
WAS HIGHER, LOWER OR THE SAME AS THAT OF THEIR FATHERS:
SAO PAULO COMPARED WITH GREAT BRITAIN

Subject's Status Category	Sao Paulo (percentages)	Great Britain a/ (percentages)
2 Categories or more higher	16.6) 40.5	13.2) 29.4
1 Category higher	23.9)	16.2)
The Same	42.5	35.1
1 Category lower	13.0) 17.0	19.2) 35.5
2 Categories or more lower	4.0)	16.3)
Total (percentages)	1 081.0	3 497.0

a/ Figures for Great Britain computed from Class, D. V., (Ed.), Social
Mobility in Britain, London, 1954, Table 2, p.183.

the special forces which tend to curb mobility from these categories[11] have
the possibility of moving in one direction only. An analysis of the national
origin of mobile and immobile individuals revealed a clear tendency for
persons of Brazilian origin to be less, and for the foreigner to be more,
mobile. (In table 2 this analysis is restricted to persons who moved two
or more categories above or below that of their fathers, in order to point
the differences more clearly).

Reading across the table, it will be seen that the proportion of men
of Brazilian origin becomes greater, while the proportion of foreign origin

11/ For example, the greater part of the Negro population is assembled in
Category 6 (the lowest), and for these people upward mobility is more
difficult than for the whites in the same category. Conversely, Brazilians
in Category 1, because of the network of family loyalty and mutual
support, have a greater opportunity of retaining the status to which they
were born, quite apart from the opportunities for higher education which
lower categories do not share to a like degree.

Table 2

THE NATIONAL ORIGIN OF THE SUBJECT AND OF HIS FATHER, AMONG SUBJECTS WHO HAD MOVED TWO OR MORE STATUS CATEGORIES ABOVE OR BELOW THAT OF THEIR FATHERS.

National origin	Related to Father's origin			Related to Subject's Origin		
	Higher status	Same status	Lower status	Higher status	Same status	Lower status
	(Percentages)					
Brazilian	31.4	45.3	52.4	68.6	70.9	85.7
Portugal	19.8	10.2	4.8	11.4	2.0	2.4
Italy	29.6	22.3	16.6	8.1	5.4	2.4
Spain	3.5	5.4	9.5	1.1	3.4	-
Germany	2.3	2.0	-	1.7	1.3	-
Japan	2.9	2.0	2.4	1.7	1.4	-
Others	10.5	12.8	14.3	7.4	15.6	9.5
Foreign	68.6	54.7	47.6	31.4	29.1	14.3
Total (percentages)	175	461	42	175	461	42

/becomes smaller

becomes smaller, as we pass from those who moved above to those who moved below their father's status category. The tendency is repeated in the more detailed analysis according to specific foreign countries of origin, although it will be noticed that immigrants from Spain[12/] and those from a miscellaneous grouping of European and Middle-Eastern countries, tended to follow the pattern of the Brazilian born, and were less successful in raising their status.

The opportunities offered by the current phase of economic development seems, therefore, to have been grasped more eagerly by the immigrant and his son than by the Brazilian; and in the manipulation of these opportunities many immigrants found advantage, particularly in the earlier years, in remaining within a fairly limited primary group of their own compatriots. This tendency is visible among most immigrants, although it is particularly marked among those of Italian origin. There were special reasons for the tenacity of Italian group feeling, among them the fact that the Italian peasant had not left his mother country because he wished to help in the creation of a society of greater justice than his own, but because the economic problems of Italy dictated it. Consequently, whether he arrived in Brazil as an independent or as an assisted immigrant, his goal was the same: to acquire enough money to enable him to return to his own country[13/]. He had no wish to merge himself in Brazil, and in Sao Paulo he united himself, whenever possible, with his compatriots, in order to reproduce in Brazil a social environment similar to that he had left. The existence of such groups may still be identified, among the Italians, by the festas devoted to Catholic saints of importance in the regions of Italy from which the immigrant came. An example, from among several that could be quoted, is the festa of San Vito Martire, identifying immigrants from Polignano a Mare, a fishing village north of Bari, of which this saint is

12/ This may be partly explained by the high illiteracy rate among those of Spanish birth, 44 per cent of whom were illiterate, compared with 12.2 per cent illiterate among the whole Sao Paulo sample. On the other hand both Portuguese immigrants (30.5 per cent illiterate) and Italian (22.7 per cent) were able to overcome a similar, though a smaller, handicap.

13/ In this connexion it is interesting to note that similar motives still inspire the internal migrant coming to Sao Paulo from the rural areas of Brazil. The consequent problems of adjustment, and of the emergence of a permanently established industrial labour force, are raised by Lopes, J.R.B., "Dados sobre a fixação do operario rural na indústria", Educação e Ciencias Sociais, 1957, (forthcoming).

the patron[14].

The restricted range of occupations which immigrants of certain nationalities first entered, itself assisted in consolidating the immigrant primary group. Thus, many Portuguese immigrants preferred to become retail grocers and fruiterers, while the Italian from, for example, the town of Polignano a Mare, to which we have referred, characteristically entered one or other of five occupations, which in the course of time became traditional: corn-merchant, newspaper-seller, fruit vendor, fish vendor or waste-paper and empty bottle merchant. The factors which led to this restriction in occupational choice to some extent sprang from the economic environment of Sao Paulo; but to a more important degree they stemmed from experience and skill which the immigrant brought with him from his native country. This is, of course, a commonplace of immigration. On the other hand, Sao Paulo can show few examples of immigrants' being identified with certain occupations (as the Irish immigrant in the United States, for example, was identified with unskilled manual labour, and the Pole with the Chicago slaughter house) merely because of the special demands of the labour market at the time of their arrival. Moreover, to those accustomed to thinking in the economic terms of Western Europe or even of the United States, the high proportion of immigrants who entered the self-employed rather than the wage-earning category is quite remarkable, although the absence of large-scale industry on their arrival largely explains it. The growth of such private businesses, calling for an increase in responsible administrative and executive personnel, for a time redoubled immigrant group cohesion through inter-marriage between families made for business rather than sentimental reasons. Indeed, it seems clear that immigrant marriages were largely endogamous until the economic fortunes of the individual were sufficiently prosperous to justify marriage outside the group of his compatriots.[15] Inter-marriage between foreign and Brazilian-born, like

14/ Castaldi, C., "Mobilidade ocupacional de um grupo primário de imi-
    grantes italianos na cidade de Sao Paulo", Educaçao e Ciencias Sociais,
    March, 1957.

15/ Cf. Hutchinson, B., "Some evidence related to matrimonial selection
    and immigrant assimilation in Brazil," Population Studies, xi,
    November, 1957.

moving to a new non-immigrant district of the city, seems to symbolise a
loosening of ties binding the immigrant to his own people and a growing
identification with Brazil.

Though illiteracy has not always been an insuperable obstacle to
such economic success, family cohesion made lack of education easier to
overcome, through providing an educated second generation to direct the
increasingly prosperous and complex businesses set up by their fathers.
The rise of an illiterate man to spectacular prosperity and high social
status has usually been sustained by the assistance of educated sons or
nephews in those sectors of his business which required, for example,
mathematical, legal or other specialised knowledge. Immigrants in
general, therefore, give considerable importance to the education of their
children. It can be shown that the University of Sao Paulo receives
a higher than expected proportion of the foreign-born and of those with
a foreign ancestry. While all faculties contain large numbers of students
of non-Brazilian origin, there is a tendency for the more purely Brazilian
students to favour older faculties, such as Law and Medicine. The newer
and more technical faculties, such as Pharmacy, Politechnics and even
Economics, seem to be more favoured by students of non-Brazilian family
origin, suggesting that children of foreign origin (not only those of
foreign birth) are more ready to take advantage of new occupational
opportunities existing in Sao Paulo – a conclusion consistent with the
greater degree of social mobility observed among immigrants, and with
the need of family business for technically trained relatives. It is
noticeable also that children of low status origin tend more frequently
to enter the newer faculties, although it must be remembered that the
successful pursuit of the older liberal professions depends to a
significant extent upon the social influence and associations which the
young practitioner can command. The technical professions, such as
engineering and the like, are perhaps less at the mercy of considerations
which are not purely professional, and of social advantages which the
student of lower status origin does not command.

But educational achievement carries with it the possibility of
upward mobility. Hence the emphasis which the immigrant primary group

/places upon

places upon the education of its younger members sows the seeds of its
own disintegration. Although this process may be retarded by the tendency
for an educated son to enter his father's business, (thus prolonging the
life of the immigrant primary group), eventually it becomes dominant.
Indeed, the course of the disintegration of the immigrant primary group,
and of the consanguine family pattern, follows closely in Sao Paulo the
lines suggested by Talcott Parsons' analysis of the rise of western
industrial society. His argument,[16] it will be remembered, postulate;
the disappearance of wider kinship relationships and the survival of a
conjugal family of restricted size. Parsons rightly emphasises the
disintegrative effects of vertical mobility and shows clearly that, when
this movement is widespread, it is incompatible with the continuance of
the far-reaching reciprocal obligations associated with the wider family
pattern. The disintegration of immigrant groups in Sao Paulo and its
consequences appear to fall with little distortion within the framework
which Parsons offers.

This disintegration, though in Sao Paulo of comparatively recent
origin, marks the beginning of the last phase of an immigrant city: it is
the preliminary to a final consolidation of the various national elements
of the population. Meanwhile, Sao Paulo remains an open city, socially
and economically undefended, within whose instability men may seek their
own ends until the hardening of a new structural framework, already
visible, puts an end, for the time being, to the opportunities which
always arise as an economic frontier is pushed back. We may contrast
such a situation with that in, for example, Great Britain, where the
economic frontier disappeared long ago, and individual opportunity is
stringently limited by relatively rigid forms of social and economic
behaviour, coupled with other limitations imposed by a Welfare State.

16/ Parsons, T., "The Social System", London, 1952. Cf. his analysis
of what he terms the "Universalistic-Achievement Pattern" of
western society.