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ASPECTS OF THE ADJUSTMENT OF
RURAL MIGRANTS TO URBAN-INDUSTRIAL
CONDITIONS IN SAO PAULO, BRAZIL

by Juarez Rubens Brandão Lopes

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I. NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Industrialization and urbanization in Brazil, as elsewhere, are closely correlated. While the role of foreign immigration in this process can hardly be overestimated, rural migration to the cities is today probably the main factor in urban growth, since regulations in the thirties considerably curbed the coming of immigrants to the country.^{1/}

The development of coffee plantations on a large scale in the State of São Paulo during the second half of the last century, and later the growth of industry in the same area, created great differences in social organization within Brazil; and these changes led Lambert to speak of "two levels of Brazilian civilization".^{2/} The rural migrant, who is so important an element in the labour supply of the new economy, is abandoning a traditional society and entering an urban-industrial one.

^{1/} Some facts about São Paulo are appropriate here. There was around the 1890's an acceleration of the city's growth just when new sources of power gave a strong impetus to the industrialization of the region. The population of the city at the time of the several censuses was the following: 1872 - 31 385; 1890 - 64 934; 1900 - 239 820; 1920 - 579 033; 1940 - 1 326 261; and 1950 - 2 198 096.

Industrial activities in Brazil are highly concentrated in the State of São Paulo, and within the State in the city itself. More than 512 000 of the 1 250 000 industrial workers in Brazil are in Sao Paulo State (1953). More than half the industrial establishments, two-thirds of the workers and more than 70 per cent of the value of industrial production of the State are in the city and its neighboring municípios (Santo André, São Bernardo and São Caetano; data for 1951).

Approximately 55 per cent of the 4 400 000 immigrants who came to Brazil from 1878 to 1937 entered the State of Sao Paulo (T. Lynn Smith, Brazil: People and Institutions, Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1946, p. 288). Internal migrants have exceeded the number of immigrants into the State ever since 1934. A survey of the elementary school population of the city of Sao Paulo shows that in recent years internal migration probably exceeds foreign immigration as a factor in its growth in the proportion of two to one (Vicente Unzer de Almeida and Octávio Mendes Sobrinho, Migração Rural-Urbana, São Paulo: Diretoria de Publicidade Agrícola da Secretaria da Agricultura do Estado de São Paulo, 1951, pp. 76, 79 and 121).

^{2/} Jacques Lambert, Le Brésil. Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1953, pp. 64-82.

Considerations such as these point to the importance of studying the participation in the production-lines of the modern paulista factory of people coming from economies, often of a quasi-subsistence level, based to a large extent on traditional forms of behaviour. This paper presents some results of an exploratory research in this area.^{3/}

A medium-sized factory in São Paulo was chosen and its labour force studied. Data were collected in interviews with the workers either at their homes or at work. The following topics are here dealt with: origin of the factory worker; types of rural migration contributing to the factory supply of labour; and the adjustment of the rural migrant to work in the urban milieu, especially to factory work. The last item is the main focus of the paper, data having been selected for their bearing on the problem of the adaptation of rural migrants to work in an urban environment.

II. THE FACTORY AND THE NATURE OF ITS PRODUCTIVE PROCESS

The selected factory was formed a few years after the second world war with the technical help of a European company. Foreign workers occupy today the main managerial, technical and supervisory positions in the plant,^{4/} and they also constitute most of the skilled labour. The factory employees, predominantly male, number about 500; women are approximately 10 per cent of the total, and these work almost exclusively in the office and in the inspection department.

Two machine parts are made by the company. In the shop there are the following main sections: a foundry, four production-lines, a maintenance

^{3/} The research is part of a project on "Education and Social Mobility in São Paulo", under the general direction of Bertram Hutchinson, sponsored by the Centro Brasileiro de Pesquisas Educacionais. The publication of a complete report of results of the project is being undertaken by the Centro. We offer our thanks to Miss Liliansa Bonini for the interview of some of the female workers of the factory studied.

^{4/} An initial group was specially sent from Europe to start factory operations.

department, a department of inspection of tools and of quality-control devices, a tool- and die-making shop, and a product inspection department. Several other smaller sections (general storeroom, toolroom, finished product storage, etc.) complete the picture.

The productive process is on a serialized-manufacture basis, the machines being arranged on production-lines. The castings made in the foundry pass from machine to machine, one or two operations being done by semi-skilled workers at each stage, and the product is finished at the end of the line. Prior to operation, set-up men adjust the machines according to design specifications, and inspectors set up quality-control devices located at the side of each machine to enable the operators, from time to time, to check whether the work is within given tolerance limits. Higher-skilled quality-control inspectors take measurements on half-processed parts, withdrawn at random, to detect errors and take steps for the readjustment of machines or of quality-control devices where these are necessary.

This short description of the productive process is enough to show the unskilled and semi-skilled character of most of the work done. More than four-fifths of shop employees are in this class; skilled workers, inspectors, sub-foremen, foremen and technicians constitute only about 18 per cent of the total. Of the semi- and unskilled workers, almost three-fourths are Brazilians who migrated to the city of São Paulo, only 7 per cent having been born in the city; the remaining 19 per cent have come from abroad.^{5/}

III. THE RURAL MIGRANTS

The segmentation of the productive process into a series of repetitive and low-skilled operations explains the high proportion of workers in the factory who came from rural communities. On the basis of our interviews, it can be estimated that probably no less than two-thirds of those holding semi- or unskilled jobs either worked in agriculture itself or lived in

^{5/} These data result from a tabulation of the factory employees in the beginning of 1957.

very close touch with rural life and activities in villages and small towns of the Brazilian hinterland.

There are in the factory in fact two types of migrants. About two-thirds have come from the interior of the State of São Paulo or of neighbouring areas; the remainder migrated from the Northeastern region. It is the original environment of the latter group which offers the most vivid contrast to the present one. The nordestinos typically came from families of sitiantes (small owners of land) or of meeiros (sharecroppers), among whom the work unit was the conjugal family, practising what was very close to a subsistence economy. The usually small part of the crops remaining after personal consumption had been met was sold at local fairs. (Those who came from areas nearer the coastal towns produced a larger proportion of the crop for market.) In many instances land ownership was not clearly individualized, land being frequently conceived as belonging to the family group, and not divided on the occasion of the death of its head. Hence if one member of the family migrated, his portion was cultivated by the others, who would make room for him on his return.^{6/} This situation is reflected in the comment of a worker from Ceará: "If I have a piece of land and my brother works on it, what he gets from it belongs to him". This assertion, on the other hand, shows also that individual property with respect to livestock and the products of the land is well defined. (According to the declaration of another worker each member of his family had his own cattle.) Interviews with nordestinos from regions nearer the coastal towns, where the rural economy is at a more commercialized stage, show a correspondingly greater individualization of land holding. Some of these before coming South sold their holding to brothers, "so that it could stay in the family". Another feature of the original rural environment of these workers is the very frequent association of agricultural with commercial activities. In many cases the father not only worked on the land but had other occupations, such as that of barber

^{6/} Cf. Marvin Harris, Town and Country in Brazil. New York: Columbia University Press, 1956, p. 86.

or of buying and selling at fairs. In other cases, one member of the family left the land and started negócios por conta própria (any kind of independent business, as peddling, owning small shops, etc.). Those nordestinos who came from small towns lived in an environment which did not differ much from that described above. Although their families dwelt, and mostly still dwell, in the town where its members have commercial occupations, they are also likely to own pieces of land nearby, or, if they do not, are sure to have close relatives living and working in the surrounding rural area. Ties between town and country in their original environment thus are intimate and numerous.

While it is true that climatic conditions and the periodic drought which afflicts the semi-arid Nordeste are the main factors responsible for the high rate of mobility in its population, migration nevertheless does not seem to occur only at times of drought. There is in the people a permanent readiness to move and to seek better living conditions elsewhere. Nordestinos of the factory usually came South in their late teens or early twenties, most frequently migrating alone or at most with a relative or someone from their home town: migration in family groups has been rare. Predisposed to move, a bad crop or even a mere sign that it is not likely to rain, encourages the younger men - those who have the best opportunities of finding a job - to leave home to try their fortune in São Paulo. It is clear from our interviews that the factory employees from the Northeastern region are clearly distinguishable from the main body of this migratory movement, most of which is composed of family groups and come South impelled by critical climatic conditions.^{7/} Those who find employment in factories - if this study may be regarded as representative - constitute a more continuous stream of single, young men, coming by themselves and motivated not only economically (undoubtedly the main factor) but also by a desire for new experiences.^{8/} Their migration to São Paulo should also be seen

7/ T. Lynn Smith, op. cit., pp. 277-80.

8/ Cf. Celeste Souza de Andrade, "Migrantes nacionais no Estado de São Paulo", Sociologia, vol. XIV, n° 2 (maio de 1952), pp. 123-27.

against the background of the mobility characteristic of their families. Prior to coming South, these workers in many instances had already left their homes several times and had gone to cities. It is frequently the case that one or more members of the family is away from the holding. However it is important to mention that the nordestino migrant rarely comes intending to stay, but almost always plans to be in the city only long enough to earn sufficient money to start again in his home community under better conditions.

Although temporary mobility of its members is frequent, the family of the nordestino is usually rooted to the land; among the migrants from the interior of São Paulo, on the other hand, the family group is itself mobile. The State was opened up with the spread of coffee (more recently cotton and cattle) to the west, this process dating mostly from the last seventy years and still continuing. As the land worked extensively lost its fertility, new lands further west were brought under cultivation, and as a result, areas that were at a pioneer stage not many years ago are already becoming depopulated.^{9/} There is therefore a continuous movement of population from area to area and a counter-movement to the east towards the city of São Paulo. A large number of paulistas interviewed in the factory came from rural areas which were opened up only half a century ago and already presented in the decade 1940-50 a demographic loss. As was to be expected, therefore, the migration of these families from rural areas of the State of São Paulo is in many instances the final episode of a long process of mobility from one rural area to another. They were usually small landowners, sharecroppers, or colonos and field-hands in coffee and cotton plantations, but unlike the nordestinos, however, their families, immersed in a commercialized economy, were engaged in planting coffee or cotton for market. As among those from the Northeastern region, though less often so, commercial activities were sometimes associated with agricultural pursuits.

^{9/} On the settling of the State of São Paulo, see Sérgio Milliet, Roteiro do café e outros ensaios. São Paulo: Coleção Departamento de Cultura, 1939, and Pierre Monbeig, Pionniers et Planteurs de São Paulo. Paris: Librairie Armand Colin, 1952.

The migration to the city is typically a movement of the entire family and represents an attempt to settle permanently.

In brief, in the communities of the migrants' origin, work, being part of family life, was to a considerable extent controlled by traditional norms. Even in the case of those who came from the interior of the State of São Paulo - where the degree of commercialization and individualization of economic behaviour is more extensive - the methods used, the division of labour, the authority patterns and the pace of activities had, when compared to urban economic conduct, a clearly traditional character. This was even more emphatically the case with the nordestinos, engaged, as they usually were, in subsistence production. On the other hand, it must be emphasized that even among these there were economic relations and activities in which impersonal and rational behaviour was socially sanctioned, though this was more likely to be true in relationships with outsiders (the landowner, the merchant, etc.). With the exception of family members engaged in itinerant rural or urban commerce, such relationships were infrequent, and everyday work was regulated by customary norms. It should also be remembered that some of the migrants grew up in small towns and villages and had therefore participated, before coming to the city, in an economic life which, though imbedded in a folk society, was already commercialized.

IV. ADJUSTMENT TO URBAN WORK

How stable is the adjustment of this labour force of rural origin to the urban-industrial environment and what are the factors conditioning this adjustment? A cursory examination of the data reveals how frequently the migrants change occupations, not only from one branch of industry to another (as was to be expected from the low level of skill of workers in serialized manufacture), but also and more significantly from factory to store, to marginal occupations such as that of street peddlers, or even, leaving the city, to rural pursuits, only to be back later to try again at industrial employment. The examination of the problem may be divided into two parts. There is first a consideration of the process of

/accomodation to

accomodation to urban conditions, in order to see the duration of the migrant's stay. Secondly, we must analyse the stability of his new status, namely as an industrial worker.

In general permanent adjustment to urban conditions is easier for the paulista migrant than for those coming from the Northeastern region. This is so, not only because the paulista comes from an environment that is closer, economically and culturally, to that of the city, but also because of the conditions of his migration, his intention to settle permanently in Sao Paulo and the fact that the family comes as a group to the city, which among other reasons makes it more probable for enough of the members to find employment and pool resources so as to support the entire group. The nordestino migrant, on the other hand, is usually involved in a longer process of adjustment. To start with, he comes with no intention of staying and so he frequently makes the journey between his rural community and the city several times before finally settling down in one or in the other. He not uncommonly migrates to São Paulo three or four times, each stay lasting from short periods of time to many years. In some cases the paulista or nordestino migrant when he comes for the first time is so upset by the noisy and agitated life of the city that in spite of his sometimes month-long journey he returns after only a few days, staying longer only on a second trip.

The difficulty of arranging living quarters, the need for the members of the family to work separately, the lack of freedom in urban work, the impersonality of relationships in the urban environment, exemplify some of the difficulties encountered by the rural migrant in his initial adjustment to the city. One worker who came from the interior of São Paulo, complained that at first the hard thing for him was to be unable to stop working when he felt like it. Another said that after a year in the city he was disgusted with his landlord who wanted to raise the rent, and went back to visit the plantation where he formerly worked and that he thought while there: "What? Am I going to work again with a hoe?" He came back and has already remained eleven years in São Paulo.

The appeal of the city's freedom for the young and the unmarried

(e.g., for

(e.g., for the nordestino who is alone in São Paulo), as well as the general preference for urban work, are important factors in tying migrants to the city. They do not hesitate to assert that a 10-hour day in the factory is not as hard as agricultural work. The long hours from sunrise to sunset, the hard climatic conditions under which rural activities take place, and the uncertainty of the harvest, are pointed to by all as exemplifying the hardships of work in the fields. There seems to be little doubt, however, that this devaluation of agricultural work reflects, not only its heaviness, but also a cultural disparagement of physical labour. A worker from Bahia, phrasing in a significant way why his need to come to São Paulo was not so great as that of his cousin, said, "He really worked; not like me (who worked with relatives in a store), but trabalho mais braçal! (unskilled heavy manual work)."

Sometimes the nordestino migrant still has the intention of saving money and then going back; but he stays on because he cannot earn enough money to do what he wants at home. A migrant from Ceará said that after three years in the South he returned to his rural community, but came back again to São Paulo because "(his) relatives were all well off, and (he) had only little money that was not enough to start anything on (his) own". The prestige gained by the migration, an important element in the situation, is shown in the relish with which they describe their trips home, where sometimes they go only for short visits, and in which, spending freely, going by air, etc. a migrant may spend more than one or two months wages.

Marriage, buying a lot or a house in the city, staying several years in the same employment which by law entitles the worker to dismissal compensation,^{10/} are some of the main factors which tie the migrant to the urban environment. Instability in industrial employment and lack of permanence in the city are more pronounced, as already mentioned, among unmarried migrants who are alone in São Paulo, a situation more frequently found among those from the Northeast: the paulistas, who more often have come to the city in family groups, are married or otherwise live with

^{10/} See below p. 16 et seq.

/their parental

their parental family. Nordestinos who are steady in their jobs are usually found to have married in the city, more often than not with girls from their home communities. As one of them explained, he did not at first care to get a better position in the factory: "I was young... unmarried, you know. I and the fellow next to me used to engage in a lot of horse-play. When I began going steady with a girl, then I started worrying about improving my job".

Yet even those who have reached a fairly stable adjustment to urban conditions and do not think of leaving the city, still consider going back at times when there are lay-offs - especially those whose families are still in the rural community.^{11/} In the business slump which occurred in 1956, when the factory laid off many workers, several rural migrants whose movements could be checked had gone back to rural areas after dismissal.

Adjustment to the city does not necessarily mean, however, satisfaction with the status of factory worker. All migrants, with few if any exceptions, value highly the possibility of trabalhar por conta própria (working on one's own resources; independent, usually commercial work).^{12/} "I'll tell you", confided one migrant dejectedly, "if it were possible I'd like to work por minha conta (on my own). Any job where I'd give the orders... it could be anything, a liquor shop, a food store. Anything that could be mine. Nobody would give me orders there, see?"

The recurring theme is the freedom of the man who works for himself. The association between agricultural and commercial activities in their communities of origin reflects this wish of being independent. Now in São Paulo they dream of opening a business por conta in the city or in the rural

^{11/} The fact referred previously that land in the Northeast is not subdivided but instead in many instances is held in common by the family group (see above p.4) provides an enduring link between the migrant and the rural world.

^{12/} This clearly is a widely diffused value in Brazil. The concern in this paper is however to point out its strength, the forms taken by it among rural migrants and the consequences therefrom for the stability of an industrial labour force in which they are an important element.

milieu, whether it be peddling, any kind of petty commercial establishment, owning a truck or a taxi, making furniture, etc. For many, therefore, factory employment is a means of earning enough money to be able to become "independent". As a worker stated explicitly: "I'd like to engage in commerce. That's the reason I'm putting up with this night work in the factory!" Among the consequences of this orientation are a high labour turnover and low working efficiency.

Frequently workers, while remaining in factory employment, use their free time to do business on the side, as, for instance, acting as estate agents or selling clothes in the streets. In their occupational histories it can be observed also how frequently they try their luck in independent occupations when dismissed, sometimes even quitting their job with this express purpose. More often than not they re-enter employment after discovering the difficulty of making a living from independent business.

The effect of this occupational orientation is not restricted to labour turnover, for even when the migrant stays in a job for a long period of time his behaviour in it is influenced by the latent desire for independence. Any cause for dissatisfaction may bring this to the surface and so affect his conduct. There are two principal means of getting money to achieve his goal: saving from his wages and receiving dismissal compensation. How the migrant behaves under these circumstances must now be examined.

V. PRODUCTION BEHAVIOUR IN THE FACTORY

The migrant has come from a traditional society to the production-line of a modern factory, and in considering his production behaviour we may ask: To what extent does it continue to be influenced by traditional values and patterns, and what conditions make for "rational" conduct motivated by individual self-interest?

At first sight, the worker's behaviour in work seems to be completely comprehensible in terms of a rational model. One may say that he uses factory employment, labour law and the union to attain his objective of working independently. But it is enough to state this to see the continuing
/influence of

influence of traditional values in determining the end he has in view. Several other factors which condition his behaviour should be viewed in relation to his rural origin. The absence, for instance, of patterns of organized action among the migrants should be understood as deriving, from among other sources, from the absence of collective action in rural Brazil beyond the orbit of kinship and neighbourhood relationships.

(Even the mutirão, a rural form of mutual aid which at least enlarges the limits of action beyond the confines of the family, is disappearing, or has already disappeared, in most regions.) Nothing in his experience prior to coming to industry prepared the migrant to engage in collective action with others with whom he has in common only a similarity of position in the industrial structure. He views the union as something made, not by him, but for him by others.^{13/} In referring to it, he significantly uses the pronoun "they" instead of "we". In the same way as he uses government social security agencies and employers' social services for workers, he also uses the union for private ends (e.g., the services of the union lawyer to deal with individual problems), and his attitude towards it is dependent upon its success in solving his difficulties. There is almost no participation by the migrants in union affairs, their role being that of passive though (as they are aware that what is decided there will affect their individual interests) interested spectators.^{14/}

^{13/} The union is sometimes implicitly identified with the government, as for instance when they refer to wage increases resulting from union action as increases by law, to distinguish them from spontaneous increases given by management. One should point out that in Brazil there is detailed governmental regulation of the formation of unions, their internal constitution, the forms they may take, their action, etc., not to speak of the many instances, especially in the past, of government-controlled unions.

^{14/} This is not to say that there is no solidarity among them and no awareness of conflict of interests with employers, but the group circumscribed by these sentiments is not that of industrial workers, not even that of an urban lower class - those in a new social situation - but the traditional lower class in which are included factory workers, people in urban menial occupations, small sitiantes, sharecroppers and field-hands. They are sentiments, therefore, shared by people who are neither objectively nor subjectively integrated in the urban-industrial environment and who alternate between these rural and urban occupations.

The lack of organized action is also reflected in the absence of clearly defined leadership and in the rudimentary state of informal organization at the shop level. Informal relationships are formed sometimes on the basis of proximity in work and similarity of interests, but also frequently on that of kinship or that of having come from the same town or region. But what is pertinent at this point is the absence of norms related to level of production, developed by the workers as a group, as distinct from norms carried over from society at large, or from the communities in which they formerly lived. This will be exemplified below in greater detail.

In the lack of social control of individual production by the workers as a group, two other influences on production remain to be examined: (a) that of traditional values and patterns internalized while they grow up in the rural communities and which, even in the absence of the groups which enforced them, continue to be effective; and (b) that of individual interests as socially defined in the situation.

The first type of influence is no doubt great. To observe the effects of traditional elements on conduct and evaluate their importance is, however, a difficult task, not only because they do not actuate in clear and explicit ways, but also because they present many variations according to the region from which the worker came. Nevertheless, the fact itself is clearly manifested in many incidental ways, such as the often used expression "cumprir a obrigação" (to do one's duty), by which is meant, not duties explicitly set up as pertaining to the job, but what is traditionally understood as one's obligations. In the words of one from rural Sao Paulo - who because he never talks or interrupts his work is called by the others lavrador (peasant): "There are some workers who arrelaxam (get careless, flag), and saying they earn too little, and so on, start to slow down. The worker who is good always works the same. Never changes his pace, one way or the other".

According to the traditional conception of the employment relationship, one should do the "right" amount of work for a just retribution. What is right derives necessarily from custom and is, by its very nature, indefinite.

The good worker is he who, by general consensus, does his work in a way traditionally considered right. There is an upper as well as a lower limit of effort: A gente não deve se matar (one should not kill oneself working). The traditional conception of work, in which rights and duties of employer and employee in large measure derive from traditional class relations, is almost impossible to maintain under urban-industrial conditions, in which consensus with respect to these relations tends to weaken.

In this situation individuals must use personal criteria of what is just or else must orient their conduct by rational norms, no longer acting according to substantive precepts, but in the ways most advantageous to their own interests. The way the migrant worker views his interests, and how he tries to implement them, depend upon beliefs and values which have developed in the city, under the influence of rural traditions, in the give and take of ideas and impressions occurring among people similarly situated.

Rational patterns of behaviour are not unknown in the rural communities from which the workers came. As we have already indicated, even in Northeastern families living under conditions closest to a subsistence economy, it was not unusual for someone in the group to engage in commercial activities in a small scale. The change in their economic life, great as it was, consisted in broadening the sphere of action in which rational patterns of conduct prevailed. What was incidental and sporadic became, with migration to the city, the very basis of economic existence.

Besides the effect on their objectives of the occupational orientation brought from the rural world, the application of rational criteria depends upon the way workers in Sao Paulo define the meaning of such new phenomena as unions, labour laws, labour courts and social security agencies, under the impact of mass communication, political propaganda, etc.

The results of the interaction of such diverse factors is best seen by examining the migrants' behaviour in work. After some years in employment, it is extremely common for workers intentionally to lower their efficiency in order to be dismissed and receive seus direitos (literally /his rights;

his rights; the reference is to the compensation, equal to one month's pay for every year of service, which employers are obliged by law to pay for dismissal with no just cause).^{15/} On the other hand, employees complain that after they are a few years in the factory the management begins "to punish them", giving wage increases to newer employees and not to them, being less tolerant with them with respect to absence, tardiness, etc. These facts are, of course, mutually dependent. Beliefs about such behaviour on the part of employees and of management being widespread they tend to be self-fulfilling. Any wrong, real or imagined, makes the worker seek dismissal in order to get compensation. On the other hand, management, having the idea that all employees after some years become inefficient, begins to discriminate against semi- and unskilled workers (who are easily substituted) even before lowered productivity becomes manifest.

The situation should be examined in greater detail. Workers in the production lines believe that in their factory pay is better than average. Hence they decide to make efforts to be sent away only when they think they have been wronged, when they quarrel or when they attain a number of years in employment, and therefore think the dismissal compensation to which they would be entitled is large enough to enable them to go into the independent business they contemplate.

Another element in the situation is whether or not the line foreman can prevent the worker from disturbing the routine of his department by "punishing him". The relative facility with which most line workers can be substituted makes it difficult for them to make trouble. Even on the most difficult machines a new worker can be trained in a relatively short time, from a fortnight to a month at most. As there always are employees

^{15/} Rational conduct on the part of the migrant worker, by which factory employment is a means to attain his goal of being independent, results then in a typical cycle: he at first tries to be efficient para se fazer (to get a position with good pay) and after some years, when he thinks his dismissal compensation is sufficient to start him in business, begins to tie up production, in order to get dismissed. Failing in the independent job he may get another industrial employment and start a new cycle.

in less well-paid and lower-prestige jobs who want to work on the line, it is easy for the foreman to move the worker who is holding up production, and to put him in some job without prestige (cleaning up, etc.). This can be done with no reaction on the part of the working group, indicating again their low group-solidarity.

Substitution can only be effectuated when the worker is employed to perform indefinite jobs, and this is duly noted in his labour book, i.e. "general services" or "helper". When he has a definite occupation such as "latheman" or "inspector", the law prohibits his transfer to other employment without his consent.

Consequently, when the worker can be easily substituted, and therefore cannot "tie up" production and force his own dismissal, he at times asks his superior to recommend his dismissal in order to get compensation - which the latter can do easily enough at slack times when some workers have to be laid off anyway. The reasons for the foreman's acceding to the worker's request may be friendship, bribery or the wish to avoid future trouble with a hostile subordinate.

In those cases where the worker "ties up" production and cannot be changed to another place, there results a sometimes long-drawn conflict with the foreman, whose outcome^{16/} depends upon such matters as the amount of disruption the worker can cause (e.g., the difficulty of finding a substitute in the machine to work extra time so as not to delay the rest of the line), the amount of compensation he would have to receive to be dismissed, the degree of pressure on the foreman to get production done on schedule, etc.

Line foremen put hard-working employees on the first machine of the line. Workers work fast either because they consider this to be their obrigação, or because, being new in the factory, they want to improve their position, getting better jobs or salary increases. Others, on subsequent machines of the line, follow the pace of the first - unless they are tying up production - to avoid accumulating parts at their machines and

^{16/} Frequently such outcome is a compromise, the worker receiving part of the total compensation he could get.

attracting attention of the foreman. There is almost no sanction, organized or diffuse, on the part of the working group. Someone might get angry with the fast producer at the front and call him names, but as one worker put it, "taking care that he did not hear, or only jokingly so as not to make him mad". The resentment caused by fast workers remains on an individual basis.

Before 1957 the line operators, in addition to their regular wage, earned a bonus according to individual production. The situation regarding production behaviour was then essentially the same as that previously described. Then, as now, after some years of service the worker wanted to be dismissed to get compensation and try out his luck in independent work. His behaviour to attain this objective and the conditioning factors were no different from those operating now. The bonus did not dissuade the worker from "tying up" production. There was the same animosity as now between operators and fast workers who made them increase their speed but as now this friction was individual and there were no group sanctions.

VI. CONCLUSION

It was shown that in the adjustment of production-line operators of rural origin to the city a distinction could be made between two main components of the migration: the unmarried young men coming alone from rural holdings in the Northeast where a quasi-subsistence economy was practised; and those coming as part of family groups from rural São Paulo, who were more acquainted with a market economy and its characteristic population mobility. Although the final accommodation to the urban environment of the first type of migrants is more problematic and slower, in both cases values brought over from rural areas are important, though with differences of degree, to the kind of adjustment attained in urban work.

Traditional norms regulating economic behaviour in the rural milieu were applicable to kinship and other primary groups and in all instances there were certain relationships - with landowners and merchants, or with a wider circle in those cases where one of the family engaged in commercial activities - under the sway of rational criteria. In the city, therefore,
/where economic

where economic behaviour is normally wholly outside the kinship structure it is such criteria which come to the fore. A closer examination of the migrants' adjustment to urban work, however, shows the effect of his recent rural origin at at least three points.

First, the objective which rational economic behaviour tries to attain reflects the cultural value of work por conta própria. With savings and the dismissal compensation obtained in industrial employment the worker seeks to go back to buy a land holding or to enter into business or other independent occupation, either in the original community or in the city.

Second, social control of work behaviour by rural patterns is principally the result of their internalization in the migrant's personality (e.g., the idea of one's obrigação). In the absence of the community and the community sanctions which enforced it, and because of the frequent contact in urban industry of those who obey rural patterns with individualistic conduct, this control becomes weakened.

Third, lack of participation in collective action, either union-wide or informally in the factory, is directly related to the absence of such action by secondary groups in the rural areas, and to the occupational orientation which prevents the migrant from identifying himself with the industrial structure.

As a result, behaviour in industrial work, not being controlled by the workers as a group,^{17/} and only imperfectly by internalized rural patterns, derives in the last analysis from the value given to independent work, and from group definitions, developed in the city, of things considered pertinent to this goal, such as labour law and the union.

The importance of this behaviour - resulting as it does in high labour turnover and intermittent low productivity - for modern industry, whose productive processes have been so subdivided that a high proportion of its labour force can come from rural areas, need hardly be emphasized.

^{17/}This study, therefore, supports the view that work group control of production - which has been so often verified in industrialized countries (e.g. in the Hawthorne research in the United States) - is dependent upon the historical collective experience of workers in the industrial environment (cf. Georges Friedmann, Problèmes humains du machinisme industriel. Paris: Librairie Gallimard, 1946, pp. 279-83 and 301-23).