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Marzio Barbagli, Vittorio Capecchi, and Antonio Cobalti: **La mobilità sociale in Emilia-Romagna**. Bologna: Il Mulino, 1988. 428 pp.

In Italy, by contrast with many other European countries and the United States, the study of social mobility has been largely neglected. After the pioneering work by Federico Chessa (1912) on the intergenerational transmission of occupations, it was not until the 1960s that any other analysis of social mobility in Italy appeared and this was written by an American (Lopreato, 1965). Over the next 15 years only a handful of other research studies on this subject were published by Italian social scientists: three of them concerning individual regions (Barile, 1972) or even individual cities (Lentini *et al.*, 1979; Martinotti, 1982). The sole national survey conducted by an Italian researcher in this period (Ammassari, 1977) only exists as a paper presented by the author to a conference of the ISA Committee on Social Stratification.

Nor does the research conducted by Barbagli, Capecchi, and Cobalti address the whole of Italian society: it deals, in fact, only with Emilia-Romagna (one of Italy's 19 administrative regions). Nevertheless it differs from previous surveys in three respects. First, by drawing on the work of Goldthorpe and Erikson, it analyses mobility within the framework of class formation and class action. Second, it draws the distinction, also taken from Goldthorpe, between absolute and relative mobility and uses log-linear models. Third, it acted as a testing-ground for the preparation of a national survey of mobility conducted by Barbagli, Capecchi, de Lillo, and Schizzerotto, the preliminary results of which were published in the first 1988 issue of the journal *Polis*. It seems, therefore, that Barbagli, Capecchi, and Cobalti's book is an important attempt to arouse the interest of Italian sociologists in studies of mobility and most recent analytical approaches to the subject.

The survey was conducted during 1983 on a sample of almost 13,000 subjects resident in Emilia-Romagna who were born between the end of the last century and 1958, employed and unemployed, male and female subjects are included. However, the book's analysis deals mainly with either the sub-sample of the subjects (around 9,000) who were or had been employed, or with the even more restricted sub-sample of subjects (around 5,000) who had worked for at least ten years. Thus the authors follow convention in limiting their consideration of overall social mobility to occupational mobility, but in doing so neglect movement among classes by marriage (or cohabitation). At the same time, however, they move

into a less well-explored area by paying close attention to gender differences in social mobility.

The book begins with Barbagli's analysis of absolute (inter- and intra-generational) mobility. He adopts a class structure with seven positions: entrepreneurs, members of the professions, and members of the service class; white-collar workers; petty bourgeoisie; urban working class; agricultural petty bourgeoisie; share-croppers; agricultural labourers. By comparing the class of a respondent's first occupation with that held by the father when the respondent was 14, Barbagli estimates that more than half of those surveyed were inter-generationally mobile. Subjects from the agricultural classes were more mobile than average, while the children of white-collar workers and urban working-class respondents were considerably less so. After dividing respondents into six age cohorts, Barbagli shows a constant increase in the incidence of mobility from the oldest generation (born before 1914) to the youngest (born between 1954 and 1958). Inter-generational mobility is systematically higher among women; and the gap between the sexes in mobility rates is apparently widening. This pattern is due to profound structural changes in the gender-based segregation of occupations. Much more frequently than men, women once used to begin their working lives as agricultural labourers; today, again compared with men, they more usually find their first employment in white-collar positions. Moreover, among younger generations Barbagli notes a much higher percentage of men than women in the working class. Only among entrepreneurs, members of the professions, the service class, and the petty bourgeoisie is there a stable over-representation of men.

The picture changes considerably, however, when career mobility is considered. Only a quarter of respondents began their working lives in a class position that differed from that corresponding to their occupation ten years later. And this proportion turns out to be very stable within the various generations. It also emerges that women are much less intra-generationally mobile than men.

Two of these findings are open to question. The decision to examine inter-generational mobility using the subjects' first occupation as a bench-mark runs the risk of underestimating the real dimensions of mobility patterns. It does not take account of people who arrive in a class different from their class of origin one or more years after entering the labour market. To eliminate this risk while still controlling for the

effects of career duration, the occupation held ten years after the first could have been used as a basis for comparison. At any rate, a mobility table showing the classes corresponding to the present, or last, occupations of the respondents would have been welcome. The second objection concerns the extent of the widening gap between men and women in inter-generational mobility rates. Barbagli includes in the white-collar class a number of occupations (secretary, typist, telephone operator, shop assistant) which might more appropriately be assigned to the working class. With such a classification, the flow of women of working-class origin into white-collar ranks would diminish, and hence the gaps between male and female mobility rates for recent generations would narrow.

A society's degree of openness cannot be evaluated by studying absolute mobility rates; for this, we must examine the differential odds of expanding social mobility for people from different class backgrounds. Barbagli, Capecchi, and Cobalti base their examination of these disparities on a particular analytical instrument which Cobalti calls a 'table of relative mobility'. This takes the form of an origin-by-arrival matrix; however, instead of frequencies, the table contains generalized odds ratios, i.e. geometric means of all the possible ratios between the chances of subjects who belong to a given class of origin of arriving in one given class of destination rather than any other, and the corresponding chances of individuals belonging to each of the other classes of origin. One notes that in the case of an origin-by-arrival matrix of order N , the radical of order $N^2/(N-1)^2$ of each generalized odds ratio corresponds to the tau parameter (in Goodman's sense) expressing the intensity of the interaction between the relevant modalities of the variable 'origin' and of the variable 'arrival' in a log-linear model of multiplicative form. According to Cobalti, the advantage of the relative mobility table is that it gives concise measures, immediately interpretable in terms of competitive advantages (in Goldthorpe's sense) of the chances of moving from one class to another in a given society. One could point out, however, that the generalized odds ratios differ little from the tau parameters, and that at times it is more useful for analysis of the structure of the inequalities in mobility chances to know specific odds ratios rather than their averages.

When applied to employed respondents, the relative mobility table reveals that in Emilia-Romagna mobility chances are rigidly structured by origin. For example, the chances of subjects originating from the superordinate class (entrepreneurs, members of the professions, and the service class) of remaining in that class are on average

12.4 times greater than those of all other subjects. By contrast, the chances of subjects with working-class parents becoming entrepreneurs, members of the professions, or members of the service class are 0.4 of the average relative chances of subjects from other classes. Using log-linear models, Cobalti then shows that the inequalities by social origin in chances of inter-generational occupational mobility have remained stable over time. A feature, he believes, that also extends to inequalities between men and women. In other words, he maintains that the disparities between the occupational destinations of each sex depend only on the different distribution of occupations by sex, and not on the fact that the links between occupational class of origin and occupational class of arrival change according to gender membership. This also applies to career mobility.

Broadly speaking Cobalti's results are convincing. Indeed, they provide an opportune reminder to sociologists, at least in Italy, of the persistent centrality of class position as a structuring factor in social inequalities and individual life-chances. Nevertheless, certain aspects of the analysis are not entirely convincing. Cobalti uses a class-division very similar to that adopted by Goldthorpe in *Social Mobility and Class Structure in Modern Britain* (1980), but which differs from the classification Barbagli uses in the first part of the book. This makes any connection between their treatments of absolute mobility and relative mobility an awkward undertaking. But it is the analysis of gender inequalities in chances of mobility that leaves one rather perplexed. Schadee and Schizzerotto's study on this subject (1990) revealed numerous variations by sex in the opportunities for both inter-generational occupational mobility and for career mobility. Why Emilia-Romagna should be so profoundly different from the rest of Italy is not clear. Moreover, Cobalti himself finds that in certain cases the chances of moving from one class to another, or of staying in the same class, are conditioned by gender. Such cases, however, he prefers to interpret as minor deviations from the model of constant fluidity for the two sexes.

Having examined the relative mobility regime, Cobalti turns to the role played by education in conditioning chances of moving from one occupational class to another. This is one of the most interesting, but also one of the most difficult, chapters in the book. Again, using log-linear models and odds ratios, Cobalti draws the following main conclusions. Educational level gives significant advantages, or disadvantages, in competing for the most privileged occupational positions. The association between schooling and first occupation varies, however, according to gender and over time. More exactly,

education produces greater differences in competitive capacity among women than among men, and the advantages deriving from secondary and higher education (high school diploma and university degree) tend to decrease as one passes from older cohorts (born before 1943) to younger ones (born after 1943). The link between educational level and occupational position of arrival (present or last) changes according to social origin. In certain cases the association between education and mobility chances varies over time. In particular, the advantages provided by secondary and higher education diminish between the oldest and youngest generations as both when one considers mobility into the positions of entrepreneur, member of the professions, and of the service class, from all other classes, and when one concentrates on arrival in the white-collar middle class by the children of skilled and unskilled workers. Nevertheless, Cobalti claims, it is possible to obtain a good fit of the entire matrix of 'origin by education by arrival by period' on the basis of the log-linear model without the four-way interaction.

It is doubtful whether complex three-way interactions among education, arrival, and period and among origin, arrival, and education actually exist; it is more likely that they result from the way Cobalti has handled his data. He dichotomizes educational levels rather than employing the more reasonable (for Italy) fourfold division into university, high school, middle school, and elementary school. Moreover, he makes rather rigid use of log-linear models by ignoring a number of significant interactions in several cells or doing the opposite and unjustifiably extending them to the whole table. An alternative and arguably more fruitful approach is developed in Schizzerotto (1988).

Capecchi's two long chapters separate the part of the book devoted to the analysis of absolute mobility from that dealing with education. Capecchi first uses census data and official statistics to chart the changes in Emilia-Romagna's occupational structure and the distribution of school qualifications since 1951, and then shows how these changes have affected men and women. In the second of his two chapters Capecchi uses the research data to identify the processes responsible for the growth of the class (or fraction of a class) of small entrepreneurs in industry and the tertiary sector so characteristic of the economic development and social structure of Emilia-Romagna since the 1950s. This interesting analysis, although not wholly coherent with the rest of the book, provides useful background information to the research as a whole.

The final chapter is certainly more in line with the general argument of the book. Here Barbagli

examines the consequences of inter-generational mobility for certain aspects of individual and group behaviour: political behaviour, religious behaviour, attitudes to pre-marital sex, and holiday-making. In all these areas, socially mobile individuals display patterns that occupy the middle ground between those prevalent in their class of origin and those prevalent in their class of arrival. Hence it follows, Barbagli argues, that in Emilia-Romagna the consequences of mobility at the individual level are best interpreted in the light of the resocialization hypothesis (advanced, among others, by Blau and Duncan, and by Hodges and Treiman) rather than that of social uprooting (proposed by Durkheim, by Sorokin, and by Lipset and Bendix). The resocialization hypothesis may also serve to explain, for example, the apparent contradictoriness of the changes in voting behaviour among the Emilian population as a whole compared with that of the white-collar middle class. Whereas the former vote increasingly less for the PCI (Italian Communist Party), the latter vote increasingly more for it. One reason for this lies in the conspicuous flow of subjects from the working class into white-collar occupations, where the proportion of those voting for the PCI (47 per cent) is much lower than the corresponding proportion among worker children of workers (67 per cent) but, at the same time, much higher than the proportion (27 per cent) of white-collar children of white-collar workers voting for the party. Finally, Barbagli shows that the higher the percentage of subjects belonging to a class for two generations or more, the more homogeneous this class is in cultural terms. From the point of view of the political behaviour of the Emilia-Romagna working class, this feature seems bound to produce a reduction, rather than an increase, in electoral support for the PCI, even though historically the party has been their chief political organization. Second-generation urban workers vote for the PCI much less frequently than do worker children of agricultural labourers and sharecroppers. And, whereas during the 1950s the flow of subjects originating from these two classes was very substantial, it has by now practically ceased.

Barbagli provides numerous other examples to demonstrate how analysis of mobility phenomena can contribute to the understanding of individual and collective behaviours that otherwise would remain obscure. Bearing in mind that studies of mobility, even when conducted within a framework of class formation and action, rarely address its behavioural consequences, one may conclude that Barbagli, Capecchi, and Cobalti's book is a contribution that goes beyond the confines of Italian sociology.

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Giuseppe Bonazzi: **Storia del pensiero organizzativo**. Milano: Franco Angeli, 1989. 411 pp.

The state of organization studies in Italy presents some contradictory features. Rather few academics regard themselves as organization scientists, and university 'sociology of organization' curricula can vary considerably in content and, it must be acknowledged, in quality. Organization studies have mainly been the domain of non-academic researchers and advisers. However, students of neighbouring disciplines such as industrial sociology or industrial relations have drawn freely and eclectically from organization studies, and this kind of cross-fertilization has sometimes produced interesting results.

An earlier work of Bonazzi's, published in 1982 (*Dentro e fuori della fabbrica. Storia ragionata della sociologia dell'organizzazione*) rapidly became a standard text and reference book, reflecting some typical features of Italian organization studies. Considerable research interest was devoted to business, and relatively little to, for example, non-profit organizations; the exposition consisted of a history of ideas rather than a systematic discussion of concepts and methods.

The book currently under review is, in the author's imaginative words, 'like a tree which can grow higher because its roots sink into the soil fertilized by the remains of the old, by now decomposing book'. Although a good part of the material is the same, and the approach is still mainly historical, the new book is more than a revised edition of the old one. The material is organized in a new and original way, which gives it more of the systematic character of a treatise, and less of the diachronic character of a history of organizational thought. Authors and schools are discussed in relation to their contribution to one of three themes or 'questions', industrial, bureaucratic, and organizational.

The first section, on industrial issues, dealing with the effects of technology on work and the conditions fostering or prejudicing workers' consensus; it also spans discussions of Taylorism, the debate on its dissolution into a plurality of industrial organizational forms, and contemporary problems of flexibility and internal labour markets. The second section concerns bureaucratic issues, examining the social functions of norms and the strategies of the actors faced with these norms. It discusses Weber's sociology, the post-Weberian debate and recent developments in the possibility and limits of the post-bureaucratic organization of work. The third section analyses organizational issues, a subject less clearly definable than the other two, but centred on the study of decision-making and control over resources. Themes discussed include the radical implications of the Simonian model of rationality, and developments which have followed the crisis of the contingency approach (organizational symbolism, resource dependence, transaction cost theory, ecological approach to organizational populations).

Bonazzi's presentation of organizational thought is innovative in underlining that what really matters is not the nature of the organization, but the questions the researcher wants to answer about it. It is then always legitimate and often fruitful to investigate, for example, 'industrial' aspects of non-profit organizations, or norms and decisions in manufacturing firms, a theme which Bonazzi actually includes in the section on bureaucratic organization.

A number of traditional boundary problems among different disciplines are thus disposed of, and a foundation is proposed for a theoretically promising pluralistic approach to the study of organizations. There is one possible caveat: the sequence in which the three questions are presented, and the fact that