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Intergenerational Mobility and Social Inequalities in a Comparative Perspective*

Abstract In this paper I compare the intergenerational mobility patterns and the relative closure of the social structures of four countries, Portugal, Czech Republic, Sweden and Canada, applying Erik Olin Wright's neo-marxist class scheme and theoretical model.
The analysis shows the impossibility of constructing a general model of intergenerational mobility based on the political system or on the socio-economic development level of the countries. There is no convergence between countries associated with a hypothetical homology of positions in the world capitalist system.
Of the three dimensions used to evaluate the degree of democratisation of social opportunities in these countries, skill or cultural capital is the greatest obstacle to the mobility of individuals. I also found that gender is very important in the structuring of inequalities and in the dynamics of social exploitation. And I conclude that the explanation of the differences in the generational class trajectories of women becomes the most important challenge, theoretically and methodologically, for the sociology of social classes and social mobility.
Keywords: Class Structures; Social Mobility; Inequalities; Gender; Comparative Analyses; Cultural Capital

1. Introduction

In this paper I compare the intergenerational mobility patterns and the relative closure of the social structures of four countries: Portugal, the Czech Republic, Sweden and Canada. Portugal as a country of the South that became recently a full member of the European Union, but maintaining its position as a semiperipheral country in the world system. The Czech Republic as a country with a fast privatisation of its economy and, therefore, with increasing and consolidated capitalist structures. Sweden as a representative of Nordic capitalism, with a strong presence of the State in the regulation of its economy and with traditional strong social policies. Finally, Canada as a country with a full capitalist economy.

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In my analysis I use Erik Olin Wright's neo-marxist class scheme and theoretical model.[1] After describing the class structures and the patterns of absolute mobility in the four countries, I analyse the impact of gender in the relative opportunities of social mobility. I argue that special attention to the specific mobility patterns of women goes beyond the usual practice, based on typological or methodological arguments, of turning their role invisible in the class dynamics and in the labor and educational markets. The data in this paper clearly show the crucial role of gender in the structuring of inequalities and social exploitation, both for the aggregate analysis and for each of the countries taken separately. To talk of intergenerational mobility without taking into consideration the specificity of women's trajectories is to neglect the most challenging and complex data for a sociological explanation of the dynamics of capitalist societies, contributing also to maintaining women's *status quo*. The increasing presence of women in the educational and labor markets of the four countries, with different temporal patterns, induced important changes in personal and family strategies, and explains the specificity of the class structures and of the class trajectories in the countries discussed in this paper.

2. Theoretical and methodological framework

I apply in this paper the theoretical framework proposed by Erik Olin Wright, and also the methodologies and typologies defined in his latest book on class analysis (Wright, 1997). Erik Wright's model can be included in the marxist school of analysis and is based on the concept of exploitation as defined by John Roemer (1982). Exploitation is always relational and produces antagonistic relations and interests

[1] For a comparative empirical analysis of the class theories of Erik Olin Wright and John Goldthorpe, see González (1992) and Marshall *et al*. (1989).

between social classes.[2] For the capitalist societies Erik Wright describes, exploitation is a result of the combination of three resources: the unequal control of the means of production (capitalist exploitation); the unequal control of organizational resources (organizational exploitation or relation to authority)[3]; and the unequal relation to scarce skills (skill exploitation).[4]

My operationalization of the respondents' and their parents' class locations follows simpler criteria than those originally applied by Erik Wright. The matrix of twelve class locations has been simplified to allow comparative intergenerational analyses.[5] I aggregated in the employer class location the small employers (1 to 9 employees) and the capitalists (10 and more employees), separating them from the petty bourgeoisie on the dimension of property. As for authority I created a class location of expert managers and supervisors and another class location containing the skilled and nonskilled managers and supervisors. On the skill dimension I maintained the experts separated from the workers,[6] aggregating the skilled and unskilled workers in the same class location.

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[2] Exploitation is grounded on three principal criteria: the inverted and interdependent material welfare criterion (the material welfare of one group causally depends on the material deprivation of another); the exclusion criterion (the exploited are excluded from access to certain productive resources); and the appropriation criterion (exploiters appropriate the fruits of labor of the exploited) (Wright, 1997: 9-19).

[3] Sorensen (2000) advances a critical analysis of Wright's definition of authority as a basis for exploitation. Sorensen proposes an alternative theory of exploitation based exclusively on the rent extraction by exploiters. Erik Wright's answer reaffirms the need to take the appropriation of the labor effort as an exploitation criterion, stating that rent extraction is only one of its components (Wright, 2000).

[4] In his typology of class models and theories, David Grusky (1998: 1190) describes Wright's theory as realist against John Goldthorpe's nominalist theory and other social stratification theories. David Grusky is of the opinion that a more realist model can be the alternative to Wright's and Goldthorpe's theories. This model is based on the disaggregation of social classes in occupations with some homogeneous composition, with similar interests and concerted action strategies.

[5] I have worked only with those inserted in the work force, including the unemployed. I excluded those classified as housewives, students, retired and permanently disabled.

[6] This option to maintain the experts separated from the skilled workers, contrary to what I have done in a earlier publication about intergenerational mobility in Portugal (Mendes, 1998), attempts to answer some critical responses that pointed to the perverse effect of making analyses, in a society where skills are so strong in the determination of social mobility patterns, with a tipology where experts were taken together with skilled workers.

To test the relative permeability of the four countries' social structures, I constructed a matrix that defines what is considered as mobility in the three dimensions (see Appendix II). There is also a quasi-independence matrix that controls for the effect of the diagonal cells in the contingency table origin class/respondent class. To see whether the relative probabilities of workers' mobility to other class locations have a particular pattern, there is a locational-permeability variable. With this matrix it is possible to show which class locations are more permeable or not to workers' movements and the specific role of each of the three dimensions.[7]

I must also recall that in the theoretical framework being used in this paper the movements in the social structure are taken only as topological movements (Erikson and Goldthorpe, 1993; Hout, 1989, 1983; Wright, 1997). There is no hierarchical or gradational orientation of class locations, and, consequently, I will not use the terms upward or downward mobility.

The models used in this paper are as follows:

$\log F_{ijk}$ = COUNTRY + O + D + QI + C x O + C x D (Baseline)

$\log F_{ijk}$ = Baseline + PROPERTY + AUTHORITY + SKILL (1)

$\log F_{ijk}$ = Model (1) + WORKER (2)

$\log F_{ijk}$ = Model (1) + QI x COUNTRY (3)

$\log F_{ijk}$ = Model (3) + PROPERTY x C + AUTHORITY x C + SKILL x C (4)

where O and D are the two dimensions of the permeability matrix (class origins and class destinations in the mobility analysis); C is the country; QI is the quasi-independence matrix; PROPERTY, AUTHORITY and SKILL are variables defined by the matrices in Appendix II; and F_{ijk} is the expected frequency in the ijk^{th} cell of the 6 x 6 x 4 matrix for mobility analysis of O by D by country.

[7] See also Appendix I for the operationalization of the class structure.

Model (1) is the basic additive model of permeability analysis.[8] Model (2) adds the WORKER interaction variable to the variables in Model (1). It measures the probability of workers' mobility having a different pattern when compared to other class locations. Models (3) and (4) enable us to see variations across countries in the patterns of mobility.

3. Class structures and structural mobility

The class structures of the four countries differ in significant ways. As we can see by the results presented in Table I, Portugal has a class structure very similar to the one of the Czech Republic, except for the property dimension, with the small employers and the petty bourgeoisie, and for the skill dimension, with the skilled and nonskilled managers. The differences in the two locations related to property are due to very dissimilar historical trends in the two countries. In Portugal, the peasantry has had until recently a significant weight in the work force, as well as small employers.[9] In the Czech Republic, with an accelerated post-communist transformation process, only after 1989 did the access to property become a reality, and in a very gradual way.[10] The weight of the petty bourgeoisie in Portugal is a defining feature of semiperipheral countries, and is crucial in the structuring of social dynamics, of sociabilities, of cultural practices and of the political-ideological processes (Santos, 1991).

[8] The permeability coefficients of the three dimensions (Property, Authority and Skill) tell us the log of the odds of a permeability event occuring across the relevant boundary compared to such an event not occuring.

[9] In the 2001 Census still around 9% of the working population was concentrated in the agricultural sector. For the structural transformations of the Portuguese society, see Costa and Viegas (2000).

[10] In 1993 in the Czech Republic, and for the total of the work force, only 2.9% were employers and 6.5% were self-employed. In 1997 these figures were respectively 4.2% and 8.4%. See the important paper by Večernik (1997).

Table I. Labor force distribution in the class location matrix

Resources in means of production

Owners	Employees			
1.**Capitalist/ Bourgeois** Portugal 1.3% Czech Rep. 1.0% Sweden 4.0% Canada 1.5%	4. **Expert managers** Portugal 3.1% Czech Rep. 2.8% Sweden 2.5% Canada 4.5%	7. **Semiskilled and nonskilled managers** Portugal 0.6% Czech Repub 3.9% Sweden 2.3% Canada 5.3%		+
2. **Small employers** Portugal 8.0% Czech Rep. 4.3% Sweden 2.8% Canada 6.0%	5.**Expert Supervisors** Portugal 1.4% Czech Rep. 1.6% Sweden 5.7% Canada 8.6%	8. **Semiskilled supervisors** Portugal 7.1% Czech Rep. 9.0% Sweden 7.1% Canada 8.2%	10. **Nonskilled supervisors** Portugal 6.7% Czech Rep. 6.2% Sweden 10.6% Canada 12.9%	Organizational Resources > 0
3.**Petty Bourgeois** Portugal 13.8% * Czech Rep. 9.6% Sweden 2.3% Canada 7.6%	6. **Experts** Portugal 4.9% Czech Rep. 4.7% Sweden 7.8 % Canada 5.8%	9. **Semiskilled workers** Portugal 21.8% Czech Rep. 21.0% Sweden 16.0% Canada 14.0%	11. **Workers** Portugal 31.2% Czech Rep. 35.9% Sweden 38.9% Canada 25.5%	–
+	> 0		–	
	Skill			

*Agriculture=4.3 %
Nagriculture=9.6%

Portugal N = 701; Czech Republic N = 920; Sweden N = 748; Canada N = 719

The greater number of skilled and nonskilled managers in the social structure of the Czech Republic is related to the weight of the state apparatus. This bureaucratic tradition was converted into a resource to maintain respondents' authority positions, now in the private companies. This was due to the accelerated privatisation process that occurred in the last 15 years in the Czech Republic.[11]

Sweden's class structure is very polarized. A significant presence of capitalists is counterweighted by a great number of workers. Sweden has more respondents in the category of workers than those found in Portugal and in the Czech Republic. Canada is the country with a greater numerical expression of the intermediary class locations, mainly in the supervision categories.

[11] See Matějů (1998) for an analysis of the growth of the middle classes, and especially of the manager class locations.

This brief characterization of the social structures of the four countries allows me to state that I am comparing two countries with less important capitalist structures, Portugal and the Czech Republic, and two mature capitalist countries, Sweden and Canada, although there are significant differences between the last two countries. The capitalist system in Sweden is closer to a social-democratic model where the State maintains a strong presence in the definition of social policies that complement the workings of the market (Esping-Andersen, 1991). In Canada, the State is less present, although it is not completely absent. The Federal State and the Provincial States have an active intervention in social policies and in employment regulation, mainly through legislative measures.[12]

Table II. Respondents by class origins and class destinations: Portugal, the Czech Republic, Sweden and Canada (total of labor force)

Total				
	Portugal	**Czech Rep.**	**Sweden**	**Canada**
	Class origins (% by column)			
employers	11	1	18	16
petty bourgeoisie	25	1	8	9
expert managers	2	3	3	6
managers	2	5	6	5
supervisors	13	24	24	27
experts	1	2	1	3
semiskilled workers	17	33	19	12
workers	30	30	22	21
	Class destinations (% by column)			
employers	9	5	7	7
petty bourgeoisie	14	9	2	8
expert managers	3	3	3	5
managers	1	4	2	6
supervisors	16	17	24	30
experts	5	5	8	6
semiskilled workers	21	22	16	13
workers	31	36	38	26

Note: Portugal, N= 670; Czech Rep., N= 662; Sweden, N= 646; Canada, N=626
The total can add to more than 100% due to statistical roundings.

[12] In the samples that I am using (ISSP, 1999), 19.1% of the working force in Canada worked for the State and 17.5% worked in public companies. These figures were, respectively, 36.8% and 8.7% in Sweden, 16.0% and 11.4% in the Czech Republic, and 15.2% and 2.8% for Portugal. Canada occupies a middle position in a hypothetical scale defining capitalist economies (see Esping-Andersen, 1991).

The analysis of absolute mobility shows us in detail the temporal transformations of the class structures in the four countries. In Table II we can see the data for social origins and destinations of the respondents. There are also here great discrepancies between countries. Beginning with social origins, in Portugal one must take into account the great weight of the petty bourgeoisie and the lesser relevance of the categories related to supervision. In the Czech Republic, due to the difficulty of the access to property, what is striking is the insignificant presence of property owners and the great number of skilled workers. The Czech Republic shares with Portugal a great number of unskilled workers. The two capitalist countries have social origin structures with similar profiles, and a significant number of respondents have parents who were employers.

As for destinations, Portugal maintains the same social profile, except for the rapid declining weight of the petty bourgeoisie. In the Czech Republic we can see two opposite trends: an increase in the property owners and a greater proletarianization of the work force. This proletarianization is also important in Sweden, but there is a corresponding fall in the relative weight of the employers. The pattern of social destinations in Canada is similar to the one for social origins, although there is also a steep decline in the number of respondents with parents with class locations as employers.[13]

The analysis of structural mobility shows us how divergent are the trajectories of countries with distinct positions in the world capitalist system, and the impossibility of constructing modal trajectories or linear patterns of insertion in this system. We cannot speak, as many liberal theorists are keen to point out, of a convergence of countries associated with a hypothetical proximity in their capitalist development patterns.

[13] This concentration of economic capital is related to the capitalist dynamic in the core countries of the world system in the last decades of the 20th century.

4. Intergenerational mobility and equal opportunities

The descriptions given above only refer to the structural changes observed in the four countries. But a more problematizing perspective is needed. We have to ask for the effect of the exploitation resources on the delimitation of social opportunities and in the access of individuals to welfare. Of the dimensions in question, property, authority and skill, which of them is less permeable to the movements of individuals? Do workers have specific class trajectories, as they are located in a position with few or no resources? Do workers' trajectories show a greater democratisation in the structure of social opportunities? Are relative opportunities for the different class locations getting closer or is the gap widening? What is the role of skills and of education – or cultural capital in Pierre Bourdieu's (1979) terms – in the creation of more equal opportunities? And what is the role of gender in the structuring of social opportunities?

To answer all these questions I will begin with the analysis of the permeability coefficients for all respondents and for the four aggregated countries.[14] In Table III results for model 1 are shown. This model improves clearly in fit on the baseline model, as for 3 degrees of freedom the ratio chi-squared (L^2) declines by 33 points. The negative coefficients for PROPERTY and for SKILL indicate that these are real obstacles to intergenerational mobility. As for AUTHORITY it is totally permeable to the movement of individuals. The great obstacle to mobility is the skill boundary, both in its intensity as in its statistical significance. The anti-log shows that 50% of the respondents stay in the same location for the SKILL resource. For PROPERTY the value is less intensive, as only 33% cannot overcome this class boundary. The differences between coefficients are only statistically significant for SKILL against AUTHORITY.

[14] The program used for statistical calculations was GLIM (Generalised Linear Interactive Modelling), version 4, upgrade 8, for personal computers.

Table III. Parameter estimates for permeability of class boundaries to mobility: total labor force in Portugal, the Czech Republic, Sweden and Canada

Variable	Coefficient (s.e.)	Antilog
Boundary-crossing coefficients		
PROPERTY	- 0.39 (.184) *	.67
AUTHORITY	- 0.09 (.064)	1.0
SKILL	- 0.70 (.110) ***	.50
Scaled deviance (91 d.f.	199.6	
Baseline scaled deviance (94 d.f.)	236.9	
Overall improvement in fit (3 d.f.)	37.3***	
Differences in boundary-crossing coefficients		
PROPERTY - AUTHORITY	- .30 (.156)	
SKILL - AUTHORITY	- .61 (.119)***	
SKILL - PROPERTY	- .31 (.239)	

Significance levels (two-tailed tests):* p < .05 ** p < .01 *** p .001

The difference between SKILL and PROPERTY is not significant, and we can argue that these two dimensions create a joint and global effect on the structuring of inequality of social opportunities.

Model 2, which measures the net movement of workers to other class locations, being a good indicator of the democratisation of social opportunities, improves the fit over Model 1 (Table IV). The movements to the expert manager/supervisor and expert locations are the most difficult, confirming the role of skill as a strong class boundary for workers. For the total of the respondents and for workers it is SKILL that structures in a very marked way the inequality of opportunities in the four countries.

Table IV. Interactions with mobility across the working-class boundary: total of labor force in Portugal, the Czech Republic, Sweden and Canada.

Variable	Coefficient (s.e.)
PROPERTY	- 0.45 (.221)*
AUTHORITY	- 0.03 (.147)
SKILL	- 0.39 (.124)**
Mobility between workers and nonworkers:	
Worker/Employer	- 0.28 (.192)
Worker/Petty bourgeois	- 0.07 (.159)
Worker/Expert Manager/Supervisor	- 0.69 (.204)***
Worker /Skilled and Nonskilled Manager and Supervisor	- 0.01 (.152)
Worker/Expert	- 0.73 (.194)***
Scaled deviance (87 d.f.)	172.6
Improvement over Model 1 (4 d.f.)	27.0***

Significance levels (two-tailed tests):* p < .05 ** p < .01 *** p .001

Model 4, which measures the specific effect of the variable COUNTRY, does not improve on model 3.

But these aggregated results hide the real differences between countries. By calculating the coefficients separately for each country we can perceive clearly those differences. A brief commentary is needed before going on with my analysis. Comparative analysis is only valid, in these kinds of models, when the countries are aggregated and a specific model is designed to measure the impact of each of them (Model 4). The coefficients calculated separately have meaning only for each country and are merely indicative on a comparative basis.

Table V. Differences between permeability coefficients within countries (total labor force)

	Portugal	**Czech Rep.**	**Sweden**	**Canada**
PROPERTY	- .77 (.277)***	+ 3.72 (7.08)	+ .54 (.622)	- .39 (.335)
AUTHORITY	- .17 (.134)	- .85 (340)*	- .07 (.128)	- .07 (.119)
SKILL	- 1.27 (.304)***	- .63 (287)*	- .59 (.297)*	- .57 (.167)***

Antilog

	Portugal	**Czech Rep.**	**Sweden**	**Canada**
PROPERTY	.46	-	-	-
AUTHORITY	-	.43	-	-
SKILL	.28	.53	.55	.57

Significance levels (two-tailed tests):* p < .05 ** p < .01 *** p .001

After this short explanation, I proceed with the analysis of the coefficients for each country. In Portugal, SKILL and PROPERTY are the main obstacles to intergenerational mobility. SKILL appears with a very strong negative coefficient, as only 28% of the individuals cross this class boundary when we calculate the anti-log. As for PROPERTY 46 % of the individuals cross this class boundary. Model 2 improves in the fit over the baseline model (p<.001). Workers in Portugal encounter as obstacles to their intergenerational trajectories the following dimensions: property, as the movements to employers are less probable; authority (the mobility from workers to skilled and unskilled managers and supervisors is very difficult); and skill (the probability of workers becoming experts is very low). On the other hand, there is a pattern of consistent mobility to the petty bourgeoisie class location. Therefore, in the property dimension, the significant social barrier to the social mobility of Portuguese workers is not in the possibility of establishing themselves as self-employed, but in their probability of becoming employers.[15]

[15] Erik Wright (1997: 185) has shown the same pattern for men in his analyses of the USA, Canada, Norway and Sweden.

In the Czech Republic it is AUTHORITY and SKILL that are less permeable, with AUTHORITY having the stronger negative coefficient (43% of respondents with mobility on the AUTHORITY dimension and 53% on SKILL). In a post-communist political, economic and social transition process, and inheriting a productive and bureaucratic structure heavily marked by centralism and rigid hierarchical labor division, AUTHORITY, both for managers[16] and supervisors, conditions the mobility opportunities in the Czech Republic. Those whose parents were positioned in jobs with authority benefited from privileged access to organizational resources and from the established social networks.

In Sweden and Canada, and this for all the respondents, SKILL is the only obstacle to the respondents' mobility, and the coefficients have the same intensity in both countries (55% of the respondents in Sweden and 57% in Canada have mobile social trajectories). In these two advanced capitalist countries, one with a stronger social-democratic tradition and the other with a more market-oriented economy, skill and educational resources are the main factors in the structuring of social opportunities and of social inequality.

4.1 Men's intergenerational mobility

We will now consider the impact of gender on intergenerational mobility patterns. I begin with men and with data aggregated for the four countries. In Table VI we can see the coefficients for model 1.

The three coefficients, for PROPERTY, AUTHORITY and SKILL, are negative and, therefore, present obstacles to men's mobility (although the statistical significance of PROPERTY is very low). The difference between coefficients allows us to see that SKILL is the less permeable of the coefficients. Calculating the anti-logs, 80% of men are mobile

[16] In Table I we can see that the structural weight of managers is higher in the Czech Republic (6.7%) than in Sweden (4.8%).

Table VI. Parameter estimates for permeability of class boundaries to mobility: men in the labor force in Portugal, the Czech Republic, Sweden and Canada

Variable	Coefficient (s.e.)	Antilog
Boundary-crossing coefficients		
PROPERTY	- 0.45 (.239)#	.64
AUTHORITY	- 0.22 (.087)**	.80
SKILL	- 0.92 (.141) ***	.40
Scaled deviance (91 d.f.)	127	
Baseline scaled deviance (94 d.f.)	166	
Overall improvement in fit (3 d.f.)	39***	
Differences in boundary-crossing coefficients		
PROPERTY - AUTHORITY	- .23 (.207)	
SKILL - AUTHORITY	- .70 (.156)***	
SKILL - PROPERTY	- .47 (.310)	

Significance levels (two-tailed tests):* p < .05 ** p < .01 *** p .001
Significance level (one-tailed test) : # p .05 (directional hypothesis)

in AUTHORITY, against 64% in PROPERTY and 40% in SKILL. By comparing By comparing these with the results shown before for the total of respondents, we can say that the three dimensions are real obstacles for the intergenerational mobility of men and that the coefficients are more intense. For men the reproduction of their parents' social positions and of the exploitation resources seems highly probable.

As for the net mobility of workers to other class locations, model 2 improves significantly in fit over model 1 (Table VII). Curiously, PROPERTY, for workers, appears no longer as an obstacle to the intergenerational mobility of men. The mobility of male workers is very difficult to the class location of experts (which demands a higher education degree) and highly possible to the class location of skilled and nonskilled managers and supervisors. What this means is that, contrary to what happens in relation to other class locations, male workers, through upward trajectories inside

their workplaces due to seniority, to work skills and to social networks, have chances to move to manager and supervisory positions (as foremen, section leaders, etc.). It is an important means of social mobility that depends on male workers' personal and social capital, on their ties to the corporation and on their personal work performances.

Table VII. Interactions with mobility across the working-class boundary: men in the labor force in Portugal, the Czech Republic, Sweden and Canada.

Variable	Coefficient (s.e.)
PROPERTY	- 0.45 (.289)
AUTHORITY	- 0.56 (.201)**
SKILL	- 0.72 (.170)***
Mobility between workers and nonworkers:	
Worker/Employer	+ 0.27 (.261)
Worker/Petty bourgeois	- 0.40 (.220)
Worker/Expert Manager/Supervisor	- 0.35 (.276)
Worker /Skilled and Nonskilled Manager and Supervisor	+ 0.53 (.210)*
Worker/Expert	- 0.70 (.271)**
Scaled deviance (87 df)	105.2
Improvement over Model 1 (4 df)	21.8***

Significance levels (two-tailed tests):* p < .05 ** p < .01 *** p .001

As we have seen for the total of respondents, model 4 does not improve in fit over model 3. But, there are significant differences in the countries taken separately (Table VIII).

Table VIII. Differences between permeability coefficients within countries (men in the labor force)

	Portugal	**Czech Rep.**	**Sweden**	**Canada**
PROPERTY	- .79 (.388)*	+ 3.88 (.7.08)	+ .30 (.692)	- .47 (.388)
AUTHORITY	- .38 (.179)*	- .31 (.197)	- .23 (.210)	- .112 (.146)
SKILL	- 1.22 (.445)**	- 1.22 (.265)***	- 1.19 (.386)**	- .60 (.205)**
Antilog				
	Portugal	**Czech Rep.**	**Sweden**	**Canada**
PROPERTY	.45	-	-	-
AUTHORITY	.68	-	-	-
SKILL	.30	.30	.30	.55

Significance levels (two-tailed tests):* p < .05 ** p < .01 *** p .001

For Portuguese men the three coefficients are negative and very intense for SKILL (only 30% are mobile in this dimension), with a medium intensity for PROPERTY (45% of men with mobility) and a weak intensity for AUTHORITY (68% men with mobility). These results confirm those verified for a representative sample of the working Portuguese population in 1995 (Estanque and Mendes, 1998: 112-113; Mendes, 1998). The joint effect of the three dimensions makes the social structure very impermeable to the intergenerational mobility of men in Portugal. The privileged social positions are stable, and individual trajectories develop within well defined paths and with modest opportunities to work in non-exploitative jobs.

The model that measures male workers' net mobility does not improve significantly on the statistical models ($p<.05$), and their mobility patterns are the same as those for other class locations.

For the other three countries, it is SKILL that is less permeable to the intergenerational mobility of men. The coefficients are very intense in the Czech Republic and Sweden (only 30% of men in both countries have mobility trajectories on this dimension) and less intense in Canada (55% of men are mobile on this dimension). The net mobility of workers is the same as for the other class locations. These results show the impossibility of defining a general model of intergenerational mobility that has as independent variables the political system or the level of economic development of the countries.[17] As Erik Wright has concluded (1997: 186-190), there is no common pattern of variation of relative social mobility coefficients for the industrial countries. The real differences in the relative permeability of social structures of the countries analysed in this paper are better explained by different and specific historical

[17] For analogous conclusions, see Marshall *et al*. (1997: 236-239) when they comment on the Featherman-Jones-Hauser hypothesis of similar relative social mobility rates between industrial countries.

trajectories and by their different positions in the world-system as core, semiperipheral and peripheral countries.

And, contrary to Erik Wright's results (1997) for Canada, where PROPERTY was the main obstacle to men's intergenerational mobility, it is SKILL now that is less permeable to the social mobility trajectories of men. I must emphasize that the sample used by Erik Wright dates from 1982 and the sample from ISSP is from 1999.[18] Erik Wright concluded that in the more developed capitalist countries (Canada was included alongside the Unites States), PROPERTY was the exploitation dimension that most contributed to the rigidification of the social structure. My results suggest that cultural capital, that is, educational and skill resources, has become more important than economic capital in structuring the social opportunities of men in the Western capitalist countries.[19] The differences in the four countries included in my analysis, mainly the specificity of Portugal when compared to the other three, can be better explained by historical variations in their organizational, labor and educational systems.

4.2 Women's intergenerational mobility

Although some sociological studies on social mobility still argue for the exclusive primacy of men's social trajectories,[20] mainly in the neo-weberian social stratification tradition, I defend that it is crucial to take women's social trajectories into account to better understand social transformations. This is not only because many studies have shown the importance of gender on social mobility (Wright, 1997: 192-195), but also

[18] Beyond this, my class locations operationalization criteria are more simplified due to constraints derived from the original questions in the survey of 1999 ISSP, mainly on respondents' activities of management, supervision and work autonomy.
[19] And this is more in accordance with the theses proposed by Pierre Bourdieu (1979) for the structuration of social space.
[20] See the comments in Marshall *et al*. (1997: 229-233) that justify this practice. For the relevance of gender for social and economic transformations in some countries, see Ferreira *et al.* (1998). For the specific case of the United States, see England (2001), and for Britain, see Crompton (1997).

because typologies and methodologies in the social sciences should not reproduce a patriarchal logic that makes women invisible or irrelevant for the field of class analysis, using the overtired expression "breadwinner" or even the notion of family class. And this is even more important for a country like Portugal where today women represent 50% of the work force and 60% of all students enrolled in higher education.

The data for the four countries (Table IX) show negative coefficients for SKILL and PROPERTY. SKILL has a medium intensity (50% of women do cross class barriers) and PROPERTY a lower intensity (67% of women are socially mobile on this dimension). AUTHORITY doesn't have any direct influence on the social trajectories of women.

Table IX. Parameter estimates for permeability of class boundaries to mobility: women in the labor force in Portugal, the Czech Republic, Sweden and Canada

Variable	Coefficient (s.e.)	Antilog
Boundary-crossing coefficients		
PROPERTY	- 0.39 (.184) *	.67
AUTHORITY	- 0.09 (.064)	1.0
SKILL	- 0.70 (.110) ***	.50
Scaled deviance (91 d.f.)	199.6	
Baseline scaled deviance (94 d.f.)	236.9	
Overall improvement in fit (3 d.f.)	37.3***	
Differences in boundary-crossing coefficients		
PROPERTY - AUTHORITY	- .30 (.156)	
SKILL - AUTHORITY	- .61 (.119)***	
SKILL - PROPERTY	- .31 (.239)	

Significance levels (two-tailed tests):* p < .05 ** p < .01 *** p .001

The model that measures women workers' net mobility does improve in fit over model 1 (Table X). And we can see that the access to the class locations of expert managers and supervisors and experts is very difficult for women workers. Compared to men, women from working-class origins don't have any open alternatives to their

intergenerational mobility. As we have seen above, men could, through seniority and social networks, escape from the worker's class location to nonskilled manager and supervisor class locations.

Table X. Interactions with mobility across the working-class boundary: women in the labor force in Portugal, the Czech Republic, Sweden and Canada.

Variable	Coefficient (s.e.)
PROPERTY	- 0.45 (.221)*
AUTHORITY	- 0.03 (.147)
SKILL	- 0.39 (.124)**
Mobility between workers and nonworkers:	
Worker/Employer	- 0.28 (.192)
Worker/Petty bourgeois	- 0.07 (.159)
Worker/Expert Manager/Supervisor	- 0.69 (.204)***
Worker /Skilled and Nonskilled Manager and Supervisor	- 0.01 (.152)
Worker/Expert	- 0.73 (.194)***
Scaled deviance (87 d.f.)	172.6
Improvement over Model 1 (4 d.f.)	27.0***

Significance levels (two-tailed tests):* p < .05 ** p < .01 *** p .001

Once more the model that measures the effect of the variable COUNTRY doesn't change the statistical results. But the analysis by gender shows significant differences in women's mobility (Table XI). Beginning with the case of Portugal, SKILL has a strong negative effect on women's mobility (only 22% do cross class barriers) and PROPERTY has also a negative effect, although less intense (43% of women with mobility on this dimension). AUTHORITY is not an obstacle to the social trajectories of Portuguese women.

Table XI. Differences between permeability coefficients within countries (women in the labor force)

	Portugal	**Czech Rep.**	**Sweden**	**Canada**
PROPERTY	- .80 (.404)*	+ 3.47 (7.09)	+ 4. 60 (7.081)	- .15 (.683)
AUTHORITY	- .05 (.218)	+ .08 (.225)	- .06 (.171)	- .08 (.214)
SKILL	- 1.51 (.480)**	+ .06 (.396)	- .05 (.542)	- .52 (.295)#

Antilog

	Portugal	**Czech Rep.**	**Sweden**	**Canada**
PROPERTY	.45	-	-	-
AUTHORITY	-	-	-	-
SKILL	.22	-	-	.60

Significance levels (two-tailed tests):* p < .05 ** p < .01 *** p .001
Significance level (one-tailed test) : # p .05 (directional hypothesis)

These results contradict those found for a representative sample of the Portuguese work force in 1995 (Estanque and Mendes, 1998: 113-116; Mendes, 1998), where only SKILL had a low negative effect on women's intergenerational mobility (63% were mobile on this dimension). We could try to explain these discrepancies by the different social compositions of the samples, by the divergent codification procedures or by the methodological adaptations in the permeability events matrix. But how to explain that for Portuguese men the pattern remains the same, only with modest changes in the intensity of coefficients? An alternative hypothesis must be advanced. The 1995 sample caught Portuguese women in the final phase of a long transitional period that began in the 1960s, marked mainly by their increasing participation in the work force and in higher education. Now, in a consolidation phase, with a saturated labor market for the educational qualifications offered by women, intergenerational mobility becomes more difficult both in the skill and property dimensions (this last one maybe due to changes in the marriage market).

Inequalities increase when we add the model for women workers' net mobility (statistical significance of p < .001). Working-class women have their access almost

closed to the following class locations: employers, expert managers and supervisors, and experts. The only positive social trajectory is to the petty bourgeoisie class location. Self-employment is an alternative path out of the working class for Portuguese women, a way out of their parents' formal exploited social positions in the relations of production.

The intergenerational mobility of Portuguese women and men shows us a society with deep social inequalities and low democratization in the access to the resources that structure and reproduce exploitation. The future seems written for those in Portugal that come from dispossessed social backgrounds in terms of skill, property and authority (this dimension only for men). Due to the intensity of the coefficients related to skill it can be said that, after twenty-eight years of democracy in Portugal, the massification of schooling had little impact on the narrowing of the gap between class locations, and education still remains a crucial resource for the social reproduction of the privileged classes, mainly those with strong cultural capital.

As for the other countries, in the Czech Republic and Sweden women don't have any obstacles to intergenerational mobility, while in Canada it is SKILL that has a medium negative effect on women's mobility (60% of them are mobile on this dimension). For Sweden, these results run contrary to the findings of Erik Wright (1997: 196), where skill had a significant negative coefficient.[21] The data shown in the first part of this paper for absolute mobility in Sweden confirms an increased proletarianization of the class structure, and that this trend was stronger for women. This increased proletarianization means that those individuals with managerial, supervisory and expert

[21] Mark Western and Erik Wright (1994) had shown that, for Sweden and Canada, women who come from working-class families are comparatively disadvantaged because they are strongly likely to end up also in working-class jobs. Men from working-class backgrounds, on the other hand, have comparatively more opportunities for upward mobility out of the working class. My aggregate results show that these opportunities are fewer for men than women. The separate results for each country emphasize even more the oppenness of social structures for women as compared to men.

class origins see their odds of maintaining their parent's social positions diminishing, competing with those coming from below for the few privileged class locations.

What these results allows us to conclude is that gender has a central role in the structuring of social inequalities and exploitation, and this for the aggregated four countries as well as for each country taken separately. To analyse social mobility without taking notice of the specificity of women's social trajectories is to neglect the most challenging and complex data for a sociological explanation of social transformations in western societies and to perpetuate the academic blindness to women's pressure and rights in the labor and educational markets.

6. Conclusion

The comparative analysis undertaken in this paper shows us very different and complex social structures and intergenerational mobility patterns. There is no convergence of countries related to their supposed positional homology in the industrial capitalist system. The results presented lead us to the conclusion that no general model for intergenerational mobility can be constructed on the basis of the political system or the socio-economic development level of the four countries.

In what concerns the four countries' class structures, what is more salient is the permanence of the petty bourgeoisie in Portugal, and the rapid increase, after 1989, of the employers and the petty bourgeoisie in the Czech Republic. In this country there is also a parallel movement of proletarianization of large parts of the working population. In Sweden, also the most relevant fact is the proletarianization that has taken place in the last decades, and that has affected mainly women in the work force. In Canada there is a concentration in the employer class location and an enlarging of the intermediary class locations. This is the country that is closer to an ideal-type "middle-class society",

with a large number of intermediary class locations and low levels of proletarianization of its work force.

The pattern of relative social mobility opportunities is one of the differences between men and women. But, on a more general level, skill, or cultural capital, is the great obstacle to intergenerational mobility. In these four Western countries cultural capital is the most important factor for the reproduction of social inequalities. Schooling and professional skills appear as crucial to the exploitation of the labor effort. This can indicate, in a new century based on information technologies, a convergence of countries with different historical positions in the capitalist world system based not on industrial capabilities but on a more diffuse factor: knowledge production and reproduction. And this sets educational and professional skills acquisition policies as priorities to produce more equal and less exploitative societies.[22]

Workers, as the most dispossessed class location, have little opportunities to improve their living conditions, and the weight of skill in the closure of social structures makes their fates almost set from the beginning. Only voluntary political programs, based on permanent skill training and certification by the State can mitigate the gap in social opportunities and produce a more equal and just society, and this is a challenge that must be engaged by all sociologists.

[22] Skill is not an obstacle to intergenerational mobility only for women in the Czech Republic and Sweden. Gøsta Esping-Andersen (1993: 239-241), although working with a very different theoretical framework than the one used here, concludes that post-industrial class formations will depend on the access to the educational system and on its rate of success. For him some political measures are needed to prevent the social closure of the upper classes, and this can only be done through the implementation of measures that democratize the educational system.

APPENDICES

Appendix I. Operationalization of class structure for the permeability analyses

	Property		Authority	Skill
Class Location	Self-employed	Has employees	Managerial or supervisory position	Occupation
Employers	Yes	Yes		
Petty bourgeoisie	Yes	No		
Expert Managers and Supervisors[#]	No		Yes	Professional, technical or managerial occupations
Skilled and Nonskilled Supervisors and Managers	No		Yes	Occupation other than professional, technical or managerial occupations
Experts	No		No	Professional occupations (i.e: occupations that require post-undergraduate education)
Semiskilled Workers	No		No	Technical, managerial or semi-professional occupations
Nonskilled Workers	No		No	Occupations other than technical, managerial or semi-professional occupations

Adapted from Wright (1997: 154)

Require a higher education degree (in Portugal, due to a late massification of higher education, I used the complete high school degree, except for those occupations requiring a university degree).

Appendix II. Design matrices for class-boundary-cross variables

Permeability events that cross the property boundary[PROPERTY]

	Emp	Pb	EMs	MSn	Pro	SE+ Wkr
Emp	0	0	1	1	1	1
Pb	0	0	0	0	0	0
EMS	1	0	0	0	0	0
MSn	1	0	0	0	0	0
Pro	1	0	0	0	0	0
SE+ Wkr	1	0	0	0	0	0

Permeability events that cross the authority boundary [AUTHORITY]

	Emp	Pb	EMs	MSn	Pro	SE + Wkr
Emp	0	1	0	0	1	1
Pb	1	0	1	1	0	0
EMS	0	1	0	0	1	1
MSn	0	1	0	0	1	1
Pro	1	0	1	1	0	0
SE + Wkr	1	0	1	1	0	0

Permeability events that cross the skill boundary [SKILL]

	Emp	Pb	Gsq	Gsn	Perit	T + Tsq
Emp	0	0	1	0	1	0
Pb	0	0	1	0	1	0
Gsq	1	1	0	1	0	1
Gsn	0	0	1	0	1	0
Pro	1	1	0	1	0	1
SE+ Wkr	0	0	1	0	1	0

Permeability events that link the working class with other class locations [WORKER]

	Emp	Pb	Gsq	Gsn	Perit	T + Tsq
Emp	0	0	0	0	0	1
Pbn	0	0	0	0	0	2
Gsq	0	0	0	0	0	3
Gsn	0	0	0	0	0	4
Perit	0	0	0	0	0	5
T + Tsq	1	2	3	4	5	0

Within-class events: quasi-independence matrix [QI]

	Emp	Pb	Gsq	Gsn	Perit	T+ Tsq
Emp	1	0	0	0	0	0
Pb	0	2	0	0	0	0
Gsq	0	0	3	0	0	0
Gsn	0	0	0	4	0	0
Perit	0	0	0	0	5	0
T+ Tsq	0	0	0	0	0	6

1 – Crosses class boundary
0 - Does not cross class boundary
Emp - Employers
Pb – Petty bourgeois
EMS – Expert managers and supervisors
MSn – Skilled and nonskilled managers and supervisors
Pro- Professionals
SE +Wkr – Skilled employees and workers
(NAME) Name of variable in equations

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