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Still driven - Mobility patterns and gender roles in Portugal

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Abstract

This article explores the relationship between gender and mobility based on the results of a PhD research about the mobility patterns in Portuguese metropolis. Mobility of human groups is one of the strongest trends of the last century with continuity to the present (Sheller and Urry, 2006). Although the empowerment of women in western societies, geographical mobility continues to be gender specific. If this situation is not new at international scene, in Portugal it raises interesting questions as the country has suffered recent and important social changes precisely in what concerns women roles. Using both an hypothetical deductive analytical model and combining quantitative with qualitative techniques in this research we were able to identify different mobility profiles according mainly to social identity in which gender performs a central role.

Keywords: Mobility, Gender, Women, Transports, Metropolis, Social identity.

Introduction

The growth of mobility of people is one of the strongest trends of the XX century (Sheller and Urry, 2006). In the same period remarkable differences in women social roles occurred in western societies. This paper aims to explore both issues in connection with each other and in the specific Portuguese social reality.

Due mainly to the Salazar regime, some social processes occurred later in Portugal than other European countries (Viegas e Costa,1999). These include both the feminization of the working force and the level of mobility of the population especially in what concerns the use of private transport. That raises the question if the temporality of the two phenomena shaped differences in their contours.

We will start to situate theoretically the discussion first of mobility, then gender and finally the confrontation of the two concepts reviewing the relevant literature on gender and mobility. Afterwards we will present the empirical study and analyze the results in order to frame some possible patterns of Portuguese gendered mobility. We will finish with some proposals of interpretations of these patterns.

About Mobility

"The concept of mobility encompasses large-scale movements of people, objects, capital and information worldwide, as well as the more local processes of daily commuting, moving in public space and transport of material objects in everyday life." (Hannam, Sheller e Urry, 2006: 1).

Mobility is a long known feature of human groups but its expression in the (post) modern society assumes unexpected features with strong impacts on the social structure. At the same time it is a mass phenomenon that brings to light social issues and simultaneously is a sociological problem that discusses fundamental concepts like time and space and motion representations.

In recent decades, Portuguese society has changed quite quickly and one big change was the growth of private ownership of automobiles and in the two metropolitan areas the modal inversion from collective transports for the individual, especially the automobile. Due to Portuguese social and historical specificities, our society is still promoting the increase of cars and mobility is not yet a social and sociological concern at a time when several European capitals are already green towns.

Thinking automobility

Imposed in western metropolis since mobility has become part of everyday lifestyles, the car at the same time that offers the best moving conditions from an individual perspective impacts negatively on the collective. (1991) points out that, since the Second World War we moved from a "walking city" for an "automobile city" and at the same time from a "morphological city" to a "functional city". Dupuy (2004) explains that the individual advantages of using car are such that drivers do not stop growing and, remarkably, this increase appears to raise a better network of services and routes.

The private car is the main factor of mobility growth and from an overall point of view we can say that the increase in its use was motivated by a wide range of reasons like comfort, speed and several facilities. The automobile allows people to more efficiently manage their time and deal with unforeseen events (Oliveira and Cruz, 2008. The perception of comfort and security are not negligible factors but the main reason for

choosing the car is that it is faster than public transport in what concerns commuting (Oliveira, 2006). The notion of intrinsic safety is in the minimum strange since road accidents represent 29% of the causes of death in Portugal (INE, 2002). From our point of view this can be explained by the automobile being socially represented as a breastplate, especially from physical aggression. The preponderance of automobility is considerable in commuting but it is even more relevant in what concerns leisure, particularly tourism. The automobile facilitates the experience of time travel as a break with daily routine (Araújo, 2004). The analysis of time travel has been developed by several authors, including Urry, who refers that travelling in the contemporary world assumes a very marked significance in personal experiences (Urry, 2002). In the process of traveling different temporalities coexist, which are sometimes difficult to conjugation by its actors, because they are multiple and inconsistent since time travel is by definition, lost time but other notions and uses of time emerge such as multi-tasking time and motion time, expressed in the landscape that flows through the window and suddenly interrupted by a line of traffic causing disruptions and feelings of anxiety and pressure.

The connection between mobility and work as going to work is one of the most important reason for moving. The mobility of people who are not active in the labor market is substantially less than those who are working. Within this group mobility is higher depending on the functional complexity of the work being higher among professionals and intellectual and scientific activities (Santos, 2001).

Since the emergence and subsequent popularization of the automobile that its use significantly influences the use of space, bringing with it new spaces and thus marking the management and urban planning. United States played a key role in the development of a distinctive automobile culture by providing experiences, pictures and literature that have become icons of the car. The construction of motorways has become a metaphor of progress in the United States of America (Urry, 2004) and other countries (Portugal being one of them) imported this social representations. The car has a central role in the history of the contemporary world, in various levels of analysis, and has always represented much more than an object that allows, in its pure definition, movement in space by reducing the expenditure of time. The car is today an integral part of the urban landscape and even in the countryside has a growing weight

Today's mobilities (concept that puts together physical motion and virtual connectivity) are in the center of the social change at the same time creating opportunities and constraints and deeply changing temporalities. The growing demand for ways and means of transport should therefore be interpreted not as a reminiscence of the past but as a strong trend of the current social and historical moment and a consequence of development and therefore mobility appears as an evocative keyword for a strong political and social discourse.

Although we can think about mobility in general terms mobility is deeply connected to the context, to the people who perform it, where it happens and the way it is interpreted. (Hanson, 2010)

About Gender

We will start by distinguishing sex and gender as the second concept is still commonly misused. While sex refers to aspects related to the biological differences between men and women, the concept of gender was introduced in sociology to describe the social representation of biological sex, determined by social definition of tasks and roles assigned to women and men in society both in public and private life (Oakley, 1972). In general gender issues are subject of great interest by sociology, because they are linked to issues of power and inequality in societies. Gender inequalities are usually defined as the differences in status, power and prestige that women and men among groups, communities and societies (Giddens, 2010). Gender is currently recognized as an important category of historical analysis since the different circumstances in which men and women live socially generate different perspectives on the events. Albeit this perspective has received some critics in particular from those who consider reductionist the perspective of social conditioning arguing that the dichotomy nature/nurture is not so as linear.

In this article we will argue that Portuguese mobility are gender specific in the sense of distinct social expectations and agency behaviors according to sex into social identities.

Gender roles in Portugal

In Portugal the last decades of the twentieth century were marked by the feminization of the working population. Unlike other countries of Mediterranean Europe, Portugal has seen in the last 40 years,

"a 'silent revolution', with its center in the rapid and comprehensive inclusion of women in work. Portugal have moved from one of the lowest rates of female employment in the developed world to one of the highest: 61.6% against an average in the EU-27 was 58.6% in 2009 [Eurostat, 2010]. (.. .) These numbers are even more significant when we consider that this female employment is mostly in a full time basis as our rate of female part-time employment is very low (14% below the average EU-27 in 2008)"(Coelho in Sales and Villas- Boas, 2012: 31).

However, the increasing women participation in the labor market and the simultaneous increase of women academic qualifications has not driven to an equality social situation. The dominant social model continues to give women the main responsibility for housekeeping and child care and to men the responsibility for professional work. National and international studies (Torres, Monteiro, Vieira da Silva and Cabrita 2004; Torres, Haas, Steiber, and Brites, 2007) show that Portuguese women accumulate paid work (expending almost the same time in their paid job than men) with unpaid labor (management, housework and caring for dependents) while men still involve considerably less in the second type of tasks. This means for women an overloaded daily life, which brings difficulties to the balance of family and professional life, without however mean less commitment of women in the project of building a career (Sales e Villas-Boas, 2012). This circumstance, expression of the social division of gender roles, is a major barrier to equal participation of women and men in all spheres of social life and therefore women are still underrepresented in positions of decision-making, like for example public administration leadership or private companies senior executives as well as in some industries, and in private sector earn an average salary equivalent to 81.3% of men in the same position (Almeida in Sales and Villas-Boas 2012). This lack of female representation in decision making is only understandable because these asymmetries are strongly rooted in gender stereotypes which translate ancient conceptions of femininity and

masculinity and the relationship of women with power (Almeida in Sales e Villas-Boas, 2012).

Women of lower socio-economical condition are particularly affected in a general framework of intense wage inequality, one of the largest in the European Union. Paradoxically, this inequality is an essential mean of socio-economic regulation as high rates of female qualified employment feed the less qualified female employment through the acquisition of substitute services of housekeeping. The families located in the higher levels of the hierarchy of income have the economical power to obtain these services on the market. This effect is reinforced by the fact that weddings occur mainly among people with very similar levels of education and thus wage income. Thus, the service providers of housework and care (cleaning, laundry, meal preparation, care for children, elderly and other dependents) constitute a major share of female employment as showed by OECD (2012). Although we are dealing with a redistribution mechanism among women, it is simultaneously a powerful mechanism for perpetuating social wounds.

The current economical and social crisis is changing this reality but not in the sense of a greater equity. Recent indicators show that women (both qualified and not qualified) are the first to suffer the effects of the economical collapse and the activity rate is highly masculine: 57% against on 47% of women (INE, 2011).

Mobility and gender

Mobility patterns differ according to sex as several social scientists have noticed however there is still a gap of social interpretation of these differences (Cresswell and Uteng, 2008). Studies about gender and mobility tend to focus mainly one of the concepts and therefore not exploring the all potential of the relationship between them (Hanson, 2010).

When we look at the patterns of mobility in countries like the United States or England, we can see differences based on sex. Women tend to travel shorter distances and with different stops while men have a higher incidence of more linear and longer paths with a single reason for travel. Specifically, British mobility indicators show that men travel

more than women, especially as car drivers. Men travel more for professional reasons, while women move mainly for shopping needs and do more *escort* trips, which means the transport of people, eg taking children to school. Women make more journeys on foot or by public transport than men but it has increased the number of women between 60 and 69 years with a driving license (from 15% to 63% in 2008), which indicates a growing trend of feminization of car use in Britain (Oliveira, 2011).

The same patterns apply if we look at the different roles women play in the transport sector. Women are the group less present in the management of transportation systems and decision making. These sectors have traditionally been dominated by men given its strong dependence on areas such as technology and engineering which are also traditionally male areas. Although today still less than 30% of the car owner's in the EU are women, this number is increasing and is expected to be a major factor in the future growth of motorization European (Finat, s/d). But at the same time women represent about 60% of public transport users, remaining the group that uses more the collective transport.

Another aspect of this usage patterns divergence between men and women refers to how the two represent the motor vehicle. In this respect traditionally the driver is associated with men and that has raised numerous difficulties regarding women drivers. The woman driver is socially represented as slower, less aggressive and less responsive. It is pertinent to recall here the work of Jean Kilbourne on the image of women in advertising. Kilbourne (1999) refers that the way women are represented now in the twenty one century remains the same as in 1970s. Looking specifically to automobile advertising we can see that it continues today to play and relay on the strongman stereotypes, fast and seductive, that through his powerful vehicle can attract the most desirable women. The woman appears in these ads as an object or as mother and companion, advertising the family vehicle, led by man. Occasionally appear ads targeted to female drivers with a main message of femininity, perpetuating of the same social gender roles. Examples of this are ads that highlight accessories like mirrors where women can paint their lips while driving or technical features that can overcome the traditional female "clumsiness" for driving, for example cars that park alone.

However, at the same time that mobility remains gender specific there are some signs that seem to indicate that the end of this century brought an approximation of the two sexes on access and use of automobile. It seems that things are changing and its starting point might be automobility patterns, moreover the strong tendency of contemporary modal options in major cities of Europe. Some authors read this tendency as part of a process of masculinization of women behavior as a mean to gain equality (Walsh, 2010). Actually, this change takes place mainly at the level of car use contexts and taking in account that women increasingly tend to have a paid full time job and their workplace being mostly located in large urban centers, it seems reasonable to have an increasing number of women moving in mobility patterns similar to men. Socio-demographic factors such as the declining birthrate and the postponement of motherhood combine to enhance this situation.

In conclusion, literature shows there is a relationship between mobility and gender but there are different angles to perspective the ways this relation connects with the context and the complex scale of interactions that shape social world (Hanson, 2010). Therefore it is important to get more information about the uses and the meanings of women mobilities.

Empirical Study

Methodology

We studied the daily mobility of the two Portuguese metropolitan areas (Lisboa and Porto) from the perspective of their citizens everyday uses of time and space. Our application of the concept included both the physical movements and virtual connectivity of inhabitants and users of the two metropolitan areas but the data we are discussing here concerns just the first meaning of the concept.

Dislocations were measured by their reach (inside and outside councils and the distance) and through their duration.

The data presented are the partial results of a PhD research. We have used a methodological approach that involved the combination of quantitative and qualitative techniques: a questionnaire survey and in-depth interviews. We argue that for the study of Portuguese mobility patterns a complementary approach was essential as this object of

study is simultaneously vast and full of subjectivity. There is scarce national data about Portuguese mobility so it was relevant to get extensive information that allows us to better frame the problem. At the same time we assumed that mobilities are deeply connected with options, lifestyles and representations and an intensive approach was therefore valuable.

We have applied an online survey to active inhabitants and/or users of one of the two metropolitan areas and 31 in-depth interviews. The survey had 1968 valid respondents and although not being representative of the Lisboa and Porto metropolitan areas it is a large sample and it was largely disseminated in companies and households databases. The interviews were applied to people who had already responded to the survey in order to obtain qualitative data. The data of the survey was analyzed using univariate, bivariate and multivariate analysis with the support of computer tool SPSS, version 17. For bivariate crosstabs we employed correspondence analysis (ANACOR). For the multivariate analysis we employed a multiple correspondence analysis (ACM) and cluster analysis. For the interviews we used thematic content analysis.

The gender perspective was included for the personal characterization (using the variable sex) and also in the construction of the dimension "social identity" (using variables connected with tasks, activities and representations). In the interviews we aimed to have equal representation of both sexes in order to make a gender-based analysis of the data obtained, however due to constraints of the field work, it was not possible to obtain gender equality of the respondents.

Results

The average age of our sample from the survey is 39 years, the median is 37 and mode is 32. The standard deviation is 8.5. The younger (18 to 25 years) and older (over 55 years) groups are poorly represented.

Regarding gender distribution there is an almost equal representation of both sexes (50.4% of men and 49.6% of women).

The respondents of the survey are mostly located on the fringe of 29% of the national population with higher qualifications (INE, 2012) and therefore this sample is not representative of the national population in terms of education. Almost half the sample has completed superior studies: 38% are graduated and about 18% completed post-graduate

studies. Additionally our sample has 22% of workers who are currently studying. This represents a sharp investment in skills and training throughout life. In this group of students 62% are in university.

Table 1: Level of Education

Level of Education completed	Frequency	Percentage
University degree	754	38,3 %
A level	631	32.1%
Master and PhD	349	17,7 %
General Certificate of Secondary Education	195	9,9 %
Primary education	39	2 %
Total	**1968**	**100,0 %**

Valid answers: 1968   99,8%

Missing answers: 3   0,2%

The variable occupation was coded after the collection of data according to level 2 of Portuguese National Classification of Occupations (CNP), which have allowed classifying occupations more accurately then the first level which correspond to only 10 major areas. Level 2 makes the correspondence with common sense designations like teacher, manager and engineer. The percentage of missing values is remarkable in this variable (26%), which may have caused bias in the results so they should be cautiously interpreted. Still we can say that the dominant group is composed by experts of intellectual and scientific occupations (55%), with mainly managers, engineers, system analysts, quality technicians and teachers. The dominant sector was the tertiary (99%). It is a tertiary highly qualified identifiable with the concept of symbolic analysts (Reich, 1993), despite the still significantly presence of a tertiary more traditional (about 10%) of office workers, trade and secretaries.

In comparison with national data, this distribution is quite different: the experts of intellectual and scientific occupations represented only 14% of the employed population

(INE, 2011) so we are facing a specific segment of the population, mostly linked to the performance of intellectual and scientific professions.

Lisbon area has the largest concentration of national professional and scientific intellectuals, who leads the development of Portuguese knowledge society (Cardoso, 2009) as well as the largest concentration of ICT professionals (Nunes, 2004).

Regarding income level, we are in presence of a population that tends to earn above the national average. In Portugal minimum wage is currently 485 Euros (before taxes) per month and 57% of the population monthly wage locates between 700 and 900 Euros (TESE, 2010). In our sample a relatively high percentage (25%) earns more than 3,000 Euros per month which corresponds to about 3 national minimum wages per person (almost 100% of the sample are households of two wages). The group of people with 2000/ 3000 Euros represents 20% of the population studied.

Tests were performed to explore the association between sex and social identity and lifestyles. In our sample women are younger than men, situating more in the groups below 34 years old. Women are also more educated (Pearson chi-square of 68 and a significance of 0,000). But at the same time they are who contribute less for the household income (Pearson chi-square of 164 with a significance of 0,000) and are overrepresented in occupations like teachers, secretaries and managers while men are mainly engineers, and computer specialists. In what concerns activities and spar time we found that women spend more time in "care of the house and dependents" and men more time with the "leisure and cultural activities."

Analyzing leisure activities, there is a low but significant association between men and a higher incidence of "surf the internet or play computer" and, on the other hand, among the group of women and "watching television" and "socializing with other people."

Gender is also associated with "transportation used in moving house-work", indicating that people of different sex use a particular mode of transport for commuting (Pearson chi square 95 and a significance of 0.000): men in the majority use "only car"," only motorcycle " is a residual but exclusively male option, while women have a higher percentage in the modal options of " only public transport "and" combined means (public + private). Gender is also associated with the" frequency of moving by public transport

"confirming that women use more public transport then men. In what concerns the main reason for choosing the actual mean of transport, when women travel by car they argue personal reasons while men highlight reasons connected with professional needs, speed and comfort.

A test of means showed a close average distance of men and women (respectively 17.76 and 16.39 kilometers by day) but still we can say that men travel longer distances then women.

Questioned about what their car represents, women respondents highlighted representations of the car as a family tool engaged with quality of life (36% of women who responded to the question) but curiously also freedom of action and decision (26%) while men mainly represented their car as a work tool.

Time management was approached by qualitative techniques. The results were that time is managed mainly in two approaches: daily management and weekly management. Differences of gender are notorious since women have a time management closely linked to the management of the house, supplies and care of children which raises very strict schedules.

"There was a time when I used to came with my husband came by car and then to came back with my dad who also worked in Lisbon and it was good because we could talk and be together as a couple and he would sometimes have lunch with me because we had the car in Lisbon and that was a quality time, hard to get at home. But I needed to change this routine because I was mom and the traffic is not controllable. Too much stress and not compatible with having a child in kindergarten. But to go with my father was financially more advantageous to me. "(INT. C)

"My job right now is all about time management, the timings of that kids that I scort. My personal life goes with me and work and family balance is almost impossible. My life is an agenda full of undone items. My daughter complains that I do not have time for her and my house is a mess. "(INT. N)

There is a considerable weight of routine procedures, with very strong and defined patterns for the workweek but surprisingly also at weekends and holidays.

"We have a country house in Cartaxo with trees and a swimming pool we go there for the week-ends and holidays. I "use" Lisbon during the week to organize things at lunchtime so that I can enjoy my spare time at weekend"(INT. F)

It has been pointed out in all interviews the strategic importance of planning in order to organize life better.

The planning strategy seems to reflect the factors of mobility, such as the distances and routes, accessibility and the mode of transport used, so while women organize their life according to public transportation timetable, men are more flexible to unpredicted events as they move by car but they still plan their day in order to better coordinate work and spare time.

"I feel the time as scarce but manageable. I use all my free time for my PhD and to family life. "(INT. O)

"My wife has a very tiring week because of the work and the house and the weekend also in a rush because family visits but for me is different I have all the time I need now. "(INT. I)

We have conducted a multiple correspondence analysis which identified two axles, one connected with mobility patterns and other with social identity. In what concerns consistency, we noticed that dimension one is highly consistent, with a Cronbach's Alpha of 0,82 while the consistency of the dimension two is weaker with just 0,68 explaining less variance. The income is the main discrimination measure of social identity and sex is yet not relevant. We believe that a possible reason for the weaker consistency of dimension two might be the overall homogeneity of the sample, meaning that this population has one major mobility profile. Afterwards we decided to do an analysis of clusters of type *k-means* in order to clarify in what sense are that the two dimensions related and to identify groups according to the profile of mobility.

The choice for k-means is because the hierarchical analysis assumes the default listwise exclusion, which means that all cases with missing values are automatically excluded. In our sample that would mean retaining only 47% of cases for analysis. After several experiments we obtained two clusters, primarily defined by the variables that characterize what we might call a "mobility profile":

Characterization of the two clusters

The variables that have contributed more to differentiate the two clusters are the "transport used", "time spent," "occupation", "sex", "age" and "income level". The "level of education" and "distance home - work," not substantially differentiates the two groups but clusters are gendrified.

Cluster 1 is a cluster characterized by grouping the elements that take more time in traveling from home to work, making more use of public transport and combined transport modes. It is a younger cluster **with more women** than men and higher presence of people with lower incomes. In what concerns occupation this cluster has higher percentage of technicians and administrative staff. We call it the Driven cluster.

Cluster 2 groups the faster commuters, especially those that use motorized and private vehicles. It is an older cluster, with more men and with higher incomes and also higher percentage of skilled intellectual and scientific occupations. We call it the Driver cluster.

Discussion of Results

The population demonstrated to be relatively homogeneous in terms of lifestyles and mobility patterns, which can be explained by the flatness of acquired social positions, particularly in terms of education and occupation. These results are consistent with what literature tells us about women tending to move towards male attitudes and lifestyles. A possible spill-over of this homogeneity is the non significant difference in the distance traveled between men and women, which is one thing that literature emphasizes as gender specific of mobility.

Moreover, the dominant characteristics of the clusters underlie the inequality of power between the sexes that we have found in the literature review and that still represents

a characteristic of western societies. The statistical relationship between mobility profiles and social identities stressed the feminization of the use of public transport and the use of the car by women mainly due to personal purposes. At the same time, time management studied in the qualitative approach stressed the typical differences between men and women routines: the women major participation into the non-paid work like house and children care which daily conducts women to more strict schedules and a higher work charge. At the same time the meaningful "small" differences like for example in the social identity: women are younger, contribute less for the household income and have less prestigious jobs. Also in the leisure activities, were women tend to practice more relational activities like the face-to-face contact while men practice more often leisure activities involving functional virtual mobility as "surfing in the internet". In short we can say that the segmentation of the two clusters found highlight what literature tells us about the gender gap in all spheres of life and also in mobility.

But on the other hand we need to consider the underneath tendency to homogeneity of the results. From our point of view this can be understood in two ways: we can read the homogeneity of our results as a tendency to the masculinization of lifestyles with more women following the men standards, as discussed by some authors and here emerging as possible trend in Portuguese metropolitan mobility patterns. In a more optimistic reading we can see this tendency as a cut with the traditional gender roles and a new urban lifestyle of both men and women, highly qualified and highly mobile. A new group of people that are less gender differentiate then their parents' generation and were the patterns of mobility could became less gender specific in the future. If this is the case it would be important to study if now, due to the recent economic and social crisis that Portugal is passing through, the mobility patterns are the same and if women are being more or less affected then men.

Conclusion: Drivers and driven

The reading of Portuguese metropolitan mobility patterns based on gender allowed us to find both continuities and innovations. Women have entered Portuguese labor market and particularly in the case of qualified women, tend to be part of a relatively homogenous group of high mobile people that daily commute and move considerably in their spare time-But within this group, women belong to a particular sub group that is shaped by an effect of

asymmetries when compared with the dominant group: an asymmetry of the mode of transport is coupled with the travel time, putting women in a less desirable level of mobility than men. But even more important in our view is that this disadvantage standing encompasses asymmetries in other spheres of social life: lower income, lower status occupations and higher weight of extra work responsibilities for women, reifying and consolidating a differential position of less power for women. Considering that this population belongs to the so-called new middle classes, locating above the national average in terms of education and income levels it was expectable a smaller asymmetry based on gender. We believe that our results underlie the need to rethink the conditions needed for a real equality between men and women and to reinforce the gender mainstreaming in Portugal in what concerns the transport sector.

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