Vasco Ramos e Tiago Carvalho (2021), "Remapping the Portuguese social space: Towards a Bourdieusian class scheme", *Portuguese Journal of Social Science*, 20(1-2): 3-25, doi: https://doi.org/10.1386/pjss_00031_1.

Remapping the Portuguese social space: Towards a Bourdieusian class scheme

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Abstract:
Class analysis is intimately linked to the very development and consolidation of Portuguese sociology after the Carnation Revolution. Throughout the last decades, different research programmes assessed the nature and extent of class inequalities, drawing on Marxist, Weberian and functionalist paradigms. After a highly productive and intensely debated phase, a syncretic and compact approach prevailed. While this approach captures relevant features of class inequality, its current version overshadows critical aspects of difference and misrecognition in the social space in Portugal. From an analysis of occupational, qualifications and income data, we first propose a scheme of class fractions, which draws on the relational and multidimensional approach to class originally proposed by Bourdieu and recently taken up in European sociology. Using multiple correspondence analysis and nationally representative datasets, we demonstrate the validity of this tool for studying class and linkages to fields and its potential for replication in further statistical and qualitative research.

Keywords:
social class; inequality; capital; Portugal; Bourdieu; multiple correspondence analysis

Background

Social class inequalities are striking in contemporary Portugal. This assertion is backed by the work of several researchers who assessed the consequences of class differences across several domains. Among these, sociologists such as Almeida, Costa and Machado stand out with their typology of class positions. Whether by its consistency or due to a lack of alternatives, it became arguably the most widely used class scheme in recent Portuguese sociology. However, 30 years after the foundational groundwork that laid the basis of the current version, inconsistencies have become increasingly clearer. On the one hand, the Portuguese class structure changed: not only the economy is increasingly service-based, as the active population is more educated than before. On the other hand, lifestyle and consumption patterns and forms of collective representation continue to evolve. In this article, we show that such changes engender and bring to the surface class oppositions that this typology hardly captures. While the ACM typology captures important dimensions of class in contemporary Portuguese society, in its present version it offers too broad a lens to identify essential aspects of difference and social inequality, namely in what relates to lifestyle, consumption and political engagement. This is hardly surprising, as it was never a major goal of its proponents, even if they often rely on Bourdieusian interpretations for their findings. We argue that remapping the Portuguese social space in a way that grasps such differences entails going back to the theoretical-methodological premises of the French author. Not as proof of our allegiance but to ensure a more nuanced picture, which may circumvent underestimating important aspects of social difference in contemporary Portuguese society.

This article is organized as follows. As a starting point, we briefly trace a genealogy on social class research in Portugal, as our work is grounded and shaped by many of the debates had in Portuguese sociology until now. We then address issues in the predominant take on social class within the discipline, questioning its adequacy to grasp present-day divides. After outlining shortcomings, we draw on the principles laid out by Bourdieu in Distinction (1984, [1979] 2010), while following a similar logic to recent work out of the United Kingdom (Atkinson 2017), Norway (Hansen et al. 2009) and Denmark (Prieur et al. 2008; Skjøtt-Larsen 2012) to propose an alternative tool to study classes in Portugal. Lastly, using existing datasets, we analyse the space of social positions in contemporary Portugal and, from it, derive an alternative class scheme that can be used in further research.

Sociological tools for class analysis in Portugal: a critical reappraisal of ACM and its alternatives

In the international scene, for much of the last decades, the literature on social class was roughly organized in two camps: on one side, the neo-Marxists, inspired by Erik Olin Wright's work; on the other, the neo-Weberians, where John Goldthorpe stood as a towering figure. Both camps laid out tools that can be used to map the class structures of capitalist countries, using quantitative datasets (Erikson and Goldthorpe 1992; Goldthorpe et al. 1987; Wright 1997). More recently, consistent efforts have been made to renew the Weberian approach, taking into account the growing fragmentation of the 'service class' (Oesch 2006). In the United Kingdom, drawing on the work of Bourdieu, Savage et al. (2013) proposed a much-publicized (and often criticized, e.g. Mills 2014 or Atkinson 2017) new model of social class.

The Portuguese case is somewhat different. The neo-Weberian take on social class was seldom used (with the notable exceptions of Cabral 1998 and Roldão 2008), while Estanque and Mendes, from the University of Coimbra, implemented the Marxist perspective. In 1992, the latter authors worked directly with Wright in the 'Class Structure and Class Conscience' international project that compared the class structures of different countries (Estanque 1997; Estanque and Mendes 1998). In the meantime, Estanque and Mendes (1998) resorted to Goldthorpe's model to demonstrate the lack of social mobility in Portugal, under increasing workforce fragmentation and precariousness. A few years after, these authors diverted their attention away from this subject and distanced themselves from the Marxist perspective. For example, Estanque (2003, 2009, 2012) increasingly mentioned a 'middle-class effect', a symbolic marker of expectations, lifestyle and consumption standards and desirable expressions of social conflict. The concept of middle class was a clear nod to Goldthorpe's service class and its dividends (secure employment contract, career opportunities, inter alia). A plethora of occupations is dubbed 'middle class', from office workers to bureaucrats of public and private sectors, to teachers and skilled workers (Estanque 2009). Assuming the difficulty in 'rigorously' defining the boundaries of such a heterogenous social grouping, Estanque will refer to 'middle class' as a somewhat nebulous and internally diversified group, encompassing those located above the base of the stratification pyramid and below the top strata (2017: 39). All in all, the author seems to have abandoned rigorous class analysis to subsume it under common catchphrases.

Against the backdrop of the capitulation of coherent alternatives[1], the take on social classes developed by authors out of CIES-IUL attained an undisputed, near-hegemonic status in Portuguese sociology. The research programme initiated by Almeida, Costa and Machado can be traced back to the 1980s (Almeida 1988; Almeida et al. 1988; Costa 1987; Machado et al. 1989) and resulted in a typology of class positions (hereafter ACM). Initially proposed in the early 1990s, this scheme was fine-tuned, both in the number of positions and in the designation of class fractions. The research team grew and addressed fundamental issues related to inequality, from life trajectories to education. Over the past two decades, this typology became arguably the most widely used instrument in the analysis of social classes in Portugal and led to considerable empirical and cognitive insight in an array of research projects (Almeida et al. 1994; Costa et al. 2000; Machado and Costa 1998; Machado et al. 2003). Currently, a newer generation of authors uses the ACM typology to explore class inequalities in European societies (Almeida et al. 2006; Carmo and Nunes 2013; Costa et al. 2018; Mauritti et al. 2016).

Theoretically, these authors propose a combination of Marxist, Weberian and functionalist insights on social class. Moreover, when interpreting findings, they place a premium on approaches that bridge the structure–agency divide (Pinto 2007), from Giddens' theory of structuration (1984) to Bourdieu's theory of practice ([1972] 2002). In addressing class inequality, the instrument developed by this school combines Wright's neo-Marxist approach, which values control over means of production, organizational resources and qualifications, with Bourdieu's take on the overall volume of available capital and its decomposition in species. Interestingly, paradigmatic cross-fertilization and theoretical syntheses are distinctive features of this research centre and university, a veritable research habitus setting it apart from more doctrinarian schools (Machado 2009).

[1] We should point out that there are a few alternatives. The more consistent and fruitful draw heavily on Bourdieu. Their empirical focus has mostly examined cultural practices and class culture in a regional context (the city of Oporto) (Lopes 2000; Pereira 2005; Pereira and Pinto 2007).

In the ACM typology, economic and cultural-symbolic resources shape the class structure. As in Bourdieu, class inequalities are, therefore, taken as multidimensional. First, individuals are clustered based on ownership or control over means of production (in the neo-Marxist definition) and occupations. This approach firmly ascribes class positions to the place individuals occupy in relations of production. The cultural-symbolic dimension, which relates mostly to educational credentials, is considered separately. For this dimension, the scheme relies on occupational status (employer, self-employed or employee) and the one-digit occupational codes used in official classifications (International Standard Classification of Occupations [ISCO]).[2] In its most recent iteration, this yields a minimum of five class positions,[3] namely entrepreneurs and executives (EE), professionals and managers (PM), self- employed workers (SE), routine employees (RE), industrial (and agricultural) workers (IW).

The ACM proponents assert that their typology, when compared to that of Wright (1985, 1997), differentiates far better wage relations in agriculture, industry and services. They rightfully point out that, by lumping all wage workers together in a proletariat class, Wright obscures crucial differences in available resources, subjectivities and work cultures. Moreover, Wright's option is bound to produce unbalanced statistical distributions, excessively teased out in what relates to the 'middle classes', and insufficiently in what pertains to the 'popular classes' (Machado et al. 2003). In the ACM class scheme, the proletariat can be found by bracketing together routine employees, industrial and agricultural workers. Discriminating these positions was theoretical and empirically sound, due to changes to the economic structure and a gendered segmentation of the workforce. The authors also acknowledged *petite bourgeoisie* positions, parsing out small-scale business owners and independent peasantry, which are an important segment of class structures in Southern Europe. In recent versions, as occupations in agriculture lost importance, class positions were subsumed to others (see note 3).

Throughout the years, ACM scheme accomplished invaluable services to class analysis. Moreover, the very scheme helped in shaping our understanding of class-based inequalities in this country (these authors included: Ramos [2014] and Carvalho [2014]). However, at this stage, it is necessary to point out fragilities that curb its potential to grasp important aspects of class in contemporary Portugal. While the proponents of this scheme draw on Bourdieu for interpretation, recent and more compact iterations render it increasingly distant from the French author's take on social class.

One problem is the stagnation of the typology, which may lead to reified uses of previously defined categories and substantialist understandings of class or class fractions. Moreover, some uses of the ACM scheme may inadvertently underplay the material and cultural aspects of social class. Class positions are always relational; schemes are not necessarily universal and should consider contextual factors (we expand this consideration in the conclusion). There are risks when comparing categorical class positions across different societies without contextually defining distances between them (Mauritti et al. 2016). A second issue is an inability to account for significant developments in the fields of education and economy and their effects on the social space of class. The current solution cannot capture oppositions within several class positions, especially among routine employees, entrepreneurs and executives, and professionals and managers.

[2] Currently, there is the Portuguese Classification of Occupations (CPP2010), which replaced the National Classification of Occupations (CNP1994). The only exception to this one-digit rule is that employees in the 9.1, 9.4, 9.5 and 9.6 occupational groups are classified as RE; employees of the 9.2 and 9.3 occupational groups are classified as IW (Machado et al. 2003; Mauritti et al. 2016).

[3] In previous versions, occupations in the primary sector (agriculture, fishing) were classified in specific positions. In the current version they are considered either as self-employed or as industrial workers, depending on occupational status.

Several examples can be given. In an increasingly service-based economy, the ACM typology clusters countless occupations as routines employees, from hairdressers to office clerks, from store attendants to food delivery operators, and many others in the gig economy. Even if these occupations are undoubtedly located in dominated class positions, differences in terms of rewards, social recognition (status and power) and work cultures may generate differences in terms of political position-taking and lifestyle. However, we do not know, and to what extent such is true is ultimately an empirical matter. As it stands, due to the lack of update given the structural changes described above, the ACM typology cannot assess it and ends up falling into a pitfall similar to the neo-Marxist approach, which its proponents once criticized: routine workers are lumped together in an oversized and undifferentiated working class.

A similar issue occurs among *entrepreneurs* and *managers*. This class includes most employers, from ICT and financial services to restaurant owners. There are vast differences in terms of overall volume and composition of capital, which should be used to discriminate them into different class fractions. While possible within the ACM logic, this is rarely done (a notable exception is Carmo and Nunes 2013). As Bourdieu (1998) argues, horizontal differentiation is a relevant source of antagonism and struggle. For one, it opposes those whose position depends on the possession of economic capital from those who predominantly rely on cultural capital. A prime example is his often-contested observations on the 'dominated fractions of the dominant classes', to refer to the oppositions between intellectuals and the economically dominant bourgeoise (Silva 2009). This relates to issues that concern those positioned as *professionals and managers*. All employees whose occupations are officially classified as professionals or technicians are considered in this class position. The assumption is that they tend to have higher cultural capital and, to some extent, a level of economic compensation, owing to their role as symbolic analysts or their technical expertise. As the access to higher education expanded in Portugal, so did the struggle for legitimacy, symbolic and material recognition in many of these activities. Here the problem is likely in terms of (vertical) distinction, an issue compounded by the growth of precariousness across these occupations. In short, there is a risk of assuming that classes automatically stem from the ACM typology (or any scheme for that matter). Such cannot be further from true: even if useful as a scheme, class analysis should be periodically renewed and reconsidered, with the tools at hand.

Returning to Bourdieu on class and social position

Following Bourdieu, we argue that social class is an inherently relational and contextual concept. Shortcomings in how social class is understood are answerable by returning to the Bourdieusian theoretical and methodological toolkit (1997, [1979] 2010; Bourdieu and Wacquant 2013).[4] Such entails a considerable analytical undertaking, using instruments laid out by the French author and marshalling a vast source of empirical materials. First and foremost, because the French author's approach to social class implies a constant articulation between theory and practice (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992).

One cornerstone of this approach is a refusal to specify, from the outset, given classes and unchangeable boundaries between them. Bourdieu considered this task, which is crucial in Wright, Goldthorpe and similar projects, as part of a political conflict outside scientific inquiry. Not that social class is

[4] We should point out that Bourdieu's work, and in particular *Distinction*, received wide acceptance among researchers working on social classes and education in Portugal (for a review see Ramada Curto et al. [1979] 2010: xxxvi).

irrelevant to political struggle, as it is to many other issues: quite the opposite is true. However, aprioristic definitions of class may lead to substantialist logics that conceive and identify social groupings as idealized realities, distanced from actual social practices. Therefore, asserting what class means looking at an array of indicators that inform us about the overall volume, composition and evolution of capitals. The actual sum and combination of the relevant species of capital (economic, cultural, social and symbolic) will allow differentiating between actual classes and class fractions (Bourdieu 1989). Assets are unequally distributed in each field of the social structure, and social agents act according to a logic of struggle for power and prestige. However, Bourdieu proposed to analyse status groups and lifestyles as manifestations of social class, not as a parallel or separate dimension (the homology hypothesis). Bourdieu also argued that practices classify and declassify objects, activities and those who perform them. In this sense, the struggles for prestige and legitimacy are not separable (nor distinct) from the material conditions of existence, nor class positions: they are mutually constitutive (Atkinson 2017).

Accordingly, working out a Bourdieusian class scheme needs to incorporate economic and symbolic elements: it is through everyday practice that social collectives arise and symbolic boundaries are established between individuals who occupy different positions in the social structure (Weininger 2005). However, as in other fields, the spaces of lifestyle or political position-taking are topologies with some autonomy vis-à-vis the social space of class. Relationships are mediated by class habitus, and thus the degree of homology between fields needs to be empirically investigated and established (Atkinson 2014). Furthermore, historical change and the 'perpetual flux in the market of distinction' implies a cyclical re-examination of empirical reality and a critical reappraisal of theoretical models and methodological options (Ramada Curto et al. [1979] 2010: XXIX).

A neo-Bourdieusian proposal: options and methods

We aim to reconstruct a map of the social space in Portugal and, from it, derive a scheme of class positions. The objective is that this scheme can be operationalized in further qualitative or quantitative research, namely on large national surveys, but also to adapt its principles on ethnographic work in a wide array of fields, contexts and locations. It should be noted that behind Bourdieu's principles of class analysis, what we have is an analysis of how power is distributed and that can be adapted depending on the scales of observation. As suggested by Atkinson (2017: 12), devising a scheme of 'objective' class positions, or 'classes on paper', will benefit from a definition simultaneously ensuring maximal internal homogeneity and opposition to others in terms of conditions of existence and possession over resources essential in the expression of social difference in contemporary societies.

Theoretically, our scheme assumes that positions can be discerned vertically, according to the overall volume of capital, and horizontally, depending on the composition and combination of different types of capital. Another axiom of a Bourdieusian approach is a tripartite conception of the social space, which differentiates dominant, intermediate and dominated positions (Bourdieu [1979] 2010). Bourdieu does not pre-conceive the social space as such, but rather it is the result of his analysis resulting from constant dialogue between theory and data. However, it is possible to find similar logic of division across fields, depending on the lenses and objective of the research (urban

vs. countryside; national vs. local). Variation within positions is indispensable to understand the struggles to define legitimate ways of existing and acting in society. Thus, the definition of classes and class fractions is relational, an assumption that gives relevance to distances between hierarchical positions in the social structure, as to fault lines between class fractions. Positions occupied by agents in relations of production are relevant. However, other properties should also be considered, namely occupation, income levels and accumulated assets, possession of qualifications, credentials and academic titles, as well as the gendered proportion of agents, tacit inclusion/exclusion criteria and even their spatial distribution (Bourdieu [1991] 2018).

In building our class position scheme, we draw inspiration from current studies that resort to Bourdieusian concepts to show how to construct theoretical sound and empirically grounded maps of national social spaces. Such are the cases of Atkinson's (2017) work concerning the United Kingdom, Hansen et al.'s (2009) work about Norway or Prieur et al.'s (2008, 2012) research on Denmark. In the Norwegian case, the backbone of the classification scheme is a careful recoding of the occupational codes, drawing on data from different sources (but mostly from the national registrar data on income). The Norwegian researchers added a set of conditions for the *economic fractions*, particularly to identify owners, rentiers and other actors living of property ownership. The Danish approach relies on a multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) of indicators of capital ownership, whose homology with lifestyles and positions was later tested, using occupations as a mediating factor. Atkinson (2017) combined both approaches and that is what we propose to do later in this article.

So far, such approaches and underlying debates have had little to no impact in Portugal. Therefore, our first task was to configure the class structure. As with international colleagues, and Bourdieu before them, we considered the categories used by statistical agencies – in this case, the updated CPP2010, the national version of the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) (ILO 2012).[5] The most differentiated coding (four-digit level) consists of 422 unit-level occupations, while sub-major groups (two-digit level) cluster 43 types of similar professions. Following Atkinson (2017) and Hansen et al. (2009), we aimed to use a more detailed solution. However, the National Statistics Institute uses the clustered coding in all national surveys, with four digits only being collected in large international research projects (ISSP and ESS) and staff registry data (SRD) from the Ministry of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security. As such, we decided to construct our scheme based on two-digit codes, drawing on a detailed analysis of SRD.

The initial matrix of class positions and fractions systematically aggregates two-digit CPP codes (Table 1). To test this proposal, we first considered the distribution of economic capital, exploring data on monthly net income (and standard deviation) at unit-level and aggregated codes. We used data from the 2015 and 2018 SRD databases, which gather ~3.2 million cases from all under contract in the private sector and non-profit organizations and most public sector workers (except central administration). Even these large databases do not suffice to characterize all positions in a class scheme: they lack information on workers without a contract, the self-employed and capitalists (large-scale employers or business owners). Information on managers is frequently missing, due to the lack of a monthly salary. The solution was to examine Labour Force Surveys (LFS), a robust trimestral sample of the active population in Portugal (we used data from 2019 – third and fourth trimesters). Analysis of

[5] CPP2010 and its forebearer – CNP1994 – are also the basis of the ACM typology, according to a linear logic. These classifications have assumptions (implicit and explicit), decisions made by its designers at national and international levels, which define and set the boundaries between professions on the basis of skill level and functions. Such assumptions evolve. For example, while both classifications have the same nine major occupational groups, the current version has a smaller number of professions. More importantly, the clustering of professions within major and sub-major groups underwent significant change, many being organized differently: this has implications to the comparison of the ACM in the late 1990s and today.

Table 1: Social class positions in Portugal.

		Cultural < Capital composition > Economic			
		Cultural fractions	**Professional fractions**		**Economic fractions**
Lower < Capital volume > Higher	**Dominant fractions**	Cultural dominants	Professionals and white-collars		Business executives and top managers
	Intermediate fractions	Cultural intermediaries	Technicians	Administratives	Small business owners and lower-level managers
	Dominated fractions	Care and personal service workers	Sales and customer service workers	Manual workers	Skilled trades
		Welfare beneficiaries and informal caregivers			

Table 2: Repositioning criteria.

	Vertical limits	**Horizontal limits for economic fractions**
Dominant fractions	Top 20% of income distribution	Employers in top 20% of income distribution Not employed and in top 20% of income distribution
Intermediate fractions		Employers below top 20% of income distribution Not employed and below top 20% of income distribution
Dominated fractions	Below 50% of income distribution	
	Social transfers as only source of income (without previous relation to work)	

income at the unit level showed substantial differences within *professional* and *technicians and associated professionals* (sub-major groups 21–26 and 31–35). Overall, incomes of high-status professions are systematically within the top quintile of the distribution. Conversely, some occupations within these groups are meagrely rewarded, attesting their symbolic devaluation and lack of social recognition.

Most positions within our scheme can be adequately classified using occupational data. Such is not the case in economic fractions. Occupations such as managers in hospitality, retail, commerce and sales workers encompass contrasting situations. Rewards differ substantially, owing to effects of location in the economic field (public vs. private sectors), type of industry (manufacturing, services or commerce), size and location of organization. Moreover, it is relevant whether agents are business owners or wage workers. Additionally, self-employed agents and rentiers living on income from assets may not be classifiable through occupations. Therefore, we created a set of repositioning criteria (see Table 2). In this second step, we use income data to differentiate between dominant, intermediate and dominant positions. We defined a vertical limit between intermediate and dominant positions, corresponding to income levels within the first quintile. We defined an additional vertical limit between intermediate and dominated positions in cultural fractions; set

below the fifth decile of the income distribution. Vertical limits were set based on data from the Standard Income and Living Conditions Survey (EU-SILC) (2011–18). Economic fractions are hierarchically distinguished according to ownership or control over means of production and total income (wages, capital gains and income from self-employment). In this scheme, students are not included, and those currently not in work (retired, unemployed or on sick leave) are classified according to their last occupation or the one held for the longest time. Alternatively, the last occupation can be considered. Finally, agents without former links to the labour market and dependent on social transfers are classified in a specific position.

All in all, this scheme of class positions and fractions, as the mapping of their relative positions, is the product of theoretical assumptions and substantial analysis of available statistical sources.[6] Our final model consists of twelve class fractions, which can be adapted or collapsed, depending on the analysis. Table 1 shows the categories and Table 2 summarizes the repositioning criteria. Positions are categorized on three levels in the vertical axis, in accordance with the total volume of capital. On the horizontal axis, positions are differentiated, splitting between those with more cultural than economic capital (on the left), those with more economic than cultural capital (on the right) and those with approximate proportions of capital (at the centre). It should be noted that the data suggests professionals and white-collars are closer to the cultural dominants. Adapting Bourdieu's principles, and the literature mentioned above, we find similar 'classes on paper' that are adapted to the Portuguese case. Therefore, in an effort of knowledge accumulation and comparability, we used and adapted designations from Atkinson (2017) and Hansen et al. (2009). Furthermore, this scheme is designed to be applied relationally using, in future work, statistical tools such as MCA (and similar ones).

A brief description

Using data from LFS and the Household Finance and Consumption Survey (HFCS), we outline the socio-demographic profiles and distribution of capital among the positions (Table 3), with the exception of welfare beneficiaries and informal caregivers.

Dominant positions are decomposed into three fractions. *Business executives and top managers* comprise directors and managers in administration, commerce, production (in agriculture, manufacturing, construction and distribution), retail and service (including hospitality, IT, marketing and human resources). These are highest in economic capital, both in monthly incomes and accumulated wealth (in property and other assets). Those in this class fraction are more likely to have received a substantial inheritance, suggesting a level of intergenerational transmission of wealth. Cultural capital is relatively high, with two-thirds having university degrees. In opposition to this fraction stand *cultural dominants*, where we find university, higher education and secondary teachers, doctors, legal, social and cultural professionals (including artists and other intellectuals). These are highest in cultural capital: 90 per cent have university degrees and close to 30 per cent hold postgraduate credentials (M.Sc.s and Ph.D.s). Accumulated wealth and incomes are lower among this predominantly female fraction. *Professionals and white-collars* have high and balanced volumes of cultural and economic capital (although less than business executives and top managers, both in income and accrued capital). This overwhelmingly male-dominated fraction is composed of senior officials

[6] Positioning is always dependent on the available data and the specific context. An in-depth analysis of a regional or local class positioning would likely result in a different scheme.

Table 3: Indicators of capital and socio-demographic features of class fractions in Portugal.

Class fractions	Net monthly income €)*	House value (€)+	Received inheritance %	Received inheritance Mean amount (€)+	Highest educational qualification (pct.)* Basic	Lower sec.	Higher sec.	Tech. and voc.	Bacc	Univ. degree	M.Sc./ Ph.D.	Sex (pct.)* Male	Female	Non-perm. contract + service providers (pct.)*	Self-employed (pct.)*	Non-PT citizens (pct.)*	Percentage of working population
Business executives and top managers	2,167	188,448	20.6	97,177	0.7	4.9	16.6	2.2	4.1	56.2	15.4	61.6	38.4	2.4	–	4.3	2.0
Professionals and white-collar workers	1,918	165,659	19.4	66,713	0.2	4.2	17.5	1.0	4.5	54.5	18.1	67.7	32.3	13.7	12.8	3.9	5.6
Cultural dominants	1,871	177,101	21.1	92,329	-	1.5	5.3	0.2	3.2	64.7	25.2	33.6	66.4	14.6	19.2	3.3	5.4
Small business owners and lower-level managers	971	140,588	29.4	63,754	9.3	36.7	25.7	0.4	2.2	20.1	5.6	61.1	38.9	11.8	8.2	4.3	5.9
Technicians	939	121,396	15.9	48,208	2.2	19.8	40.4	2.1	1.6	26.6	7.3	62.8	37.2	17.2	4.2	2.1	12.8
Administrative staff	787	105,598	12.5	60,715	2.4	23.1	54.7	1.0	2.1	15.0	1.7	37.2	62.8	17.3	0.7	2.9	9.1
Cultural intermediaries	999	110,685	16.5	53,733	-	6.0	12.0	0.3	1.5	60.9	19.2	26.3	73.7	23.9	4.1	0.8	6.8
Skilled trades	739	96,275	20.5	24,685	25.8	50.8	20.6	1.3	0.3	1.0	0.2	80.9	19.1	19.1	22.4	3.2	14.8
Sales and customer service workers	662	77,537	14.4	42,539	6.8	35.2	44.0	1.2	0.6	10.2	2.0	33.3	66.7	29.0	16.4	4.8	8.2
Manual workers	676	84,895	15.0	26,465	24.0	53.6	20.1	0.5	0.1	1.6	0.1	48.4	51.6	24.4	3.3	5.5	18.8
Care and personal service workers	644	84,463	14.0	31,483	9.8	41.6	39.0	1.6	0.6	6.4	1.0	18.9	81.1	23.7	9.6	6.4	10.6

+*Source:* HFCS 2013: Weighted data for population estimates.

**Source:* Labour Force Survey 4th T2019: Weighted data for population estimates (active population 15–65).

and legislators, chief executives, engineering professionals, architects, business analysts, finance administrators and associated professionals, ICT professionals and higher-level technicians.

Intermediate positions are less endowed with economic and cultural capital. Among these, the patterning of oppositions is similar, although more broken down in the middle. *Small business owners and lower-level managers* are accurately defined by their namesake. They correspond to the *traditional petite bourgeoisie*. Like business executives and top managers, they operate in the economic field, most in the private sector and many are self-employed. However, they are significantly lower in income and accumulated wealth, and mostly occupy dominated and less lucrative positions in the economic field (coffee shops, restaurants, mini-markets, groceries, drugstores, clothing stores and other types of commerce). However, male-dominated gender imbalance is less pronounced within this position. More than 60 per cent have only completed secondary education. In sharp opposition stand the *cultural intermediaries*, which cover occupations with medium overall capital, but among whom cultural capital, measured by academic credentials, is much more salient than economic capital. An overwhelming majority has higher education credentials but in areas of lesser economic recognition, which corresponds to what Bourdieu dubbed, using common 1970s terminology, as the *new petite bourgeoisie*. Here we find nursing and midwifery professionals, paramedics and health associate professionals, sports and fitness workers, low-paid teachers, legal, social and cultural professionals (including performing artists). In the middle of these two opposites, we find two additional positions with more balanced capitals. *Technicians* comprise designers, cartographers, lower-paid engineers, administration, sales, purchasing, public relations and associated professionals (with lower pay), mining, manufacturing, construction, process control and ICT technicians. Economic capital is average, and so is cultural capital, often in the form of technical credentials or practical skills. *Administrative staff* stands out for being predominantly female and the lowest paid among intermediate fractions. Here we find all clerical support workers, including tellers, receptionists, secretaries, accounting and book-keeping clerks, among others. In terms of cultural capital, the majority have secondary school credentials, although one-sixth is credited with a degree in higher education.

Finally, there are four fractions lower in all forms of capital within dominated positions. Overall this is the largest class in the social space, with close to 55 per cent of the active population. As Atkinson (2017), we decided to draw vertical lines in this lower region of the social space, an option not followed by Bourdieu in *Distinction*. While differences are less conspicuous, there is variation depending on whether the leading capital is economic or cultural and, in related terms, on sexual composition. Therefore, the internal structure of this section of the social space is similar to intermediate positions. *Skilled* trades include workers in the building and related trades, handicraft, metal, mechanics and machinery trades, printing, electric and electronic trades and market-oriented skilled farmers, fishery and forestry workers. Better paid than other positions in this area of the social space, close to one-quarter of them are self-employed and overwhelmingly male. Most often they depend on practical knowledge, being that cultural capital, as measured by credentials, is low. *Care and personal service workers* have proportionally higher academic qualifications but overall all the less well-remunerated fraction. Among them, we find child-care, elder-care and health-care assistants, teacher aides, hairdressers,

bartenders and waiters. Most occupations within this position depend on dispositions and orientations towards care and communication, often depicted as feminine traits, which likely relates to an overwhelmingly female profile. *Sales and customer service workers*, a fraction where we find the shop, street and market salespersons, cashiers and ticket clerks, are equally more dependent on cultural than economic capital. They are more likely to be women, often working without a permanent contract or as self-employed, which reflects the high incidence of precariousness in the service sector (Matos et al. 2010). Among dominated positions, they have the most in household wealth, likely stemming from marriage ties and social capital. *Manual workers*, the largest class fraction, are lowest in all forms of capital. This gender-balanced fraction comprises plant and machine operators, assemblers, drivers and elementary occupations (cleaning, construction and manufacturing, food preparation and refuse). Further analysis of specific fields and trajectories is necessary to examine the extent of homogeneity or heterogeneity of circumstances and practices.

A two-step empirical validation

Confirming the object

Following the construction of the scheme, we now subject it to empirical validation. The first step is a confirmation of the object, the second demonstrates its external validity, that is, its ability to explain aspects of social difference in Portugal. We start by building a model of the Portuguese social space, running an MCA resorting to data from the HFCS dataset (valid n = 3,106). This dataset includes data from individuals, their families and their parents, and indicators of economic and cultural capital that can be used as a proxy for trajectories. We included the following variables: gender; economic capital indicators (household income, savings, dividends, home value, inheritances, household assets, employment status, cultural capital proxies [respondent's, father's and mother's education]). In total, we used eleven active variables and 43 modalities (Tables 4 and 6).

MCA is a statistical method that describes the relationship between the predefined set of modalities of categorical variables in a low number of dimensions (Le Roux and Rouanet 2010). In our case, the first two axes, which we retained for interpretation, account for 71.5 per cent of the variance (Tables 5 and 6 and Figure 1).

The first axis accounts for 58.1 per cent of the variance and, as can be seen in Figure 1 and Table 6, opposes those highest in all forms of capital (at the top) to those who are low in capital (at the bottom). For this axis, the modalities that contribute the most are indicators of economic capital (household income, assets, inheritances, dividends from investments and savings). Also relevant are parental education (inherited) and respondent

Table 4: Labels, variables and modalities used to construct the Portuguese social space.

Labels	Variables	Modalities
Economic capital	5	21
Cultural capital	3	12
Gender	1	2
Parental social class	2	8

Source: HFCS 2013. MCA analysis, developed using XLStat software.

Table 5: MCA: Eigenvalues, modified and cumulative rates.

Axis	Eigenvalues	Modified rate (pct.)	Cumulative modified rates (pct.)
1	0.051	58.094	58.094
2	0.012	13.387	71.481
3	0.004	4.492	75.972
4	0.002	2.628	78.601
5	0.001	1.116	79.717

Source: HFCS 2013. MCA analysis, developed using XLStat software.

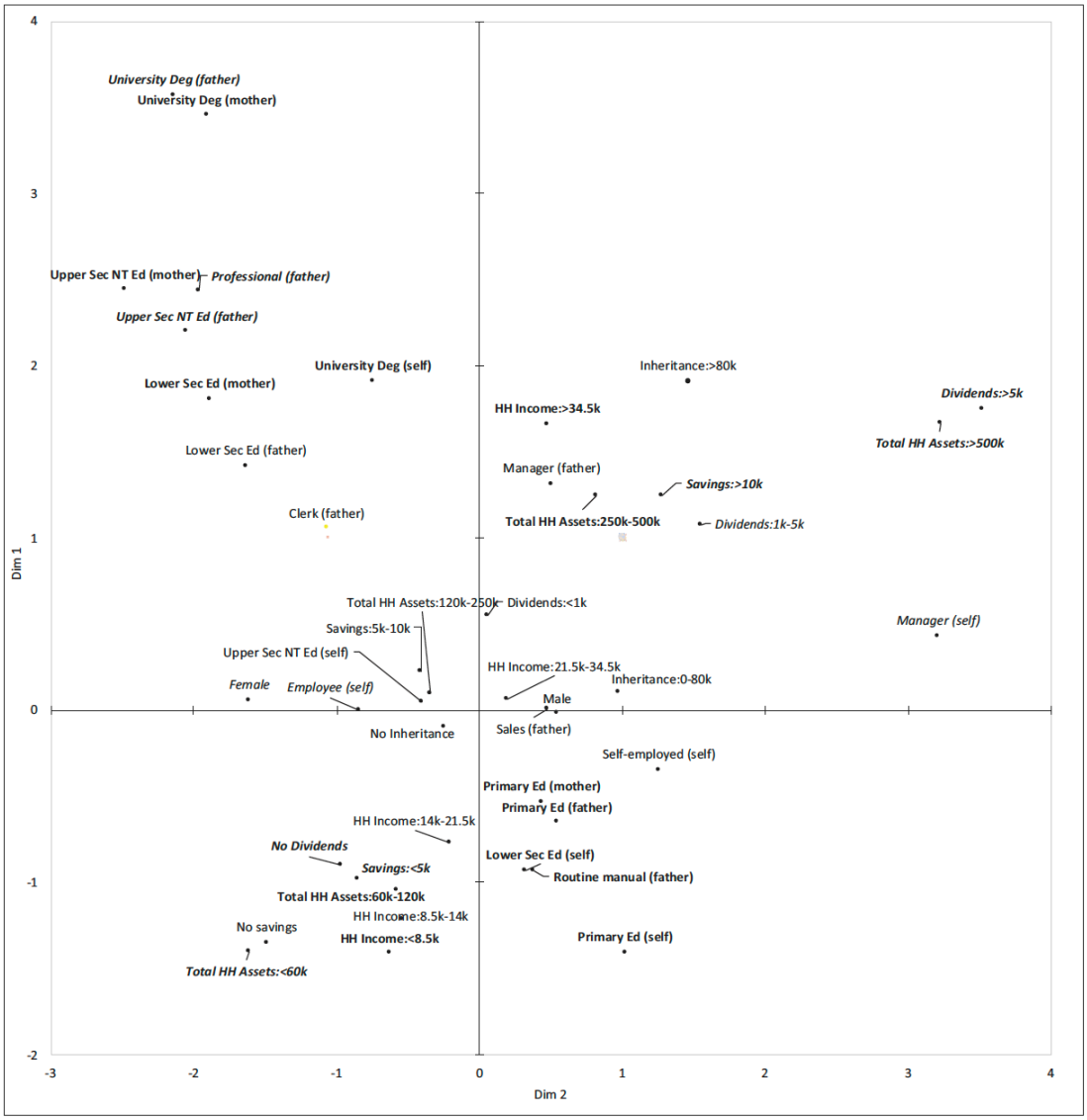
Table 6: MCA: Contribution of variables to the model.

Variable	Modalities	Axis 1	Axis 2	Variable	Modalities	Axis 1	Axis 2
Respondent's education	Primary ed	**3.361**	1.773	Savings	No savings	0.379	0.460
	Lower sec ed	**2.562**	0.307		<5k	**4.197**	**3.129**
	Upper sec NT ed	0.004	0.288		5–10k	0.054	0.172
	University deg	**9.651**	1.461		>10k	**5.393**	**5.646**
Father's education	Primary ed	**3.016**	2.080	Dividends	No dividends	**3.575**	**4.136**
	Lower sec ed	1.595	2.117		<1k	0.863	0.010
	Upper sec NT ed	**2.952**	**2.567**		1–5k	1.339	**2.772**
	University deg	**7.684**	**2.755**		>5k	2.001	**8.115**
Mother's education	Primary ed	2.153	1.446	Fathers occupation	Routine manual	**4.625**	0.747
	Lower sec ed	1.859	2.034		Professional	**7.518**	**4.887**
	Upper sec NT ed	**2.981**	**3.072**		Sales	0.000	0.230
	University deg	**6.106**	1.864		Manager	1.779	0.267
HH income	<8.5k	1.684	0.331		Clerk	0.532	0.543
	8.5–14k	2.062	0.411	Inheritances	No inheritance	0.069	0.442
	14–21.5k	1.171	0.081		0–80k	0.016	1.346
	21.5–34.5k	0.009	0.090		>80k	1.069	0.624
	>34.5k	**7.078**	0.589	Employment status resumed	Employee	0.000	**4.660**
Total HH assets	<60k	**2.946**	**3.895**		Self-employed	0.167	2.192
	60–120k	1.975	0.611		Manager	0.218	**12.118**
	120–250k	0.027	0.364	Gender	Male	0.003	2.018
	250–500k	**2.578**	1.118		Female	0.008	**5.955**
	>500k	**2.741**	**10.277**				

Source: HFCS 2013. MCA analysis, developed using XLStat software.

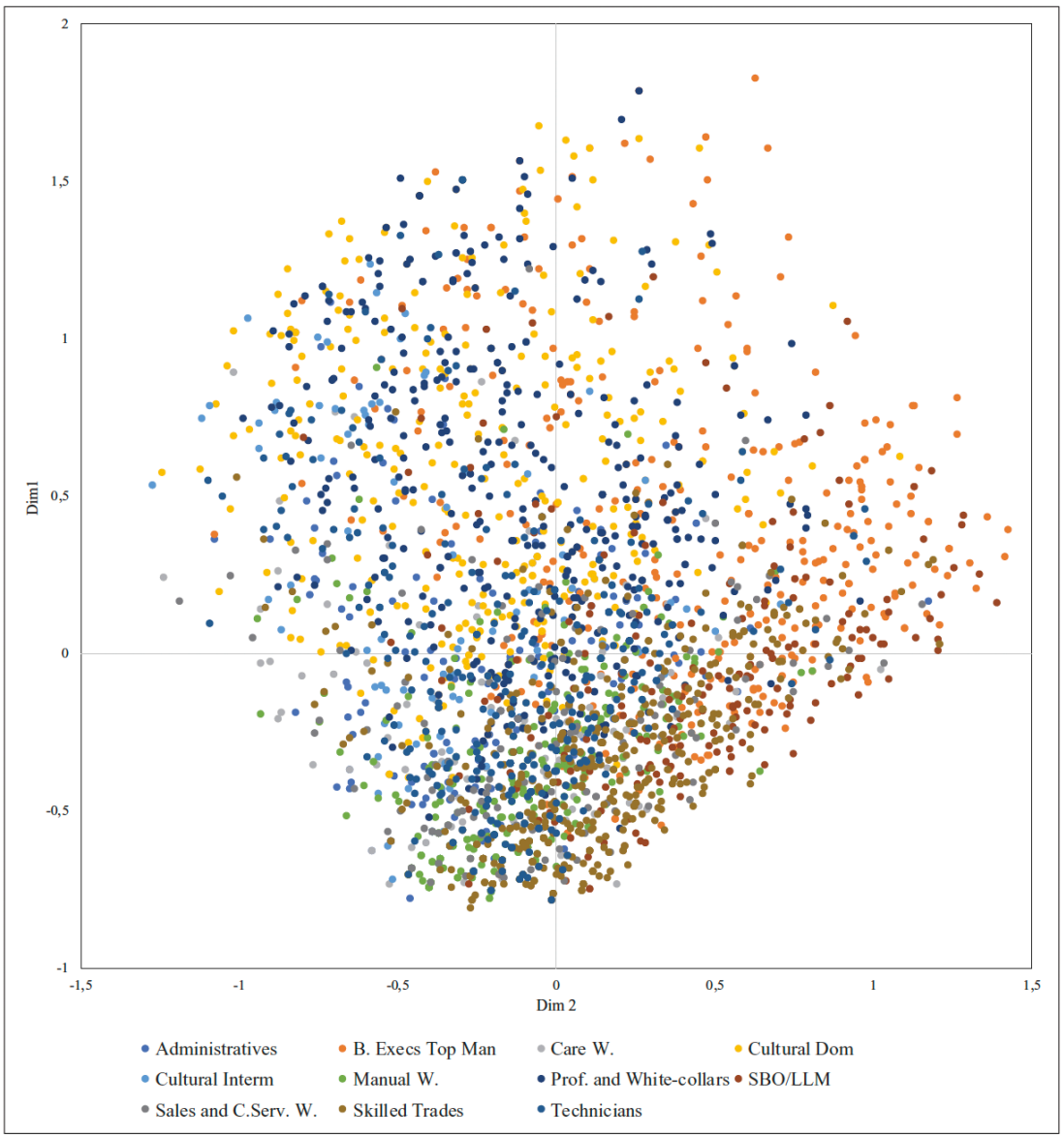
(acquired) forms of cultural capital and parental (father) occupation. The second axis, which accounts for 13.4 per cent of the variance, opposes those who possess more economic capital and own means of production (to the right in the figure) to those whose primary capital is cultural (either inherited or acquired). Inspection of the space of individuals (Figure 2) suggests that the Portuguese class structure, as captured by this survey and these variables,

Figure 1: MCA of indicators of capital, plane of axes 1 and 2, with modalities. Modalities in bold contribute above-average to axis 1; modalities in italics contribute above-average to axis 2. Source: HFCS 2013. MCA analysis, developed using XLStat software.



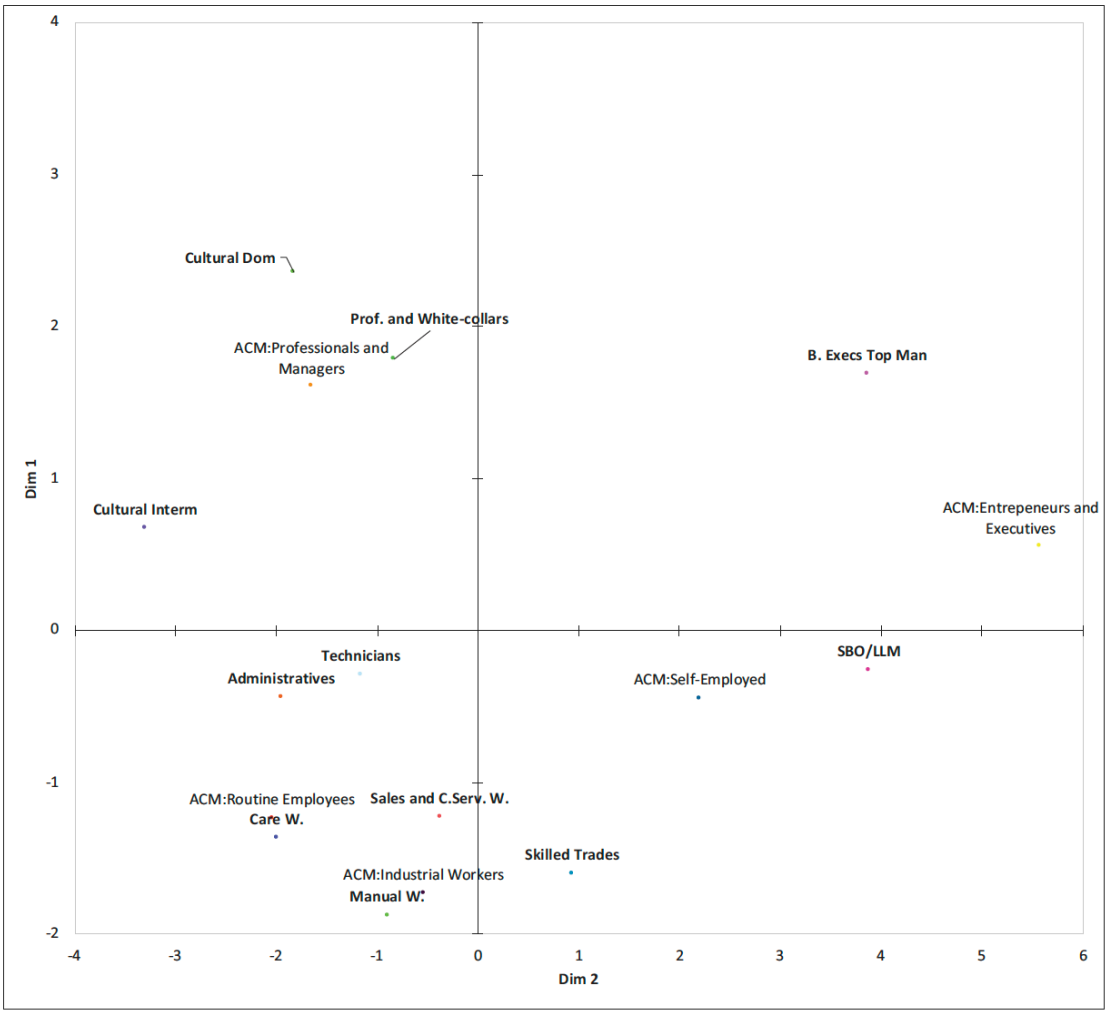
is fan-shaped. Differences in species of capital are increasingly important in positions ranked higher in the class structure. In this sense, the Portuguese class structure seems closer to that of the United Kingdom (2017) or even to late 1970s France (Bourdieu [1979] 2010) than to contemporary Scandinavian societies (Hansen et al. 2009), where intermediate and dominated classes are more heterogeneous in terms of capital. If smaller discrepancies at the lower regions of the social space can reflect a 'relative homogeneity of life' (Atkinson and Rosenlund 2014: 18) among dominated class fractions, they nonetheless may be of import.

Figure 2: Cloud of individuals. Source: HFCS 2013. MCA analysis, developed using XLStat software.



The projection of our proxy class categories shows a good degree of fit (Figure 3). The vertical axis allows differentiating a three-tiered class split, with business executives and top managers, professionals and white-collars and cultural dominants at the top. Middle positions are fairly distinct, according to the composition of prevailing forms of capital, with small business owners and lower-level managers and cultural intermediates at opposing extremes, and with administrative personnel and technicians nearer in the middle. Although nested closely together, dominated positions are also split according to the composition of capital and relatedly gender, with skilled trades opposing care

Figure 3: Projection of class categories. Source: HFCS 2013. MCA analysis, developed using XLStat software.



workers, and sales and customer service workers slightly atop manual workers, in terms of the overall volume of capital.

In comparison with the ACM class scheme, also projected in Figure 3, our solution allows a clearer differentiation of positions at the top, middle and bottom of the social space, retaining distinctions according to ownership of means of production, which is pivotal to ACM. Critically, our scheme discloses oppositions according to possession of cultural capital, something that is not achieved by the more categorical ACM approach. Furthermore, despite departing from different premises, our scheme allows discriminating situations among what Weberians term as the 'service class', which is increasingly accomplished in international comparisons (Oesch 2006).

Class and political position-taking: A quick sampler

Do these intra-class differences matter? In other words, does our scheme of class positions capture differences in terms of dispositions and interests?

Using this scheme will enable us to identify diverging lifestyles or disparities in terms of political position-taking? More importantly, are these differences overlooked by the ACM scheme?

Full-fledged analyses of the space of lifestyles or the space of political position-taking, their respective homologies with the space of social class and recent evolution, lie beyond the scope of this article. However, we can offer an illustration of the potential of this scheme by briefly looking at the space of political position-taking. To do so, we supplement our analysis with Portuguese data from Round 9 of the European Social Survey (n = 1,055, hereafter ESS2018). This survey includes an extensive module on political issues, including participation, position-taking and attitudes. While ESS data does not include adequate variables on the volume and composition of capital to replicate the MCA analysis, we can use the available data (occupation, education and income) to outline class positionings and use it in a tabular fashion, as a proxy of social space. Additionally, this allows comparing our scheme with the ACM scheme.

For the analysis, we chose two key variables: 'interest in politics' and 'placement on left to right scale'. Even if rough and far from comprehensive, these variables give us a taster of political dispositions (Table 7). Starting with interest, using our scheme shows that all fractions of the dominant class display higher attentiveness to political issues and discussions, a feature that places them against all fractions of the dominated class. Within intermediate class positions, there are stark contrasts, with cultural intermediaries and technicians displaying above-average interest in politics. Such is likely due to their relatively higher cultural capital, which endows them with a level of symbolic mastery over categories of political discourse. While overall those in dominated class fractions tend to express less interest in politics, with detachment being higher among manual workers and the skilled trades than among care and personal service workers. While using the ACM scheme also shows differences between positions, they oppose industrial workers, deprived of capital and less interest in the political phenomenon, to factions endowed with economic and cultural capital who are often more interested.

Turning our attention to political positioning, our scheme shows that the easiness of self-placement varies according to the overall volume of capital. Dominant, and to a lesser extent intermediate, class fractions are more likely to place themselves along a hypothetical line from left to right than the dominated. Moreover, there are important differences in terms of leaning between fractions within classes. Among the dominant, those more endowed with economic capital express a *centrist* orientation, while cultural dominants tend to skew heavily to the *left*. Within intermediate class positions, oppositions are also unambiguous, with SBO-LLM swinging to the *right*. A similar orientation is partially shared among technicians, along with centrist leanings, which in combination result in distance from the *left*. Administrative staff also tends to place themselves squarely in the *centre*. Finally, cultural intermediaries sway to the *left*. Within the dominated, care and personal service and manual workers more often have difficulty in defining their positioning. On the other hand, personal service workers skew slightly *right*. Conversely, the skilled trades skew to the left and sales and customer service worker are more *centre-oriented*.

All in all, the data suggests that there is a degree of homology between our class positioning scheme and political orientation. However, this does not mean that class positionings determine or necessarily entail voting for political parties positioned at different points along this line. Asserting that

Table 7: Interest in politics and political placement on a left–right scale (average proportions and distance from average).

	Interest in politics				Left to right positioning			
	Very interested	**Quite interested**	**Hardly interested**	**Not at all interested**	**Left (0–3)**	**Centre (4–7)**	**Right (8–10)**	**Refusal/ DK**
Total (average proportion in %)	**11.4**	**33.8**	**34.0**	**20.8**	**23.1**	**48.2**	**18.8**	**9.8**
Class fractions (diff from average proportion)								
Business executives and top managers	24.5	0.5	–10.8	–14.2	0.0	6.7	1.8	–8.4
Professionals and white-collar workers	15.0	10.2	–16.3	–8.9	0.2	6.5	1.3	–7.9
Cultural dominants	12.9	0.2	0.0	–13.1	14.0	4.5	–8.6	–9.8
Small business owners and lower-level managers	0.5	3.9	–2.1	–2.2	1.5	–6.0	6.2	–1.6
Technicians	6.6	6.4	–7.9	–5.1	–7.3	7.1	6.3	–6.1
Administrative staff	–5.0	4.4	6.2	–5.6	0.9	7.1	0.3	–8.2
Cultural intermediaries	8.9	7.8	–9.7	–6.9	8.4	4.5	–6.6	–6.2
Skilled trades	–5.3	–7.3	8.1	4.5	6.2	–3.4	0.0	–2.6
Sales and customer service workers	–6.8	–4.5	18.2	–6.8	–0.4	10.1	–5.9	–3.6
Manual workers	–10.2	–6.1	–0.5	16.8	–2.6	–4.4	–4.2	11.2
Care and personal service workers	–2.5	–2.1	8.3	–3.7	–7.1	–4.2	1.7	9.7
ACM scheme (diff from average proportion)								
Entrepreneurs and executives	5.1	–0.6	–0.2	–4.3	3.9	–3.9	3.9	–3.1
Professionals and managers	9.3	6.7	–9.8	–6.3	0.9	4.2	1.6	–6.6
Self-employed workers	8.1	11.9	–8.1	–11.9	–1.2	–5.2	9.2	–2.7
Routine employees	–4.8	–0.7	6.1	–0.6	–2.9	1.7	–2.5	3.8
Industrial workers	–7.9	–7.3	3.9	11.3	0.8	–3.3	–2.0	4.6
Class fractions: χ^2 (30) = 118,093, p < 0.001; Cramer's V = 0.221					Class fractions: χ^2 (30) = 71,372, p < 0.001; Cramer's V = 0.172			
ACM positions: χ^2 (12) = 70,405, p = 0.012; Cramer's V = 0.171					ACM positions: χ^2 (12) = 25,592, p = 0.012; Cramer's V = 0.103			

Source: ESS 2019. Weighted data for analysis.

would entail an understanding of how parties are perceived by individuals and placed along that line, as well as gauging other indicators of participation and political mobilization. However, what is clear is that, except for the right slant of the self-employed, all these differences are smothered if we use the ACM scheme. Furthermore, our approach shows higher statistical soundness in tackling interest in politics and ideological self-positioning. As we hypothesized, the lens of the ACM scheme is overly broad and likely overlooks essential differences in interests and political dispositions. Some of its shortcomings are remedied by the scheme we propose.

Concluding remarks

Built upon a reassessment of previous work on social classes in Portugal, our work pays homage to those that, over the past 30 years, reflected and written on inequalities, often going against a growing scientific consensus that then assured that 'class was dead'. Inspired by them, our work is an attempt to update class analysis in Portugal. Our critique acknowledges previous work but stresses limitations that merit being addressed as a way of moving forward. In doing so, we take stock of work and debates currently underway in several countries, which are inspired by Bourdieu's thought on social class. Therefore, the class positioning scheme that we propose is also a conceptual and methodological departure from previous work, and not a mere reworking or refining of erstwhile typologies. More in tune with Bourdieu's approach, it splits the social space into three main classes, which themselves are internally divided into several fractions, according to possession of the two species of capital that act as the main principles of difference and antagonism in contemporary societies (economic and cultural).

Our map of class positions is a preliminary tool to place individuals in the social space. It is a useful proxy for when two-digit occupational codes and income levels are available, as is often the case. Depending on the research objectives, context, availability of tools and data, this scheme may be adapted or modified to say what a class structure, as an expression of power and a logic of struggle for recognition, may look like. It depends on a set of relational principles, rather than a pre-established analytical framework, Therefore, it is well possible to construct a similar scheme via MCA with available proxy variables of capital. In our case, a more accurate depiction would certainly benefit from more information on the individual's trajectories and changes in capital composition over time.

Ours was an effort of conceptualization and knowledge accumulation in social sciences. The scheme is not an end in itself: it is a challenge for more work in refining and testing it against other quantitative surveys and also in qualitative work. Lest we forget that in Bourdieu's perspective, social classes are an analytical tool developed by researchers that cluster individuals sharing similar volumes and types of capitals in a particular setting – which he termed as 'classes on paper'. Furthermore, as a classification scheme, it does not presuppose political existence or any given lifestyle. For instance, being devised for a service-based economy, in the scheme described above, agricultural positions were mostly subsumed within dominated working-class positions due to their almost disappearance. If one decides to research class and inequality in a rural setting, where the mentioned positions are still relevant, the overall relations between dominant, intermediary and dominated would most likely differ.

Using the principles established here in future work is a theoretically promising venture that can reinforce the dialogue between Portuguese sociology and relevant streams of contemporary European sociology (Atkinson 2020). It is also a challenge to make use of more robust statistical analyses, which are seldom used by other counterparts. Further investigation is needed to develop and fine-tune this scheme concerning different themes: from collective action and political position-taking to consumption and lifestyles. Herein lies the challenging task of testing the hypothesis of homology between social space and other spaces or fields.

Acknowledgement

The work leading to this article was funded by the Fundacão para a Ciência e a Tecnologia through the project reference CEECIND/00864/2018/CP1541/ CT0003.

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