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***SOCIAL AND OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE AND
DYNAMICS***

ABSTRACT

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Keywords: social structure, status, social mobility, fluxes of social mobility, trends in social mobility, social origin, social destination, influence of parents' occupation on son/daughter's occupation, influence of parents' occupation on son/daughter's education, influence of education on occupation, birth-cohort, status inheritance, social fluidity, social inequalities, social class, social closeness, social frontiers, social distance, intergenerational educational mobility, educational homogamy

The theme, the objectives, and the main conclusions of the thesis

The thesis intends to analyse the evolution of intergenerational social mobility in Romania in the second half of the 20th century. Chauvel (2001, p. 338) has suggested that, in comparison with the study of intra-generational mobility, "the intergenerational social mobility analysis seems to be more appropriate to capture the changes, for a long term", which have affected the social structure. Grusky and his collaborators (2008, p.1) considered that researchers, who examined the social mobility, were obsessively concerned to discover the long-term trends in the evolution of this process. *Social and occupational structure and dynamics* fit within the category of such attempts, to identify trends in the intergenerational social mobility. Starting from the analysis of the association between father's occupational category and sons/daughters' occupational category, who were born in different periods, I examined the trends in the intergenerational social mobility in Romania during the second half of the 20th century. This, given that in our country, there are very few evaluations of this kind. The situation can be placed on the lack of reliable public data, adequate for the analysis of trends in intergenerational social mobility.

The censuses of population carried out in Romania in the second half of the 20th century revealed a series of mutations, produced in the social and occupational structure of the active population. The overall image outlined by these censuses is however a poor one. They manage to offer clues, in respect of the expansion or the decline of social and occupational categories in the second half of the 20th century, but do not indicate too much about who are the people who changed the status from one generation to another. One of the objectives of the thesis represents exactly highlighting the main flows of intergenerational social mobility from the second half of the 20th century.

Social and occupational structure and dynamics consists of two parts. In the first part, which includes a single chapter, *The conceptual and methodological framework of the social stratification and mobility researches. Personal and structural factors in social mobility and reproduction*, I mention the main concepts and theoretical approaches used in the analysis of social mobility and reproduction, as well as a few general methodological aspects, of the stratification and social mobility researches.

The analysis of intergenerational educational and occupational mobility in Romania in the second half of the 20th century represents the main purpose of the second part of the thesis. The conceptual and methodological framework of the analysis was that of social classes (Erikson and Goldthorpe, 1993), which can be understood as discrete variables. In

principle, the undertaken study was based on the analysis of social mobility tables, built on survey data. The statistical analyses were carried out using SPSS program.

In the second part of the thesis, I examined certain aspects of educational and social reproduction and mobility, which I had identified in the literature on social mobility. One of the major themes, approached by certain researchers, was the evolution of social fluidity during the 20th century. Starting from the comparison of different societies or historical periods, from the point of view of the relationship between social origin and destination, several scholars characterized the investigated societies as being more or less fluid. Several authors have examined the relationship between social origin and occupation in parallel with the influence of social origin on the achieved education level and the link between education level and occupation. The strength of these three relations did not have a convergent evolution in all of the investigated societies. In many of the developed societies, the researchers showed a weakening of the influence of the social origin over the social destination and an increase of the importance of education, in relation to social origin, in the process of allocating status, during the 20th century. In other societies, the researchers found that the strength of each of the three relations decreased during the 20th century. Some scholars concluded that the diminution of the influence of social origin on the achieved education level led also to the decrease of the effect of the social origin on the occupation. Some investigations found that the increase of social fluidity was influenced by the change of limits of different social categories, because of the transition from a predominantly agricultural society to an industrialized one, then to post-industrial society. There were some societies where the social fluidity has been constant during long periods, as well as others, where researches highlighted the existence of certain fluctuations without a clear trend in the intergenerational social mobility regime.

Another theme, identified in the consulted literature, was the one of inequalities in access to education. Most of the researchers found that despite the education expansion and democratization of the access to lower levels of education, the inequalities maintained, in respect of the access to higher education in the 20th century, even though they had fallen in time. As some scholars found, not even the communist regimes managed to eliminate inequality of opportunities for access to superior education, between youth coming from disadvantaged social environments and those coming from higher categories.

Another aspect of major concern for the researchers who have analysed the intergenerational social mobility was the evolution of the extent of this process in the 20th century. In many of the developed societies, the extent of intergenerational social mobility

increased for the generations born after the Second World War, compared to previous generations, but many scholars found the persistence of the inequality, with regard to the access to social desirable positions, despite the emphasis of absolute social mobility during the 20th century. Some enquiries concentrated on the analysis of intergenerational social mobility flows and the relation between the intergenerational social mobility and economic development. Several authors considered the transformation of the social structure to be the result of the economic changes, occurred during the 20th century. Some scholars argued that the education expansion has been a precondition for the social structure change. In many of the developed countries, the category of managers and specialists with intellectual occupations, as well as routine non-manual occupations' category has known the expansion during the 20th century, while farmers and unqualified workers' class decreased in the occupational structure of the active population. In most of the investigated societies, the category of skilled workers has expanded during the 20th century, while, in some states with an advanced economy, such as the United Kingdom, the researches revealed a numerical decline of this social category.

In the second chapter of the thesis, *Methodological aspects of the analysis of intergenerational social mobility and educational homogamy in Romania in the second half of the 20th century*, I explain the option for the class-structural approach to intergenerational social mobility. I then mention the source of the data and the variables included in the analysis, I describe the way I have delimited the investigated population and I introduce the class schema and the classification of levels of education to which I turned to. This chapter also contains several references to the techniques of intergenerational social mobility analysis.

In the third chapter of the thesis, *Intergenerational educational mobility in the second half of the 20th century*, I aimed at measuring the extent of the intergenerational educational mobility in Romania and how this evolved in the second half of the 20th century. Another goal of this chapter was the discovery of certain trends in the evolution of opportunities for access to tertiary education in Romania in the second half of the 20th century. A working hypothesis for the undertaken study was that the education expansion generated a progressive increase in the rate of ascending intergenerational educational mobility in the second half of the 20th century. The survey data do not support this hypothesis. The respondents of the generations born during the period 1965-1984 were educational ascending mobile, as compared to their parents, in a higher proportion than those of the generations born during the period 1911-1944, but in a smaller extent than those who were born during the period 1945-1964. The available data refuted the

hypothesis that women' intergenerational educational ascending mobility was higher than that of men. Instead, the empirical data support the hypothesis that, in spite of education expansion, the inequality of chances for access to higher education persisted in the second half of the 20th century, even though it had decreased during this period. The respondents whose parents completed tertiary education had better chances for access to higher education, in comparison with those who had another educational origin. At the tertiary level of education, the extent of the educational reproduction had progressively increased, from the generations born during the period 1911-1944 to those born during the period 1965-1984. The persons originated from the category of managers and specialists with intellectual occupations had better opportunities for achieving tertiary level of education, compared to those who had another social origin. Men had higher chances for completing tertiary education rather than compulsory education, in comparison with women.

In the fourth chapter of the thesis, *Intergenerational social mobility in the second half of the 20th century*, I aimed at measuring the extent of the intergenerational social mobility, identifying trends in social mobility, and highlighting the main flows of intergenerational social mobility. As Erikson and Goldthorpe (1993, p.2) stated, social mobility is a fundamental social process, which links the social structure to the social action. The two authors considered that the analysis of social mobility flows could indicate the changes in the social structure, as well as certain affinities or disjunctions between different social classes. A higher level of social immobility, within certain social categories, denotes a strong tendency towards status inheritance and a limitation of access to these categories for the outsiders.

The empirical data led to the conclusion that the extent of social reproduction within the managers and specialists' category, as well as within the skilled workers' category was larger than within all other social classes. In the managers and specialists' class, the extent of social immobility was relatively constant during the second half of the 20th century. In comparison with these two occupational categories, the tendency towards status inheritance was weaker within the farmers' category, the intermediate occupations category and the unskilled workers' category.

One of the hypotheses was that in Romania, in the second half of the 20th century, the workers had the social origin mainly in the farmers' category. The analysis of the social mobility flows, which have entered into each social category of destination, highlighted the fact that in Romania, in the second half of the 20th century, the farmers had predominantly an agricultural origin. The skilled workers from the generations born during the period 1934-1954 were mostly the descendants of the farmers, while those from the generations born

during the period 1955-1975 originated mainly from the skilled workers' category. The unskilled workers from the generations born during the period 1934-1964 were predominantly the descendants of the unskilled workers, while those from the generations born during the period 1965-1975 were recruited mostly from the skilled workers' category.

As regards the chances to reach the higher occupations category rather than the skilled workers category, they were higher for the graduates of the tertiary education than for those who achieved a lower level of education. In comparison with men, women were more advantaged, from the point of view of the opportunities to have access to the higher occupations category rather than the skilled workers category. The persons whose mothers had higher or intermediate occupations had better chances to reach to the higher occupations category rather than to the skilled workers category, as compared with those whose mothers were unskilled workers.

In the fifth chapter of the thesis, *Homogamy versus educational heterogamy*, I analysed the evolution of educational homogamy extent in Romania in the second half of the 20th century. Another goal of this chapter was the discovery of social proximities and distances as reflected by the choice of conjugal partner. The empirical data indicated that the extent of total educational homogamy decreased a little from the generations born in the period 1915-1944 to those born in the period 1965-1984. I found that the proportion of couples constituted by conjugal partners who had the same level of education was close to that of couples made up of persons who achieved different levels of education. The educational homogamy was larger at the extremes of the hierarchy of education levels. In the case of educational heterogamy, the couples in which the conjugal partners had a closer education level prevailed. Among couples made up of mates with different levels of education, the traditional model, in which the woman has a lower education level in comparison with the man, prevailed. The manner in which the respondents born in the period 1915-1984 chose their conjugal partner reflects a tendency towards resemblance of the partners, according to the achieved level of education. Persons having a similar level of education seem to interact more frequently and closer than those who differ very much according to the achieved education.

Limitations of the undertaken analysis

The first problem that I encountered in the attempt to detect trends in the intergenerational social mobility in Romania in the second half of the 20th century was that of achieving data of an adequate standard of reliability, which enable the analysis of the

relationship between social origin and education, between education and occupation and between social origin and occupation. Unfortunately, such databases to which access is free of charge are few in Romania. The Public Opinion Barometer of the "Soros" Foundation Romania was the main source of the data used in the analysis. Unfortunately, this survey was carried out during a relatively short period, after which, in 2007, it was interrupted. The data were extracted from different editions of this survey carried out in the period 1998-2007. Another source of the data used in the analysis of intergenerational educational mobility was the survey "Population's choice behaviour", coordinated in 1995 by the professor Dumitru Sandu. A third source of analysed data was the survey European Social Survey. Unfortunately, Romania did not participate until present only at two of the editions of this survey, the third and fourth one. One of the weaknesses of analysis of trends in intergenerational social mobility is related to the low volume of the available data and to the relatively short period, which these cover. In order to identify possible trends in the intergenerational social mobility, I resorted to grouping the respondents into birth-cohorts¹, depending on the period in which they completed the formal education or in which they entered the labour market and according to major economic and political changes, occurred in Romania, during the 20th century. Another weakness of the undertaken analysis consists in the fact that the survey data do not reflect the real structure of the Romanian society from the second half of the 20th century. The differences between the social structure rendered by the survey data and the real one were mainly generated by the differential mortality and by the migration. To these, there is also the fact that I limited the analysis to the respondents aged 25 to 84, in the case of intergenerational educational mobility, or aged 34 to 64, in the case of intergenerational occupational mobility, for which the information was available, both regarding the own education or occupation, and regarding the social or educational origin.

Another problematic aspect of the intergenerational social mobility analysis is that the respondents' occupation and their fathers' occupation have not been recorded in the surveys to which I appealed to in analogous stages of their professional career. The fact that the occupation and the education level were measured using different scales, from one survey to another, has led to difficulties to harmonise them. The classification of education levels, which I used in the analysis, includes six categories: without formal education, not

¹ The cohort notion was taken over, in sociology, from the demography. In demography, as Trebici shows (1975), the cohort designates an assembly of persons, who suffered the same demographic event (birth, marriage or others), in a given period of time. In the social mobility studies, the cohort term is usually used referring to people, who were born in a given time interval.

more than eight years of education, vocational school or equivalent (without direct access to tertiary education), high school, post-secondary non-tertiary education and tertiary education. In the analysis, I used a class schema with five categories resulted from the combination of some major occupations groups, from the International Standard Classification of Occupations, based on similarity, according to the education level and the type of activities carried out by their members. The class schema shall comprise the following categories: higher occupations (managers and specialists with intellectual occupations), intermediate occupations (technicians, supervisors, clerks, service workers, and shop and market sales workers), farmers, skilled workers (craft and related trades workers, plant and machine operators and assemblers), and unskilled workers. Because I used so wide occupational categories and I did not intercept the movements between the social positions within the same wide group of occupations², it is possible to have overestimated the social immobility level, specific to certain social and occupational categories and to have underestimated the extent of the total social mobility.

² Goodman (1965) claims that the extent of the social reproduction or social mobility always depends on the specific classification, used to describe the social distribution of individuals. Ganzeboom and Luijkx (2004b, p.119) pointed out that, since it is possible that in the surveys the non-response rate to be higher, among those with a lower status and for those mobile, it is possible that certain trends in the social mobility, reflected by survey data to be underestimated.

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