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Women, Gender, and Work

The Portuguese Case in the Context of the European Union

Abstract: *In this article we discuss changes in the relationships among gender, paid work, and unpaid work in Portugal in the context of the European Union. Based on a research program developed since 1997 on the relationship between family and work, and exploring data from several national and international surveys, such as the European Social Survey, the analyses focus on several topics: changes in demographic indicators; the substantial growth of women's participation, especially mothers, in the labor market; paid work, unpaid work, the welfare state, and existing policies; care solutions and arrangements and social networks; the relationship between women's activity rates and fertility rates, women's attachment to work, and finally, values and attitudes about work and family life. The main goal was to understand and explain specific features of the Portuguese case in a European comparative perspective.*

Over the past thirty to forty years Portugal, like every other country in the European Union (EU) and most countries in the Western world, has seen significant change in its main demographic indicators. Birth and marriage rates have declined, households have become smaller as has the proportion of extended families; at the same time, divorce rates have risen, as have births outside of marriage, and the number of people living alone (see Table 1). These changes have been accompanied by an increased number of working women, including especially the growing participation of mothers with small children in the world of work.

In fact, in recent years, Portugal has been one of the European countries with the highest rates of full-time female activity, in contrast to other southern countries that have lower rates and to some Scandinavian and North European countries where higher female activity is usually associated with part-time jobs. It is also clear that Portuguese mothers have a continuous attachment to the labor market, independently of the age of their children, as we will see below.

How can we explain this high rate of activity of Portuguese women, and especially of Portuguese mothers? Why do they stand out from their counterparts in the other South European countries? In this article, among other issues, we try to answer these questions. The results of a survey in the context of the European Network on Policies and the Division of Unpaid and Paid Work are our main sources of analysis. But data from Round 1 (2002) of the European Social Survey

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Table 1

Evolution of Family Demographic Indicators and Activity Rate (1960–2006)

	1960	1970	1981	1991	2001	2006
Fertility rate[a]	3.2	3.0	2.1	1.6		1.3
Crude marriage rate[b]	7.8	9.4	7.8	7.3	5.7	4.5
Crude divorce rate[c]	0.1	0.1	0.7	1.1	1.8	2.2
Roman Catholic marriages (%)	90.7	86.6	74.6	72.0	62.5	52.1
Birth outside marriage[d]	9.5	7.3	9.5	15.6		31.6
Average size of families	3.8	3.7	3.4	3.1		
Single person household	11.5	—	—	12.9		—
Male activity rate (%)	63.8	62.1	53.3	54.3	54.8	
Female activity rate (%)	13.0	19.0	29.0	35.5	42.0	

Sources: Instituto Nacional de Estatística (INE), Demographic Statistics, 2006; Census 1991, 2001; A.N. Almeida, M.D. Guerreiro, C. Lobo, A. Torres, and K. Wall, "Family Relations: Change and Diversity," in *Crossroads to Modernity: Contemporary Portuguese Society,* ed. José Viegas and António Firmino da Costa (Oeiras: Celta, 2000), 41–70 ; Joao Ferreira Almeida, A. Costa, F. Machado, L. Capucha, and A. Torres, "Society," in *A Portrait of Portugal,* ed. A. Reis (Lisbon: Instituto Camões, Circulo dos Leitores, Temas e Debates, 2007), 45–79.

[a]Number of children per child-bearing woman between fifteen and forty-nine years old.

[b]Marriages 1,000/mean population.

[c]Divorces 1,000/mean population.

[d]Total live birth outside marriages per 100 live births. The criteria for defining this type of family can be found in Almeida et al. (2000: 44).

(Vala and Torres 2006) and from other research using qualitative methods are also analyzed and discussed here.[1]

Paid Work, Unpaid Work, and the Welfare State

In a previous article, we focused on a theoretical and conceptual discussion of gender relations and the division of paid and unpaid labor, which led to our main research questions (Torres 2006). Generally speaking, this kind of differentiation reveals the analytical dichotomy between paid work—as a result of a job on the labor market normally pursued outside the home if not in physical terms then at least in social, material, and symbolic terms—and unpaid work done on the domestic front.

Gender also plays a fundamental analytical role. Other relevant variables such as education and schooling, status in the class system, region, ideological sympathies, and attitudes, to name just a few, provide useful information for attempts to explain specific arrangements in the division of paid and unpaid labor between men and women.

Equally important is the role played by state intervention, that is, the path chosen by the welfare state, the ideological nature of state and governmental structures, and the effects of policies directed at the family and gender issues. In recent years there has been intensive discussion precisely over welfare state issues, and the most interesting contributions have come from several researchers who are concerned with gender issues and focus on social and family policies related to motherhood and child care facilities (Gornick and Meyers 2003; Gornick, Meyers, and Ross 1997; Meulders and O'Dorchai 2003; Sainsbury 1994, 2000).

This conceptualization enables us to map out the framework and show the patterns of the division of paid and unpaid work between men and women in specific contexts as well as to understand practices and attitudes in relation to this topic.

In sum, in a given society men and women decide what kinds of family arrangements and work division they will follow, especially when they have children, in a set-up that has a social, institutional, ideological, and gender-specific context. Decisions are made within a framework where options are related to specific constraints.

The extremely rapid rise of women's activity in Portugal[2] as well as some social transformations reopened the discussion of the state's role in Portuguese society. In fact, along with phenomena such as rising urbanization and the breakdown of the extended family into a close family unit, the feminization of the labor market resulted in the elimination of any hopes for protecting broad social solidarity networks based on family relations and local neighbors.

Besides some studies reveal not only that solidarity networks have a far less relevant influence than was previously thought (Hespanha, Portugal, and Rodrigues, 1999) but also that fewer such networks are available to those who need them.

High Levels of Female Labor Market Participation: Explaining the Portuguese Case

In the space of a few decades, Portugal passed from being the European country with the lowest rate of full-time female work in Europe to being the highest ranked, in contrast to other northern countries with higher female activity but mainly in part-time jobs (Torres 2006).

The number of women in active employment increased steadily from 13.1 percent in 1960 to 46.7 percent in 2004, while men's participation decreased in the same years, 63.8 percent to 58.1 percent, respectively (Almeida et al. 2000; Torres 2006).[3]

This progression can be seen clearly in juxtaposition to the stagnation of working men in absolute values. In the course of twenty years, the number of women working as "trade and personal service employees" doubled and those working as "executives, managers, and skilled workers" nearly tripled (Table 2). And in this last category the difference between men and women in 2001 favors women (456,100 women to 450,200 men). Women's economic activity has progressed as much in skilled sectors as in less skilled sectors.

Several reasons can explain this radical change in the Portuguese work structure and the rise of women's participation in the labor market. One of the most important reasons concerns the length of the Colonial War (1961–74), which caused an sharp rise in the need for alternative labor power. In fact, during the consecutive thirteen-year period between 1961 and 1974, young men were obliged to serve four years in military service and to fight in Africa for at least two years.

For women in less privileged sectors this was an opportunity to seek available work in factories or as paid domestic servants in the big cities. For the better-educated women, professional opportunities were opening in civil services, the teaching professions, and even in business firms. Reconciling this activity with family life, and despite the dominance of traditional values and practices, was made possible precisely because cheap domestic paid labor was available.

This situation gave women the opportunity to enter the labor market and to remain in it. In fact, the 1974 April Revolution ending the colonial war and implementing serious and sometimes radical transformations guaranteed equal opportunities for both men and women in the new laws. Even if traditional orientations remain in practice, now it is very difficult to return to the earlier views on gender inequality.

The indirect effect of emigration, a huge movement mainly in the 1960s representing the decline of agriculture as a way to earn a living, also meant that a more active role was played by women. Through force of circumstance, and acquiring knowledge of other worlds, the increasingly more active role of women thus helped to create a new image of female competencies outside the home.

Finally, the most common reason mentioned for our high rate of female

Table 2

Resident Population with Twelve or More Years by Socioprofessional Status (1981, 1991, 2001, thousands)

	1981		2001		Difference 2001–1981	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Nonagricultural entrepreneurs	111.1	28.3	280.4	142.8	+169.3	+114.5
Farmers with employees	42.3	51.3	12.8	5.5	–29.5	–45.8
Self-employed farmers	229.6	128.9	70.7	36.2	–158.9	–92.7
Self-employed	196.8	64.9	128.3	88.1	–68.5	+23.2
Liberal professionals	17.8	4.4	19.5	8.2	+1.7	+3.8
Executives, managers and skilled workers	184	150	450.2	456.1	+266.2	+306.1
Trade and personal services employees	512.7	541.8	549.3	1,033.7	+36.6	+491.9
Industrial workers	1,115	313.8	1,095	383.5	–20	+69.7
Agricultural laborers	207.8	92.7	60.3	25.4	–147.5	–67.3
Military personnel	20.2	0.3	31	2.3	+10.8	+2
Nonspecified active workers	11.7	1.3	44.6	66.4	+32.9	+65.1
Total of active workers	2,649	1,377.7	2,742.1	2,248.2	+93.1	+870.5

Sources: INE, Population Census 1981, 1991, 2001; Anália Torres, *Vida Conjugal e Trabalho: Uma perspectiva sociológica* [Marital Life and Work: A Sociological Perspective] (Oeiras: Celta Editora, 2004).

activity—poverty and men's low salaries—is, of course, also important. Low wages encourage a dual-earner model in the household. According to European Social Survey data, 46.7 percent of households had to live on incomes less than €1,500 (Torres et al. 2004). But women's participation in the labor market continued to grow despite rising standards of living; thus, reasons other than economic ones must be sought.

Table 3 shows that Portuguese women, especially mothers, have a permanent attachment to the labor market.

Even at the risk of being overburdened with responsibilities, women's work experience was also accompanied by a desire for independence, which they were

Table 3

Labor Market Participation of Men and Women by Type of Household (1999; *n* = 1,267; %)

	Men	Women	Total
N	667	600	1,267
Living alone	83.6	81.4	82.7
Single parent	73.7	70.8	71.9
Living together without children	89.9	65.7	78.5
Living together with at least one child age six or younger	95.2	66.3	77.9
Living together with at least one child	84.1	64.2	73.4
Living together with one or more children older than age six	80.2	63.1	71.5
Other situations	87.1	65.6	74.8
Total	84.3	66.0	74.5

Source: A. Torres, F.V. Silva, T.L. Monteiro, and M. Cabrita, "Men and Women Between Family and Work, European Network on Policies and the Division of Unpaid and Paid Work," report, Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences (Tilburg University, 2001).

(and are) reluctant to give up. Reduced financial dependence on men is a way of resisting traditionalism and machismo.

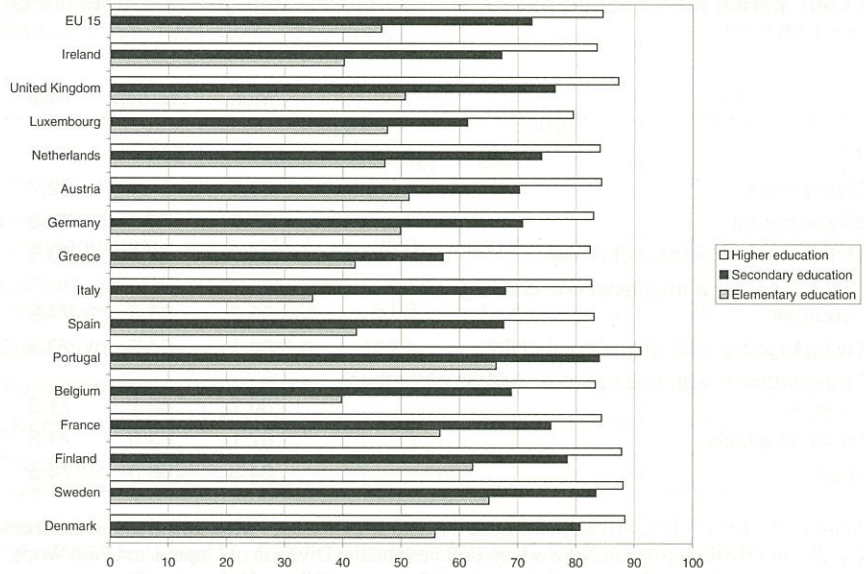
And, if economic needs are important for joining the labor market, the truth is that Portuguese women with higher education,[4] presumably, with better income conditions, are proportionally much better represented in the labor market, at roughly 90 percent, the highest figure in the European Union (Figure 1). Housewives are much more present when they have lower levels of education[5] (Table 4).

The lower the income the higher the probability of being a housewife.[6] But at the other end of the income scale, again, there are more housewives than in the intermediate positions, but fewer than in the low income groups.[7]

The situation whereby the proportion of women employed is directly proportional to their amount of education is valid for the entire European Union. In almost all countries, the employment average for women with a higher education degree is 84.6 percent (Figure 1). In the EU a woman with a university degree is almost necessarily a working woman.

A positive attachment to the experience of work in the labor market, especially for highly educated women, is also likely to exert many additional long-term consequences. The fact that mothers have gone out to work has had the undeniable effect of encouraging daughters to join the labor market as well: it has become a "normal" and undisputed part of life. Furthermore, the higher the mother's

Figure 1. **Active Women, Age Twenty-five to Sixty-four, According to Level of Education Attained, 2002**



Source: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, *Employment Outlook* (Paris, 2002); Anália Torres, *Vida Conjugal e Trabalho. Uma perspectiva sociológica* [Marital Life and Work: A Sociological Perspective] (Oeiras: Celta Editora, 2004).

educational qualifications, the greater chance of its positive consequences on her children's academic achievement.[8]

Research based on interviews carried out in Portugal allows us to conclude that even in the most underprivileged groups resorting to fairly unskilled labor, female employment is not merely a means of economic survival. This idea coincides with the positive attitude expressed by Portuguese women that a job is a source of sociability and a means of attaining indispensable social identity, since their competencies are recognized socially speaking. Their jobs also act as a way of increasing the woman's autonomy and bargaining power within the partnership or relationship, while at the same time giving them the chance to improve their buying power and break free of limiting lifestyles and routines (Torres 1995: 186; Torres 2004; Torres et al. 2001).

In addition, there are life-course effects. In many cases, these women feel that they have progressed and that life has changed for the better when they compare themselves with their mothers, remembering the difficult economic conditions and sometimes mistreatment by men that no one dared question at the time. In fact, even though asymmetries persist in the family today, the environment is more

Table 4

Level of Education Attained by Women in Portugal, According to Their Professional Status (1999, %)

	Primary education	Secondary education	Higher education	Total
Student	1.1	19.2	7.4	4.5
Employed	64.3	66.9	85.2	66.0
Unemployed	5.7	4.0	5.6	5.0
Looking for first job	0.1	—	1.8	0.2
Housewife	25.1	9.3	—	21.1
Retired	2.7	0.6	—	2.2
Other	1.0			1.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: A. Torres, F.V. Silva, T.L. Monteiro, and M. Cabrita, "Men and Women Between Family and Work, European Network on Policies and the Division of Unpaid and Paid Work," report, Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences (Tilburg University, 2001).

democratic and masculine domination is less oppressive. But they pay the price by doing double work each working day, and experiencing worries and feelings of guilt if they are unable to cope with this situation.

The Portuguese survey data, once more revealed that part-time jobs in Portugal, as in other South European countries, are not frequently available. Only 10.8 percent of our working women respondents had part-time jobs. This kind of paid work is also generally associated with jobs that do not require any special qualifications or that fail to offer any stability (André 1993). Working fewer hours may mean earning a lower wage and in the end, the job may not be worth it.

These ideas are also reflected in an enterprise culture in which different sets of expectations are held about masculine and feminine roles: women always have the family while men only have it sometimes. Nevertheless, if this is the dominant entrepreneurial perspective, it is certainly not shared by most of the women who work in Portugal.

The survey also showed that taking a break from work usually occurred only very infrequently, even though women tended to interrupt their professional activity more often than men did.[9] Perhaps one of the most important things revealed by the data was that, apart from illness or incapacity, getting fired from a job[10] was the most frequent reason leading to an interruption in working life. It may therefore be safely concluded that stopping work was based more on labor questions than on family matters.

Turning to the results of the European Social Survey (Vala and Torres 2006), women tend to attribute the same importance to work as men do. They consider work important even in countries where there is less participation of women in the labor market. While family is the most important aspect of their life for both sexes, women undoubtedly want to invest on both fronts: family and work (as shown in Figure 2).

Paid work does not seem to have constrained fertility in Portugal, although fertility rates have been decreasing in recent decades while paid work has been increasing.

But if we look at the picture of Europe shown in Figure 3, we can observe that women's paid work is not only a constraint but also seems to be an enhancing factor. Portugal has the highest fertility rates among the South European countries, while the other southern countries have both less participation of women in the labor market and less fertility.

For a long time, one of the factors pointed out as the main contributors to the fall of fertility rates was precisely the rise of female participation in the labor market. But in the late 1980s the correlation between the two variables became positive (Del Boca and Locatelli 2003: 152). As Figure 3 shows, this effect was felt more clearly in the Scandinavian countries where fertility rates rose slowly from the beginning of the 1990s to the present, and which are now well placed both in women's participation in the labor market and in fertility indexes. This change has been explained based on Scandinavian countries' closer attention to promoting policies that might enable women to have children without having to lose their job attachments (ibid.; Oinonen 2004).

These data suggest that women's paid work can help in starting a family project. If both members of a couple are working—and with the interaction of other factors such as social policies that help to balance work and family—it is easier for a couple to decide to have children.

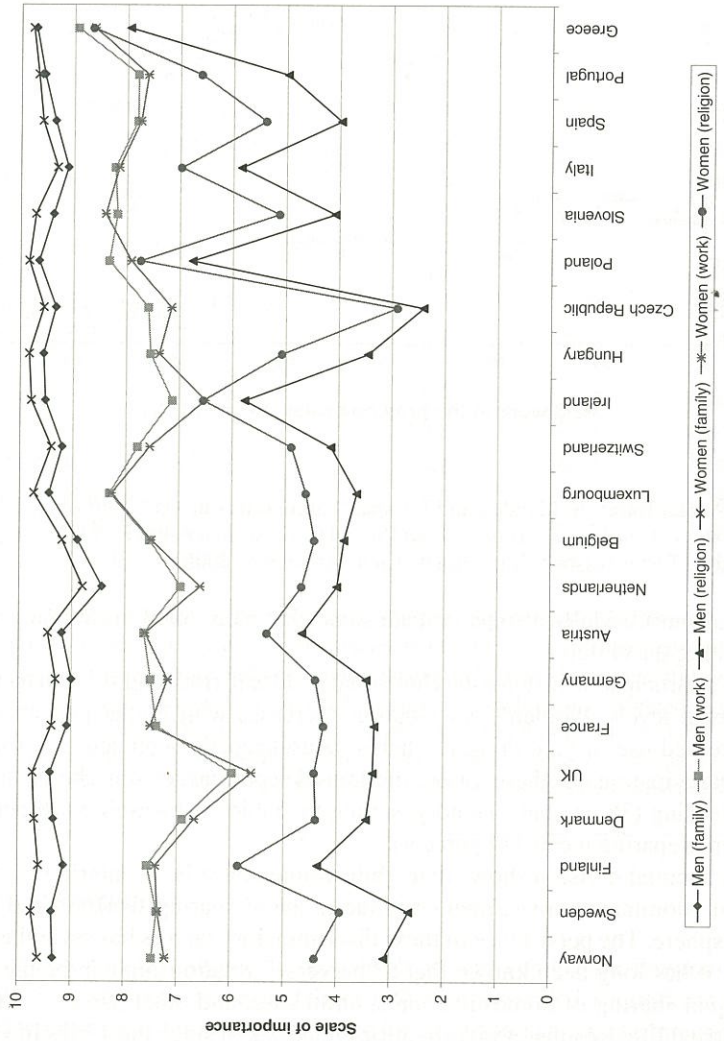
Portuguese Women: Between Paid and Unpaid Work

Besides doing a large amount of paid work, women also perform most of the domestic chores and other family responsibilities.

In fact, the division of work is far from egalitarian. Table 5 shows that men's participation exceeds 50 percent only in performing administrative chores such as paying bills, taking care of taxes, and repairing and maintaining the car, while women perform between 75 percent and 100 percent of the other tasks. Women undertake a greater number of chores, and, moreover, these chores—such as preparing meals, feeding and caring for children, housecleaning, and so on—also require more time and daily availability.

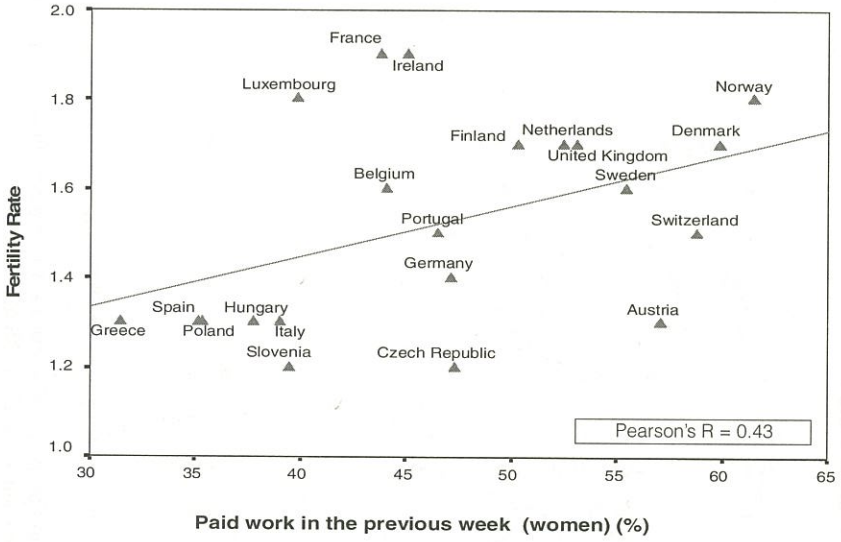
While women do some household chores that continue to be "nonnegotiable"[11] (e.g., cleaning and tidying up the house, doing the laundry), men participate in sharing some of the "negotiable" chores (mainly connected with preparing meals

Figure 2. **Importance of Family, Work, and Religion in the Lives of Women and Men**



Source: Anália Torres, R. Mendes, and T. Lapa, "Famílias na Europa" [Families in Europe], in *Contextos e Atitudes Sociais na Europa* [Social Contexts and Attitudes in Europe], ed. J. Vala, and A. Torres (Lisbon: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, 2006).

Figure 3. **Women's Rate of Paid Work Versus Fertility Rate**



Source: Anália Torres, R. Mendes, and T. Lapa, "Famílias na Europa" [Families in Europe], in *Contextos e Atitudes Sociais na Europa* [Social Contexts and Attitudes in Europe], ed. J. Vala, and A. Torres (Lisbon: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, 2006).

and child care).[12] Males also participate somewhat more often in shopping and in entertaining the children.

Men's participation in domestic chores and child care rises slightly with increased educational levels. Women's contribution decreases with higher education, but the increased use of paid domestic help—housekeepers—compensates for their lower participation. In these cases, the housekeeper carries out chores such as housecleaning (38 percent), laundry, setting the table, dishwashing (16 percent), and even preparing meals (14 percent).

This unequal division shows that while women have been entering traditionally male-dominated areas, men continue to avoid sharing work related to the private sphere. The persistence of these discriminatory factors has several effects. Indeed, it has long been known that a "perverse" relationship can be the result of unequal sharing of domestic chores, child care, and other aspects of family and married life. Results of investigations undertaken since the 1960s in various countries, including Belgium, France, and the United States, reveal an undisputed and unanimous conclusion: marriage satisfaction increases when domestic chores and child care are more equally distributed (Blood and Wolfe 1960; Michel 1974, 1978). More recently, Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2001) have shown that dissatisfaction in this regard is clearly expressed in contemporary societies.[13]

Table 5

Distribution of Household Chores Between Men and Women in Portugal, According to Their Jobs Outside the Home (1999, %)

Domestic chores	Employed men	Employed women	Housewives
1. Preparing meals	13.2	73.9	87.0
2. Setting the table, dishwashing	16.7	67.9	82.5
3. Laundry—washing and ironing	3.4	80.4	92.0
4. Housecleaning	9.3	75.1	90.1
5. Shopping	31.5	68.7	79.8
6. Gardening, handiwork, taking care of the car	75.7	28.8	46.8
7. Bathing and dressing children	21.4	75.7	86.6
8. Feeding children	20.6	74.1	87.7
9. Taking children to school, doctors, and so on	32.5	70.7	80.5
10. Playing with children	38.3	61.1	67.6
11. Caring for the elderly	14.7	82.8	93.1
12. Caring for ill children	21.6	65.3	76.5
13. Household financial affairs	63.7	51.5	56.9
14. Household administrative affairs	67.7	47.3	52.3

Source: A. Torres, F.V. Silva, T.L. Monteiro, and M. Cabrita, "Men and Women Between Family and Work, European Network on Policies and the Division of Unpaid and Paid Work," report, Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences (Tilburg University, 2001).

Note: Each particular chore done by the household as a whole or delegated (e.g., to the hired domestic help) is 100 percent work for both sexes. The numbers in the table therefore indicate the mean percentage of men's and women's share in getting the chore done. In respondents' answers about spouses' participation, women state that men participate much less than they say.

Child-Care Solutions

Another issue concerns socioeducational solutions and child care. Previous studies focusing on Lisbon (cf. Torres and Silva 1999) have revealed a significant number of working mothers of very small children for whom public care facilities are insufficient. National survey data reveal a slightly different picture. Some respondents said that while they were working mothers, they were also the main providers of child care. Table 6 shows that this category includes some 30 percent of children between zero and two years old, and 26 percent of the total number of children mentioned in the survey between the ages of zero and ten. Possible explanations

Table 6

Main Socioeducational and Child-Care Solutions Involving the Children of Mothers Working Outside the Home (%)

Child's age group	Zero to two	Three to five	Six to ten	Zero to ten
Stays with mother	30	24	24	26
Stays with grandparents	28	26	24	26
Goes to a nursery school, child-care center, or kindergarten	22	38	35	33
Goes to a babysitter	9	4	3	4
Stays alone at home	1	—	3	2
Other situations outside the family	—	—	—	—
Other situations within the family	11	8	10	10
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: A. Torres, F.V. Silva, T.L. Monteiro, and M. Cabrita, "Men and Women Between Family and Work, European Network on Policies and the Division of Unpaid and Paid Work," report, Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences (Tilburg University, 2001).

are either that the children stay at home by themselves or they go to their mothers' place of work. Whatever the case, such solutions are always bad.[14]

Table 6 shows that the most common answer (33 percent) is: "goes to the nursery school, child-care center, kindergarten, and so on." If we add the babysitter to this proportion, we then have 37 percent of the parents resorting to assistance outside the family. This makes it the most important solution even when set against 26 percent going to their grandparents and 10 percent to other family members. Thus, for the country as a whole, leaving the children with other family members is not as common as might at first be imagined.

These data reinforce the need for more socioeducational and care facilities in order to satisfy the requirements of such families. Moreover, respondents are largely in favor of readily available services and facilities outside the family, which cater to their children while they are away at work.[15]

Apart from being manifestly insufficient, there is a fairly serious mismatch between areas of the country where such services are most needed and areas enjoying greater availability of public facilities.

Caring for the elderly has been and remains women's task. Respondents to the survey revealed that 13 percent of them had elderly relatives requiring special care. For the great majority (97 percent), family was the predominant care solution whether in their own homes or in those of relatives. The female relatives of the

elderly were the ones giving them assistance. In general, not family assistance and female support are at fault but the lack of structures such as elder care facilities, which are asymmetrically distributed across the national territory.

Social Networks: Low Income, Less Help

Contrary to what we expected, fewer respondents said they would turn to the family for help.[16] But gender again is fundamentally important in structuring the patterns of help and family and social networks. Women have the central, main role and men resort to them for help more often than women seek men's help. Women also prefer to seek child care help from people other than their male partners. While most men say that they turn to their partners for help, most women say that their mothers are, by far, the ones they most rely on.

The capacity to mobilize social and family networks is considered a resource or a backup, rather like capital loans that people can apply for and use to their own advantage. Those who have the most networks available to them (in light of owning other kinds of capital, especially economic and educational types) are the ones who least need them. Thus, those with the fewest solidarity networks at their disposal are the ones who need them most.[17]

Existing Policies: Changes in the Maternity and Child-Care Leave Systems

The orientation toward protection of the family has not been directly assumed by governments, as "family policy has continued to be implicit in the sense that public responsibility for family well-being is embedded in national policies rather than acknowledged as a separate policy domain" (Wall 2001). Nevertheless, issues like child care leave systems, child-care facilities, or the need to balance work and family have also been objects of specific policy changes.

Maternity leave was implemented at end of the 1970s as a right that represented the commitment of the state to the protection of maternity and family. It has always been stipulated as fully paid (by social security to employers) leave based on the worker's normal salary. There is also parental leave, and paternity leave, and leave for family reasons (Wall 2001).

In 1995 the option for fathers and mothers to share maternity leave (with mothers always obliged to take the first six weeks) was established.[18] In 1999 there were some other changes in leave arrangements.[19] Paid maternity leave was increased to 120 days (consecutive) and paternity leave to 5 fully paid days. Also implemented was a leave of 100 days for those adopting a child younger than fifteen. A nursing mother was given two hours leave per day until the child is a year old (if the mother is not nursing the child, one of the parents, either the mother or the father, is entitled to the above-mentioned leave). The new law also allows parents the option not only to share the total paid leave of 120 days but also to allocate it to the

father, after the six weeks that must be taken by the mother. Finally, if the father takes two weeks parental leave immediately after 120 days, he is entitled to fully compensated leave for that period (Wall 2001).

Other measures and benefits include unpaid parental leave (subsequent to maternity leave), possible specific periods of part-time work or flexible working hours. Child benefits, tax incentives for individuals or family units with dependents, tax-free allowance for single parents with low income, and tax reductions for some special types of expenditures relating to health care, education, and so on (Wall 2001).

Child-care facilities for children younger than three years old is still scarce and private solutions are very expensive, asymmetrically distributed, and poorly available in large urban areas.

Values and Attitudes About Work and Family Life: Between the Modern and the Traditional

The results of the Portuguese survey showed that attitudes toward work and family life have a strong tendency to reflect modern values.[20] But we can observe the modern and the traditional intersect—especially when we compare practice with discourse.

The role of mothers and family in child care is most strongly emphasized, although nursery schools and kindergarten are also considered positive and possible solutions. Family in child care is more prominent among the less educated. The rejection of such commonly held opinions as "sometimes having children is just not worth it," or the choice of statements like "only children bring a couple happiness" and "a woman who does not want at least one child is an egotist."

On the other hand, while respondents strongly emphasized the family network in replying to questions about the relationship between the family and their children, as far as ideas about working outside the home went, traditional views were entirely lacking. Such valorization has more to do with material compensation from having a job.

The fact that salaries are low in the Portuguese labor market is one explanation for the high rate of working women in Portugal. It suggests the idea of modernization with no emancipation. At least this seems to be the case among less educated women. Among better educated working women, the material benefits of having a job is only third on the list of reasons given by the respondents. Furthermore, among the more highly educated working women, it is the job itself that is the most important. Men who have received less schooling place more value on their jobs than other better educated men and more than women who have also received less schooling. In other words, there is an inverse relationship between men and women with respect to levels of education and the overall value they place on their jobs.[21]

With regard to more circumspect questions about the effects of double activity on the couple, we see appreciable differences in the kind of answers given. The greatest degree of awareness about the negative consequences of double activity is thought to affect the relationship between cohabiting partners. The more highly educated respondents say that such twofold activity does not intimidate them. It is also interesting to note that domestic work is recognized for its value, more so among women than men and particularly among nonworking women. But it is also true that when comparing the working woman with the housewife, the former is always more favorably received; having a job is regarded as an essential step for women in obtaining both respect from society and their independence.

However, this tendency becomes much clearer and more pronounced above all among the better educated respondents. More highly educated sectors more strongly recognize the emancipation that accompanies more modernized modes of work.

According to the respondents' answers, men should "take an active role on a daily basis" in educating the children. On the other hand, respondents say that men should not cut down on their involvement with their jobs after the birth of a child. The attitude reflected in everyday life is that men should do their share on the domestic front although their jobs come first.

In his innovating work on gender relations, Kunzler (2002) considers the relevance of men taking an active part in domestic life as a main direction toward modernizing gender relations. Given current behaviors and modern attitudes about women and work, as well as the large number of working women, this vector is essential if gender relations are to be modernized in Portugal.[22]

As a rule, in terms of paid work, men are not recognized as superior to women. The set of values is generally more modern than what actually happens in practice. We may conclude that the main focus placed on traditionalism involves men's joining the domestic world—not because this is what people say but rather because the effect of expressing reservations about these issues has materialized into the asymmetries we have observed in the division of labor.

Conclusions: Gender Equality Is Continually at Stake

As we have seen, in contrast to other European countries, Portugal has an extremely high rate of female employment, although not in terms of part-time jobs. Independently of the age of their children or their marital status, most working women have full-time jobs. Women's long hours spent in paid work almost on a par with men's does not mean, however, that working mothers are able to rely on a well-supplied network of child care facilities. Nor does it mean that domestic work and child care duties are more fairly shared between men and women.

Where unpaid work is concerned, women's domestic chores include caring for elderly dependents and children. When women work outside the home, the only way they can cut down on their share of the household chores is by actually decreasing

the amount of time they spend doing them. It is not the case that men are doing a fairer share of the chores. The fact of having paid work does not prevent women from desiring or having children.

Family networks partially replace a dearth of outside facilities destined to alleviate time spent in caring for elderly relatives. However, this statement does not take into account that a significant number of elderly people are living on their own and possibly have to make do despite a lack of assistance coming their way.

The situation in which children are placed is even more worrisome. Apart from the extra expenditure families are obliged to make when seeking private socioeducational measures and child care services for their children, families that have extremely low purchasing power frequently resort to more dubious or less acceptable solutions.

Another worrisome conclusion concerns inter-help or "helping-hand" networks within the family. People who earn the least receive only very little assistance or are not able to depend on it at all.

As for paid work, two main trends must be emphasized: the first involves the very marked difference between men and women in personal earnings, where women are placed at a distinct disadvantage. The second trend reveals that, regardless of a woman's marital status and the number of even very small children she has, these have no bearing on the number of hours she works in her outside job.

On the one hand, this situation results from the fact that to live decently in Portuguese society, it is nearly always necessary to have two incomes in the family; on the other hand, it is also true, that there are other reasons why most women go out to work in the first place. In the low income bracket, having a paying job can mean more power and independence within the marital and family context, even though women have to pay the price by taking on the bulk of unpaid domestic work as well. A full-time job outside the home brings the better-educated woman who earns more added responsibility in the form domestic chores and child care, although both tasks may be alleviated by paying hired domestic help to do them.

Women tend to attribute the same importance to work as men do. For women work is a value in itself even in countries where fewer females are working. Women's labor market entry has not diminished the importance of family, which continues to be a taken-for-granted value and is the main sphere of personal investment for both men and women in Portugal and throughout Europe. What are changing are family models and the meanings and forms of investment in the family.

In terms of social policies, since 1995, increased public funding has been channeled into aid for child and elder care. Having started practically from zero, current needs are still far from being satisfied.

Looking at the progress that has been made in overall terms, it is obvious that an asymmetrical relationship persists between men and women in paid and unpaid work. The difference between the two sexes in paid work is much smaller than in

unpaid work, where women always seem to be at a marked disadvantage. We have attempted to explain this situation by examining specific characteristics of Portuguese society while, at the same time, keeping in mind the global mechanisms that generally condition the division of labor between men and women. Indeed, there is a close relationship between the fact that women are, as a rule, employed in the worst-paid jobs that demand the lowest qualifications, and that they also have to take on the added chores of child care, elder care, and housework. The social and sexual division of work gives rise to objective restraints because the two sexes are afforded different job opportunities that are also reinforced by symbolic restraints. Household division of tasks tends to reflect and reproduce the different positions in the labor market, leading to less time spent by men in household chores and care. Gender equality is continually at stake.

Notes

1. This survey was undertaken by the Portuguese research team for the European Network on Policies and the Division of Unpaid and Paid Work. It focused on a very wide range of issues related to the division of unpaid and paid work between men and women. A statistically representative sample of the population living in mainland Portugal, twenty to fifty years old, responded to the 1999 questionnaire. The sample was composed of 1,700 people of whom 791 were men (46.5 percent) and 909 were women (53.5 percent) (Torres et al., 2001).

2. Only a few decades ago, this was the lowest rate of female activity in Europe. Portugal did not take an active role in World War II, which helps to explain why the labor market during this period failed to include women.

3. In reality the numbers for women's activity in 1960 are underestimated because people working in agriculture and even in domestic services tended to declare that they were mainly housewives.

4. Nevertheless, still a small group of the population.

5. It must be remembered that this is a sample of young people (thirty-six years old on average) since the respondents were between twenty and fifty.

6. In a survey done in Lisbon, women with children and low income said that having paid work did not compensate for the expenses of child care facilities (Torres and Silva 1999).

7. The data revealed that housewives in higher-income families were also women with intermediate levels of education. Women who do not have a university degree have fewer possibilities of finding a fulfilling job. Being a housewife in a high-income family is a much better alternative.

8. Authors such as Louis André Vallet, Claude Thélot, and François de Singly (quoted in Martine Segalen 1993: 194), consider that professionalization models are inherited. According to Vallet, the destinies of daughters depend more on the maternal than the paternal stance; that is, when mothers work, their daughters are much more likely to do the same. Thélot and Singly, for their part, show that the more educated the mothers, the greater the probabilities that their children will go further in their professions.

9. In fact, 70.3 percent of the male respondents said that they had never stopped their professional activity, while 64.5 percent of the women said the same. Only 19.8 percent of the women said they had stopped gong to work once and 14.2 percent said they had stopped going to work two or more times during their working lives. The respective figures for men were only 17.9 percent and 10.5 percent.

10. From a wide range of answers about why they had interrupted their working lives, the main answer given by both men and women indicated that they had been fired (46.1 percent men; 28.2 percent women). Among other reasons were illness or incapacity (35.7 percent men; 39.3 percent women); "incompatible schedules" (0.6 percent men; 6.1 percent women); "it was better for the children if I took care of them" (1.3 percent men; 6.7 percent women); "maternity leave" (0 percent men; 11 percent women).

11. We have classified household chores as "negotiable" when both partners do them, and "nonnegotiable" when only one partner, either male or female, takes charge.

12. Although in terms of child care not all chores point in this direction. For example, if a higher level of education means playing more with the children, taking them to school or the doctor, or even feeding them, other chores such as bathing and dressing children indicate much less activity on the part of the fathers.

13. "For many women today, such conduct means not only a lack of help in everyday life but also, I would argue, a daily experience of inequality within the family, an offence against expectations and demands that are part of their life project, a display of contempt for their personality and indeed for their existential desires and rights. The available studies suggest that such disappointed expectations give rise to rancor against husbands and dissatisfaction with marriage and the family"(Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2001: 104).

14. Examining the study in more depth, we tried to determine what kind of professions were exercised by the mothers in these cases. Generally speaking, they were engaged in unskilled labor, which in turn meant short-term, precarious employment (office and hotel cleaning and similar jobs, street vendors, cooks, etc.). In addition, it is difficult to find part-time work in these jobs, so the women work mainly full-time. Thus, these mothers find even more unsuitable solutions.

15. When asked what socioeducational and child care services would be ideal, the respondents replied clearly and consistently, even though they differentiated between children two years old and younger and children three years old and over. A large majority said the ideal solution for a child up to age two was to stay with the mother or father or both (87.6 percent). For children older than three, respondents said they thought nursery schools, child day care centers, and kindergartens were the best.

16. Taking into account the answers obtained in the survey and referring to the example "seeking help from the child's mother/grandmother " in unexpected situations requiring child care services, 45.5 percent of the respondents with children younger than ten years old said they could never depend on any help from these sources.

17. Controlling for household income and basind our data on answers to the question about "seeking help from the child's mother/grandmother," a far more numerous group belonged to the lower income bracket that says it "never" or "only sometimes" asks for help from the mother in necessary situations as against the group that says it "always" or "often" asks for the mother's help.

18. Decree-law 17/95, June 9 (Wall 2001).

19. Decree-law 142 of August 31, 1999; Decree-law no. 70/2000 May 4; and Decree-law 230/2000, September 23.

20. For lack of a better term and regardless of the disagreement it might cause, when talking about gender relations, we use the term "modern values" in a broad sense and as synonymous with current ideas of parity, equality, and balance between men and women, rather than merely to refer to patterns arising in the division of labor.

21. The only exception to the rule lies in how women regard the material benefits. But even here, as the level of schooling increases its importance decreases.

22. Although this situation is not strictly linear on the attitude scale, we believe that breaking down the results obtained in the survey points in this direction, as we have already mentioned.

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Gender, Family, and Work

The Case of Poland in Cross-National Perspective

Abstract: *The situations of men and women in the labor market in particular countries strongly differ from one another. The differences are loosely related to attitudes concerning work, family life, and gender. This article characterizes Polish social politics and society as a mosaic of traditional and nontraditional values, expectations, and behaviors when it comes to family and work. One of the basic questions is whether new lines of conflict and new spheres of understanding are emerging between women and men as they adapt to changing living conditions in the postcommunist era. These changes are taking place in the context of transforming living conditions and of social and cultural capital that is increasing faster for women than for men, while gender inequality still dominates the relationship between men and women. Public policy is confronted with changing systems of values and attitudes toward family and work. These changes are not occurring at the same pace with changes in different social groups, even though they are moving in the same direction. The rapidly growing number of people with higher education,*

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