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## 1. Work and family in Portugal

Anália Torres<sup>1</sup>

### 1. Introduction

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

Classifying the position of Portugal among other countries, in what women's paid work is concerned, becomes a difficult task. It is not close to the other southern countries, with which the country shares some common features, like the influence of catholic religion, the fact of having had in the past authoritarian political regimes with very traditional views regarding women's condition, or even the fact of being later comers in what economical development is concerned. In contrast, the number of hours women spent on paid work in Portugal makes them very close to Scandinavian women. But we know that on other items like the extension of parental leaves, public child care facilities, family income, or the country's Gdp, the distance becomes huge. Finally, comparing some Oede countries we find out that Portugal and the USA are the only ones that have at the same time high mother's activity rates and low level of public coverage for child care facilities (Gornick *et al.* 1997; Meulders, D'Orchai 2003)<sup>2</sup>. This closeness may be explained by the fact that in both countries there are extensive informal paid services for childcare.

<sup>1</sup> With Tiago Lapa.

<sup>2</sup> It must be said that from 1995 until 2002 Portuguese Government's made some efforts for rising up the level of coverage for pre-school childcare facilities allocating public funds and also by supporting some solutions of the so called social sector (private solidarity institutions). In spite of this effort there is some asymmetrical national distribution of these services and the group of children until 3 years is not at all covered.

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 of the other southern European countries? In this article, among other issues, we try to answer these questions. The results of a survey made on the context of the European Network on Policies and The Division of Unpaid and Paid Work<sup>3</sup> are one of our main sources of analysis. But data from Round 1 (2002) of the European Social Survey (Vala, Torres 2006) and from other researches using qualitative methods are also analysed and discussed here.

Focusing on the one hand on paid work and its evolution in the last decades in Portugal in different socio professional groups, but also on the unpaid work, we discuss the socio-educational solutions and childcare, the taking care of the elderly, and how social networks are activated within the family and also on existing policies, parental and childcare leave systems. Values and attitudes towards family, paid work and gender division are also an issue of discussion. Let's begin with some theoretical background questions about the relations between the gender division of paid and unpaid work and the different welfare state regimes.

## 2. Paid work, unpaid work and the welfare state

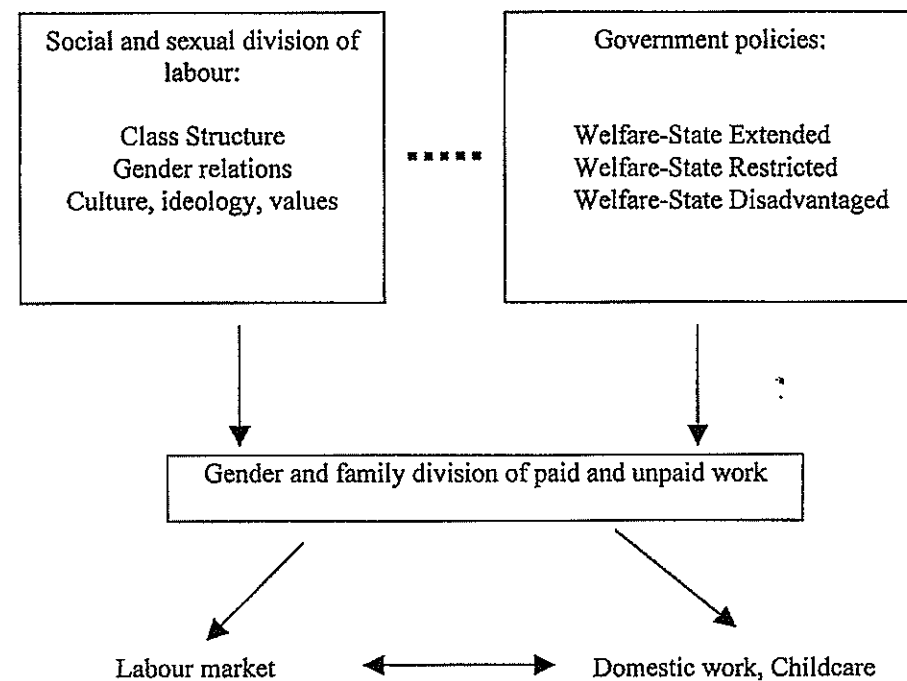
In the analytical scheme we can see in figure 1 we try to characterise the theoretical and conceptual relations we thought of as useful for the research on the division of paid and unpaid labour between men and women. At ground level, what we are studying in an interconnected way, are the various dimensions of the social and sexual division of labour more related to sharing paid and unpaid work. Generally speaking, this sort of differentiation reveals the analytical dichotomy between paid work – as a result of a job on the labour 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.

If the former may be broken down into several professional categories where there is a very direct relationship between job types and what bearing they have on scenarios outside professional activity, likewise domestic work may also be looked at in a more detailed breakdown of the different kinds of tasks involved. Within this wide range of issues are those covering child care,

<sup>3</sup> This survey was undertaken by the Portuguese research team for the European Network on Policies and The Division of Unpaid and Paid Work. It was focused on a very wide range of issues related to the division of unpaid and paid work between men and women. The questionnaire was answered, in 1999, by a statistically representative sample of the population resident in mainland Portugal aged between 20 and 50. The sample was composed of 1700 people of whom 791 were man (46,5%) and 909 were women (53,5%) (Torres *et al.* 2001).

care for the elderly or all kinds of household chores in the strict sense of the term (doing the shopping, cooking, doing the laundry, ironing, etc.).

Figure 1 - Conceptual Model



In its role as a variable, occupying the centre of the stage in the much-needed debate about such issues, gender naturally provides one of the fundamental analytical axes coursing its way transversally throughout the entire study and laying its foundations. Other issues, such as education and schooling, status in the class system, insertion on a regional scale, ideological sympathies and attitudes, to name just a few, provide information which allows us to rise questions about what is going on in Portugal with regard to the division of labour between men and women.

Equally important is the role played by State's intervention. This means 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.

We have turned to our previous study in order to use a typology of Welfare-States which, by mainly dealing with the questions of the relation between paid and unpaid work, is based on the extent and coverage of measures taken by the state in relation to childcare facilities (Torres, Silva 1999). By

bearing this classification criterion in mind, we have identified three types of Welfare-State (Table 1): the extended (the Scandinavian countries, France and Belgium), the restricted (the English-speaking countries and Continental Europe – Holland, Germany, Austria, Luxembourg), and the disadvantaged (Portugal, Greece, Italy and Spain)<sup>4</sup>.

Table 1- Childcare models in the European Union by type of Welfare State<sup>5</sup>

Model	Countries	Main Characteristics
Extended Welfare State	Denmark, Finland	A high rate of female professional activity, even in the case of mothers with small children, and high public concern in providing childcare facilities; a universal system of social benefits (all children have the right to a place in a public institution); a great number of social policy measures which make it possible to harmonize work and the family with a highly regulated labour market; concern both with the interest of the children (concern with the quality of services) and with the right of mothers to have a professional activity. In brief, the harmonisation of work and family is the main concern.
	Sweden	Welfare model similar to the above with the difference that the type of mother's paid work is characterised by a great number of women who work part-time.
	France, Belgium	Welfare model similar to the Danish and the Finnish models, with the specific characteristic of social policies for the family, childhood and youth, and childcare services being somewhat more restricted (less extensive paid parental leaves and lower rates of coverage for childcare facilities).

<sup>4</sup> The typology we suggest using considers that countries handle differently issues like policies affecting the family, work and gender. Being so, in our model France and Belgium are grouped together with the Scandinavian countries and Holland, United Kingdom, Germany, Ireland, Austria and Luxembourg belong to a big group that we considered as having a Restricted Welfare-State in terms of family and gender policies (Torres, Silva 1999).

<sup>5</sup> This conceptualization was made in 1997 on the context of a research relating childcare with the division of paid and unpaid work between men and women (Torres, Silva 1999). It does not account for changes made afterwards.

Disadvantaged Welfare State	Spain, Italy, Greece	The model of the Southern countries is characterised by relatively low rates of full-time female activity without the career being interrupted for a long period, insufficient measures for social policy and childcare services which satisfy existing necessities, but within the framework of a concept of public responsibility in this area. The State establishes an interventionist concept, providing solutions and regulating the private sector in order to assure some social justice in terms of access to services. In general, the aim is to come closer (in more minimalist development) to the Extended Welfare State (e.g. the French), and female professional activity is encouraged, though family solidarity still appears to be important for childcare in the case of working mothers; the lack of services and subsidies very often obliges women to abandon their professional activity.
	Portugal	Portugal is a very special case in the south of Europe and is a separate sub-model in itself, given that, on the one hand, it is close to the southern countries in terms of the type of State intervention and the type of existing measures and services (either real, or desired as a political orientation); and, on the other hand, it has a profile of female activity which is similar to that found in the countries in the north of Europe, and is the country where women work more full-time. In this case, despite the difficulties people encounter, there is a practical and unavoidable need to reconcile the family and work, because with most women in the labour market, private solidarities begin to be questioned (who can stay at home with the children when the mothers and grandmothers work?).
Restricted Welfare State	Germany, Austria, Holland, Luxembourg	This model tends towards a maternalist perspective, assuming that it is best for children to stay at home with their mothers while they have less than 6 years; the State intervenes to guarantee mothers the possibility of staying at home without working by providing a vast range of subsidies and financing which guarantee this possibility, without great financial constraints for the families. In these countries, childcare is also difficult for children of school age, for school hours (even with possible extra-hours) do not coincide with working hours; this is why a high percentage of women with a professional activity work part-time. These systems include an important factor for gender discrimination, as they make women's access to a professional occupation more difficult.
	United Kingdom, Ireland	This model is also based on maternalist assumptions, and female activity assumes a profile which is similar to the countries referred to above, but with the difference that the conception of obligations for the care and education of children as an essentially private matter freely decided by the families which should find the solutions which serve them best; this model tends to reproduce and increase social inequalities. This does not mean that there are not some social measures and public childcare institutions, but there are less than in the other type of maternalist model (the German model). The relatively low employment rate among mothers is also a strong indicator of the difficulties of reconciling family life with employment.

It is therefore vital to determine and analyze the nature and extension of effects of the existence or not of policies as well as the philosophy embedded in certain kinds of institutional arrangements. For instance, as we can see in Table 1, in the Scandinavian countries there is a concern for gender equality regarding paid work and family as well as for quality in child care services. By contrast, in other countries, as we analyze the kind of measures and policies sustained, we can clearly see the logic of a motherhood ideology (Kunzler 2002) considering women as the only providers of care for children and disregarding their rights in paid work. It is worth notice, that in recent years there has been intensive discussion precisely over welfare state issues, the most interesting contributions coming from several researchers that have been dealing with social and family policies related to motherhood and childcare facilities all of them concerned with gender issues (Sainsbury 1994, 2000; Meulders, O'Dorchai 2003; Gornick *et al.* 1997, 2003).

Having this kind of 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 the practices and attitudes in relation to this topic.

In sum, in a given society men and women decide the kind 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 gendered specific context. Decisions are made in a framework where options are related to specific constraints.

The extremely quick rise of women's activity in Portugal<sup>6</sup>, as well as some social transformations, reopened the discussion about the role of the state in Portuguese society. In fact, together with phenomena like rising urbanization and breakdown of the extended family into the close family unit, the result of feminizing the labour market was to do away with any hope of protecting wide-scale social solidarity networks based on family relations and local neighbours.

The theory according to which society would be able to replace an endemically lacking State and thus provide an alternative mode of social organization based on the ability of families to solve these kinds of problems efficiently by themselves – a theory which was disseminated both at home and abroad as being typically representative of the Portuguese situation – does not stand today. Recent studies carried out about the compatibility between paid and unpaid work as well as on gender issues, have proved otherwise (Torres *et al.* 2001; Wall *et al.* 2001)<sup>7</sup>. Besides, these studies further reveal that solidarity

<sup>6</sup> Only a few decades ago, it was the lowest female rate activity in Europe. Portugal did not take an active role in World War II, which contributes to explain why the labour market during this period failed to include women.

<sup>7</sup> Even among those who have espoused this theory, there is now talking of a "regression of the Welfare-State" (for example Hespanha *et al.* 1999) and the possible adverse effects the idea

networks not only have a far less relevant influence than what had been previously thought, but there is also less supply available to those who need these networks the most, as we will see ahead.

## 2.1 Portuguese women: high levels of labour market's participation

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 the highest, in contrast with other northern countries with a higher female activity but mainly in part-time jobs (Kunzler 2002). The number of women in active employment increased steadily since 1960 from 13,1% to 46,7% in 2004, while men's participation decreased, for the same years, 63,8% to 58,1% (Almeida *et al.* 2000; Cite 2005)<sup>8</sup>. The evidence that women have been occupying a large and ever-growing slice of the labour market can be seen in the Table 2.

Table 2- Resident population with 12 or more years by socio-professional status (1981, 1991, 2001)

	1981		2001		Difference 2001-1981	In thousands
	M	W	M	W		
Non agricultural 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	1033,7	+36,6	+491,9
Industrial workers	1115	313,8	1095	383,5	-20	+69,7
Agricultural labourers***	207,8	92,7	60,3	25,4	-147,5	-67,3
Military personnel	20,2	0,3	31	2,3	+10,8	+2
Non specified active workers	11,7	1,3	44,6	66,4	+32,9	+65,1
Total of active workers	2649	1377,7	2742,1	2248,2	+93,1	+870,5

Source: *Ine Population Census 1981, 1991, 2001; Torres (2004)*

of a "family welfare" replacing the State may eventually bring to bear (Hespanha 1999). However, several aspects of the theory have been held up for questioning in terms of presenting a faithful picture of Portugal's historical past.

<sup>8</sup> 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.

This progression of women can be observed clearly in juxtaposition to the stagnation of working men in absolute values. In the space of 20 years, the number of women that work as "trade and personal service employees" doubled, and the number of women as "executives, managers and skilled workers" was close of being the triple. And in this last category the difference between men and women in 2001 is favourable to the women (456.100 women and 450.200 men). On the one hand, there is a greater concentration of female jobs in categories often proved to be precarious, badly paid and containing poor perspectives in terms of future job stability. On the other hand, there are more women in sectors requiring good academic qualifications such as professions demanding intellectual and scientific skills, although the latter categories involve a smaller group of people. In sum, it is unequivocal the progression of women in the economical activity in skilled sectors as much as in less skilled sectors.

## 2.2 Explaining the Portuguese case

This radical change in the Portuguese work structure and the rise of women's participation in the labour market may be explained by several reasons. One of the most important as to do with the length of the Colonial War (1961-1974), which caused an extreme rise in the need for alternative manpower. In fact, between 1961 and 1974, that is, thirteen consecutive years, young men were obliged to provide four years in military service and fight in Africa for at least two.

For women in less privileged sectors this was an opportunity to seek for work available in factories or as paid domestic servants in the big cities. For the better educated ones, professional opportunities were opening in the civil service, in teaching professions and even in business firms. Conciliating this activity with family life, and despite the dominance of traditional values and practices, was favoured precisely by the existence of cheap domestic paid labour.

This situation ended up giving women an opportunity to join the labour market and to remain in it. In fact, the 1974 April Revolution ending up colonial war and implementing serious and sometimes radical transformations, guaranteed equal opportunities between men and women in the new laws. Even if traditional orientations still stand in practise, it is very difficult now to go back to the same views of the past about gender inequality.

The indirect effect of emigration, a huge movement mainly in the sixties representing the declining of agriculture as a way of making a living, meant also 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 pointed out for our high rate of female activity, poverty and men's low salaries is, of course, also an important one. Low wages encourage a dual-earner model in a household. According to the data of the European Social Survey 46,7% of the households had to live on incomes that were lower than € 1500 (Torres *et al.* 2004a).

But women's participation in the labour market kept growing irrespectively of the raising standards of living.

We can see in Table 3 that Portuguese women, and especially mothers, have a permanent attachment to the labour market.

Table 3 – Labour market participation of men and women by type of household, N=1267 (1999) (%)

	Men	Women	Total
Living alone	83,6	81,4	82,7
Lone parent	73,7	70,8	71,9
Living together without children	89,9	65,7	78,5
Living together with at least one child of 6 years of age 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 6 years of age	80,2	63,1	71,5
Others situations	87,1	65,6	74,8
Total	84,3	66,0	74,5
N=	667	600	1267

Source: Torres *et al.* 2001

Even with risk and reality of overload, women's working experience brought also a desire for independence, which they were (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 labour market, the truth is that Portuguese women with higher education<sup>9</sup>, presumably, with better income conditions, are proportionally much more represented in the labour market, at roughly 90%, the highest figure in the European Union.

Looking also at the case of housewives as an indicator, we can conclude that they are much more present when they have lower levels of education and that they are completely missing in the higher levels<sup>10</sup> (Table 4). Income, as we can see, has also specific effects on women's rate of activity.

<sup>9</sup> Nevertheless still a small group of the population.

<sup>10</sup> It must be remembered that this is a sample with young people (average of 36 years old since the respondents had between 20 and 50 years).

Table 4 - Level of education attained by women, according to their professional status (Portugal 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: Torres et al. 2001.

The lower the income the higher the probability of being a housewife<sup>11</sup>. But at the other top of the income scale there are again more housewives than in the intermediate positions, but less than on the low income groups<sup>12</sup>.

Table 5 - Employed women and housewives, according to their household's income (Portugal, 1999)

Women %	Up to 750 euros	From 751 to 1250 euros	From 1251 to 1750 euros	From 1751 to 2750 euros	More than 2750 euros	Total
Employed	52	74	84	79	60	66
Housewives	34	16	7	10	20	21

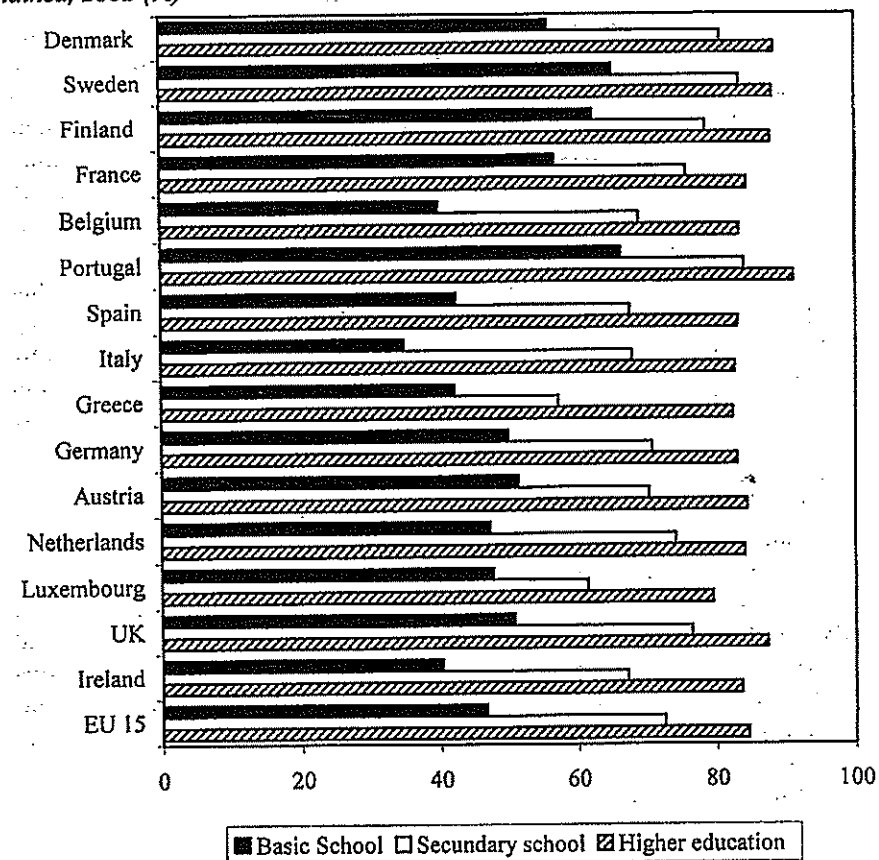
Source: Torres et al. 2001.

The situation whereby the proportion of women employed is directly proportional to the length of their education is valid in the whole of the European Union. In almost all countries, the employment average for women with a higher education degree is 84,6% (Figure 2). This is another example that shows that in Portugal, as in the whole of the EU, there are other reasons than purely financial ones for women remaining in the work market. We may talk clearly about a model that is becoming deeply incorporated in European Union: a woman with a university degree is almost necessarily an active woman.

<sup>11</sup> In a survey made in Lisbon we concluded that women with children and low income said that having a paid work did not compensate the expenses made on childcare facilities (Torres, Silva 1999).

<sup>12</sup> It became clear from the data that housewives in families with higher income were also the ones that had intermediate levels of education. We can consider that women that don't have a university degree have less possibilities of finding a job that can fulfill them. Being a housewife, in a context of high family income, can be a much better alternative.

Figure 2- Active women, (25-64 years old), according to the level of education attained, 2002 (%)



Source: Oecd, Employment Outlook 2002; Torres 2004.

A positive attachment to the experience of work in the labour market, especially on highly educate women, is likely also to exert many more long term consequences. The fact that mothers have gone out to work has had a undeniable effect on the way daughters have been encouraged to join the labour market as well, it has become a "normal" and undisputed project of life. Furthermore, the higher the mother's educational qualifications, the more the chance of its positive consequences on her children's academic achievement<sup>13</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> Authors such as Louis André Vallet, Claude Thélot and François de Singly quoted by Segalen (1993: 194), consider that professionalisation models are inherited. According to Vallet, the destinies of daughters depend more on the maternal than on the paternal stance, that i

Research based on interviews that were carried out in Portugal permits to conclude that even in the most under-privileged groups resorting to fairly unskilled labour, female employment do not merely means economic survival. This idea contrasts 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 recognised 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 give them the chance to improve their buying power and break free of limiting life styles and routines (Torres 1995: 186; Torres *et al.* 2001; Torres 2004).

There are also life-course effects. In many cases, these women feel that they have progressed and that their 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 still persist in the family today, the environment is more democratic and masculine domination is less oppressive. But the price they pay up is to work twofold in a double working day, or by being affected with worries and feelings of guilt if they don't manage to cope with that situation.

Coming back do the Portuguese survey data we concluded, once more, that part-time jobs in Portugal, like in other southern European countries, are not frequently available. Only 10,8% of our working women respondents had part-time job. This kind of paid work is also generally associated with jobs which do not require any special qualifications or which 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.

It is mainly the women who possess fewer qualifications, who bear the brunt of unemployment, part-time work, unstable and badly-paid jobs. These negative aspects would therefore make the male partner's income even more valuable, as it is the main source of the family's livelihood, while the woman's job would become devalued.

These ideas are also reflected in an enterprise culture in which there are different sets of expectations 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.

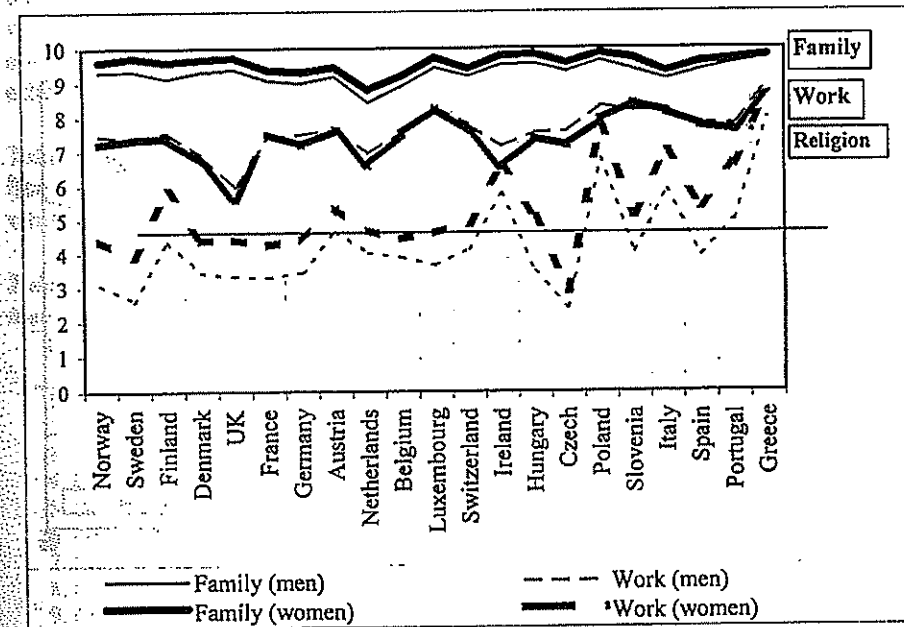
The survey also showed that taking a break from work usually occurred only very infrequently, even though women tended to interrupt their profes-

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 of their children getting further in their professions.

sional activity more often than men<sup>14</sup>. Perhaps one of the most important dat revealed that, apart from illness or incapacity, getting fired from a job<sup>15</sup> wa the most frequent reason leading to an interruption in their working life. It may therefore be safely concluded that stopping work was based more on la bour questions than on family matters.

Accounting now for the results of the European Social Survey (Vala, Torres 2006) about the choice respondents made regarding the most important aspects of life it is interesting to conclude that women tend to attribute th same importance to work as men do. They consider work important even i countries where there is a lower participation of women in the labour market.

Figure 3- Importance of family, work and religion in the life of women and men



Source: Torres, Mendes, Lapa (2006).

<sup>14</sup> In fact, 70,3% of the male respondents said that they had never stopped exercising their professional activity, while 64,5% of the women said the same. Only 19,8% and 14,2% of the women said they had stopped going to work respectively once, or twice and more times during their working lives. Only 17,9% and 10,5% of the men said they had stopped working once or twice and more times.

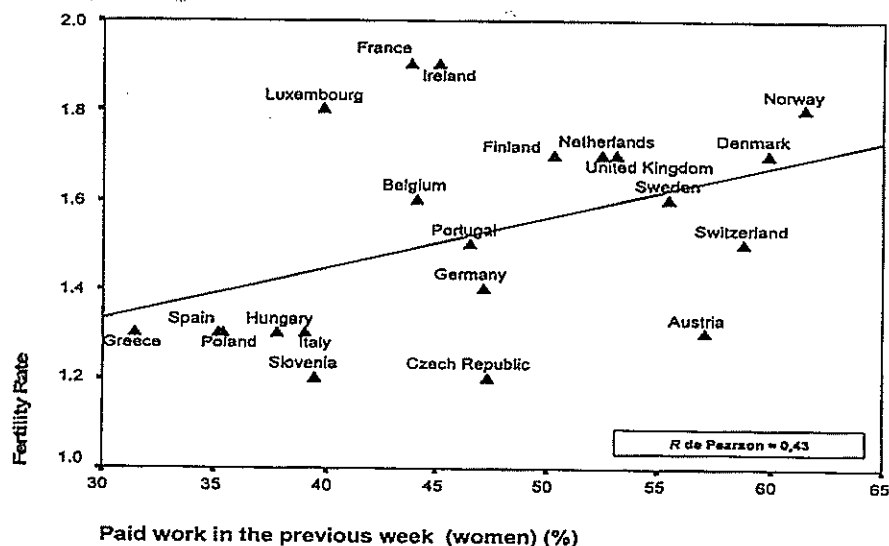
<sup>15</sup> From a wide range of answers about why they had interrupted their working lives, the main answer given by both men and women indicated that they had been sacked (46,1% men, 28,2% women). Among other reasons were illness or incapacity (M: 35,7%; W: 39,3%); "compatible timetables" (M: 0,6%; W: 6,1%); "it was better for the children if I took care of them" (M: 1,3%; W: 6,7%); "maternity leave" (M: 0%; W: 11%).

Having in consideration that family is for both sexes the most important aspect of their life, we may admit undoubtedly that women want to invest on both fronts: family and work altogether, as we have seen in Figure 3.

It is also interesting to explore the relations between fertility rates and women's activity. We can add that paid work doesn't seem to have constrained the fertility rate in Portugal, although it has been decreasing in the last decades while paid work has been increasing.

But if we look at the big picture of Europe in the Figure 4 we can observe that not only women's paid work is not a constrain but it seems to be an enhancing factor. Portugal has the highest fertility among the southern European countries, while they have both less participation of women in the labour market and less fertility.

Figure 4 - Women's rate of paid work versus fertility rate



Sources: World Bank 2002; Torres, Mendes, Lapa (2006).

For a long time, one of the factors that were pointed out as the main contributors to the fall of fertility rates was precisely the rise of female participation in the labour market. But in the late 1980s the correlation between the two variables became positive (Del Boca, Locatelli 2003: 152). This effect was felt more clearly in the Scandinavian countries where fertility rates raised slowly from the beginning of the 1990s until nowadays, as we can see in Figure 5, being now well placed both in women's participation in the labour market and in fertility indexes. This change has been explained by a closer attention, in the Scandinavian countries, for promoting policies that might enable

women to have children without having to loose their job attachments (Oinonen 2004; Del Boca, Locatelli 2003).

These data might add to conclude 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 like social policies that favour the articulation between work and family - there are more chances for a couple to make the decision of having children.

### 2.3 Portuguese women: between paid and unpaid work

Besides paid work, it matters to acknowledge the division between men and women of domestic work, childcare and other family obligations. What we have concluded in our survey for Portugal is that women, besides a large amount of paid work, assure also the essential part of the domestic chores and other family responsibilities.

In fact, the division of work is far from being egalitarian. As we can see in Table 6 participation of men only surpasses the 50% in administrative chores, like paying bills and taking care of taxes or of the car repair and maintenance, while for women the modal values vary between 75% and 100% in others tasks.

Table 6 - Distribution of household chores<sup>16</sup> between men and women, according to their jobs outside the home - Portugal 1999 (%)

Domestic Chores	Housewives	
	Men employed	Women employed
1. Preparing meals	13,2	73,9
2. Laying the table, washing up the dishes	16,7	67,9
3. Laundry - washing and ironing	3,4	80,4
4. Cleaning the house	9,3	75,1
5. Doing the shopping	31,5	68,7
6. Gardening, handiwork, taking care of the car	75,7	28,8
7. Children: bathing and dressing them	21,4	75,7
8. Children: feeding them	20,6	74,1
9. Children: taking them to school, doctor's, etc..	32,5	70,7
10. Children: playing with them	38,3	61,1
11. The elderly: taking care of them	14,7	82,8
12. Children: caring for when sick	21,6	65,3
13. Household affairs: money matters	63,7	51,5
14. Household affairs: administrative	67,7	47,3

Source: Torres et al. 2001.

<sup>16</sup> Each particular chore done by the household as a whole or delegated (e.g. to the hired domestic help) is 100% work for each of the sexes. The numbers in the table therefore indicate the mean percentage of men/women's share in getting the chore done. The answers that the respondents gave about the participation of the spouses reveal that, in relation to men, women state that their participation is much lower to the one they say they have.

Furthermore, not only the chores undertaken by women are in greater number, but they also require more time and a bigger daily availability – like preparing meals, feeding and taking care of children, cleaning the house, etc.

We can insist that there are some household chores which women do that continue to be “non-negotiable”<sup>17</sup> (for example, cleaning and tidying up the house, doing the laundry), although in doing other “negotiable” chores (mainly connected with preparing meals and childcare<sup>18</sup>), the men’s share tends to be a little more obvious. Male participation, always in minority apart from the items already indicated, is besides all a little more expressive in “shopping” and in entertaining activities with the children.

Controlling for some variables, certain indicators change slightly, without however altering the overall tendency of women’s overwork. As an example, the participation of men in the domestic chores and in the childcare rises a bit with an increase in the education level.

But with women the situation is different: their contribution decreases when they have higher education, but it is in the increase of the use of domestic paid help – housekeepers - that compensates their lower participation. In these cases, it is the housekeeper that carries out chores like cleaning the house (38%), the laundry, laying the table and washing up the dishes (16%) and even preparing meals (14%).

The data concerning the different distribution in total time between men and women, taking in account the all set of activities and occupations they are involved in, is as revealing as the data presented above (Table 7).

Table 7- Average number of hours spent by working men and women on a normal weekly day in different activities

Average number of hours spent on a normal weekly day in different activities	Hours occupied by working men	Hours occupied by working women	Approximate differences (men-women)
Paid work	9,0	8,1	+0,9
Leisure and personal care	3,1	2,3	+0,8
Domestic chores, childcare and other family care	1,3	3,8	-2,5

Source: Torres et al. 2001.

<sup>17</sup> We have taken the classification of household chores in “negotiable” when both partners do them, and “non-negotiable” in the opposite case where only one partner, either male or female, takes charge, from Bernard Zarca: “La Division du Travail Domestique. Poids du Passé et Tensions au Sein du Couple”, *Économie et Statistique*, 228, 1990.

<sup>18</sup> Although in terms of childcare 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 a lot less activity on the part of the fathers.

The conclusions point for a more than evident female overload with the domestic chores aggravated by their paid work, giving them less time for leisure activities and for personal care.

What this unequal division shows is that while women have been entering territories traditionally considered masculine, men persist in not sharing the work related to the private sphere. The persistence of these factors of discrimination has several effects. Indeed, it is known for quite some time the “perverse” relationship that can be established between the unequal sharing of the domestic chores and of the childcare and other dimensions of the family and married life. Results of investigations undertaken since the 60s in various countries, like Belgium, France and also the U.S.A., point to an undisputed and unanimous conclusion: the satisfaction in marriage increases when domestic chores and childcare are more equally distributed (Michel 1974, 1978 Blood, Wolfe 1960). More recently Beck and Gernsheim-Beck show how in contemporary societies this kind of dissatisfaction can be clearly expressed (Beck, Beck-Gernsheim 2001)<sup>19</sup>.

### 3. Childcare solutions

Another focal point has to do with socio-educational solutions and child care. Knowing at the outset from findings in previous studies, centred on Lisbon (Torres, Silva 1999), that we have a high rate of working mothers with very small children on a par with insufficient public care facilities, we wanted to analyse at national level, where and with whom are the children placed.

Answering these and other questions coming to light during our examination of the survey results, confirmed certain ideas put forward in previous studies<sup>20</sup> while also raising new questions about the problem. The most problematic data from the national survey concerns the high number of respon-

<sup>19</sup> “For many women today, such conduct means not only a lack of helping 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, Beck Gernsheim 2001: 104).

<sup>20</sup> In a research project carried out in Metropolitan Area of Lisbon in 1997, about socio-policy-making, socio-educational solutions and childcare, it was concluded that, opposite what had been defended in previous studies, the family network did not replace either the mother or the lack of public facilities. In other words, it was seen that relying on other family members, for example the grandparents, was only one of a number of possible solutions. However, it was not the most frequent solution when it came to childcare. On the contrary, it was precisely the solutions lying outside the sphere of the family, such as crèches, child minders, child-care centers, kindergartens, among others that were most often used when mothers worked outside the home (Torres, Silva 1999).

dents who said that they were mothers but that, even as working women, they were also the main childminders. By looking at Table 8 we see that this category refers to some 30% of the children who are between 0 and 2 years of age, and 26% of the total number of children mentioned in the survey aged between 0 and 10. There are a couple of possible explanations here: either the children stay at home by themselves or they go with their mother to her place of work. Whatever the case, solutions such as these are always bad<sup>21</sup>.

Table 8 – Main socio-educational and childcare solutions involving the children of mothers working outside the home (%)

Child's age group	0 a 2 years	3 a 5	6 a 10	0 a 10
Stays with mother	30	24	24	26
Stays with grandparents	28	26	24	26
Goes to a crèche, childcare centre kin-	22	38	35	33
Goes to a childminder	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: Torres et al. 2001.

The table shows that the most common answer, 33%, is: “goes to the crèche, child day-care centre, kindergarten, etc.”. If we add the childminder to this percentage, we then have 37% of the parents resorting to assistance outside the family. This makes it the most important solution even when set against 26% going to their grandparents and 10% to other family members. So looking at the country as a whole, leaving the children with the other members of the family is not as common as might at first be imagined.

These data reinforce what previous studies have already concluded, namely that more socio-educational and care facilities are required in order to satisfy the needs of such families. Besides, the respondents are largely in favour of readily available services and facilities outside the family, which cater to their children while they are away at work<sup>22</sup>.

<sup>21</sup> By going deeper into the study, we tried to learn what kind of professions were exercised by the mothers in these cases. Generally speaking, they were engaged in unskilled labour, which in turn meant short-term, precarious employment (office and hotel cleaning staff and similar kinds of jobs, street vendors, cooks, etc.). Added to this is the fact that their jobs are not part-time as those are difficult to find in these activities. Thus, the solutions found by such mothers are even more unsuitable.

<sup>22</sup> When asked about what socio-educational services and childcare services would be ideal, the respondents' replies were both clear and consistent even though they differentiated between children of 2 years of age and under, and children of 3 and over. A large majority said the ideal

Apart from being manifestly insufficient, the uneven distribution of these sorts of facilities in Portugal is also clearly evident. In other words, there is a fairly serious mismatch between areas of the country where such services are most needed and areas enjoying a higher offer of public facilities or State-subsidised services resulting in an imbalance between supply and demand.

#### 4. Taking care of the elderly: another responsibility for women

Our study collected data about the existing solutions concerning the care of the elderly – in particular about networks, resources, options and family practices involved in these cases. Only 13% of the inquired stated that they have elderly relatives that need special caring. Within, there are specific characteristics. The analysis of the Table 9 concerning the inquired persons who say they have elderly relatives that need caring, suggests that the elderly care institutions and other paid solutions have a residual importance at the national level. The reality contradicts the common sense, in particular diffused by the media, that the present tendency is to abandon the elderly in care institutions. But although this solution is little used, it is a little more common in sectors with higher incomes.

Table 9- Where are the elderly that need special caring<sup>23</sup>?

%	
52,6	In the house of the inquired or of a relative of the inquired.
44,8	In the own house of the elderly/ home-based care
2,6	Elderly care institution
100,0	Total

Source: Torres et al. 2001.

The data demonstrates that there is a lack of structures and that the family is still the predominant solution to take care for the dependent elderly, whether in their own homes or in the relatives' house. The issue of the elderly is another dimension to understand the reality of the practices of division of domestic work. Here there's a very clear gender effect since it is fundamentally the female relatives of the elderly that give them assistance. In general, we can say that it is not the family assistance and the feminine support that is

solution for a child up to 2 years of age was for it to stay with its mother, or father or both (87,6%). For children over the age of 3, respondents answered that they thought “crèches”, child day-care centres and kindergartens were the best.

<sup>23</sup> It is considered a *special caring* those related to losses and limitations of autonomy, implicating situations of dependency. For example: healthcare, care with hygiene, alimentation and preparation of meals, dislocations, etc.

in fault but what is lacking is the existence of structures like elderly care institutions, which are asymmetrically distributed across the national territory.

## 5. Social networks: low income, less help

Briefly, results indicated that despite the existence and the nature of mutual family aid, contrary to what we had expected, fewer respondents said they would turn to the family for help<sup>24</sup>. But when they exist, the networks are activated within the family since it doesn't seem to be any kind of significant networks outside the family.

Gender issues have a fundamental importance in the structuring of the patterns of inter-help and of the family and social networks. Where the "helping hand" networks are concerned, women have the central and main role and men resort to women more than women seek out men's help. The structural difference in the way the "helping hand" networks are put into action is so distinctive that we are able to see an inversion of patterns when, in the event of something unexpected happening, women prefer seeking childcare help from people other than their male partners. While most men answer that they turn to their partners for help, in the case of women, their mothers are, by far, the person they most rely on.

It was further revealed by our data that the type of household which would most need this kind of help (lower incomes earners) were precisely the ones which could depend less on receiving it from their families<sup>25</sup>.

The capacity to mobilize social and family networks is regarded as a resource or as backup, rather like *capital loans* which people could apply for and use to their own advantage. And it is precisely the ones who have the most available networks open to them (in the light of owning other kinds of capital, in particular, economic and educational) are the ones who least need them. So we can verify a "perverse" effect: those who have the least number of solidarity networks at their disposal are the ones who have more need of them.

<sup>24</sup> 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 childcare services, 45,5% of the respondents with children younger than 10 years of age said they could never depend on any help coming their way from these sources.

<sup>25</sup> In arriving at this conclusion, we considered the graded incomes of each household. Basing our data on the question "seeking help from the child's mother/grandmother", there is a far more numerous group belonging to the lower income bracket that says it "never" or "only sometimes" asks for help from the mother in needy situations as against the group that says it "always" or "often" asks for the mother's help.

## 6. Existing policies: changes in the maternity and childcare leave systems

The orientation towards protection of the family has not been assumed directly by the 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 conciliate work and family have not only been discussed recently in Portugal as they have also been objects of specific changes in policies.

Maternity leave was defined since the end of the 70s as a right that represented the commitment of the state in the protection of maternity and the family. It was always defined as a leave entirely paid (by social security to employers), payment based on the normal salary of the worker. There is also parental leave (PL) and paternity leave (PatL) and Leave for family reasons (LFR) (Wall 2001).

In 1995<sup>26</sup> it was established the option for fathers and mothers sharing maternity leave (with mothers always taking obligatory the first 6 weeks). In 1999 there were some other changes in leave arrangements<sup>27</sup>. Paid maternity leave increased to 120 days (consecutive) and the paternity leave to 5 days fully paid for fathers. It was also defined a leave of 100 days for those adopting a child below age 15. It was established the nursing mother's right to two hours leave per day until the child is one 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 for sharing the total paid leave of 120 days but also allocating it to the father, after the six weeks which must be taken by the mother (previously, allocating of leave to fathers was only allowed in cases involving the mother's death or illness). Finally, if the father takes two weeks parental leave immediately after 120 days, he is entitled to fully compensated leave for that period of time (Wall 2001).

There are other measures and benefits like 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 lone parents with low income, and tax reductions for some special types of expenditures relating to health care, education, etc. (Wall 2001).

As it was stressed before, by 1995 the public system of pre-school teaching was considered a priority and since then some evolution has been made on public coverage. But child-care facilities for children less than three years old

<sup>26</sup> Decree-law 17/95, 9 June (Wall 2001).

<sup>27</sup> Decree-law 142 of 31 August 1999, Decree-law n° 70/2000 4 May and Decree-law 230/2000, 23 September

are still very powerfully covered, private solutions very expensive and very asymmetrically distributed with a terrible lack in big urban areas.

### 6.1 Values and attitudes about work and family life between the modern and the traditional

The results of the Portuguese survey showed that attitudes towards work and family life have a strong tendency to reflect modern values<sup>28</sup>. But we can observe an intersection between the modern and the traditional – especially when we confront the practices with the discourses.

When Portuguese women carry out most of the domestic chores and take care of the children, they are basically acting according to the roles cast for them (Bourdieu 1998) or, more simply speaking, living up to the kind of expectations our society has about how female should behave. Working women will always be worried about proving that she is good at her job, but mainly, that she is an excellent mother and capable of managing her household. The responsibility falls to her but never to her partner, to make her working life compatible with her family life. In order to appreciate the full significance of this state of affairs, we need to consider gender relations in the working world.

The role of mothers and family in childcare is very stressed though crèches and kindergarten are also considered positive and possible solutions. But it should be mentioned that the view that values the family in childcare occupies a more relevant place particularly among the less educated. In this case, the dominant view – mitigated or, if we like, open-ended – is a telling indication of the educational level of the respondents, witnessed in the rejection of such commonly held opinions as “sometimes having children is just not worth it”, or when they choose to accept or dispute statements like: “only children bring a couple happiness” and “a woman who doesn’t want at least one child is an egotist”.

On the other hand, if in the answers respondents gave about the relationship between the family and their children we found the emphasis on the family network to be quite strong, as far as ideas about working outside the home went, traditional views were entirely lacking. As an abstract value, the great importance attributed to the different reasons leading to a job is, in itself, a true indication of the distance separating modern-minded attitudes from traditional ones. However, we need to mention the fact that the main motivating

<sup>28</sup> For lack of a better term and regardless of the disagreement it might cause, when talking about gender relations, we shall be referring to the expression modern values in a broad sense and as being synonymous with current ideas of parity, equality and balance between men and women, rather than merely referring to patterns arising in the division of labour.

factors leading to such valorisation have more to do with material compensation of having a job.

This finding may be linked to the fact that salaries are low in the Portuguese labour market. As is commonly acknowledged, it is one of the factors explaining why there is such a high rate of working women in Portugal. It would seem to indicate the idea of *modernisation with no emancipation*, as we have already mentioned. At least this seems to be the case among the less educated women. Among the more educated working women, the material benefits of having a job only comes third in 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. More so than in the case of the less educated working women and more so than better qualified men. On the contrary, men who have received less schooling esteem their jobs more 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 when taking into account levels of education and the overall esteem they have for their jobs<sup>29</sup>.

Concerning the adjustment between paid and unpaid work, there is a high agreement that it may be possible to make the two compatible even in situations which seem to be the most problematic, such as in cases where both partners work. And it is particularly high precisely in the respondents which this twofold activity is the rule.

With regard to more circumspect questions about the effects of double activity in the couple, we see that there are appreciable differences in the kind of answers given. The greatest degree awareness about its negative consequences is thought to affect the relationship between cohabiting partners. Contrary to this, there is less recognition about any negative effects on the children. Whatever the case, on an average, the more highly educated respondents say that this sort of twofold activity does not intimidate them. Thus, there’s the refusal to be fatalistic and accept any harmful effects a job may possibly have on family life.

It is also interesting to see how domestic work is given some recognition for the value it has, more so among women than men and particularly among non-working women. But it is also true that when comparing the working woman with the housewife, the former always has a more favourable reception and having a job is regarded as an essential step in women obtaining respect from society as well as their independence.

However, this tendency becomes a lot clearer and much firmer above all among the better educated respondents. It gives rise to a distinct dividing line

<sup>29</sup> The only exception to the rule lies in how women regard the material benefits. But even here, as the level of schooling increases so its importance decreases.

between the less educated sector which, although is modern in its attitude about having a job, is not yet emancipated, and more highly educated sectors which recognise to a greater or lesser degree the emancipation accompanying more modernised modes of work.

According to the respondents' answers, men should "take an active role on a daily basis" in educating the children. However, there are few answers, albeit positive ones, about the question of doing their fair share of the household tasks. This opinion finds a much higher echo among the female respondents. On the other hand, respondents say that men should not cut down on their involvement with their jobs after the birth of a child – here most of the answers are negative.

We believe that these answers give important leads into the attitudes underpinning the practices observed. The truth of the matter is that no one expects a man to devote less time and effort to his profession after he becomes a father – a symbolically important moment and, above all, a time when the family has to adapt to the new arrival and work much harder at home.

In terms of chore sharing and the balance between men and women, therefore, we come up against a somewhat traditional view mainly about the man's job taking precedence. The attitude which is reflected in everyday life is that men should do their share on the domestic front although their jobs come first.

In his innovating work about gender relations, Kunzler (2002) identifies four directions in which gender relations may be modernised. One such direction means men taking an active part in domestic life. Given current behaviours and modern attitudes about women and work, as well as the high number of working women, this vector is essential if gender relations are to be modernised in Portugal<sup>30</sup>.

The picture would be complete if this were to take place because, as a rule, in terms of paid work, men are not recognised as being 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 has to do with men joining the domestic world. Not because this is what people say but rather because the effect of expressing *reservations* about these issues is materialised into the asymmetries we have observed in the division of labour. Though equality is the "appropriate" discourse nowadays, it becomes clear that it is not actually put into practice.

<sup>30</sup> 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.

## 7. Conclusions: gender equality is continually at stake

As we have seen, differing from 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, working women mostly have full-time jobs. Long hours spent in paid work almost on a par with the men does not mean, however, that working mothers are able to rely on a well-supplied network of childcare facilities. Neither does it mean that domestic work and childcare duties in large numbers of households where women have outside jobs are more fairly shared between men and women. It is the women themselves who are overburdened with both paid and unpaid work. It causes weariness and stress, typical in cases where family life and working life are intertwined. Where unpaid work is concerned, women accumulate domestic chores with caring for elderly dependants and the children. When women work outside the home, the only way they are able to cut down on their share of the household chores is by actually cutting down on the amount of time they spend in doing them, and not because the men are doing a fairer share of them. It is interesting to notice anyway, that the fact of having high rates of paid work does not prevent women from desiring or having children.

It was also concluded that, through the role of the women, the family networks would appear to partially replace a dearth of outside facilities destined to alleviate care spent on elderly relatives. However, this situation does not include a significant number of elderly people living on their own and possibly having to make do despite the lack of help coming their way.

The situation in which the children are placed is even more worrying. Apart from the extra expenditure families are obliged to make when seeking private socio-educational measures and childcare services for their children, in situations where the family has extremely low buying power, it frequently resorts to more dubious or less acceptable solutions as we have seen.

Another worrying conclusion we have come to is about the *interhelp* or the "helping-hand" networks within the family. We see that it is precisely the people earning the least and who, for this very reason, should receive the most help and more family aid, who say they receive only very little of it or are not able to depend on it at all.

As for paid work, it is necessary to stress two main tendencies: the first has to do with the very marked difference in personal earnings between men and women, where women are placed at a distinct disadvantage. The second tendency reveals that, regardless of a woman's marital status and the number of even very small children she has, they have no bearing on the amount of hours she works in her outside job.

If, on the one hand, an explanation for this situation may be found in the fact that in Portuguese society, in order to live decently, it is nearly always necessary to have two incomes in the family, it is also true, as we have seen,

that there are other reasons capable of explaining why most women go out to work in the first place. In the low-income bracket, having a paying job may mean gaining more power and independence within the marital and family context, even though the woman has to pay the price by also 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 of having to take care of the domestic chores and the children, although both of them may be alleviated by paying the hired domestic help to do them.

Indeed, as we have seen, women tend to attribute the same importance to work as men do. For women work is a value in itself even in countries where there is a lower female's rate activity. And the insertion of women in the labour market hasn't made family a less important sphere. It continues to be a taken-for-granted value and is the main sphere of personal investment both for men and women in Portugal and throughout Europe. What is changing is the family models, the meanings and forms of investment in the family.

In terms of social policies we must recognize that since 1995 there has been an increasing amount of public funding channelled into aid going to childcare and care for the elderly. Since things had to start from practically zero, current needs are still far from being satisfied.

Looking at the progress which has been made in overall terms, it is obvious that there is still an asymmetrical relationship in paid and unpaid work between men and women. It is true that the difference between the two sexes as far as paid work goes is very much smaller than what we see in terms of unpaid work, where women always seem to be at a marked disadvantage.

We attempted to explain this situation by looking at specific characteristics in Portuguese society while, at the same time, keeping in mind the global mechanisms that generally condition the division of labour 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 which demand the lowest qualifications, and the fact that they also have to take on added chores like childcare, looking after the elderly and doing the housework. The social and sexual division of work not only gives rise to objective restraints because the two sexes are afforded different job opportunities on the labour market, but it also produces symbolic restraints because, in the households of these men and women, they go towards defining and reproducing which tasks ought to be done by whom in terms of hierarchical importance in each family context. Gender equality is here continually at stake.

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