



UNIVERSIDADE CATÓLICA PORTUGUESA

Family policy transformation in Portugal

Assessing its relation to female labour market
participation and gender equality

Alexandra Magalhães

Católica Porto Business School
2024



UNIVERSIDADE CATÓLICA PORTUGUESA

Family policy transformation in Portugal

Assessing its relation to female labour market
participation and gender equality

Master's Final Assignment – Written Assignment
Presented to *Universidade Católica Portuguesa*
to obtain a Master's Degree in Business Economics

by

Alexandra Magalhães

Under supervision of
Prof. Dra. Liliana Fernandes

Católica Porto Business School
April 2024

Abstract

Family policies play a crucial role in society as they influence several aspects of it, including social reproduction activities, women's employment and gender equality. While there has been a notable shift in societal attitudes towards women's roles in both the workplace and the family, persistent gender inequalities highlight the need for additional or alternative transformations in family policies to achieve social justice for all women.

The main purpose of this dissertation is to assess whether the policy transformations identified by Ferragina (2022) and its effects on female employment and gender equality have happened in the Portuguese case. To achieve this, Ferragina's analysis was recreated and updated with the latest data available and other relevant information, namely about unpaid work, was also added to the analysis.

This dissertation concludes that the major policy transformation identified by Ferragina (2022) have happened in the Portuguese case and, also, that the family policy transformations in Portugal seem to have contributed to an increase in female employment and also a reduction in the gaps between women and men, as Ferragina (2022) had established. Disparities, however, have not disappeared.

Keywords: Gender equality, Family policies, Women, Labour market, Policy transformation, Portugal

Resumo

As políticas de família desempenham um papel crucial na sociedade uma vez que influenciam vários aspetos da mesma, incluindo as atividades de reprodução social, a empregabilidade da mulher e a igualdade de género. Embora tenha havido uma mudança notável nas atitudes da sociedade em relação aos papéis das mulheres, no local de trabalho e na família, as desigualdades de género destacam a necessidade de transformações adicionais ou alternativas nas políticas de família para alcançar a justiça social para todas as mulheres.

O objetivo principal desta dissertação é avaliar se as transformações políticas identificadas por Ferragina (2022) e os respetivos efeitos na empregabilidade feminina e igualdade de género aconteceram no caso português. Para tal, a análise de Ferragina (2022) foi recriada e atualizada com os dados disponíveis mais recentes e outra informação relevante, nomeadamente sobre trabalho não remunerado, foi adicionada à análise.

Esta dissertação conclui que as principais transformações políticas identificadas por Ferragina (2022) aconteceram, de facto, no caso português e que as transformações das políticas da família em Portugal contribuíram para um aumento da empregabilidade feminina e também para uma redução das disparidades entre mulheres e homens, tal como Ferragina (2022) havia estabelecido. No entanto, as disparidades não desapareceram.

Palavras-chave: Igualdade de género, Políticas de família, Mulheres, Mercado de trabalho, Transformação de políticas, Portugal

Contents

Abstract	iv
Resumo.....	vi
Contents	viii
Table of Figures.....	xi
Table of Tables	xiii
Introduction.....	1
Literature Review	3
1.1 Social reproduction and family policy	3
1.2 Family policy and its influence on women’s employment and gender equality.....	5
1.3 Family policy transformation: context, expected effects and evidence	8
Methodology	13
The Portuguese Case	14
3.1 Evolution of family policies since the transition to democracy to the XXI st century.....	14
3.1.1 Legislative evolutions in family policy	14
<i>Parental leaves</i>	14
<i>Childcare</i>	15
<i>Family allowances</i>	17
3.1.2 Family policy transformation: evolution of childcare and comparisons with other family policies	18
<i>Childcare supply, enrolment, and usage</i>	18
<i>Childcare expenditure</i>	21
3.2 Women’s labour market participation and gender disparities in the second half of the XX th century and in the XXI st century	25
3.2.1 Historical notes on women’s participation in the labour market in the second half of the XX th century	25
3.2.2 Women’s participation and gender disparities in the labour market since the second half of the XX th century	26
<i>Employment, unemployment, and wages</i>	26
<i>Economic sectors and professions</i>	35

3.3 Discussion	41
Conclusion	44
Bibliography	46
Appendices	51
Appendix A: Definition of policies	51
Appendix B: The spending on policies and calculus applied	52
Appendix C: Recreation of Ferragina study for Portugal.....	54
Appendix D: Average life expectancy	55
Appendix E: Earnings by occupation	56

Table of Figures

Figure 1: Enrolment rate of children in childcare (%)	19
Figure 2: Enrolment rate of children in pre-school education (%)	21
Figure 3: Early childhood education and care (ECEC) expenditure in Portugal (in millions).....	22
Figure 4: Catch up spending in relation to ECEC in Portugal	24
Figure 5: Percentage of employed population by gender.....	27
Figure 6: Percentage of employed population in full and partial time by gender	27
Figure 7: Female employment rates by educational level (%)	28
Figure 8: Male employment rates by educational level (%)	29
Figure 9: Gender employment gap by number of children (in percentage points).....	31
Figure 10: Employment rates for mothers with at least one child under 15 (%)	32
Figure 11: Single parent families by gender (%)	33
Figure 12: Unemployed population by gender (%)	34
Figure 13: Average monthly basic salary by gender	34
Figure 14: Female employed population by sector of economic activity (%)	36
Figure 15: Male employed population by sector of economic activity (%)....	36
Figure 16: Employed population by profession and gender in 2011	38
Figure 17: Employed population by profession and gender in 2021	38
Figure 18: Average daily working time, 1999.....	40
Figure 19: Average daily working time, 2015.....	40
Figure 20: Catch up spending in relation to ECEC in Portugal	54

Table of Tables

Table 1: Participation rates in ECEC by income, 0-2 years old.....	20
Table 2: Gender gap in educational level.....	30
Table 3: Spending on policies	52
Table 4: Calculus applied in the previous indicator	53
Table 5: Average life expectancy.....	55
Table 6: Average monthly earnings of employees: total and by occupation.	56

Introduction

Family policy has had a significant impact on various family and gender related topics, including female employment, gender equality in the labour market, and, also, social reproduction activities or unpaid care work (Ferragina, 2022). This means that assessing the former (i.e., family policy transformation) is relevant to understand changes that may have happened in the latter (i.e., women's labour market participation, gender disparities and unpaid work). This explains the pertinence of what will be discussed in this dissertation.

Family policy has various objectives and affects countries in different ways, depending on how they decide to prioritize them, and so the measures implemented vary (Thévenon, 2011). Gornick and colleagues (1996) identified two policies that have been particularly distinguished in the literature, parental leaves and childcare. According to Henau and colleagues (2010), these policies have a positive impact on female employment for two reasons: they help women manage their time (between domestic responsibilities and work) and they affect the amount of money they have available for expenses. Another family policy also worth mentioning is family allowances, which unlike the previous policies, it is not employment-oriented but rather directed towards lower classes and the reduction of poverty.

Despite these policies, the impact of parenthood on men's and women's employment and earnings, as well as on time devoted to unpaid work, remains unequal (Bisello & Mascherini, 2017). This has contributed to a gradual transformation in family policies, perceived as a necessary change to improve the circumstances of women (Ferragina, 2022). This transformation has happened in the context of a transition from the "male breadwinner model" to the "dual earner model" which has contributed to significant changes in family policies,

particularly in childcare and family allowances spending, as Ferragina (2022) has pointed. Although these changes have positively impacted female labour force participation, gender inequalities still persist, at several levels.

Despite advancements in research on this subject, made namely by Ferragina (2022), a better understanding of the specificities of the Portuguese case seems to still be missing in what concerns the relationship of the above-mentioned policy transformations and women's labour force participation and gender equality in the country. Therefore, this dissertation aims to address this research gap and answer the following research question: "To what extent have the policy transformations identified by Ferragina (2022) and its effects on female employment and gender equality happened in the Portuguese case?".

To provide an answer to the above research questions, Ferragina's (2022) analysis is recreated and updated with the latest data available and other relevant information on social reproduction activities / unpaid work will also be added to the analysis.

This research work is, thus, divided into four parts. The first one is a literature review, highlighting key concepts related to family policy, women's labour force participation and gender equality. The second part focuses on the methodology used and explains the mixed-methods approach that was adopted. The third part provides an analysis of the Portuguese case, where statistical data and other information is analysed, followed by a discussion section, where the findings for Portugal are discussed and compared with those from the literature review. In the fourth part the main conclusions of this research are summarized, and a reflection on the limitations encountered during the process and suggestions for future research are also made.

Chapter 1

Literature Review

1.1 Social reproduction and family policy

Family policy – which, for now, can be generally understood as policy measures towards families with children -, has had a significant impact on society. It has influenced a diverse range of family and gender related issues, namely female employment and gender equality, but it has also played a crucial role for what is termed “social reproduction” (Ferragina, 2022).

According to Federici (2019), the concept of social reproduction was first introduced in the XVIIth-XVIIIth centuries as meaning “the processes by which a social system reproduces itself” (p. 55). Following Bakker (2007, p. 541), social reproduction is usually associated with three views: the “(a) biological reproduction of the species, and the conditions and social constructions of motherhood; (b) the reproduction of the labour force which involves subsistence, education and training; and (c) the reproduction and provisioning of caring needs that may be wholly privatised within families and kinship networks or socialised to some degree through state supports.”.

The concept of social reproduction has been employed to analyse the reproduction of society and, in particular, the capitalist society (Weiss, 2021). According to Weiss (2021), in Marx’s understanding, the capitalist society’s reproduction entails a relation between capitalists, the people who own resources and invest them for the purposes of production and capital accumulation, and workers, the people who trade their ability to work for a salary or wage. The author continues, explaining that, to maintain capital available for production, the value produced by workers must exceed their wage. That way, the surplus

created goes to capitalists as profit and they invest it again. This creates a new cycle of production through the concept of accumulation.

It has been argued that the reproduction of society also relies on women's domestic labour. It is women who give birth to workers, who traditionally raise them, educate them, take care of other dependents, prepare meals, do household chores, among other things (Weiss, 2021). This work, because it is unpaid and it is not sold on the market, has often been ignored (Weiss, 2021).

Feminists have long disagreed with the idea that unpaid domestic work is less valuable (Weiss, 2021). Federici (2019), for example, states that if the productivity of unpaid labour is not taken into account, that means neglecting the role and importance that this labour has for capital accumulation. Vogel (2013) asserts that women's domestic labour clashes with capital accumulation because if women worked in the market, they would produce surplus to capitalists. It would be advantageous, therefore, to reduce housework in order to increase the available labour force and, consequently, the surplus. Vogel (2013) suggests different strategies have been employed to accomplish that. One is commodification, in which aspects of domestic work become commodities and can be bought on the market, such as using laundries or fast-food services but also childcare services. Another strategy is the socialization of domestic work, making public services, such as healthcare and public education, the responsibility of the state or companies (Weiss, 2021).

Ferragina's (2022) analysis seems to be in line with the above ideas. The author argues that capitalism turns various aspects of social life into commodities, contributes to a higher parental, particularly mother's, participation in the labour market and, consequently, to a decrease in time spent in social reproduction. As a consequence, new social needs and demands have been created, and because of that governments have been required to provide new services, which has led

to transformations in family policy, viewed as necessary to guarantee the reproduction of the capitalist society.

1.2 Family policy and its influence on women's employment and gender equality

Family policy "is typically defined broadly to include all government benefits that contribute to the health and well-being of families with children (...). Family policies can be defined even more broadly to include other services, such as health care, that benefit all citizens including families with children" (Gornick et al., 1996, p.2).

Letablier and colleagues (2008) and Thévenon (2011) identify six main objectives of family policies: (1) Reduction of poverty and assurance of stable income levels; (2) Compensation for the "cost of children" – the goal is to reduce disparities in living standards between families with children and those without; (3) Improve children's well-being and their development; (4) Promote higher female workforce participation and achieve a work-life balance; (5) Address population aging and its economic implications by supporting fertility and enabling adults to have the desired number of children; (6) Improve gender equity through policies that encourage equal sharing of paid and unpaid work, for example, childcare. Different countries prioritize the six policy objectives in different ways, which influences the specific measures they implement (Thévenon, 2011). Given the objectives of this research work, the main focus will be on family policies that promote goals (4) and (6), although reference will also be made to goal (1).

According to Gornick and colleagues (1996) different policies will affect each individual differently. Ferragina (2022) suggests that traditional social spending

– income maintenance, family allowances and unemployment – is more equitable and addressed to the most vulnerable in the society, namely the lower class. On the other hand, policies that promote employment – childcare and active labour market programmes - tend to benefit the upper-middle classes. In general, policies that aim to balance work and caregiving have a positive impact on employment, however they tend to aggravate the condition of working mothers from the lower classes due to the limited opportunities in the job market for them.

Gornick and colleagues (1996) highlight two policies that have been particularly distinguished in the literature about family policy and the enhancement of the employment of women who are also mothers: parental leaves and childcare.

Parental leave policies can be structured in two main ways (Kuronen, 2010). The first is a “non-transferable individual right”, where both parents are granted a specific amount of leave that is designated for each of them individually. For instance, each parent might have three months of leave, and this allocation cannot be shifted between them. The second approach is a “family right”, which allows parents to divide a total amount of leave as they see fit. For example, if there are six months of leave available, one parent might take four months, while the other takes two. The primary goal of both approaches is to enable parents to care for their child while maintaining a balance between their professional and personal lives (Kuronen, 2010).

Childcare policy, according to Kamerman (1991, p. 180), “includes the whole range of government actions designed to influence the supply of and/or demand for childcare and the quality of care provided. These government activities include direct delivery of child care services; direct and indirect financial subsidies to private providers of care, such as grants, contracts, and tax incentives; financial subsidies to parents/consumers, both direct and indirect, such as grants and tax benefits to permit or facilitate access to services or to

permit parents to remain at home (and stop working) without loss of income; and the establishment and enforcement of regulations”.

While childcare allows mothers to allocate more time to their jobs, maternity leaves provide working mothers with the opportunity to spend additional time at home, even though they typically retain their official “employed” status (Gornick et al., 1996). Taking a period of parental leave to care for children is undeniably beneficial for both parents and their children, as it alleviates the challenge of balancing work and family responsibilities (Letablier et al., 2008).

The above-mentioned policies can, according to microeconomic theory of labour supply (Gornick et al. 1996; de Henau et al., 2010), encourage women to keep working after giving birth. This happens in two main ways: first, these policies affect how women allocate their time between home responsibilities and work; and second, they influence the amount of money available to women for their expenses. Whether we focus on the time aspect or the financial aspect, according to the labour-supply model, improved childcare services make it more likely for mothers to engage in full-time employment (Henau et al., 2010). This idea is supported by various studies (Viitanen, 2001; Gornick et al., 1996; Jaumotte, 2003; Hegewisch & Gornick, 2011; Thévenon, 2011, 2013; Ferragina, 2019) that highlight how accessible childcare services, namely high-quality public childcare services that align with typical working hours, have a positive impact on women’s engagement in the labour market.

The availability of accessible childcare services and paid maternal leave thus plays a crucial role in positively influencing women’s employment. Conversely, the absence of these essential provisions has demonstrated significant negative impacts on women’s participation in the labour force (Ferragina, 2019, 2020). Additionally, it is noteworthy that childcare subsidies and paid parental leaves tend to encourage full-time engagement rather than part-time involvement in the

workforce (Jaumotte, 2003), further emphasizing the importance of these policies in supporting women's active participation in the labour market.

Another family policy instrument worth to discuss is *family allowances*. Family allowance is a cash benefit that is paid to families in order to help them raise their children (eportugal.gov, 2023). Unlike the previously mentioned policies, this one is not employment-oriented, rather it is directed to the lower classes and to reduce poverty (Ferragina, 2022). So, although not specifically related with the previously mentioned family policy goals (4) and (6) but with goal (1) instead, family allowances are still relevant from the point of view of family policy change, as it will be argued.

It is important to note that the impact of parenthood on men's and women's employment remains unequal: women tend to bear a greater share of childcare responsibilities, especially when accessible care services are inadequate or do not sufficiently attend to the needs of full-time working parent (Bisello & Mascherini, 2017). To deal with these constraints, policy makers in the EU have been showing growing interest in establishing early childcare centres and expanding pre-school education, moving away from individual home-based care towards facilities (Letablier et al., 2008). This is, according to Ferragina (2022), one of the fundamental changes behind the family policy transformation that has been taking place and that will be described in the next section.

1.3 Family policy transformation: context, expected effects and evidence

According to Ferragina (2022), family policy transformation has happened in the context of the transition from what is known as the "male breadwinner model" to the "dual earner model" (Ferragina, 2022). The first model, in general,

assumes that men are the main providers of the family, through formal paid work, whereas women perform unpaid/social reproduction work such as home and care responsibilities (Ferragina, 2022). Family policies supported this model through child subsidies and the extension of maternity leave, accentuating gender disparities in paid and unpaid work (Ferragina, 2022). Therefore, given that this model is incompatible with gender equality, there was a need for a transformation in family policies to achieve gender equality, which happens with the transition to a new second model.

The second model, also known as the “adult worker model”, “is the gender-neutral opposite of the gender-specific male breadwinner model with respect to the gendered division of paid work” (Von Gleichen & Seeleib-Kaiser, 2017, p. 2). This model was expected to balance the paid and unpaid work in couples, seeking to alleviate women’s domestic responsibilities, through new family policies designed to promote equality in social reproductive work (Ferragina, 2022). To achieve this transformation, it was necessary to make some adjustments. Since unpaid work was not compatible with the participation of women in the labour force, family policies needed to promote that, namely through the provision of childcare (Ferragina, 2022).

To assess the extent of these transformations, Ferragina (2022) compares the evolution of spendings in childcare, since 1980 until 2015, with the evolution of spendings on other types of policies, namely family allowances, but also employment leaves, unemployment, active labour market programmes and income assistance. For that comparison, the author divided countries into four groups: the “continental” (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands), the “Mediterranean” (Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain), the “liberal and radical” (Australia, Canada, Ireland, Japan, New Zealand, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States) and the “Scandinavian” (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden). According to the author’s

analysis, in the first group childcare spendings have increased more than the other policies spendings (except for unemployment policies spendings, which show a similar value from the one in 1980). In Mediterranean countries, over the years, childcare spendings have overtaken leaves and income maintenance spendings and it have increased more than family allowances. However, when compared with active labour market programmes and unemployment spendings, the gap remains similar to the one in 1980. In liberal and radical countries, the overall spendings in childcare have increased more than the spendings on the other policies. In fact, childcare spendings have overtaken the leaves (but also the income maintenance, and the active labour market policy) spendings (and have almost caught up with the employment spendings). Finally, in Scandinavian countries, the scenario was a little different. In 1980, the spending on childcare already exceeded the spending on all other policies. Even so, this difference has intensified over the years analysed by the author. In summary, the author concludes that despite the differences between countries, the major transformation was, on the one hand, the increase in childcare spendings and, on the other hand, the retrenchment in spendings on family allowances. Although, as Ferragina (2022) sees it, this shift represents progress in terms of female autonomy and independence, the fact that women still have a “double burden” (p. 3) – that is, apart from the workload of their paid jobs, they also have the obligation of the unpaid job – still contributes to gender inequalities.

In the same vein, Bisello & Mascherini (2017) noted that despite the progress in gender equality in employment over the past decades, gender inequalities in employment rates persist and women continue to be disproportionately represented in part-time and temporary jobs. Additionally, the gap in earnings between men and women has been growing globally over the past two decades (Ferragina, 2022). This wage gap between men and women can be explained by

the degradation of the employment conditions, especially for those who are already in a vulnerable position in the labour market (Ferragina, 2022). In addition to their amount of paid work, women have typically been responsible for household tasks and being so, the division of unpaid work is completely asymmetric (Torres, 2008).

Furthermore, Ferragina (2022) also believes the policy transformations described above affect women in different ways, depending on their class. The lower-class women, namely, do not have the necessary economic resources to decrease their social reproduction responsibilities. Additionally, the author points, they are also available to join the workforce at a cheaper price (lower wage), mainly in the service-based economy. On the other hand, the upper- and middle-class women both have access to more jobs and also have the economic resources to reduce their social reproduction responsibilities (Ferragina, 2022). These differences become evident in the analysis of the relation between income and the utilization of childcare services. Despite the importance of childcare for combating inequalities, Van Lancker (2018), for example, concludes that it is used significantly more by high-income families than by low-income families. In Europe, for every 10 children of the high-income group in childcare, there are only 6 of the lower one (Ferragina, 2022). These disparities in childcare usage seem to have a negative impact on women from the lower classes (Van Lancker, 2018; Ferragina, 2022).

Nevertheless, the expansion of childcare is viewed as a relief for women and families in terms of social reproduction activities (Ferragina, 2022). If social reproduction is seen as a conflict between control of time and resources, the expansion of childcare is essential to help achieve a balance (Bakker, 2007). Ferragina (2022) concludes that the expansion of childcare contributes to boost labour force participation. In fact, the percentage of women participating in the workforce has been increasing globally (Bertrand, 2020; Fernandez, 2007;

Marques, Casaca, & Arcanjo, 2021) - but so has the percentage of women working in the service industry (Ferragina, 2022).

Summing-up, family policies have a crucial role in society, influencing several aspects of it, namely social reproduction activities, women's employment and gender equality. The transition from the "male breadwinner model" to the "dual earner model" has contributed to significant changes in family policies, namely an increase in childcare spending and a decrease in family allowances. Although these changes have positively impacted female labour force participation, gender inequalities still persist. Women still bear a "double burden", gender inequalities in employment rates and in the type of job persist, there is still a wage gap between men and women, and childcare policies have had different effects on women from different social classes. These inequalities show the need for additional or different transformations in family policies in order to achieve social justice for all women, regardless of their social class.

In a subsequent chapter family policy transformation will be empirically analysed for Portugal, through relevant statistical data concerning the country. The aim is to go beyond the empirical analysis of Ferragina (2022) and to add new information about the Portuguese case.

Chapter 2

Methodology

The previous chapter conducted a literature review to examine the transformation of family policy and its impact on women's labour force participation and gender equality. The main goal of this dissertation is to conduct a deeper empirical analysis for Portugal to assess to what extent have the policy transformations identified by Ferragina (2022) and its effects on female employment and gender equality happened in the Portuguese case.

To achieve this goal, a mixed-methods approach was used, encompassing both qualitative and quantitative methods. Babbie (2016) states that qualitative data involves any information collected by the researcher that is not represented numerically. This includes various forms of expression such as words, pictures, drawings, paintings, photographs, films, videotapes, and music, according to Tesch (1990). On the other hand, quantitative methods prioritize objective measurements and utilize statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis to generalize findings across different groups of people or to elucidate specific phenomena (Babbie, 2016).

The qualitative data used consist of a literature review relevant to the topic at hand (mainly discussed in the previous chapter) and to the case of Portugal (discussed in the next chapter). The quantitative data, that is statistical information on women's labour market participation and equality, and family policy transformation in Portugal from 1980 to 2022 will be collected from relevant and reliable platforms such as PORDATA, OECD, UNECE and Eurostat.

Chapter 3

The Portuguese Case

3.1 Evolution of family policies since the transition to democracy to the XXIst century

3.1.1 Legislative evolutions in family policy

Portugal has been promoting work-family balance since the transition to democracy in 1976 (Marques et al., 2021). This includes legislative advancements, where the topic of work-family balance has gradually become a more integral part of the country's public policies (Marques et al., 2021). Here the focus will be on the main evolutions of the types of family policies discussed in Chapter 1, that is, parental leaves, childcare and family allowances.

Parental leaves

The main legislative advancements in parental leave started to be implemented in 1976, providing all female workers with a ninety-day period of maternity leave (Cunha et al., 2017; Marques et al., 2021). However, it was just in 1984 that the first legislation addressing the protection of both maternity and paternity rights was implemented (Marques et al., 2021). It was recognised, for the first time, that the responsibility of caring for children on a daily basis, as well as during periods of illness, is a shared task for both parents and not exclusive to mothers (Cunha et al., 2017).

According to Cunha and colleagues (2017), it was in the mid-1990s that the right of two days of leave for the birth of a child for fathers was introduced and also the father's right to share maternity leave with the mother by joint decision.

In the end of the decade, it became possible for fathers to spend up to two hours per day in feeding their children (before it was only possible for mothers), and additionally, it was introduced a fully-paid period of paternity leave of five working days, a right exclusively for fathers that became mandatory later in 2004 (Cunha et al., 2017; Marques et al., 2021).

One of the biggest changes in leave policies took place in 2009 with a correction in the terminology, the term “maternity and paternity” protection was replaced by “parenthood” protection with a new law published on the 9th of April of that year (Cunha et al., 2017, p.8). Besides that, the father’s exclusive parental leave increased to 10 mandatory days (instead of 5) plus other 10 optional days and it was also introduced a bonus of one month paid period when the initial parental leave was shared by both the father and the mother (Cunha et al., 2017; Marques et al., 2021). More recently, in 2015, it became possible for both parents to take the “initial parental leave” simultaneously when shared and, also, the father’s exclusive parental leave increased from 10 to 15 working days and later to 20 working days in 2019 (Marques et al., 2021). More recently, in 2023, with the aim of improving parenthood protection, the government increased the father’s exclusive parental leave to 28 days and also extended the leave conditions for adoption and foster families (Segurança Social, 2023).

Childcare

After the 1974 revolution, there was in Portugal an initial increase in the number of nurseries, including schools for disabled children, and also training courses for educators (Mattoso, Sousa, & Monteiro, 2010). In 1984, “family crèches” were created to look after a small number of children in public establishments (Mattoso et al., 2010). In 1986, a fundamental law for education in Portugal was published, called the “Lei de Bases do Sistema Educativo” (Law of Bases of the Education System). However, this law only recognized the preschool

education in the context of childhood, not considering the 0-3 age group (Serrano & Pinto, 2015).

In 1989, specific objectives were defined for crèches, including collaborating with families in the process of care and development of the child, bringing a caring and educational perspective to the concept of crèche (Serrano & Pinto, 2015). In 1997, the law (Diário da República, 1997) recognized the preschool education as the first stage of basic education, directed to children between the ages of 3 and the age at which they enter primary school.

In 2011, the *Conselho Nacional de Educação* approved a recommendation project (Ministério da Educação - Conselho Nacional de Educação, 2011), which highlighted the lack of support from the state for children aged 0 to 3. In addition, this recommendation stated that the expectation that women should work outside the home while also being responsible for children and housework suggested major problems in terms of gender equality in Portugal. As a result, the crèches concept was changed in that year, to include an educational component for the 0-3 age group (Serrano & Pinto, 2015). Therefore, crèche was defined as “a socio-educational facility aimed at supporting the family and the child, designed to accommodate children up to the age of 3, during the period in which their parents or those exercising parental responsibilities are unable to attend”, a regulation still in force (Diário da República, 2011).

Nowadays, early childhood education and care (ECEC) in Portugal is organised in two different levels: childcare for children aged 0 to 3 years and pre-school education for children aged 3 to the age of entry into compulsory education (Comissão Europeia, 2023). ECEC for children under 3 years old is not part of the education system, instead it is the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour, Solidarity and Social Security and it is mostly provided by private non-profit organisations. For this group of children, the available offers include nurseries, nannies and family crèches. Pre-school education is directed at

children between the ages of 3 and 6 (the starting age for compulsory school) and it is the first stage of basic education in the learning process (Comissão Europeia, 2023).

Family allowances

Family allowances, as discussed before, are a component of family policies that, although not directly related to women's labour market participation and gender equity, are still relevant because of the role they play in supporting family income for families with children. The subsidy was introduced in 1942 with the goal of reducing the difficulties faced by the head of big families (Mattoso et al., 2010). It was paid to the "head of the household", who was expected to be a man and the main breadwinner in the family and the goal was to support him maintaining his family, both their descendants and ascendants (Mattoso et al., 2010). Due to gender inequality, women were unable to apply for this subsidy, the only exceptions were if they were a widow or if the husband were physically incapacitated (Marques, 2018; Mattoso et al., 2010).

In the end of the 1970s, after the revolution, there were changes in the subsidy emphasising the principles of equality and universal welfare rights (Mattoso et al., 2010). The subsidy becomes a right of the child instead of a right of the "head of the family" and it also becomes possible for both men and women to apply, as long as they are covered by social security and have dependent children, thus stopping discrimination against women (Mattoso et al., 2010). In 1980, family allowances become directed to children, ascendants were no longer entitled to this subsidy, and only the descendants are eligible for this support (Marques, 2018).

In 2003 this subsidy was changed to only be allocated to families with lower income, it was defined to five family allowance levels, and also its entitlement was changed to anyone with residency in the country with dependent children

(Mattoso et al., 2010). In 2007 was introduced the prenatal family allowance, that was destined to pregnant women since the thirteenth week of pregnancy until the birth of the child (Wall et al., 2010). In the following year, 2008, laws were issued to increase the support for the neediest families, through an introduction of a new concept of single-parent families (Marques, 2018). In 2010, as a result of the economic and political crisis, the government decided to make financial cuts that negatively affected the families, so in 2012 it decided to reverse some of the most controversial cuts (Marques, 2018).

3.1.2 Family policy transformation: evolution of childcare and comparisons with other family policies

Previously, it was seen that, in order to fight gender inequalities and the double burden faced by women, an adjustment in policies is necessary, namely, according to Ferragina (2022), through the reinforcement of the provision of childcare. In this section, we will be analysing whether this reinforcement has happened, or not, in the case of Portugal. To conclude about this evolution, different types of data will be analysed: the number of crèches, enrolment rates and usage of childcare services; and expenditure in childcare, in absolute numbers, and also in comparison with expenditure with other family policy instruments.

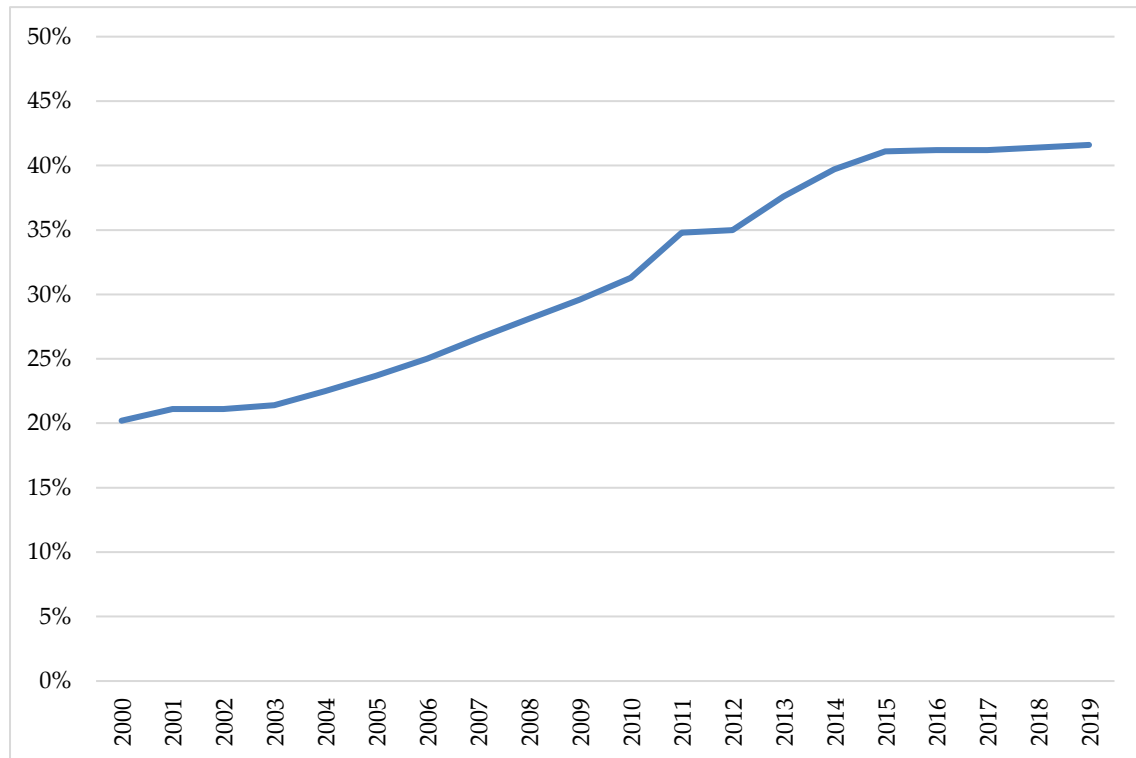
Childcare supply, enrolment, and usage

In (continental) Portugal, the number of crèches has been increasing, for the last 20 years. According to the report Carta Social (2023) produced by Gabinete de Estratégia e Planeamento (GEP), this number in 2021 had grown by 62% when compared to 2000. On the other hand, regarding pre-school education, in 2015 there were around 4600 pre-school education centres in continental Portugal (GEP, 2015), whereas in 2021, that number had increased by approximately 16%

compared to 2015 (GEP, 2023). So, in general, it seems, there has been a positive increase in social responses for early childhood education and care in Portugal.

The enrolment rate has also increased over the years. Figure 1 shows the enrolment rate of children under 3 in childcare centres from 2000 to 2019.

Figure 1: Enrolment rate of children in childcare (%)



Source: UNECE

Graph: Own Authorship

Despite the increase over the years, it is important to note that the enrolment rate remains below 50%. This indicates that less than half of the children in this age group are enrolled in childcare centres. This highlights potential gaps in access to childcare services for families with young children, which may be justified by the fact that, in Portugal, the provision free of charge and the guarantee of a place are only for children aged 3 or more (European Commission, 2023).

In this context, it is also relevant to analyse enrolment in childcare according to income level. Table 1 shows the participation rates in ECEC for children aged 0

to 2 years old by income level, in 2020. The data show a positive correlation between household income and childcare usage. This correlation, combined with the reduction of compensatory policies, appears to put women/mothers from lower classes in disadvantage, as noted by Ferragina (2022). In his study, the lowest/ highest ratio was calculated indicating that for every 10 children in the third tertile, only 8 from the first tertile are enrolled in childcare in 2015. Table 1 shows that this disparity worsened in 2019, with less than 8 children from the lowest income tertile enrolled in childcare for every 10 children in the highest one. Although childcare enrolment has increased, as previously seen, inequality in its usage continues to exist and has worsened from 2015 to 2019.

Table 1: Participation rates in ECEC by income, 0-2 years old

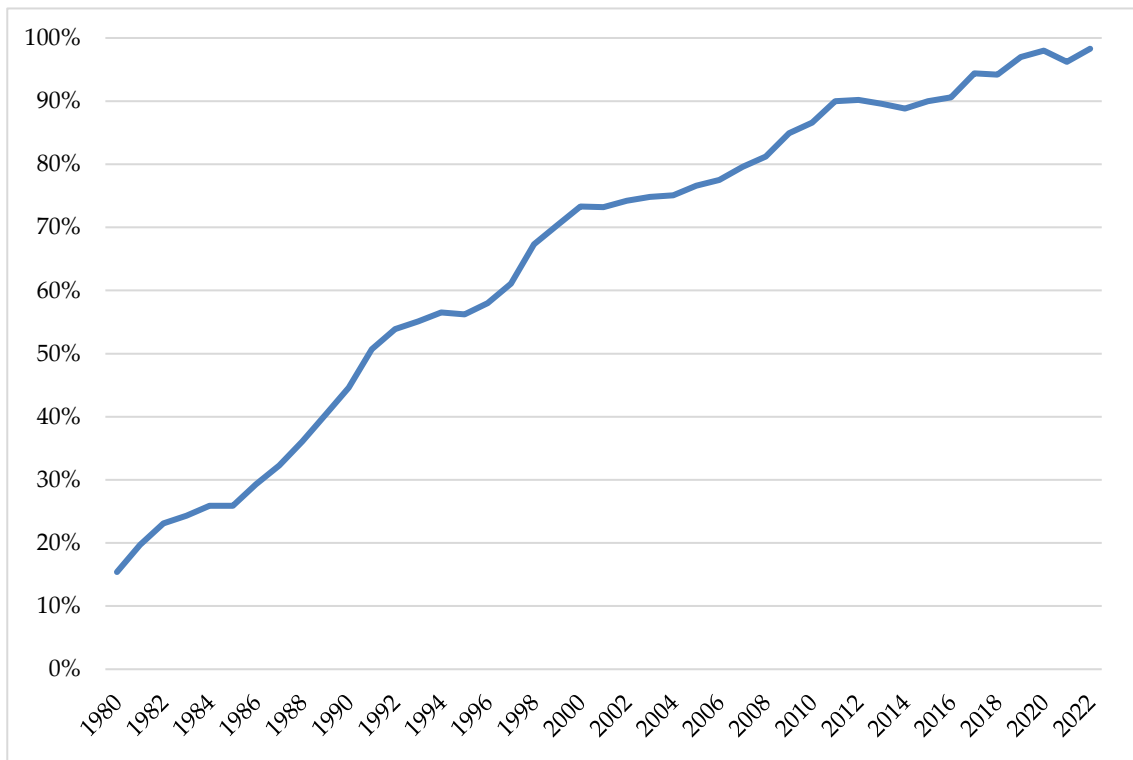
<i>1st tertile</i>	<i>2nd tertile</i>	<i>3rd tertile</i>	Lowest/ Highest ratio
41,5	44,0	54,6	76%

Source: OECD

Graph: Own Authorship

Figure 2 illustrates the percentage of children enrolled in pre-school education in Portugal between 1980 and 2022. The data shows a consistent increase in the enrolment rate for pre-school education in Portugal over the years, presenting high values for recent years. In general, both indicators show a positive trend over time, indicating progress in early childhood education and care in Portugal.

Figure 2: Enrolment rate of children in pre-school education (%)



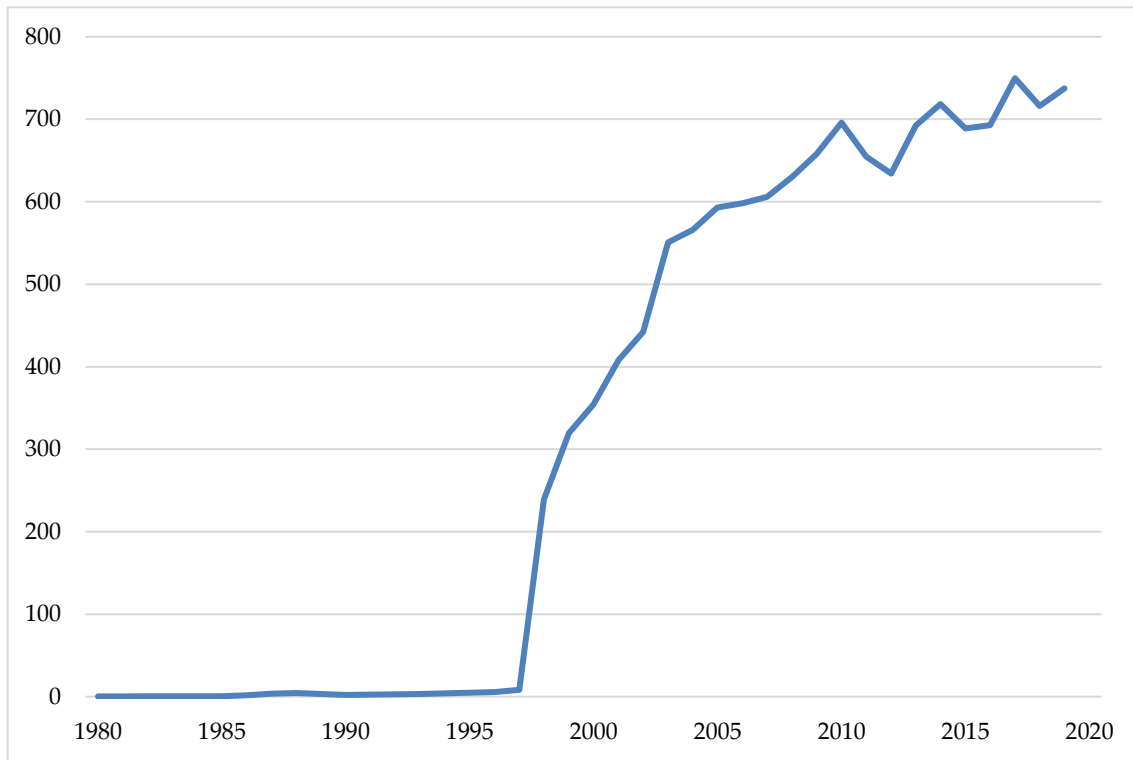
Source: PORDATA

Graph: Own Authorship

Childcare expenditure

Progress seems to also have happened in what concerns expenditures in childcare. Figure 3 shows the expenditure (at current prices in national currency and in millions) of early childhood education and care (ECEC) in Portugal between 1980 and 2019. It is clear that until mid-1990s, ECEC spendings were very low and in 1998 there was a rise until 2010. Since then, although there have been fluctuations over the years, the expenditure continued to increase until the last year for which there is data (2019).

Figure 3: Early childhood education and care (ECEC) expenditure in Portugal (in millions)



Source: OECD

Graph: Own Authorship

As discussed in Chapter 1, to assess the relative evolution of policies, Ferragina (2022) compared the childcare expenditure with other types of social expenditure in 22 countries, namely parental leave and family allowances¹. In this study the author analysed spending on childcare in different groups of countries, namely Mediterranean countries, group to which Portugal belongs, -, where, on average, this expenditure represented 0.04% of GDP in 1980 and 0.38% in 2015 (the latest available data). In Portugal, this indicator went from 0.003% of GDP in 1980 to be 0.383% in 2015, thus showing a delay in 1980 but a similar trend to the Mediterranean countries in 2015. In 2019, the last available data, this value had a slightly decrease to 0.344% in Portugal (OECD, 2024), but the general positive trend between 1980 and 2019 remains the same.

¹ The policies “income maintenance”, “active labour market programmes” and “unemployment” are not the main focus and are therefore explained in Appendix A.

As explained before, in his analysis, Ferragina (2022) created an indicator subtracting every policy spending (in percentage of gross domestic product) from childcare spending for the period of 1980-2015. If childcare spendings were higher than the other policies spendings, it would mean a positive score; if childcare spendings were lower than the other categories of spendings, it would result in a negative score. This dissertation recreates this indicator² for Portugal (Figure 4) to compare the results with Ferragina's (2022) study, while updating the data to the latest available, that is 2019.

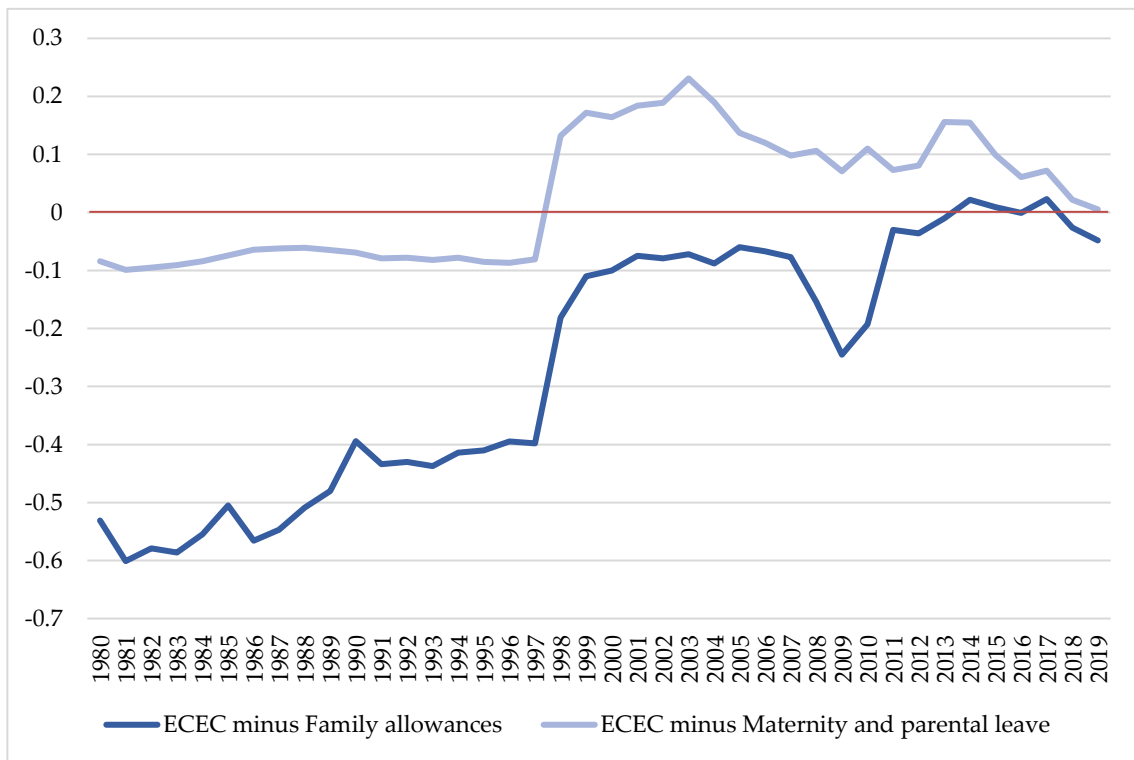
Similar to the group in which Portugal was included by the author, spending on childcare in Portugal has been catching up with spending on family allowances. In 2014, ECEC spending actually exceeded that of family allowances, but since then there have been fluctuations with a tendency to decrease. In Portugal, spending on childcare has overtaken spending on leaves, which again shows a similar scenario with the Mediterranean group, however it is important to note that since 2015 there has been a decreasing tendency.

Thus, what the data for Portugal seems to show is that, as Ferragina concluded for the Mediterranean countries, the most significant transformation of family policy is the expansion of childcare and a relative reduction in family allowances. Parental leave has also increased over the years, although not as significantly as childcare.

In the next section, trends in terms of women's participation in the labour force and gender equality will be analysed to then, in the following section, assess the possible relationship between these and the family policy trends discussed here.

² Values showed in Appendix B.

Figure 4³: Catch up spending in relation to ECEC in Portugal



Source: OECD

Graph: Own Authorship and Own Calculus

³ Following what was said in footnote 1, this dissertation focuses on childcare, parental leave and family allowance policies. Thus, the primary analysis will only include these policies. However, Ferragina's exercise was also reproduced considering the full range of policies used by the author and this analysis is presented in Appendix C.

3.2 Women's labour market participation and gender disparities in the second half of the XXth century and in the XXIst century

3.2.1 Historical notes on women's participation in the labour market in the second half of the XXth century

Before the 25th of April of 1974 revolution, according to Torres (2004), Portugal was a country with a backward attitude towards women's role in both the workplace and the family. The 25th of April was a turning point towards women's freedom and autonomy, but changes had already started back in the 1960s (Torres, 2004). In fact, with the colonial war in 1961, many young men were forced to leave the country and their jobs became available to women (Matias, Andrade, & Fontaine, 2012; Torres, 2004).

Emigration, a significant movement primarily in the sixties (Torres, 2006), was also important, since the women who were left alone had to deal with every kind of situations on their own. On the other hand, women who emigrated with their husbands had the opportunity of getting to know new realities, and those who returned to Portugal were not easily submitted to the old scenario (Torres, 2004).

With the end of the colonial war and the 1974 revolution, a democratic regime with a focus on women's rights was established (Matias et al., 2012). With this regime, women were able to participate more in society and were able to keep their jobs (Matias et al., 2012).

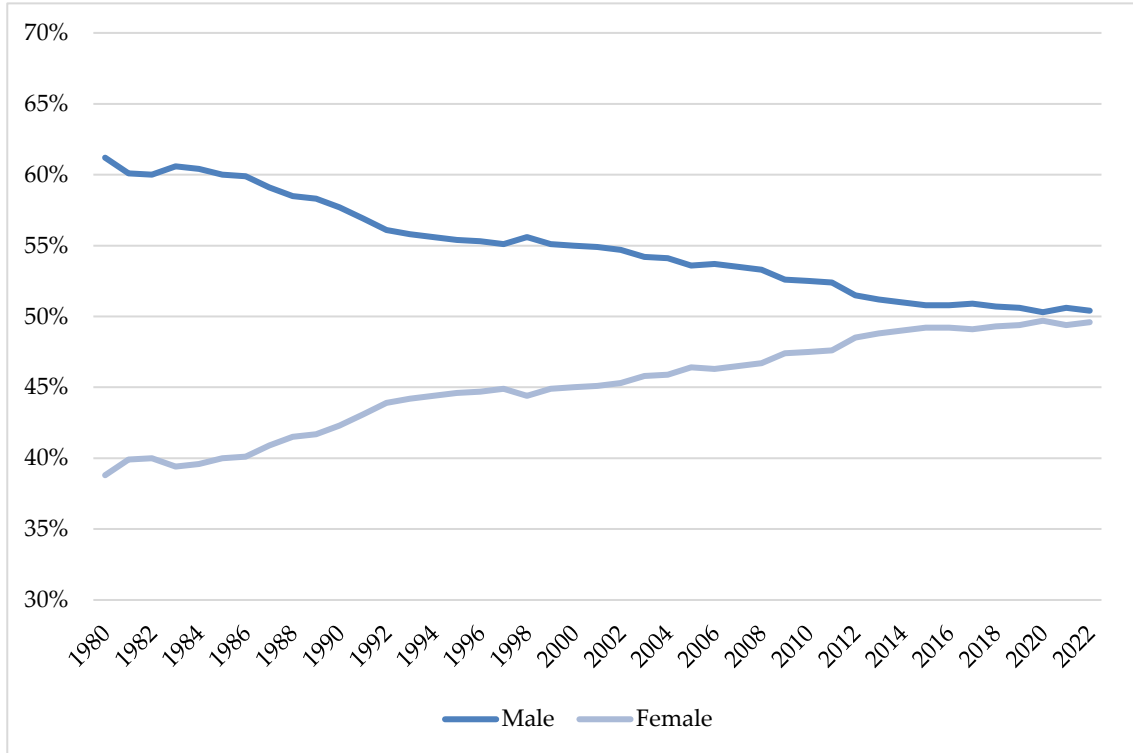
3.2.2 Women's participation and gender disparities in the labour market since the second half of the XXth century

Employment, unemployment, and wages

Figure 5 summarizes the evolution of employment by gender in Portugal, approximately since when the country entered the EU, in the 1980's, and the year of 2022. It is possible to see that women's labour market participation has been increasing since 1980: in that year they represented approximately 39% of the employed population whereas in the most recent year for which there is data, that is, 2022, it represented almost 50%. Conversely, the proportion of male employment has been decreasing over the years, from over 61% in 1980 to around 50% in the last year. Therefore, the gender gap in terms of labour market participation has been decreasing over the years, being 22,4 percentage points in 1980 and 0,8 percentage points in 2022, which is a positive sign for gender equality in the workforce. This trend is identical to what is found in another research, as discussed in Chapter 1.

However, gender disparities in the type of employment still persist. Despite the increase in the percentage of women working full time from around 80% in the early 1980s to 90% in 2021, these values are consistently below those of men, that have been more or less stable around 95% (Figure 6). This means that, as Figure 6 also shows, women continue to be more likely than men to be employed in part-time positions, as discussed in the previous chapter.

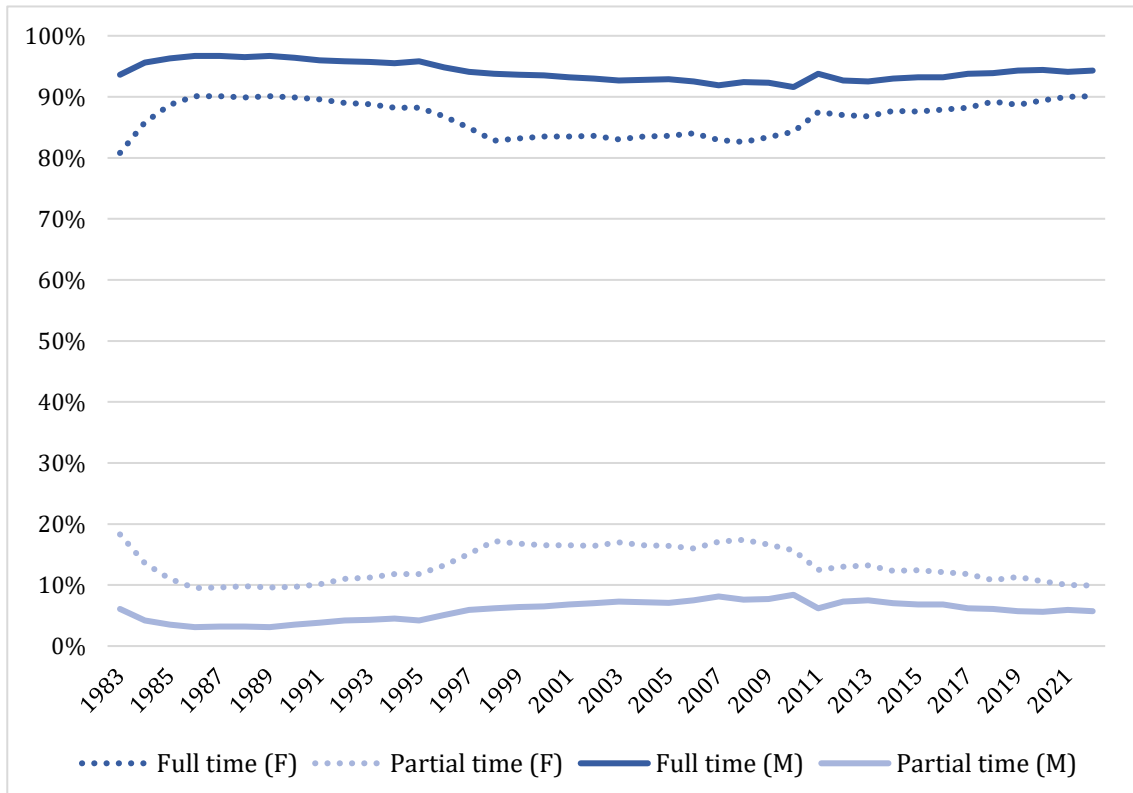
Figure 5: Percentage of employed population by gender



Source: PORDATA

Graph: Own Authorship

Figure 6: Percentage of employed population in full and partial time by gender

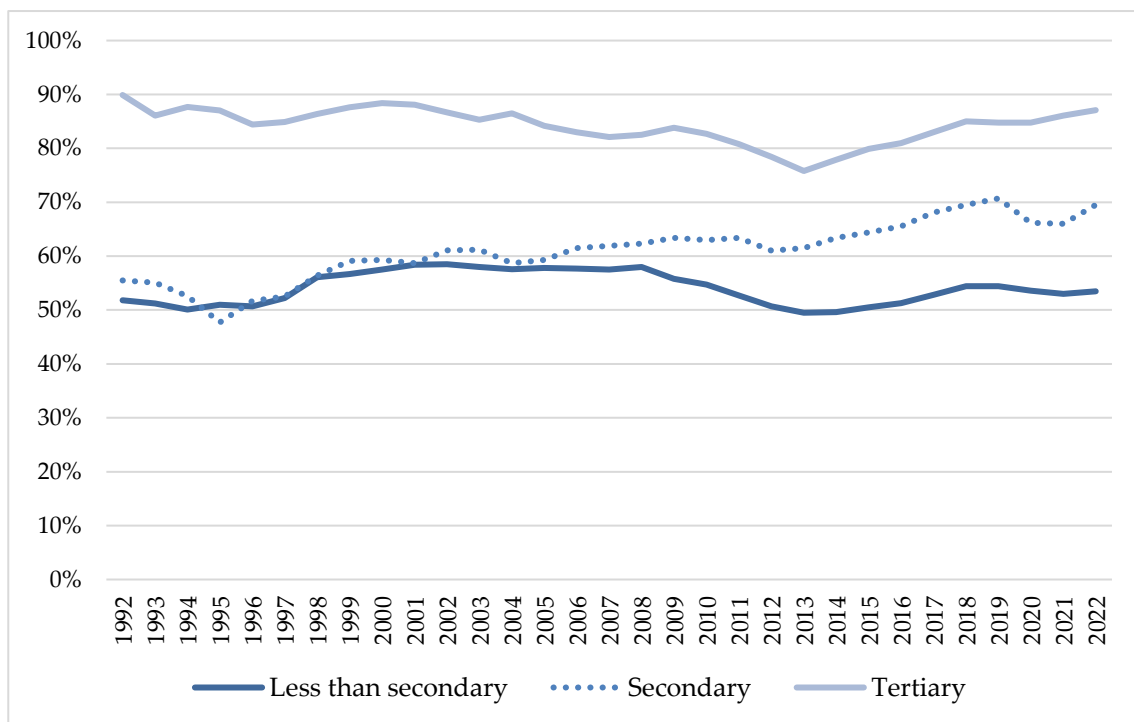


Source: PORDATA

Graph: Own Authorship

When analysing women's employment rates, it is important to consider their level of education. The highest employment rates are consistently found among women with higher education levels, ranging from 75% to 90% over the years analysed for Portugal (figure 7). Therefore, it can be concluded that women with higher levels of education are more likely to be employed. On the other hand, women with less than a secondary education have a lower employment rate, ranging from approximately 50% to 60%, which signals challenges for less educated women in accessing employment opportunities.

Figure 7: Female employment rates by educational level (%)



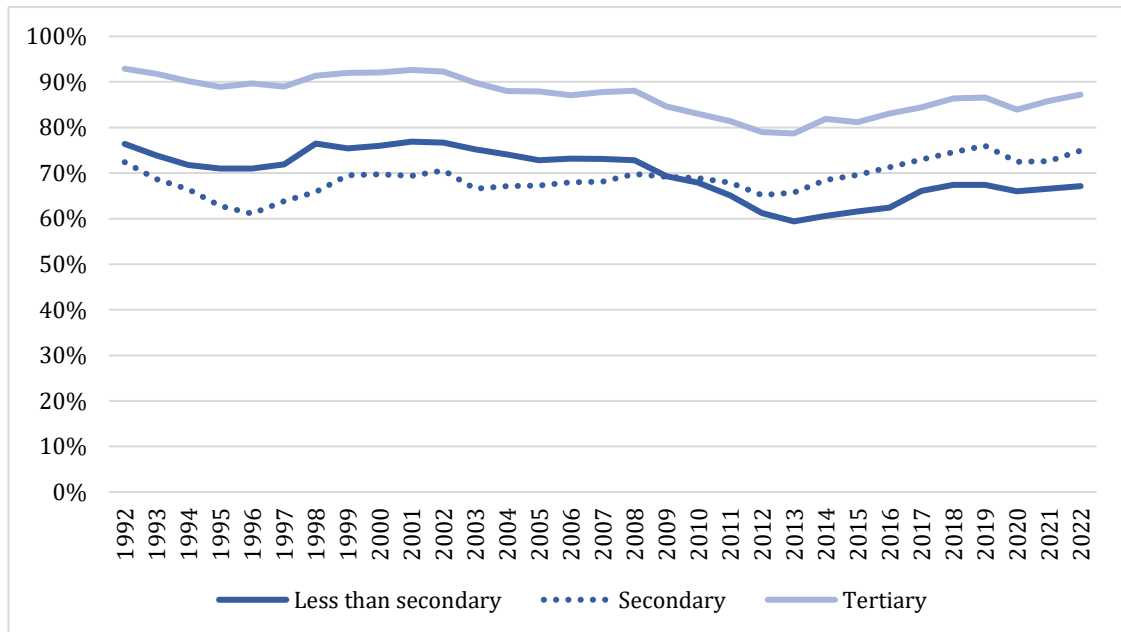
Source: Eurostat

Graph: Own Authorship

Similarly, men with tertiary education present employment rates between 80% and 90% approximately (Figure 8). However, men with less than secondary education have significantly higher employment rates than women in the same educational category, ranging from approximately 60% to 80%.

This data shows a gender disparity in employment rates among individuals with lower educational levels.

Figure 8: Male employment rates by educational level (%)



Source: Eurostat

Graph: Own Authorship

Table 2 shows the gender gap in education, calculated as the difference between the percentages of males and females in each educational level, between 1998 and 2022. The data demonstrates that, throughout the period considered, for most education levels, there are relatively small differences between women⁴ and men. However, women are predominant in the tertiary education, which has helped to compensate for the overrepresentation of women at the lowest level of education, identified in the table as “no level”, as indicated by the negative numbers.

⁴ It is important to note that women have a longer average life expectancy (see Appendix D), which may affect this indicator.

Table 2: Gender gap in educational level

<i>Years</i>	<i>No level</i>	<i>1st cycle</i>	<i>2nd cycle</i>	<i>3rd cycle</i>	<i>Secondary</i>	<i>Tertiary</i>
1998	-0,34	0,02	0,09	0,07	-0,04	-0,18
1999	-0,33	0,02	0,10	0,06	-0,05	-0,15
2000	-0,35	0,01	0,12	0,05	-0,06	-0,16
2001	-0,35	0,02	0,11	0,06	-0,05	-0,19
2002	-0,35	0,02	0,10	0,07	-0,04	-0,24
2003	-0,35	0,01	0,10	0,07	-0,04	-0,22
2004	-0,37	0,00	0,10	0,07	-0,05	-0,20
2005	-0,38	0,01	0,09	0,07	-0,05	-0,20
2006	-0,38	0,01	0,08	0,06	-0,06	-0,19
2007	-0,37	-0,01	0,09	0,06	-0,04	-0,21
2008	-0,38	-0,01	0,11	0,04	-0,03	-0,22
2009	-0,38	-0,02	0,11	0,03	-0,03	-0,21
2010	-0,37	-0,02	0,09	0,04	-0,04	-0,22
2011	-0,38	0,00	0,10	0,03	-0,05	-0,19
2012	-0,41	-0,01	0,14	0,04	-0,06	-0,19
2013	-0,42	-0,04	0,13	0,07	-0,03	-0,23
2014	-0,41	-0,04	0,11	0,08	-0,03	-0,23
2015	-0,42	-0,03	0,08	0,05	-0,01	-0,22
2016	-0,41	-0,04	0,09	0,05	-0,01	-0,22
2017	-0,43	-0,06	0,09	0,08	-0,02	-0,23
2018	-0,44	-0,06	0,12	0,08	-0,02	-0,24
2019	-0,46	-0,07	0,11	0,06	-0,02	-0,21
2020	-0,47	-0,09	0,09	0,06	0,01	-0,23
2021	-0,45	-0,11	0,11	0,08	0,02	-0,23
2022	-0,46	-0,11	0,10	0,08	0,00	-0,22

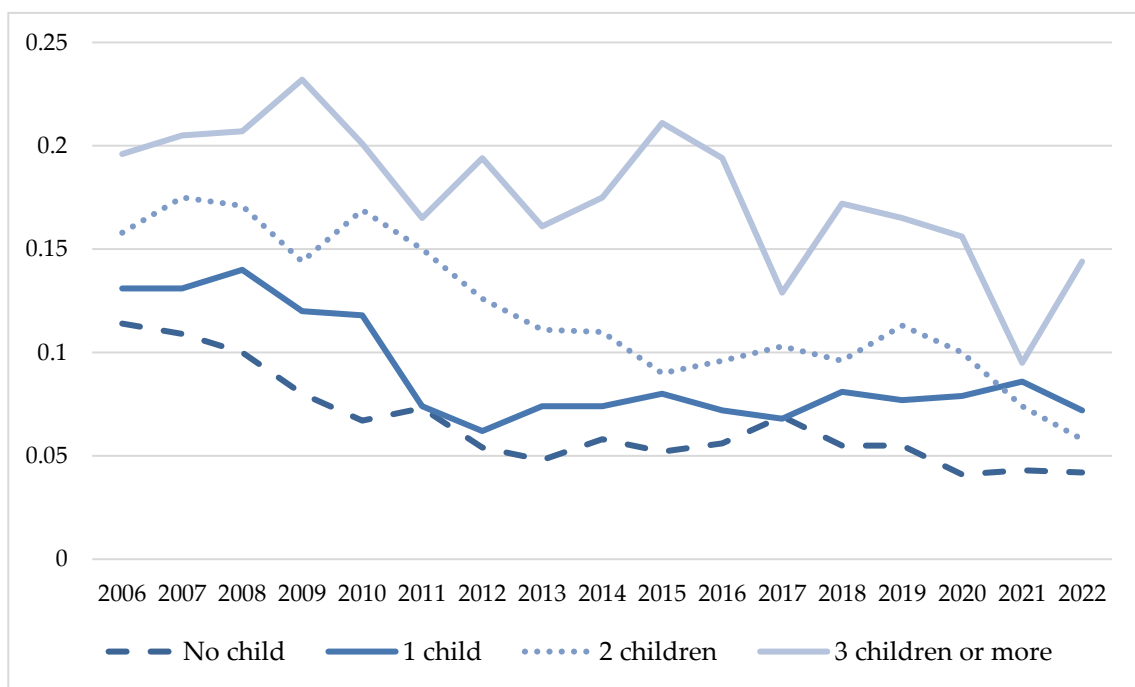
Source: PORDATA

Graph: Own Authorship and Own Calculus

So, despite improvements in education, as seen above, these do not completely translate into improvements in gender equality in the labour market. Additionally, when children are in the picture, the disparity with men is even greater. Figure 9 shows the gender employment gap by the number of children in percentage points, from 2006 to 2022, calculated by subtracting the employment rate of women from the employment rate of men (by number of children). As it is possible to observe, the gender employment gap increases with the number of children. There have been fluctuations over the years and the

general trend is this gap to decrease in the four categories, however, the more children in the family, the higher is the gender employment gap (with a small exception, where the gender employment gap for families with one child exceeds that of two children in 2021 and 2022). Once again, this highlights gender inequalities in the labour market, particularly for women with three or more children who face greater challenges in participating in the workforce.

Figure 9: Gender employment gap by number of children (in percentage points)



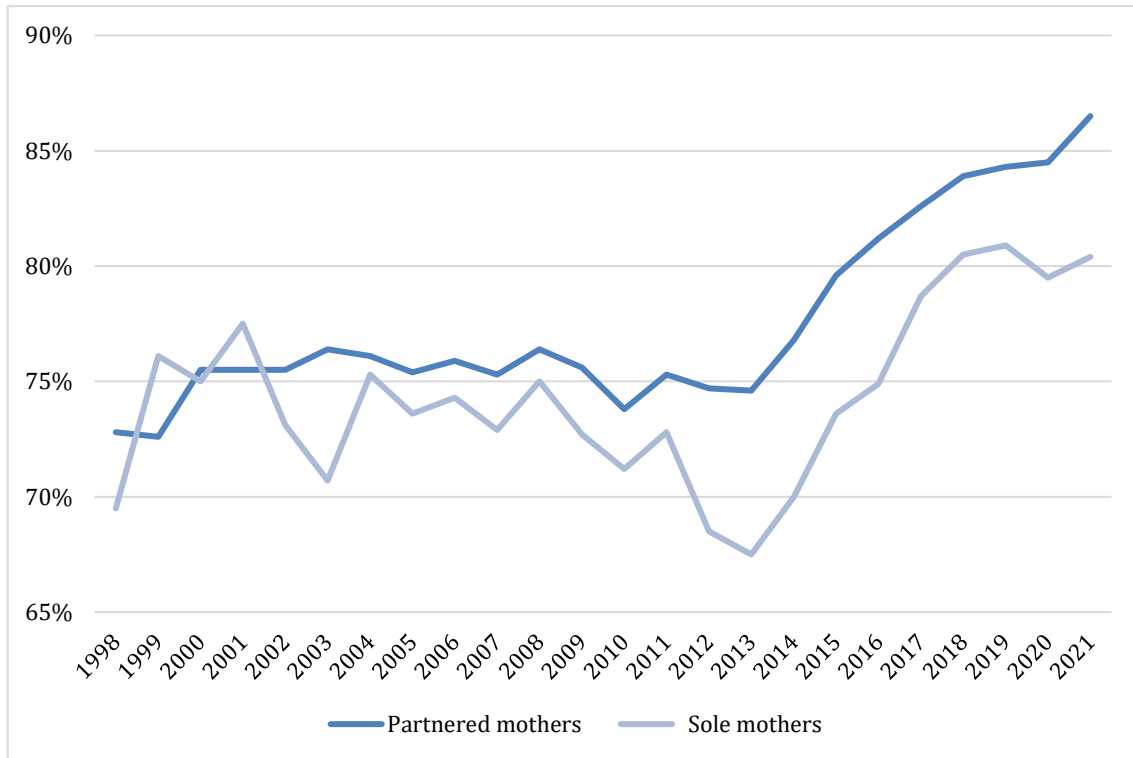
Source: Eurostat

Graph: Own Authorship and Own Calculus

Figure 10 illustrates another important breakdown of employment rates, here for partnered mothers compared with sole mothers with at least one child under 15, from 1998 to 2021. In the first year analysed, less than 70% of sole mothers participated in the labour market, while for partnered mothers it was approximately 73%. There have been fluctuations for both cases over the years, but mostly since 2013 the trend has been positive and in the last year analysed approximately 80% of sole mothers were employed, compared to around 87% for

partnered mothers. This means that, despite an overall increase for both groups, partnered mothers have a higher employment rate in most of the years analysed, indicating an unfavourable scenario for sole mothers.

Figure 10: Employment rates for mothers with at least one child under 15 (%)

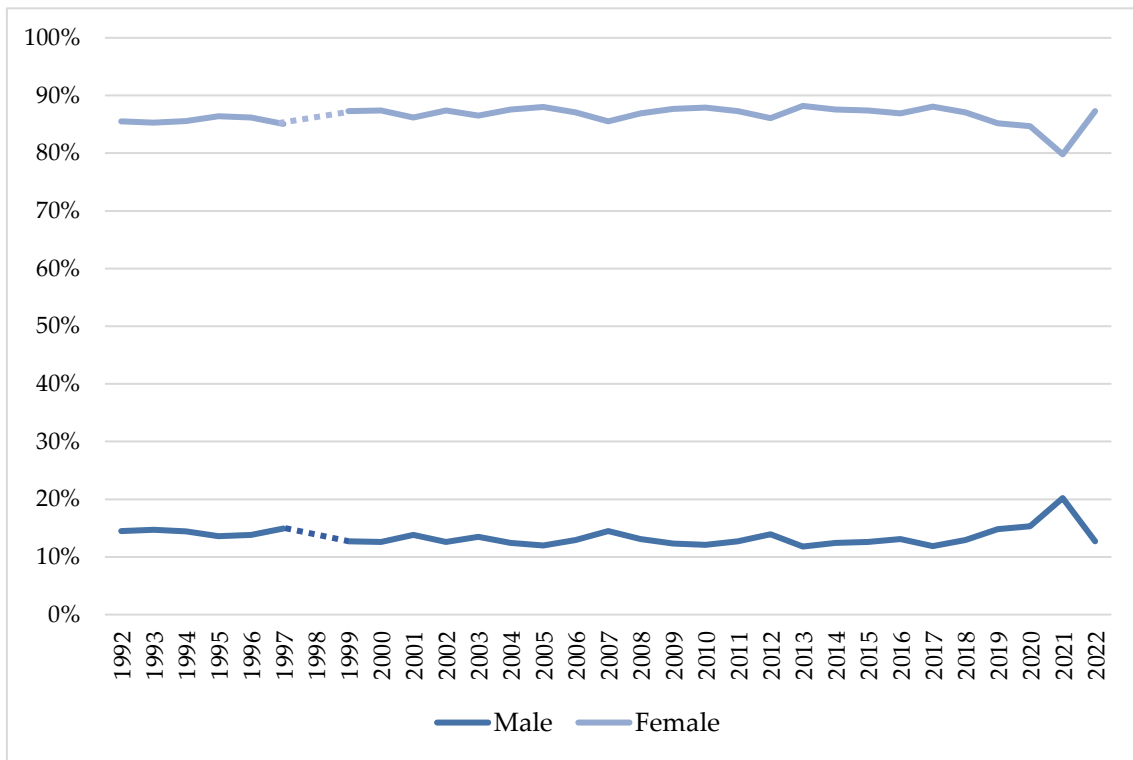


Source: OECD

Graph: Own Authorship

Furthermore, the scenario just described is much more common in women's lives since the big majority of people in this situation are women. In figure 11 it is possible to see that, in the period of analysis, almost 90% of single parents are in fact women.

Figure 11: Single parent families by gender (%)⁵



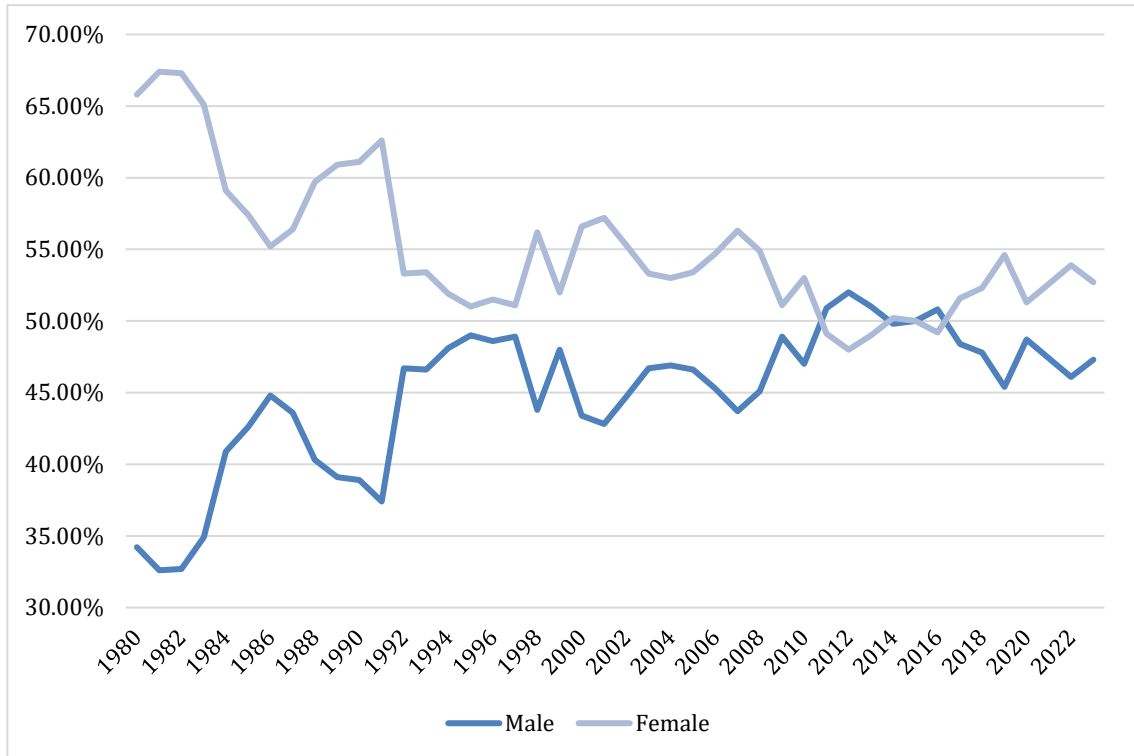
Source: PORDATA

Graph: Own Authorship

In line with the previous indicators, figure 12 once again shows a gender gap, this time in terms of unemployment. In the early 1980s, the unemployment rate for females was notably higher than for males, with females being approximately 65-68% of the unemployed population. Although there have been fluctuations over time, females generally continue to have a higher unemployment rate compared to males, even if the gap has narrowed in some years.

⁵ The year 1998 is shown in dashed lines because there is no statistical information for that years.

Figure 12: Unemployed population by gender (%)



Source: PORDATA

Graph: Own Authorship

Figure 13: Average monthly basic salary by gender⁶



Source: PORDATA

Graph: Own Authorship

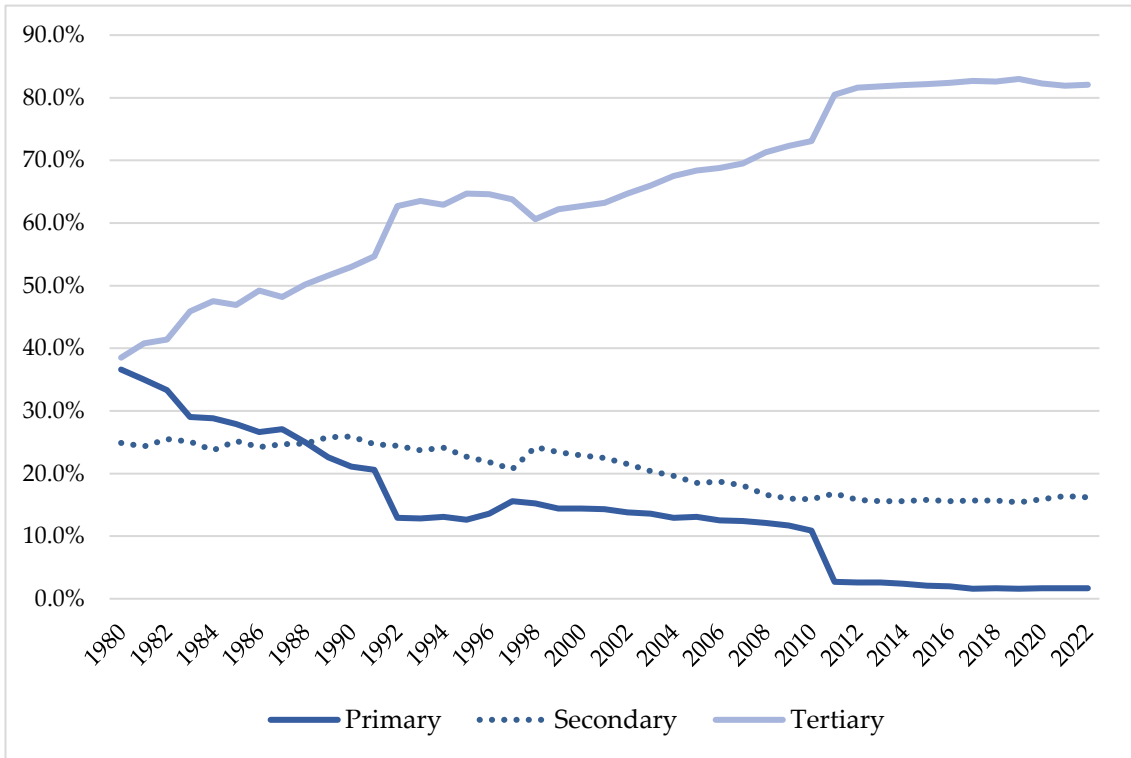
⁶ The years 1990 and 2001 are shown in dashed lines because there is no statistical information for those years.

It is also important to analyse earnings differentials between women and men. Figure 13 shows that the average monthly basic salary has increased over time for both men and women in Portugal. However, men have consistently earned a higher average monthly basic salary than women in all years recorded, which is aligned with Ferragina (2022) findings discussed in the previous chapter. This means that, although there have been improvements, a gap still exists between women and men also in what concerns salaries.

Economic sectors and professions

Another relevant point to address is the one that Ferragina (2022) mentions regarding women being mostly employed in the service-based economy. In Figure 14, it is possible to see the evolution of female employment by sector of economic activity from 1980 to 2022 in Portugal and it is evident that the percentage of women in the tertiary sector (service-based economy) has always been higher than the primary and secondary sectors and this difference has been increasing over time.

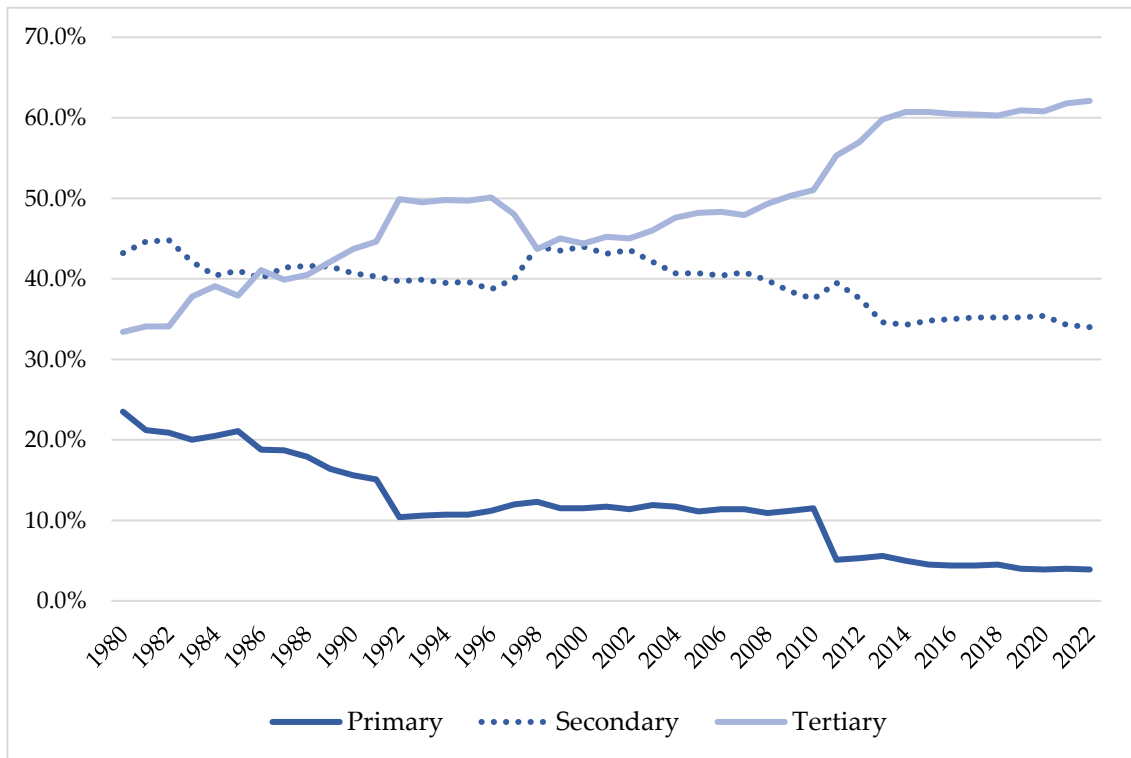
Figure 14: Female employed population by sector of economic activity (%)



Source: PORDATA

Graph: Own Authorship

Figure 15: Male employed population by sector of economic activity (%)



Source: PORDATA

Graph: Own Authorship

In Figure 15 the same indicator is shown for men. In 1980, the sector with the highest weight was the secondary one, followed by the tertiary and finally the primary sector. Throughout the period of analysis, the secondary sector has slightly decreased when compared to the primary one, while the tertiary sector has been increasing.

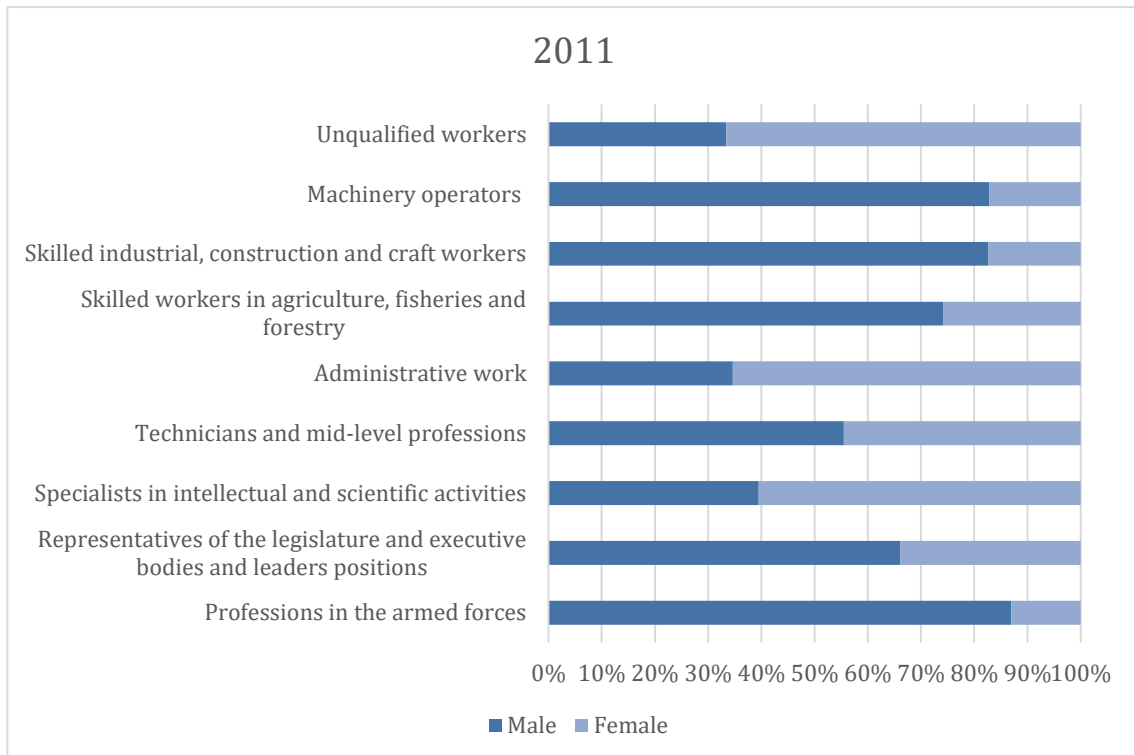
Thus, what both Figures 14 and 15 show is that there has been a significant increase in the presence in the tertiary sector for both genders, suggesting a growing weight of the service-based economy (which is to be expected as economies develop), but with a greater proportion of women (around 80% in 2022) compared to men (around 60% in 2022) working in this sector. On the other hand, there is a significantly lower and decreasing proportion of women employed in the secondary sector compared to men (whereas in the primary sector the difference is not that pronounced).

Besides gender disparities in terms of sectors of activity, it is also important to analyse gender disparities in specific professions. This is shown in Figures 16 and 17, that look at the participation of men and women in the labour market by profession, in the years 2011 and 2021, according to information from the latest census. First of all, it is clear that males generally outnumber females in most categories, evidencing gender disparities in various professions. When considering categories where women participate more than men, it becomes clear that these are typically sectors of lower wages (unqualified workers and administrative work⁷), or the category of specialists in intellectual and scientific activities, which can be justified by the higher participation of women in higher education, as it was discussed previously.

In terms of evolution, there has not been a significant change during the ten years under analysis, meaning that the highlighted disparities persist.

⁷ See Table 6 in the Appendix E for average wages according to different professional categories.

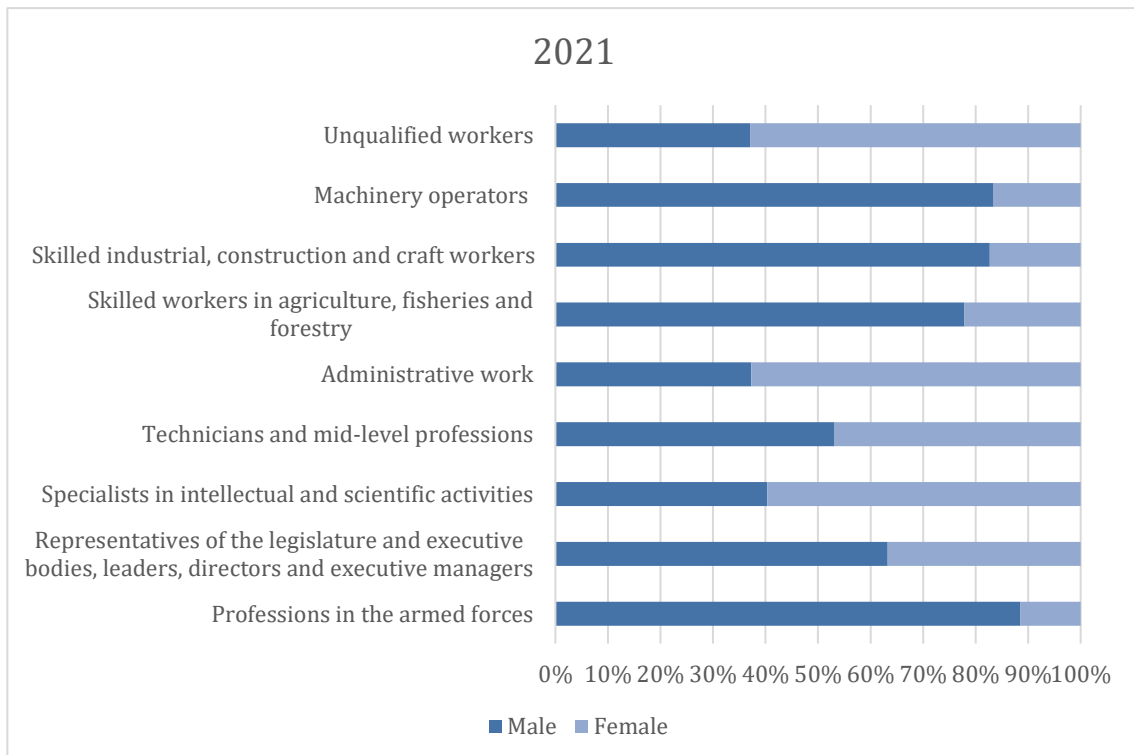
Figure 16: Employed population by profession and gender in 2011



Source: PORDATA

Graph: Own Authorship

Figure 17: Employed population by profession and gender in 2021



Source: PORDATA

Graph: Own Authorship

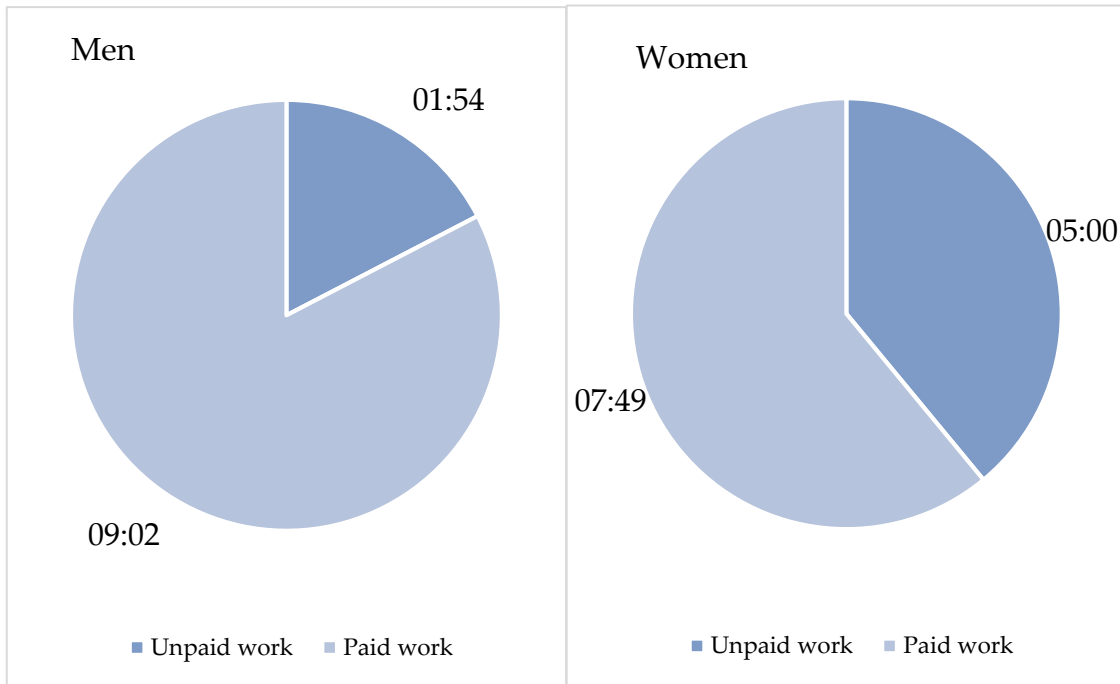
Unpaid work: the women's burden

In addition to paid work, (generally) women have always had other responsibilities within the family, that is, – unpaid work, as discussed before in Chapter 1. Figure 18 shows the average daily working time, unpaid and paid work, for both women and men in Portugal in 1999. In that year, even considering only men and women participating in the workforce, and, so, with a relatively similar duration of paid work, it is clear that women devote more time to unpaid work. Men spent significantly less time on unpaid work than women and when they did, it tended to be for their own benefit, while women generally do it for the whole family (Perista,2002). Because men work more hours in paid work than women, which reinforces the notion that men are the main provider of the family in terms of formal employment, and also because of the higher participation of women in unpaid work, it is possible to conclude that in 1999 the traditional male breadwinner model, discussed in Chapter 1, was still present in the Portuguese society.

Looking at the same indicator in 2015 (Figure 19), some changes can be noticed. Although men work the same amount of time in paid work than they did in 1999, they started devoting more hours to unpaid work in 2015, allowing women to spend less time in these activities and, also, more time in paid work.

In 2015, both men and women spent a closer amount of time in paid work, which reflects a trajectory towards gender-neutral roles in the workforce. However, despite the fact that the gender gap in paid and unpaid work has been decreasing over years, women continue to spend more time on unpaid work compared to men, which is in line with Ferragina's (2022) mention of a "double burden" for women.

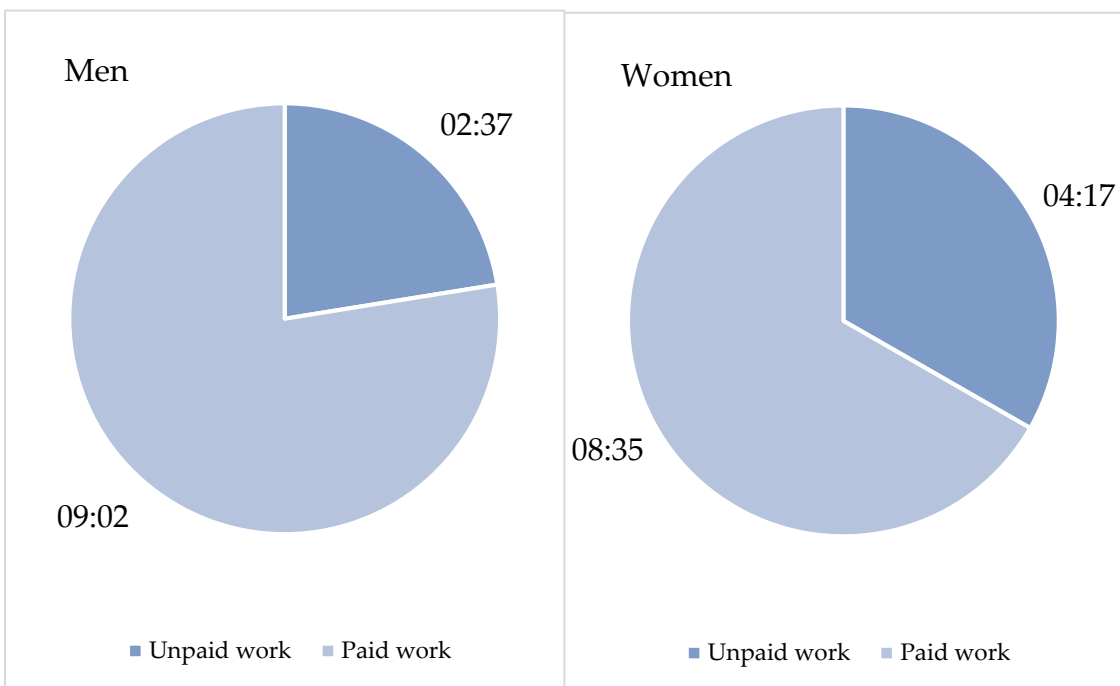
Figure 18: Average daily working time, 1999



Source: Perista, H. (2002). Gênero e trabalho não pago: os tempos das mulheres e os tempos dos homens. *Análise Social*, Vol. 37, 447–474.

Graphs: Own Authorship

Figure 19: Average daily working time, 2015



Source: Perista, H., Cardoso, A., Brázia, A., Abrantes, M., Perista, P., & Quintal, E. (2016). Os Usos do Tempo de Homens e de Mulheres em Portugal. Policy Brief

Graphs: Own Authorship

3.3 Discussion

As the previous analysis showed, the most significant transformation of family policy in Portugal seems to have been the expansion of childcare, accompanied by a slight increase in parental leave and a relative reduction in family allowances.

According to Henau and colleagues (2010), childcare and parental leave have a positive impact on female employment, and therefore, the expansion of these policies in Portugal could be one of the drivers behind the positive evolutions of female employment, as shown by the increase of the percentage of women in the workforce over the years, in Figure 5. Additionally, as noted by Jaumotte (2003), childcare subsidies and paid parental leave encourage full-time engagement in the workforce rather than part-time involvement. In Figure 6 it was noted an increase in the percentage of women working full time, which may have been influenced by this family policy transformation.

Following Ferragina (2022), if increasing women's participation in the labour market and externalizing social reproduction activities contributes to greater gender equality, then the above changes should have resulted in a decline in inequalities between women and men, which seems to be the case in much of the data analysed for Portugal.

However, although these changes seem to have contributed to the improvement of women's situation, gender inequalities persist, at several levels. There are still gender inequalities in employment - see Figures 5, 6, 7 and 8. Despite progress in women's education – Table 2 -, the situation in the labour market continues to be unfavourable for them. In addition, the scenario gets worse for women when children are in the picture, namely for sole mothers – Figures 9 and 10. The same is true for unemployment - see Figure 12. Moreover, the wage gap between men and women continues to exist, even if smaller than it

used to be – Figure 13. The tertiary sector has been increasing for both genders, however, there is a higher proportion of women compared to men in this sector. On the other hand, there is a significantly lower and decreasing proportion of women employed in the secondary sector compared to men - Figures 14 and 15. When analysing specific professions, gender disparities are evident in the majority of them, with males generally outnumbering females – see Figures in 16 and 17. And in the few sectors that women participate more than men, it tends to be in sectors of lower wages, as discussed before.

And, finally, women continue to bear a “double burden”, as, besides participating more in paid work, they still spend more time in unpaid care work/social reproduction activities compared to men – Figures 18 and 19. As women continue to bear the majority of social reproduction activities, it can be argued that they still sustain the cycle of accumulation, as discussed in Chapter 1.

Thus, what all this suggests is that family policy transformation has not, yet, been fully successful in eliminating the gaps between women and men, in both paid and unpaid/social reproduction work.

Moreover, as Ferragina (2022) has pointed, the policy transformations described above, namely childcare, seem to affect women in different ways, depending on their class. These differences become evident in the analysis of the relation between income and the utilization of childcare services. Despite the importance of childcare for combating inequalities, Van Lancker (2018) concluded that it is used more frequently by high-income families than by low-income families. This seems to be also the case in Portugal, as seen in Table 1, that shows inequalities in childcare usage according to income. As discussed in Chapter 1, the lower-class women do not have the necessary economic resources to decrease their social reproduction responsibilities, and this might explain their lower usage of childcare services. On the other hand, the upper- and middle-class

women both have access to more jobs and, also, have the economic resources to reduce their social reproduction responsibilities (Ferragina, 2022), thus the higher usage of childcare services by this group of women. So, although childcare expansion can be associated with an increase in women's participation in the labour market, as is the case in Portugal, on the other hand, it could be the case that it has contributed to a deepening of inequalities between women from different socioeconomic backgrounds. Furthermore, as previously discussed, family allowances are more targeted to the most vulnerable in society, and being so, the reduction of family allowances seems to further disadvantage women from the lower classes.

In conclusion, while family policy transformations in Portugal have boosted female employment and to some extent reduced the gaps between women and men, gender inequalities in the labour market persist and social reproduction work seems to still be gendered. Additionally, the described policy transformations might be having a negative impact on women from lower classes, contributing to inequalities among women.

Chapter 4

Conclusion

This research intended to assess whether the policy transformations identified by Ferragina (2022) have happened in Portugal as well as its effects on female employment and gender equality. For this purpose, the author's analysis was recreated and updated with the latest data available and other relevant information to the analysis was, also, added to the analysis, namely about unpaid work. This research, thus, aimed to contribute to the existing knowledge by investigating the specific Portuguese case in more detail. The main conclusions, which answer the research question that guided this dissertation – that is, “To what extent have the policy transformations identified by Ferragina (2022) and its effects on female employment and gender equality happened in the Portuguese case?” - are summarized next.

Firstly, the research showed that family policy transformation in Portugal has happened and demonstrated that childcare and parental leave seem to positively impact female employment, and therefore, the expansion of these policies in Portugal could be one of the drivers behind the positive evolution of female employment.

Secondly, the increase in women's participation in the labour market and the externalization of social reproduction activities appear to have contributed to a reduction in the inequalities between men and women in Portugal.

However, the third conclusion suggests that while these changes have contributed to the improvement of women's situation in the labour market, gender inequalities persist at several levels, as discussed before. Therefore, it can be concluded that family policy transformation has not, yet, been fully successful

in eliminating the gaps between women and men, in both paid and unpaid/social reproduction work.

Lastly, while the expansion of childcare may be associated with an increase in women's labour market participation in Portugal, it may also have contributed to a deepening of inequalities between women from different socioeconomic backgrounds, and this effect may have been reinforced by the reduction of family allowances from which the most vulnerable families usually benefit.

To conclude, it should be mentioned that this research presents some limitations, including the use of only secondary data and reliance on only publicly available sources. In addition to unavailable information, the available data was often limited, particularly for certain years. Another limitation is that no causal relationships were empirically studied, and there may be other factors influencing the trends that were here identified. Therefore, future research should consider exploring these relationships to verify the validity of the conclusions that were reached.

Bibliography

- Babbie, E. 2016. *The Practice of Social research* (Fourteenth edition). Cengage Learning, Boston, MA, 2016. www.cengagebrain.com.
- Bakker, I. 2007. Social reproduction and the constitution of a gendered political economy. *New Political Economy*, vol. 12. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13563460701661561>.
- Bertrand, M. 2020. Gender in the Twenty-First Century. *AEA Papers and Proceedings*, 110: 1–24.
- Bisello, M., & Mascherini, M. 2017. The Gender Employment Gap: Costs and Policy Responses. *Intereconomics*, 52(1): 24–27.
- Comissão Europeia. 2023. *Educação pré-escolar e cuidados de infância*. <https://eurydice.eacea.ec.europa.eu/pt-pt/national-education-systems/portugal/educacao-pre-escolar-e-cuidados-de-infancia#:~:text=Em%20Portugal%2C%20a%20educa%C3%A7%C3%A3o%20pr%C3%A9,da%20a%C3%A7%C3%A3o%20educativa%20da%20fam%C3%ADlia>.
- Cunha, V., Atalaia, S., Wall, K., Wall, R., & Bolila, F. 2017. *POLICY BRIEF II MEN AND PARENTAL LEAVES: LEGAL FRAMEWORK, ATTITUDES AND PRACTICES*. www.ics.ulisboa.pt.
- Danzinger, S., & Plotnick, R. 1981. Chapter 6: Income Maintenance Programs and the Pursuit of Income Security. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 453(1): 130–152.
- Diário da República. 1997. Act No. 5/97. *Republic Diary No. 34/1997, Series 1 of 1997-02-10*: 670–673.
- Diário da República. 2011. Portaria No. 262/2011. *Diário da República n.º 167/2011, Série I de 2011-08-31*.

- eportugal. n.d. *Request the unemployment benefit.*
<https://eportugal.gov.pt/en/servicos/requerer-o-subsidio-de-desemprego#:~:text=Unemployment%20benefit%20is%20a%20cash,benefit%20are%20entitled%20to%20it.>, February 26, 2024.
- eportugal.gov. 2023, July 26. *Family allowences.* <https://eportugal.gov.pt/en-GB/guias/apoio-a-familia/abono-de-familia>.
- European Commission. 2017. *Thematic factsheet - Active Labour Market Policies.* https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/economic-and-fiscal-policy-coordination/eu-economic-governance-monitoring-prevention-correction/european-semester/thematic-factsheets/labour-markets-and-skills_en.
- European Commission. 2023. *Access to early childhood education and care in Europe 2022/2023.*
- Federici, S. 2019. *Social reproduction theory.*
www.bloomsbury.com/counterfactuals.
- Fernandez, R. 2007. *NBER WORKING PAPER SERIES CULTURE AS LEARNING: THE EVOLUTION OF FEMALE LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION OVER A CENTURY.* <http://homepages.nyu.edu/>.
- Ferragina, E. 2019. Does Family Policy Influence Women’s Employment?: Reviewing the Evidence in the Field. *Political Studies Review*, 17(1): 65–80.
- Ferragina, E. 2020. Family policy and women’s employment outcomes in 45 high-income countries: A systematic qualitative review of 238 comparative and national studies. *Social Policy and Administration*, 54(7): 1016–1066.
- Ferragina, E. 2022. *Understanding Family Policy Transformation in the light of Critical Political Economy.* <https://hal-sciencespo.archives-ouvertes.fr/hal-03562991>.
- GEP - Gabinete de Estratégia e Planeamento. 2023. *CARTA SOCIAL - Rede de serviços e equipamentos - Relatório 2021.* www.cartasocial.pt;

- Gornick, J. C. ; Meyers, M. K. ;, & Ross, K. E. 1996. *Supporting the Employment of Mothers: Policy Variation Across Fourteen Welfare States*. <http://hdl.handle.net/10419/160811>.
- Henau, J. de, Meulders, D., & O'Dorchai, S. 2010. Maybe baby: Comparing partnered women's employment and child policies in the EU - 15. *Feminist Economics*, 16(1): 43–77.
- Jaumotte, F. 2003. *FEMALE LABOUR FORCE PARTICIPATION: PAST TRENDS AND MAIN DETERMINANTS IN OECD COUNTRIES*.
- Kamerman, S. B. 1991. Child Care Policies and Programs: An International Overview. *Journal of Social Issues*, 47(2): 179–196.
- Kuronen, M. 2010. *Research on Families and Family policies in Europe State of the Art*. <http://www.familyplatform.eu/en/1-major-trends/reports/3a-state-family-policies>.
- Letablier, M.-T., Luci, A., Math, A., & Thévenon, O. 2008. *The Costs of Raising Children and the Effectiveness of policies to support parenthood in European countries: a Literature Review*.
- Marques, M. 2018. *Uma Política Familiar: O Caso Do Abono de Família*.
- Marques, S., Casaca, S., & Arcanjo, M. 2021. Work–family articulation policies in portugal and gender equality: Advances and challenges. *Social Sciences*, 10(4). <https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci10040119>.
- Matias, M., Andrade, C., & Fontaine, A. 2012. The interplay of gender, work and family in Portuguese families. *Work Organisation, Labour and Globalisation*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.13169/workorgalaboglob.6.1.0011>.
- Mattoso, J., Sousa, B. V. e., & Monteiro, N. G. 2010. *História da vida privada em Portugal*. Temas e Debates.
- Ministério da Educação - Conselho Nacional de Educação. 2011. Recomendação No. 3/2011. *Diário da República n.º 79/2011, Série II de 2011-04-21*: 18026–18036.

OECD. 2024. *OECD (2024), "Social Expenditure: Reference series", OECD Social and Welfare Statistics (database).*

<https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1787/data-00168-en>.

Perista, H. 2002. Género e trabalho não pago: os tempos das mulheres e os tempos dos homens. *Análise Social*, Vol. 37: 447–474.

Segurança Social. 2023, July 12. *Agenda para o Trabalho Digno | Alterações ao Regime da Parentalidade.* [https://www.seg-social.pt/noticias/-/asset_publisher/kBZtOMZgstp3/content/agenda-para-o-trabalho-digno-alteracoes-ao-regime-da-parentalidade?redirect=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.seg-social.pt%3A443%2Fnoticias%3Fp_p_id%3D101_INSTANCE_kBZtOMZgstp3%26p_p_lifecycle%3D0%26p_p_state%3Dnormal%26p_p_mode%3Dview%26p_p_col_id%3Dcolumn-](https://www.seg-social.pt/noticias/-/asset_publisher/kBZtOMZgstp3/content/agenda-para-o-trabalho-digno-alteracoes-ao-regime-da-parentalidade?redirect=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.seg-social.pt%3A443%2Fnoticias%3Fp_p_id%3D101_INSTANCE_kBZtOMZgstp3%26p_p_lifecycle%3D0%26p_p_state%3Dnormal%26p_p_mode%3Dview%26p_p_col_id%3Dcolumn-1%26p_p_col_count%3D1%26_101_INSTANCE_kBZtOMZgstp3_advancedSearch%3Dfalse%26_101_INSTANCE_kBZtOMZgstp3_keywords%3D%26_101_INSTANCE_kBZtOMZgstp3_delta%3D100%26p_r_p_564233524_resetCur%3Dfalse%26_101_INSTANCE_kBZtOMZgstp3_andOperator%3Dtrue)

[1%26p_p_col_count%3D1%26_101_INSTANCE_kBZtOMZgstp3_advancedSearch%3Dfalse%26_101_INSTANCE_kBZtOMZgstp3_keywords%3D%26_101_INSTANCE_kBZtOMZgstp3_delta%3D100%26p_r_p_564233524_resetCur%3Dfalse%26_101_INSTANCE_kBZtOMZgstp3_andOperator%3Dtrue](https://www.seg-social.pt/noticias/-/asset_publisher/kBZtOMZgstp3/content/agenda-para-o-trabalho-digno-alteracoes-ao-regime-da-parentalidade?redirect=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.seg-social.pt%3A443%2Fnoticias%3Fp_p_id%3D101_INSTANCE_kBZtOMZgstp3%26p_p_lifecycle%3D0%26p_p_state%3Dnormal%26p_p_mode%3Dview%26p_p_col_id%3Dcolumn-1%26p_p_col_count%3D1%26_101_INSTANCE_kBZtOMZgstp3_advancedSearch%3Dfalse%26_101_INSTANCE_kBZtOMZgstp3_keywords%3D%26_101_INSTANCE_kBZtOMZgstp3_delta%3D100%26p_r_p_564233524_resetCur%3Dfalse%26_101_INSTANCE_kBZtOMZgstp3_andOperator%3Dtrue)

Serrano, L., & Pinto, J. 2015. *A creche em Portugal: entre uma perspetiva assistencialista e educacional.* <http://mediacoes.esse.ips.pt>.

Tesch, R. 1990. *QUALITATIVE RESEARCH: Analysis Types and Software Tools.* Routledge.

Thévenon, O. 2011. *Family Policies in OECD Countries: A Comparative Analysis.*

Thévenon, O. 2013. *Drivers of Female Labour Force Participation in the OECD.* <https://doi.org/10.1787/5k46civrngnms6-en>.

Torres, A. 2004. *Vida Conjugal e Trabalho: Uma Perspetiva Sociológica.* (Celta Editora, Ed.). Oeiras.

- Torres, A. 2006. *Work and Family in Portugal*. (G. Rossi, Ed.). Milan: Franco Angeli.
- Torres, A. 2008. Women, Gender, and Work: The Portuguese Case in the Context of the European Union. *International Journal of Sociology*, 38(4): 36–56.
- Van Lancker, W. 2018. Reducing Inequality in Childcare Service Use across European Countries: What (if any) Is the role of Social Spending? *Social Policy & Administration*, 52(1): 271–292.
- Viitanen, T. K. 2001. *The Causality Between Female Labour Force Participation and the Availability of Childcare*.
- Vogel, L. 2013. *Marxism and the Oppression of Women: Toward a Unitary Theory*.
- Von Gleichen, R., & Seeleib-Kaiser, M. 2017. *Family Policies and the Weakening of the Male Breadwinner Model*.
- Wall, K., Aboim, S., & Leitão, M. 2011. *Observatório das Famílias e das Políticas de Família - Relatório 2010*. <http://hdl.handle.net/10451/20327>.
- Weiss, H. 2021. Social Reproduction. (F. Stein, J. Robbins, R. Stasch, M. Candea, A. Sanchez, et al., Eds.) *Cambridge Encyclopedia of Anthropology*. <https://doi.org/10.29164/21socialrepro>.

Appendices

Appendix A: Definition of policies

The policies “active labour market programmes”, “unemployment” and “income maintenance” are not the main focus of this dissertation, however they were used to replicate the indicator calculated by Ferragina (2022).

Despite the fact that they are not the main objective, it is important to understand their meaning. Active labour market programmes refer to all social expenditure (except education) that aims to help individuals find work and to facilitate the match between the vacancy and the worker (European Commission, 2017). In contrast to active labour market programmes, unemployment benefits are cash benefits to individuals who are involuntarily unemployed in order to compensate the lack of income (eportugal). Lastly, Danzinger & Plotnick (1981) define income maintenance programmes “as those that provide support – cash or in-kind – through social insurance or public assistance”.

Appendix B: The spending on policies and calculus applied

Table 3: Spending on policies

	Family allowances	Maternity and parental leave	ECEC				
1980	0,534	0,087	0,003	2000	0,376	0,112	0,276
1981	0,604	0,102	0,003	2001	0,375	0,116	0,300
1982	0,582	0,098	0,003	2002	0,389	0,121	0,310
1983	0,588	0,093	0,002	2003	0,449	0,146	0,377
1984	0,558	0,087	0,003	2004	0,460	0,182	0,372
1985	0,508	0,077	0,003	2005	0,434	0,237	0,374
1986	0,572	0,070	0,006	2006	0,427	0,240	0,360
1987	0,558	0,073	0,011	2007	0,422	0,247	0,345
1988	0,520	0,072	0,011	2008	0,506	0,246	0,352
1989	0,487	0,072	0,007	2009	0,620	0,304	0,375
1990	0,398	0,073	0,004	2010	0,581	0,278	0,388
1991	0,438	0,083	0,004	2011	0,402	0,299	0,372
1992	0,434	0,082	0,004	2012	0,413	0,296	0,377
1993	0,441	0,086	0,004	2013	0,416	0,250	0,406
1994	0,419	0,083	0,005	2014	0,393	0,260	0,415
1995	0,415	0,090	0,005	2015	0,374	0,284	0,383
1996	0,401	0,093	0,006	2016	0,373	0,311	0,372
1997	0,406	0,089	0,008	2017	0,360	0,311	0,383

Source: OECD

Graph: Own Authorship

Table 4: Calculus applied in the previous indicator

	ECEC minus Family allowances	ECEC minus Maternity and parental leave			
1980	-0,531	-0,084	2000	-0,1	0,164
1981	-0,601	-0,099	2001	-0,075	0,184
1982	-0,579	-0,095	2002	-0,079	0,189
1983	-0,586	-0,091	2003	-0,072	0,231
1984	-0,555	-0,084	2004	-0,088	0,19
1985	-0,505	-0,074	2005	-0,06	0,137
1986	-0,566	-0,064	2006	-0,067	0,12
1987	-0,547	-0,062	2007	-0,077	0,098
1988	-0,509	-0,061	2008	-0,154	0,106
1989	-0,48	-0,065	2009	-0,25	0,071
1990	-0,394	-0,069	2010	-0,193	0,11
1991	-0,434	-0,079	2011	-0,03	0,073
1992	-0,43	-0,078	2012	-0,036	0,081
1993	-0,437	-0,082	2013	-0,01	0,156
1994	-0,414	-0,078	2014	0,022	0,155
1995	-0,41	-0,085	2015	0,009	0,099
1996	-0,395	-0,087	2016	-0,001	0,061
1997	-0,398	-0,081	2017	0,023	0,072
1998	-0,181	0,132	2018	-0,026	0,022
1999	-0,11	0,172	2019	-0,048	0,005

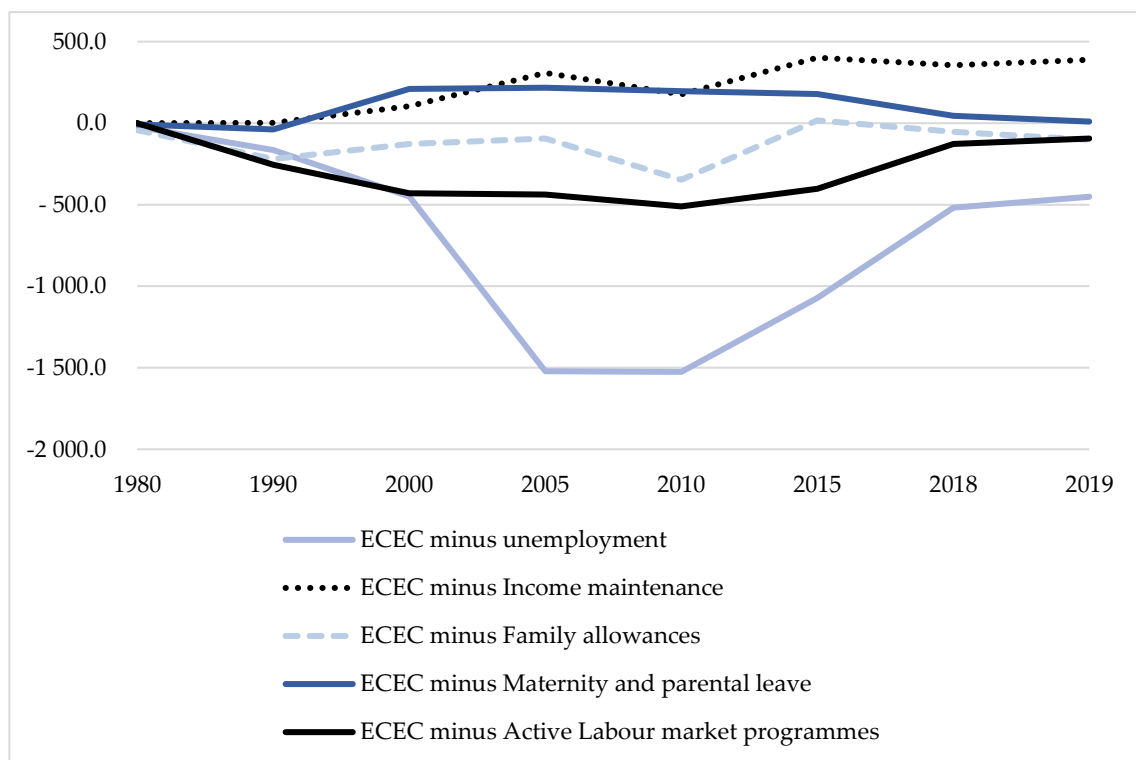
Source: OECD

Graph: Own Authorship and Own Calculus

Appendix C: Recreation of Ferragina study for Portugal

Similarly to the group it is inserted, Portugal childcare spendings have overtaken income maintenance and leaves spendings (although there has been a decrease in recent years, meaning that the expenditure in leaves has approximated to childcare spendings) and the gap with active labour market programmes has remained similar to the one in 1980. However, Portugal presents differences in comparison to the Mediterranean group regarding family allowances spendings, which have had variations during the years, but the gap is similar to 1980 and also about unemployment, which has been decreasing over the years.

Figure 20: Catch up spending in relation to ECEC in Portugal



Source: OECD

Graph: Own Authorship and Own Calculus

Appendix D: Average life expectancy

Table 5: Average life expectancy

	Male	Female
1998	72,2	79,4
1999	72,5	79,6
2000	72,9	79,9
2001	73,3	80,1
2002	73,6	80,2
2003	74,1	80,6
2004	74,4	80,9
2005	74,8	81,3
2006	75,2	81,6
2007	75,5	81,8
2008	75,8	81,9
2009	76,2	82,2
2010	76,5	82,4
2011	76,7	82,6
2012	77	82,8
2013	77,2	83,1
2014	77,4	83,2
2015	77,7	83,4
2016	77,9	83,5
2017	77,9	83,5
2018	78,1	83,6
2019	78,3	83,7
2020	78	83,5
2021	78,1	83,5

Source: PORDATA

Graph: Own Authorship

Appendix E: Earnings by occupation

Table 6: Average monthly earnings of employees: total and by occupation

2021	
Total	1 294,1
Administrative work	1 173,2
Unqualified workers	895,7

Source: PORDATA

Graph: Own Authorship