

WOMEN IN MANAGEMENT IN PORTUGAL: A DEMOGRAPHIC OVERVIEW

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Introduction

Before presenting the situation of women in management, some historical information concerning the Portuguese society will be provided in order to form a framework for interpreting the demographic data and understanding the Portuguese context of gender relations.

According to recent sociological research "comparison of statistics on women's employment and activity shows that in Portugal the difference between the male and female workforce is less accentuated than in more developed countries of the European Union" (Ferreira, 1993, p.233). Furthermore, most statistics reveal a high level of integration of women in the formal economy. Some aspects of the specific development of the Portuguese society may account for this particular pattern.

In the XXth century Portugal experienced a long period of cultural backwardness and economic underdevelopment as a result of a dictatorship which lasted from 1926 to 1974¹. By that time Portugal was one of the least developed countries in Europe, but it was also the only remaining colonial power. The fact that this country was, at the same time, at the center of a colonial empire and at the periphery of Europe is considered by Santos (1994) as a basic structuring factor of Portuguese society: "Portugal was the only European country which was looked upon by other colonising powers as a "wild" or "native" country" (p. 59).

The fact that Portugal held on to its colonies, in a period in which most European colonial empires were falling, had indeed serious consequences for the Portuguese society. Confronted with the claims for independence which were rising in some of the African colonies, and despite the pressures of the international community, the government refused any negotiation. In 1961 the colonial war broke out in Angola and spread later to Guine-Bissau and Mozambique. Hence, by the time many western countries were enjoying prosperity and social movements were struggling for human rights and the improvement of democracy, Portugal was going the opposite direction. As a consequence of the war effort poverty increased, migration to the industrial urban areas grew rapidly and out of control and emigration to other European countries reached its peak. The drafting of young men for long periods of military service to fight in Africa, where many died or were wounded, disrupted family life and intimate relationships. As the regime became more and more isolated from the international community internal repression increased and many deserters and political activists had to leave the country or were imprisoned.

The aim of the 1974 military coup was not only to end the war but also to implement democracy and promote development. After two years of political unrest a new Constitution was approved in 1976 and elections were held for Parliament, for the Presidency of the Republic, for the regional assemblies of the autonomous regions (the archipelagos of Azores and Madeira) and for local government councils. By granting equal rights to all citizens, the new Constitution

(1) Following the overthrowing of the monarchy the Republic was proclaimed in Portugal in 1910. In 1926 a military coup established an authoritarian regime and Salazar rose to power, first as finance minister and later as prime-minister until 1968. Democracy was finally restored with a military coup on April 25th 1974.

represented a fundamental improvement in the situation of Portuguese women.

Changes in the labour market also reflected positively on women's status. Before 1974 women's salaries were about 53% of those of men but by 1977 this figure had risen to 72%, as a result of the introduction of a minimum wage and women's access to better paid occupations. In 1971 approximately 83% of women occupied the lowest paid jobs and in 1978 this percentage had already gone down to 54% (Kaplan, 1992). In 1970 women's employment rate was 19.7% (Salgado, 1978). By 1990 47% of Portuguese women over 14 and 71% of those aged 25-49 years were employed (Bulletin on Women and Employment in the EEC, 1992, n.1, p.2).

Women's participation in the labour market is not an entirely new phenomenon in Portugal. There is a long tradition of female work in agriculture, both as wage workers and in subsistence farming, as well as in textile industry. Secondly, the emigration of men in the 60s left many women managing the family's small properties or businesses. Furthermore the colonial war facilitated the access of educated women to qualified jobs. The most significant change in the situation of women in the labour market concerns the proportion of male and female workforce in the three sectors of activity. In 1994, 13.5% of active women worked in agriculture, 24.3% in industry and 62.2% in the services sector, whereas the distribution for men was 10.1%, 40% and 49.9% respectively (Commission for Equality and Women's Rights, 1994, p.115). But the great number of women in the services occupations is partly explained by the fact that "sixty percent of women professionals in Portugal are employed as teachers, the country with the most pronounced feminisation of teaching" (Bulletin on Women and Employment in the EC, 1993, p. 3)

This means that the participation of women in the process of development undergone by the Portuguese economy, which was characterized by a consistent reduction of the primary sector and the growth of the services sector, has been largely confined to the activities associated with the traditional female role.

However the increase in the activity rate of Portuguese women has not been accompanied by changes in the division of labour in the family. Hence "Portuguese women are particularly over-burdened because not only do most of them work full-time, but they also have the longest working week in the EU (42.9 hours comparatively to an average of 34.7 hours) in a society where there is very little help available for the care of the children, the sick and the old

(nursery schools provided childcare for only 40% of children under 3 in 1980)" (Ferreira, 1993, p.237). On the other hand, the average number of children for women between 15 and 49 has dropped from 2.71 in 1960 to 2.17 in 1981 and 1.59 in 1991 (Nunes de Almeida & Wall, 1995, p. 39-40). According to these authors the consistency of this pattern all over the country, despite the unequal regional development of women's employment, reveals a change in the importance attributed by Portuguese parents to the education of their children.

Indeed the greatest changes that took place in Portuguese society after 1974 were in the field of education. In 1911 the republican government implemented compulsory schooling for all children aged 7 to 11. It was only after 1974 that the period of compulsory schooling was progressively increased to attain 9 years in 1986. Three more years are required to complete secondary education (10th to 12th grades). The extension of compulsory schooling and the demand of education have caused a rapid growth of the school population. Between 1974-75 and 1989-90 the number of students in the last five grades of secondary schooling (7th to 12th grades) grew 169% and the number of university students grew 158% (Marçal Grilo, 1995, p. 186). On the other hand primary school population decreased as a consequence of the fall in fertility. However, as late as 1988, 21% of women and 11% of men were illiterate and the rate for the total population was still higher than 12% according to the 1991 population census (Marçal Grilo, 1995, p. 181). Confronted with a particular negative legacy in the field of education democratic governments have concentrated their investments in teacher training and school buildings for the new generations, whereas eradication of illiteracy has been given far less attention. On the whole the younger generations have benefited from this policy but the progress in education in the last 20 years is even more evident for women than for men.

In 1990-91, 51.9% of the secondary school population and 54.5% of the university students were women and in the same year women were also the majority of the students (58.5%) enrolled in the first year of university (Commission for Equality and Women's Rights, 1994, p.101). The improvement in women's higher education has facilitated their access to better qualified jobs and the analysis of the statistics reveals a significant degree of feminisation in some professions: in 1993, 30.8% of lawyers, 40.7% of medical doctors, 22.5% of judges, and 17.8% of diplomats (numbers for 1994) were women (Commission for Equality and Women's Rights, 1994, p.119). The increase of woman judges and diplomats is particularly recent as women had no access to these professions

before 1974. However the presence of women is less significant in decision making positions. In 1991 20 women were elected among the 230 members of Parliament (8.7%) and 6 of the 59 government posts were held by women (2 ministers and 4 secretaries of state); in the local elections of 1993 only 5 of the 305 mayors elected were women (1.6%) and in 1994 only 2 women were elected to the European Parliament (Commission for Equality and Women's Rights, 1994, p.125).

Women In Management

The aim of this work is to present recent data concerning the presence of women in management positions. Our data are based on the information contained in the 1991 population census.

As our analysis is centered on an area of activity which requires highly qualified human resources, we will start with some data on academic qualifications.

Table 1 - Women as % of Graduates

FIRST DEGREE	COMPLETE	48%
	ATTENDING	53.9%
MASTER/Ph D	COMPLETE	35%
	ATTENDING	52%

As can be seen in Table 1 the current percentage of female graduates is 48%. However if we take into account those still attending university this percentage will tend to increase. The same occurs in the highest levels of academic training. These data suggest that the number of women graduates, as

well as the number of women holding masters (translation for the portuguese "mestrado" which is a postgraduation degree) and PhD degrees will soon be higher than the number of men.

On the other hand, the breaking down of the percentage of female graduates into the different scientific areas indicates, as shown in Table 2, that this trend is not particularly influenced by the traditional division of feminine and masculine areas. If we take into account that most female graduates are teachers, as stated in the introduction, the number of graduates in education, humanities and even exact sciences can be explained by the orientation towards the teaching profession. It is nevertheless important to verify that the proportion of women is also high in some areas traditionally considered as male, such as medical sciences and management. Sciences of agriculture and engineering, in particular, are the only areas where the number of women graduates is low.

Table 2 - Women as % of Graduates by Scientific Area

	FIRST DEGREE	MASTERS / Ph. D
Humanities	70%	51,1%
Education	84,9%	56,4%
Arts	51,4
Law	32,3%	25,5%
Social Sciences	48%	31,6%
Management	46,2%
Exact Sciences	69,1%	50,1%
Medical Sciences	60,3%	34,2%
Sc. of Agriculture	24,4%	25,1%
Engineering	13,5%	15,2%

Concerning the situation of women in management we intend to characterize the Portuguese context on the basis of some recent demographic data. Our data covers all occupations associated with management and high status professions, as shown in Table 3. The 5 occupational categories included in this table correspond to the categories defined by the National Statistics Institute: Entrepreneurs/directors which includes owners of large corporations administrating their property; entrepreneurs with intellectual and scientific professions which also includes property owners with a high cultural capital; entrepreneurs in industry, trade and services (this category differs from the precedent in respect to the cultural capital); top managers in the private and public sectors and independent intellectual and scientific professionals.

Table 3 - Women as % of Entrepreneurs, Top Managers and High Status Professionals

	TOTAL (women)	% of total M / F)
Entrepreneurs / Directors	9727	18,3%
Entrepreneurs with high cultural capital	7153	38,2%
Entrepreneurs in Industry, Trade and Services	22591	31,3%
Top Managers (private and public sector)	6538	18%
Independent intellectual and scientific professionals	3963	24,4%

According to the information contained in Table 3, women's presence is less significant in the two categories requiring the recognition of authority and leadership qualities (both in the private and public sector). The large percentages in the second and the third categories may be explained by the access of women to property through inheritance. However the number of those who are property owners with high cultural capital is the highest of all categories. The percentage of women in the law and medical professions (see

the introduction) may explain the number of women who work as independent professionals.

In view of these results we decided to analyse the number of women who occupy the five positions pointed out in Table 3 and who are also family heads (Table 4). Once more we find the smallest number of women family heads in the category of Entrepreneurs /Directors (followed by the category of top managers) and the highest number in the category of entrepreneurs with high cultural capital.

Table 4- Women Family Heads as % of Entrepreneurs, Top Managers and High Status Professionals

	TOTAL (women)	% of total M/ F)
Entrepreneurs / Directors	1141	3,2%
Entrepreneurs with high cultural capital	1324	12%
Entrepreneurs in Industry, Trade and Services	2397	7,3%
Top Managers (private and public sector)	1208	4,9%
Independent intellectual and scientific professionals	726	8,6%

Several studies enhance the importance of civil status in the access of women to top positions in management. As mentioned in one of the previous papers (see the paper by Conceição Nogueira in this book) women managers and in other traditionally male professions tend to be either single or divorced and those who are married belong to dual career couples.

Table 5 - Women Managers by Civil Status

	TOTAL	%
Single	11257	22,5%
Married	33874	67,7%
Widow	1641	3,2%
Divorced	3196	6,3%

As can be seen in Table 5 the highest percentage concerns married women, then followed by single, divorced women and widows. In order to clarify the relationship between civil status and the access to top management positions (and high status professions) we compared these figures with the distribution of women by civil status in the total population.

Table 6 - Comparison of the Civil Status of Women - in Management and in the Total Population

	TOTAL (women)	% of women managers	% of women in total population
Single	11257	22,5%	27,2%
Married	33874	67,7%	57,5%
Widow	1641	3,2%	11,9%
Divorced	49972	6,3%	3,3%

It is important to note that the figures for the total population in Table 6 include women of all age groups and not only those we are particularly interested in. Despite this limitation in our data, inspection of Table 6 reveals one particularly relevant result: the percentage of divorced women in managerial and high status professions is almost twice as high as the percentage of divorced women in the total population.

Finally, it seemed important to analyse the age distribution of women managers. As can be seen in Table 7, 61.4% of women managers are under 45 and more than one third of them belong to the youngest age group. According to these data the access of women to management positions is a recent phenomenon which is closely linked to democracy and the progress in education in Portugal. Furthermore, the low average age of women managers sheds another light on the data concerning the civil status of these women (Table 6), as the association between divorce and a leadership position becomes more evident.

Table 7 - Women Managers by Age Groups

	TOTAL	%
age group: 25 to 34	15.402	33,9%
age group: 35 to 44	13.822	27,5%
age group: 45 to 54	8.508	16,7%

Final Comment

Some conclusions can be drawn from this short overview of the data of the 1991 population census with respect to the situation of women in management in Portugal:

1. Women outnumber men in higher education.
2. Although the majority of women students in higher education attend those courses which lead to traditionally female professions, such as teaching, their number in other scientific areas, including management, is increasing.

3. In the near future there will be more women graduates than men, as well as more women PhD holders.
4. Although the current percentage of women in management professions is still low, it may increase as a result of the increase in the number of graduate women.
5. Despite the changes in women's cultural capital, their access to top management positions is still not very significant.
6. The divorce rate is higher for women in leading positions and professions with high cultural capital than in the total population which confirms the costs that these careers involve for women.
7. Most women who currently occupy leading professional and managerial positions are relatively young. Thus, their access to such positions is a phenomenon nearly as old as the democracy in Portugal.
8. In what concerns the future the question is whether the change in women's cultural capital will facilitate their progressive access to top positions, or will the effect of the *glass ceiling* remain despite the improvement of women's educational status. The answer to this question may lie in the research performed in other countries which shows that gender discriminatory effects prevail over women's effort.

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