Article

Work–Family Articulation Policies in Portugal and Gender Equality: Advances and Challenges

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Abstract: Portugal has been described as a singular case in terms of the participation of women in the labour market and work–life balance policies. Unlike the other so-called Southern European countries, where a belated and somewhat slower move away from the male breadwinner model has been found, Portugal stands out from the other EU member states with its relatively high rate of female employment and the prevalence of the dual-earner model based on continuous and fundamentally full-time employment. Moreover, the "early return to full-time work and a gender equality oriented model" calls for a separate analysis of this country's case. In addition to providing a comprehensive overview of the singularities of Portugal's employment patterns and work–family articulation policies, this article substantially adds to the existing literature by bringing new analytical angles to the debate. The intention is therefore to shed light on the political discourses that fuelled the policy debate throughout the three decades following Portugal's transition to democracy, up until the latest and most decisive policy changes. This article also examines the key social actors' views about the political process sustaining the development of policies in this area and identifies the major players promoting the most progressive legislative advances in the country.

Keywords: work–family articulation policies; welfare state; gender equality; Portugal

1. Introduction

There has been a substantial increase in the participation of women in the workforce, and the dual-earner model is now the one most commonly found in European societies. Such a trend, however, has developed across gendered labour patterns: part-time employment is a largely female-dominated working time arrangement, and work interruption after childbirth is still common among women, while men tend to increase their labour market participation when they become parents (Casaca 2012; Torres et al. 2018; Wall et al. 2016).

The welfare state, or state social provision, which has been typified in different regimes by a number of authors (Arcanjo 2006, 2011; Esping-Andersen 1990, 1999; Ferrera 1996; Lewis 1992; Orloff 2009), plays an important role within the framework of gender equality (Addis 2003; Orloff 2009). The variety of family policies and leave arrangements designed to facilitate articulation between professional and family life is now a well-developed field of research. The conceptual option for 'articulation' is aligned with previous criticism of the term work–family/life 'balance' (Crompton et al. 2007; Gregory and Milner 2009; Lewis and Cooper 2005), as, to some extent, the idea of 'balance' suggests a harmony between the demands of paid and unpaid work, which does not exist in most cases. Thus, the more neutral concept of 'articulation' encompasses the need for individuals to make a trade-off between employment and care responsibilities, instead placing the focus on their strategies for coping with this inevitability.

Parental leave policies, subsidies for dependents (such as children, disabled persons and the elderly) and the provision of infrastructures and services for the support of families are just some examples of policies that can promote a better work–family articulation (Gornick and Meyers 2009). Diverging policy developments are to be found across Europe, thus reflecting how differently the dominant assumptions on women and men's roles in society are embedded in the orientations of various welfare states. Not only have such divergences had different implications in terms of gender equality (Addis 2003; Lewis 2002; Orloff 2009; Wall 2007), but developments in family policies are also far from following a linear progressive trend even within the same country (Kamerman and Moss 2009). Nordic societies have implemented far-reaching reforms and are now closer to the "universal breadwinner and caregiver parity model" (like the one found in Iceland), which has long been considered the ideal model for achieving gender equality in societies and ensuring that women and men's roles in professional and care work are fully equalised (Fraser 1997).

Portugal is considered an interesting case study, since a relatively high rate of female employment is intertwined with the prevalence of the dual-earner model based on continuous and fundamentally full-time employment (Casaca 2012; Torres et al. 2005, 2018), accompanied by a strong state orientation towards gender equality and a significant investment in the care infrastructure, sustaining an 'early return to full-time work' model (Escobedo and Wall 2015). What is less well known, however, is the political process underpinning policy development in the country, with the main discourses either supporting or contesting the most progressive legislative proposals, and the major social actors in play. As there is no previous research that has thoroughly examined this dimension for the Portuguese context, our study therefore seeks to bring an innovative insight to the existing literature on the topic.

This article is based on research that sought to fulfil two core objectives: (1) firstly, to study the labour market trends in Portugal from a gender-sensitive point of view, and to analyse the main advances made in terms of work–family articulation policies; (2) secondly, to analyse the discourses of the key social actors about the fundamental political processes and to identify the major players (critical actors) promoting a transformative policy agenda. The first objective was fulfilled by adopting a longitudinal analytical approach, which covered over four decades (1976–2019), starting in the period of transition to democracy (1976), with the enactment of the first normative framework aimed at achieving gender equality and work–family articulation, and ending with the latest available data (2019). To this end, a descriptive analysis is made of the main trends in employment rates, as well as of the core policy developments aimed at facilitating work–life articulation and providing for maternity and paternity protection (Sections 4 and 5). As for the second objective, the analytical focus is on the policy developments occurring between 1976 and 2009, as this is considered to be the period when ground-breaking reforms were introduced in the field of parental leave policies geared towards gender equality in the country. The research findings result from the adoption of a comprehensive methodology based on the combination of both a descriptive and a qualitative approach, involving the in-depth analysis of the contents of parliamentary debates and the corpus of semi-structured interviews held with key actors (Section 6). We start by outlining the main theoretical contributions to the debate on the welfare state, work–family policies and gender equality, as well as the role played by the critical actors in achieving policy progress (Section 2), and we end by pointing to the main research conclusions, together with an indication of the research topics to be developed and broadened in future studies (Section 7).

2. Welfare State, Work–Family Articulation and Gender Equality: A Summary of the Theoretical Debate

The debate on the differing orientations of welfare states towards the articulation between professional and family life and gender equality was initially driven by Esping Andersen's benchmark study of the different regimes of welfare states (liberal, conservative and social-democratic), published in 1990. The author's approach was followed by an increasing chorus of feminist critical accounts that have pointed to the existence of gender

blindness (Lewis 1992; Korpi 2000) and the underestimation of unpaid work (O'Connor et al. 1999; Orloff 1993), mostly undertaken by women. In this vein, Krook and Mackay (2011) argue that institutionalists should recognise the importance of gender relations for the configuration of institutions, as it should be impossible to imagine a good science that ignores gender. According to the institutional approach, different parental leave policy models are found in Europe: the 'one-year-leave' gender equality oriented model, which comes closest to that of Scandinavian countries, granting approximately nine to 13 months of paid leave with full or very high compensation, and highly geared towards the promotion of gender equality; the 'part-time mother' short-leave policy model, which is particularly common in liberal Anglo-Saxon countries, where part-time work during the various phases of motherhood is seen as an adequate option, there is a shortage of state provisions to assist the care dependent, and therefore a low emphasis on gender equality in the policy agenda; and the 'home-centred mother' long-leave policy model, which promotes maternal home care through well-paid leave until the child is 3 years old, consequently having a low emphasis on gender equality in terms of leave (Wall and Escobedo 2013).

The debate on the position of women in welfare states led to the emergence of the concept of 'defamilisation' (Esping-Andersen 1999; McLaughlin and Glendinning 1994), which, according to Lohmann and Zagel (2016, p. 50), "captures not only economic independence and the independence from care responsibility but also the freedom to choose who cares". In particular, defamilisation refers to the independence of women, depending on the degree to which the welfare state promotes their integration into the labour market, their economic autonomy and freedom of choice in the way that they lead their lives, relieving them of family responsibilities. Hence, the burden of unpaid informal care work is still mostly regarded as the responsibility of women, who are often driven to opt for a reduction in the number of working hours to combine both responsibilities, which, together with policies based on individual contributions, will maintain or even reinforce their underprivileged position (Bettio and Plantenga 2004; Gornick and Meyers 2009; Lewis et al. 2008). Therefore, in order to address work–family articulation, besides providing paid and gender equality oriented leaves, policies must also ensure the public provision of care services and more balanced working-time arrangements. In this context, the government's commitment to gender equality is seen as particularly relevant, given the need to change the way that care work is managed within families. In this sense, as an alternative to the most common configurations of care work, and in order to achieve gender equality, Fraser (1997) suggested a 'universal caregiver model', according to which institutions should act on the assumption that caregiving responsibilities should be socially shared, thus allowing men and women to combine a professional career with care responsibilities.

As far as Portugal is concerned, its frequent inclusion in the Southern European cluster is far from being consensual (Arcanjo 2011; Silva 2002; Wall 2007). Ferrera (1996) identified differentiating features of Southern European countries that suggested the need for a fourth "family" of welfare state configurations: (i) the peculiar 'excesses' in income maintenance: peaks of generosity accompanied by vast gaps in terms of protection; and (ii) the persistence of clientelism and the formation—in some cases—of fairly elaborate 'patronage systems' for the selective distribution of cash subsidies. Arcanjo's analysis, however (Arcanjo 2011, p. 141), did not validate Ferrera's typology, as the polarisation of social protection systems in Southern European countries is related to their lower level of development in comparison with those of other countries in the early 1990s, and the question of political benefits "appears to be a forced generalisation in the social security domain, at least with regard to Portugal". Furthermore, as mentioned by Wall (2007) and Escobedo and Wall (2015), while Portugal's historical pathway is linked to the Southern European male breadwinner model, different patterns were to be found in Spain, for instance, in the transition from a right-wing dictatorship to democracy. In the case of Spain, the literature has pointed to its late departure from a breadwinner-oriented model, whereas Portugal followed an early 'revolutionary' move towards the adoption of an "early

return to full-time work and the gender equality oriented model." Since the late 1990s, in particular, progressive public policies relating to family issues have been combined with the expansion of service provision and embedded in a gender-equality model geared towards providing support for the greater involvement of fathers in parenting roles and in the dual-earner model. Moreover, Portugal enjoyed an early participation of women in the labour market and is amongst the European countries with the highest level of female contribution to the income of dual-earner families (Addabbo et al. 2015; Casaca and Damião 2011; Cunha and Atalaia 2019). Despite progressive legislation on gender equality and (paid) work–family articulation, the obstacles to defamilisation are high, in particular due to the lack of childcare and eldercare facilities, as well as the prevalence of a strong gender asymmetry in terms of the burden of unpaid and caring work (Perista et al. 2016).

Changes in the development of work–family policies, however, result from the complex relationship and interplay between the historical context, the institutional framework and the role played by political actors (Kamerman and Moss 2009). Hence, seminal works on critical mass theory (Dahlerup 1988) highlighted the influence of 'critical actors' as key drivers for policy change, specifically with women-friendly outcomes. According to the definition suggested by Chaney (2012, p. 442), 'critical actor' is an "umbrella term", as it embodies a variety of actors with different areas of expertise, who are dedicated to enhancing the strategic representation of women in legislative settings, and can be strategically focused on one specific women's issue. Following the same reasoning, Childs and Krook (2008, p. 734) stressed that it is not only the institutional factors that are important, but also the study of what specific actors do, namely male or female legislators "who initiate policy proposals on their own and often—but not necessarily—embolden others to take steps to promote policies for women, regardless of the number of female representatives present in a particular institution". Shedding light on these critical actors, men or women, is crucial, as it "offers new opportunities for exploring the legislative behaviour of women—and men—who mobilise on behalf of women as a group, and thus for identifying various possible paths to the improved substantive representation of women's concerns" (Childs and Krook 2008, p. 734).

3. Information Sources and Research Methods

The first of the two central objectives of this research was accomplished through a secondary data analysis of national and European statistical databases, as well as of publications (e.g., reports, books, articles) on labour market trends and work–family articulation policies. Labour market statistics prior to 1990 were obtained from own calculations based on the Portuguese National Statistics Institute's Labour Force Survey (INE n.d.), and Eurostat was the source for later years, via the European Labour Force Survey (Eurostat 2020). Complementary data on contingencies that influenced labour market dynamics over the years were taken from publications (Addabbo et al. 2015; Casaca 2012; Ferreira 2014; Torres et al. 2005). Data were also collected relating to the main advances in work–family articulation policies, firstly through an analysis of the contents of core policy documents, and, secondly, by retrieving empirical data on the coverage rates of caring infrastructures and parental leave take-ups. After the identification of major regulatory alterations relating to work–family articulation between 1976 and 2019, consisting of relevant changes in Constitutional Law, parental leave policies, social services and equipment, or National Action Plans, an extensive search was performed in each of the documents identified, from which the main segments/articles influencing work–family articulation were signalled and retrieved (see the summary in Table 1. Empirical data about the coverage rates of infrastructures were retrieved from the Social Charter—Service and Equipment Network report (GEP/MTSSS 2011, 2019), and statistics on parental leaves were obtained from the reports of the Commission for Equality in Labour and Employment (CITE 2019) and the Permanent Observatory of Family and Family Policies (Correia and Cunha 2020; Leitão et al. 2019; Wall et al. 2011, 2012, 2013, 2016).

As for the second objective, the analytical focus was on the development of policies between 1976 and 2009, as this is considered to be the ground-breaking period of reform in the field of leave policies geared towards gender equality in Portugal. The research findings result from the combination of both a descriptive and a qualitative and comprehensive methodological approach, based on the in-depth analysis of the contents of parliamentary debates and the corpus of semi-structured interviews undertaken with key actors. Most legislative measures designed to support the articulation between professional and family life are proposed, discussed and approved in Parliament. Hence, it was relevant to examine the debates in which this subject was either directly or indirectly addressed. To ensure as comprehensive a review as possible, we conducted research into the Portuguese Parliamentary Records Digital Library (available at www.parlamento.pt, accessed on 27 December 2013) and the Journal of the Constituent Assembly (1975–1976), the Journal of the Assembly of the Republic Series I (from 1976) and the Journal of the Assembly of the Republic Series I and II—Constitutional Revision. Considering the extent of the time horizon under analysis, it was necessary to define criteria for marking out the boundaries of our research. In this sense, we considered it appropriate to consult the debates concerning the most relevant of the previously identified changes in legislative initiatives relating to work–family articulation between 1976 and 2009 (see Table 1). As a research support document, an analytical matrix was drawn up, consisting of six segments, namely: identification of the parliamentary deputy participating in the debate; party membership; date of the debate; context of the deputy's intervention; transcription of the relevant segment of the intervention; and the party's position in the political spectrum. In order to collect the views of the key political actors about the evolution of work–family articulation policies, semi-structured individual interviews were undertaken between April and September 2015, with an average duration of 90 min. Participants were selected according to their relevance to the research topic and not according to their overall representativeness. The universe of interviewees comprises both former and current deputies, representatives of the women's commissions of the trade union confederations and presidents of the state bodies with responsibilities for gender-equality matters. The first interviews were conducted with key actors who had a higher level of media exposure, and whose contribution to developments in this area was common knowledge. Since this is a subject in which the main protagonists tend to have a lower level of media exposure, we requested the people that we interviewed first to provide us with the names and/or contacts of other people who actively contributed to the development of these policies (snowball sampling). Regarding the distribution of the sample of interviewees by sex, achieving a balanced representation of women and men was not a concern, since we were already aware, through the analysis of the parliamentary debate, that women were more active in these matters during the period under analysis. Hence, there was a clear majority (90%) of women in the group of participants (18 women and two men), and their ages ranged from 42 to 77 (with an average age of approximately 62) (see Table 2). To ensure that the information collected in the individual interviews was in keeping with the topics to be explored in depth, a script composed of 18 questions was prepared. Semi-structured interviews were analysed using software-assisted (MAXQDA 12) qualitative content analysis. At this stage, a thematic analysis was undertaken with a view to identifying, analysing and linking patterns (themes) in the data (Braun and Clarke 2006, p. 79).

4. Setting the Context: Women and Men in the Labour Market

This chapter offers an overview of the main employment patterns, for both women and men, in Portugal. The country has a long tradition of relatively high female employment, mostly on a full-time basis, driven by a combination of country-specific factors in the 1960s that led to a shortage of male workers, such as the massive recruitment of men to fight in the colonial war and the level of emigration flows (Casaca 2012; Torres et al. 2005). Moreover, the high prevalence of low incomes and poverty in Portugal accelerated the participation of women in the labour market, as a way of trying to make the family's ends

meet. Indeed, the percentage of women in the labour market rose from 13.1% in 1960 (Aboim 2010, p. 39) to 36.1% in 1976 (own calculations based on INE n.d.). Women's employment evolved at a more rapid rate after the 1974 Revolution and the consequent liberation from the dictatorial regime (1932–1974), when several policies were put in place to tackle social, economic, cultural and political discrimination against women. Before then, women had been prohibited from working in areas such as the judiciary, diplomacy and local public administration, and only in the 1976 Constitution were they granted several citizenship rights, not only in the field of work and employment, but also within the family, in terms of their access to education, as well as their right to civic and political participation (Monteiro 2010). These changes, accompanied by the developments taking place in the public administration, particularly in those sectors typically classified as areas of "feminine" work, such as education and the health services, reinforced the growth of full-time female employment in Portugal (Perista and Lopes 1999; Torres et al. 2005).

Statistics and information relating to employment were examined and compared to those of the 28 EU member states (before the UK left the EU). An analysis of the differential between female and male employment in Portugal reveals that, in 1976, the gap was approximately 22 percentage points (p.p. [36.1% for women and 57.6% for men]) (INE n.d.). Approximately twenty years later, in 1995, according to data from the *Labour Force Survey*, the gap had narrowed to approximately 17 p.p. (employment rates of 54.3% for women and 71.2% for men), and by 2010 it was already below ten p.p., with an employment rate of 61% for women and 69.8% for men. This was followed by a decrease in the employment rates of both women and men, over a period of three years, to the levels of 57.9% and 63.5%, respectively, in 2013, but also resulting in the lowest-ever gap being recorded of 5.6 p.p. (Eurostat 2020). It is worth noting that the gender gaps in employment (as well as in unemployment and precarious employment at that time) narrowed during the economic and labour crisis and the implementation of strong austerity measures. Such a trend cannot be interpreted as representing progress towards greater gender equality; rather, it is mostly driven by the increasingly vulnerable position of men, resulting from the widespread deterioration of labour market conditions (Addabbo et al. 2015; Ferreira 2014; Karamessini and Rubery 2014).

In 2019, the women's employment rate in Portugal was six percentage points lower than men's (67.6% and 73.6%, respectively), whereas in the EU-28 the gap has never been lower than ten p.p. (employment rates of 64.1% for women and 74.4% for men), due to the men's employment rate being higher and the women's employment rate being lower than it is in the Portuguese context (Eurostat 2020). Hence, in 2019, Portuguese women (aged between 15 and 64) had an employment rate that was (3.5 p.p.) higher than the EU-28 average (64.1%), bringing it closer to the country with the highest rate (75.4%), Sweden (Figure 1), than to the other so-called Southern European countries, where employment rates for women are among the lowest in the EU.
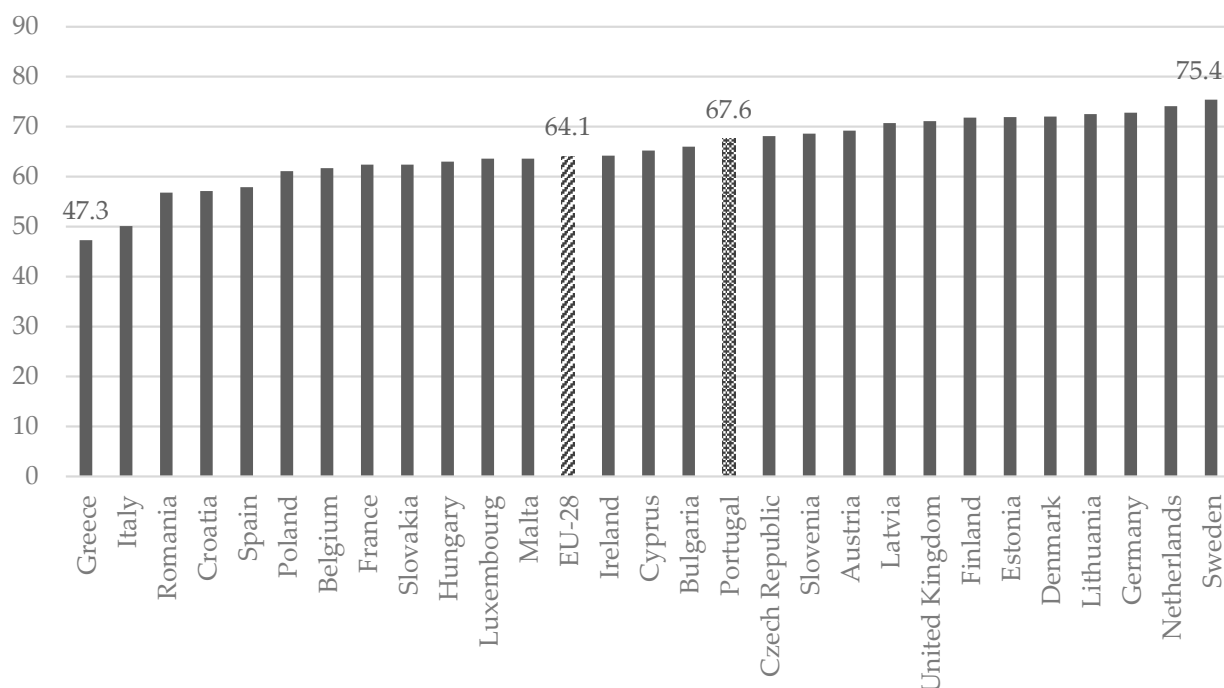
Figure 1. Employment rates of women (aged 15–64) in the EU-28, 2019 (%). *Source:* Eurostat (2020).

The characteristics that account for Portugal being considered a singular analytical case include the evidence that both women and men work on a full-time and continuous basis throughout their life course (Addabbo et al. 2015; Casaca 2012; Torres et al. 2018; Wall et al. 2016). In fact, 89.1% of all Portuguese women in employment (aged 15–64) were working on a full-time basis in 2019. Such a pattern was the dominant one in the time span under analysis. When women work part-time, the main reason given is the difficulty in finding a full-time job, suggesting that part-time work is mostly involuntary. Moreover, Portugal has the third highest employment rate (82.7%) for women (aged 20–49) with small children (aged under six) in the EU, immediately after Sweden (83.6%) and Slovenia (82.8%), and well above the EU-28 average (64.7%) (Figure 2). Furthermore, contrary to the predominant pattern of career interruption after childbirth among women in the EU, the employment rate in Portugal is slightly higher for women with children than it is for those women without children (81.6%) (Eurostat 2020). Data relating to this particular indicator for Portugal have only been available since 2005, and reveal a steady growth in the employment rates of women with children under 6 years of age, especially since 2012, increasing by more than 10 p.p. until 2019 (from 71.6% to 82.7%).

Despite the decreasing gap in the employment rates of Portuguese women and men, empirical evidence reveals the enduring patterns of segregation on the grounds of gender. Significant inequalities between men and women still persist, with female workers outnumbering their male counterparts in precarious jobs, unemployment, and less valued and poorly paid occupations, at the bottom of the hierarchical ladder (Addabbo et al. 2015; Coelho and Ferreira 2018; Torres et al. 2018).
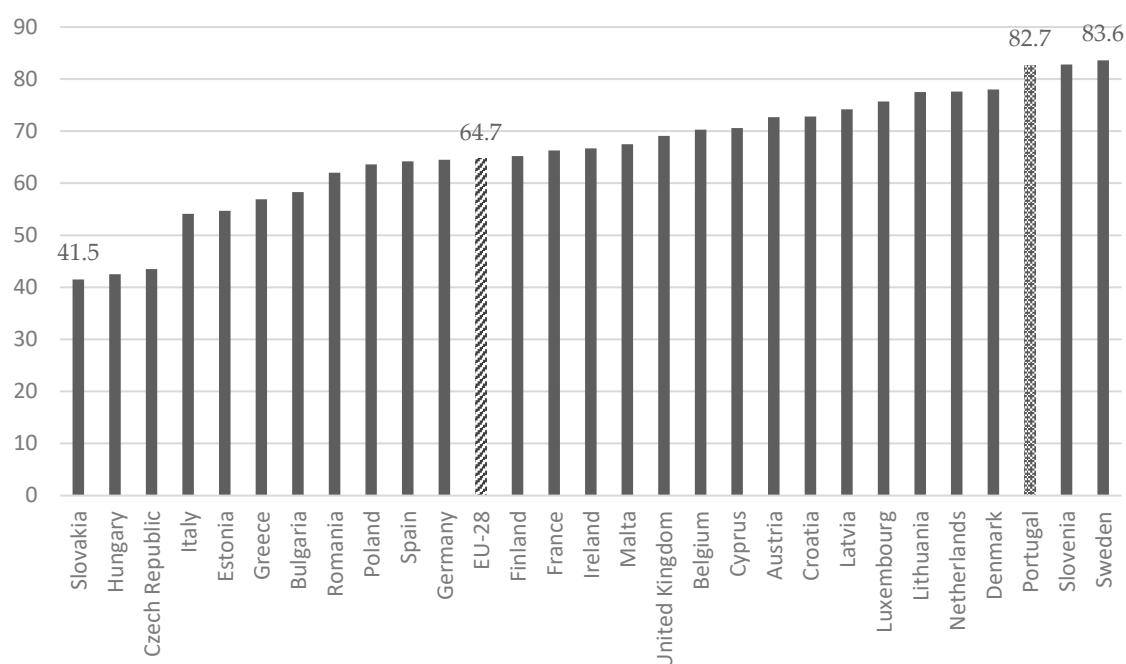
Figure 2. Employment rates of women (aged 20–49) with children under six years of age in the EU-28, 2019 (%). *Source:* Eurostat (2020).

5. The Evolution of Work–Family Articulation Policies in Portugal

Since the transition to democracy, in 1976, work–family articulation in Portugal has begun to be promoted in various dimensions of social life. Among these is the legislative process, with the progressive integration of this topic into the nation's public policies. We focus here on the measures adopted to promote work–family articulation and designed to provide the facilities and services needed to support families, protect parenthood and promote the involvement of fathers in childcare. The main legislative changes are briefly outlined in Table 1.

In the case of "parenthood protection", all women workers in Portugal were granted the right to a ninety-day period of maternity leave in 1976, but it was not until 1984 that the first legislation on the protection of maternity and paternity was put in place. The following figure summarises the main developments on this subject in the period 1976–2009 (Figure 3).
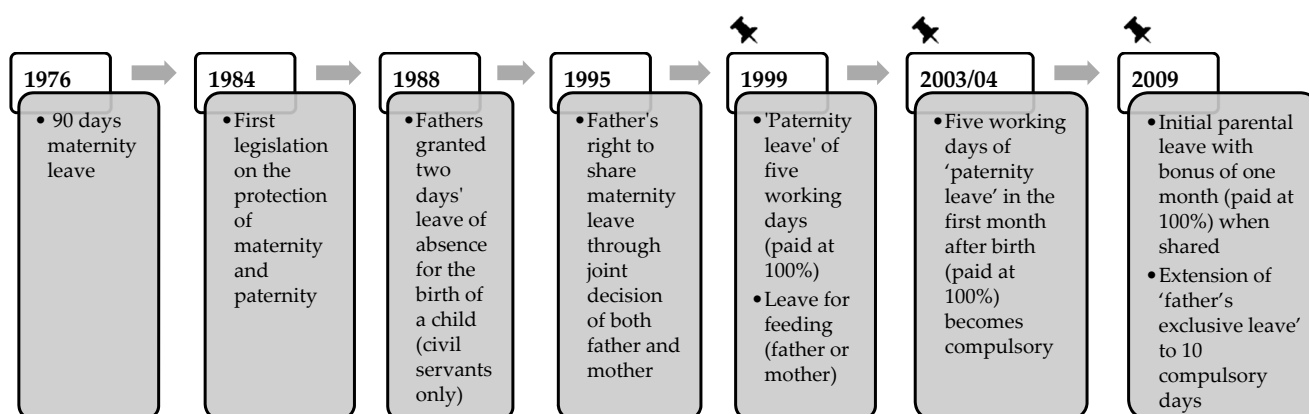

Figure 3. Developments in the legislation governing parenthood protection, 1976–2009. ✈ Major landmarks in leave policy developments in Portugal (Escobedo and Wall 2015).

The 1999 legislation was the first of three landmarks in leave policy developments in Portugal identified by Escobedo and Wall (2015). The introduction of an exclusive and fully-paid period of paternity leave for five working days—only an optional leave at first—and a period of leave for feeding of two hours per day (father or mother) were amongst the most important reforms ever introduced in Portugal in terms of parenthood protection. Official statistics on the evolution in the father's use of parental leave (compared to the number of births and expressed in percentage terms) show that there has been a continuous growth in the use of this option over the years, increasing by almost 70 p.p. between 2000 (10.8%) and 2018 (77.2%) (Figure 4). After the 1999 legislation was introduced, work–family articulation started to be addressed in the nation's regulatory framework for parenthood protection. Paternity leave became compulsory in 2004 with the regulation of the 2003 Labour Code (Código do Trabalho, hereafter referred to by the Portuguese acronym CT.), representing Escobedo and Wall (2015) second landmark. The 2003–2004 reform paved the way for subsequent legislation to be geared more towards facilitating work–family articulation, and, one year after its publication, the leave take-up by fathers was already approximately 40%.
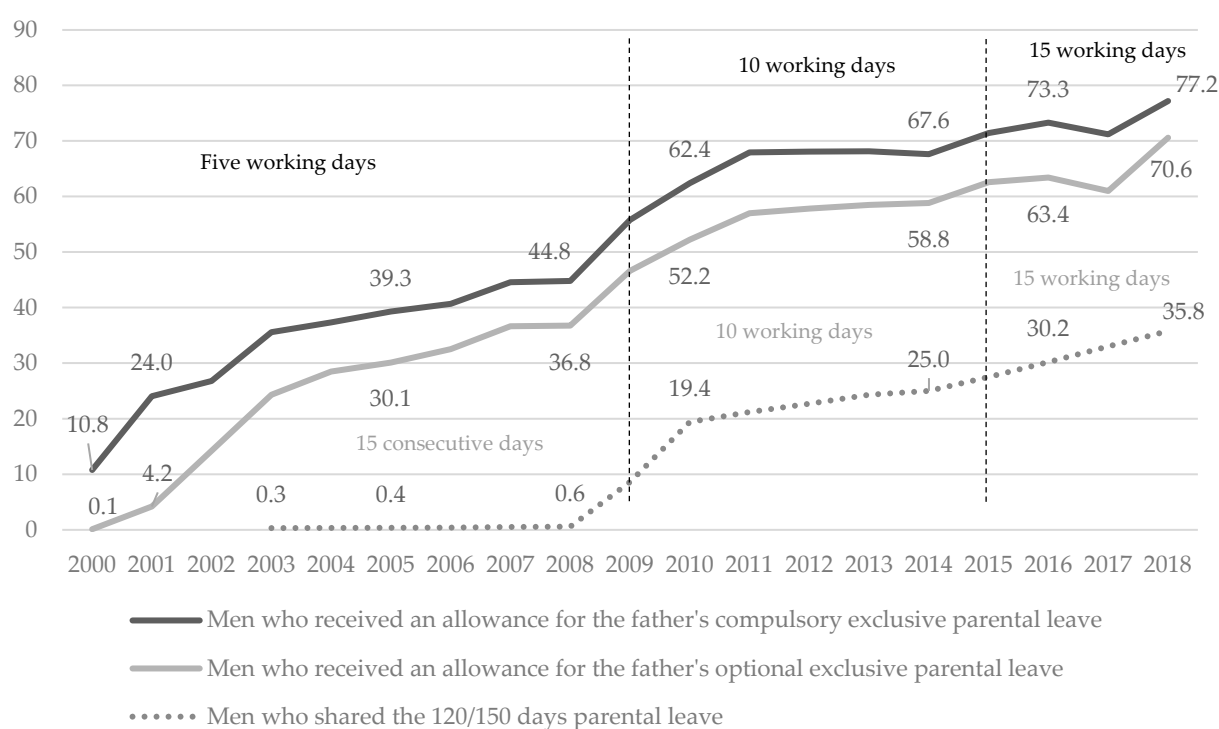

Figure 4. Evolution in father's use of parental leave (percentage of number of births). *Sources:* CITE (2019); own calculations from Correia and Cunha (2020), Leitão et al. (2019), Wall et al. (2011, 2012, 2013, 2016). *Notes:* Data for shared leave are aggregated with the father's compulsory exclusive parental leave of five working days for the years 2000, 2001 and 2002 (only disaggregated from 2003 onwards [inclusive]) and exclude cases of shared leaves due to the mother's death or physical or mental disability. From 2010 onwards, data exclude shared leaves of less than 30 days, or 15 consecutive days, i.e., those that did not benefit from the bonus.

The third landmark (Escobedo and Wall 2015) and the turning point in parental leave policies took place in 2009, with the revision of the CT and the Decree-Law that "defined and regulated a new system of 'parenthood protection' rather than 'maternity and paternity protection', as previously". This represented "a significant change in terminology, which went hand in hand with the spirit of the new law, to the effect that reconciling work and family is a basic right and duty of fathers and mothers in equal measure" (Cunha et al. 2017, p. 8). In effect, the aforementioned laws included gender equality among their core references, strengthening the father's rights and encouraging

the sharing of parental leave. This change was embodied in an increase of five days in the father's exclusive parental leave (increasing from 5 to 10 compulsory working days, plus 10 optional days) and with the introduction of a bonus of 30 days of paid leave that could be shared between the two parents. The information displayed in the figure below shows that when the 2009 Law (indicated by the vertical dotted line), and therefore the sharing bonus, came into effect, there was a sharp increase in the take-up of shared parental leave, from approximately 45% in 2008 to 62% in 2010.

The percentage of fathers sharing the initial parental leave increased by more than 35 p.p. in the decade from 2008 to 2018, which is clearly related to the 2009 reform of "parenthood protection". According to Wall (2010, p. 91), these changes in relation to parental leaves "mark the beginning of a new stage in the evolution of fathers' rights towards a greater equivalence with those of mothers". Results of the International Social Survey Programme questionnaire, administered in 2014 to a representative sample of the population (18+ years old) resident in continental Portugal, show that the main measures contained in the 2009 legislation enjoyed a positive acceptance of approximately 60% (Cunha et al. 2017). There was also a growth in the number of men taking up the father's (compulsory and optional) exclusive parental leaves, and 2018 was the year when the highest rates of take-up were recorded for all three types of leaves.

The most recent reforms of the parental leave system in Portugal occurred in 2015 and 2019. On both occasions, there was a reinforcement of parental rights (Figure 5).
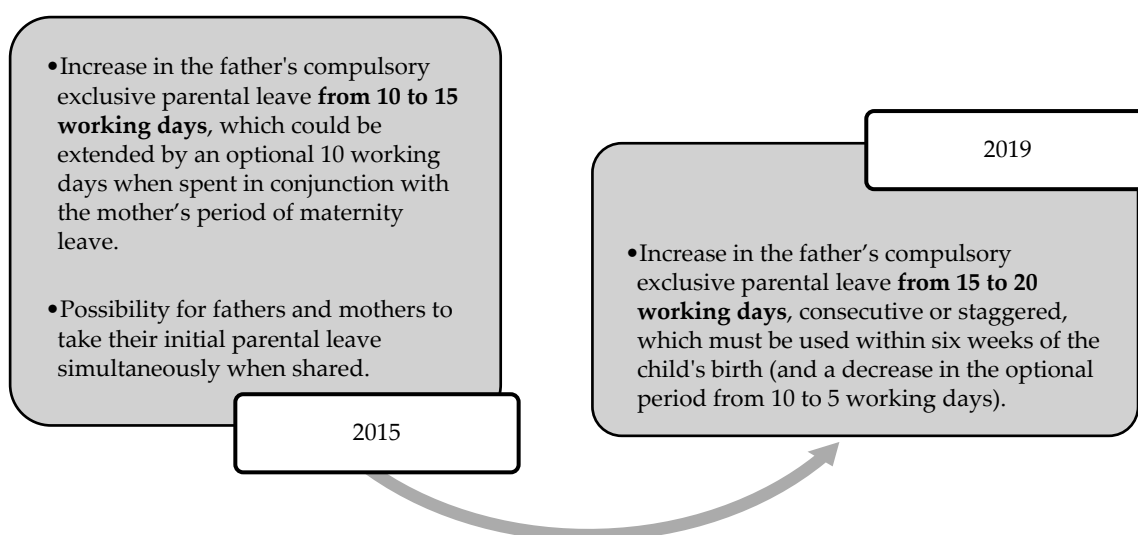

Figure 5. Most recent reinforcements of parental rights in Portuguese legislation (2015 and 2019).

As far as the support provided to families in terms of facilities is concerned, two legislative measures may be highlighted within the framework of social responses to children and the elderly: in 1997, the law that established the legal system for pre-school education; and, in 2006, the Social Services and Facilities Network Extension Programme (hereafter referred to by the Portuguese acronym PARES). Indeed, despite the fact that women, the main caregivers, are massively integrated into the labour market, the availability of services and facilities to assist the care dependent continues to be manifestly substandard, with a shortfall in the supply of this type of social response. This is particularly evident with regard to care for children and the elderly, and the developments that have been registered in this area depend, to a large extent, on the dynamic role of non-profit charitable entities (Instituições Particulares de Solidariedade Social, hereafter referred to by the Portuguese acronym IPSS) (Metelo et al. 2010; Wall et al. 2016). In 2002, one of the objectives set by the Barcelona European Council was for each of the Member States to provide childcare by 2010 to at least 33% of children under 3 years of age (in early childhood). Portugal managed to fulfil, and even surpass, this objective within the defined deadline, with an

average coverage rate of 35.1% by 2010 (GEP/MTSSS 2011). In 2018, the most recent year for which data are available, the average coverage rate was 48.4% and the utilisation rate was 85.5%, a figure that underlines the importance of this particular type of social response for the work–family articulation of Portuguese families (GEP/MTSSS 2019). It is important to emphasise, however, that this type of social response did not yet cover half of the national territory in 2018, a situation that may be related to the predominance, within the Portuguese technical and institutional framework, of an ideology which insists that care for children up to three years of age must be provided by the family. In the case of the elderly, the scenario is even less encouraging, with the coverage rate standing at 12.6% in 2018 (GEP/MTSSS 2019).

6. The Political Process Underlying Policy Development (1976–2009)

6.1. Parliamentary Debates

Parliamentary debates on this matter were fairly dynamic over the 1976–2009 period, and the important legislative progress that was made was mostly welcomed by the different parties with parliamentary representation, often meeting with unanimous approval. However, this path was not followed without some expressions of conservatism, mostly coming from the deputies of right-leaning parties. As illustrative examples of this traditionalism, let us consider the observation of a male deputy from the Independent Social Democratic Action (a left-wing party) during the first revision of the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic (hereafter referred to by the Portuguese acronym CRP), on the proposal to equate paternity with maternity in the epigraph of article 68 (unanimously approved):

> *I'm a father, but I find this article quite unfortunate and I'm afraid it may even be ridiculous (. . .). Article 68 should remain as it is, referring only to "motherhood", highlighting a positive discrimination towards mothers (. . .). Not establishing any exclusiveness for mothers regarding education, which implicitly leaves the field open to the action of fathers, but nothing more than that (Plenary Meeting on 29/04/1982).*

Most of the selected legislative measures were adopted in the 7th Legislature (1995–1999), when the country was governed by the 13th Constitutional Government (led by the centre-left Socialist Party, hereafter referred to by the Portuguese acronym PS). This happened at a time when, according to Torres et al. (2005, p. 24), "there seems to have been a turning point in the public—and political—social place of the gender issue". These legislative modifications did not meet with any strong resistance from the opposition, an example of which was the law that established a maternity leave of 120 consecutive days and introduced an (optional) 'paternity leave' of five working days in the first month after birth (paid at 100%). In the presentation of the government bill, one male Secretary of State (PS), emphasised that the law would place Portugal "at the forefront of Europe" with regard to "policies affecting family, equality and work-family reconciliation" (DAR, 7th Legislature, 4th Legislative Session, Plenary Meeting of 12 May 1999: 3028). This bill was unanimously approved, earning the unequivocal support of the main opposition party, the Social Democratic Party (a centre-right party, Partido Social Democrata, hereafter referred to by the Portuguese acronym PSD), as expressed in the speech of a male deputy, who declared that the "new legal framework for an increasingly interventional fatherhood", with the effective sharing of the "responsibilities that derive from the condition of parenting", among other amendments, deserved the "applause" of the PSD parliamentary group (Plenary Meeting of 12 May 1999).

It was under the leadership of the 14th Constitutional Government (PS, 1999–2002) that one of the most important advances began to be developed within the framework of equality between women and men in Portugal: compulsory paternity leave. The proposal was therefore made for a compulsory 'paternity leave' of five working days in the first month after birth (paid at 100%). Although it was only approved under the 15th Constitutional Government (a coalition of the PSD with the right-wing conservative Christian-Democratic/Popular Party, Centro Democrático Social/Partido Popular, hereafter referred to by the Portuguese acronym CDS-PP, 2002–2004) in the 2003/2004 CT, this law

had originally been proposed by the previous government. This progress was not unrelated to the intervention of the then Secretary of State for Equality of the PS government, Maria do Céu da Cunha Rêgo, a declared advocate of legislative measures that guaranteed the involvement of men in the private sphere, such as "the rules that enshrine a statutory right to paid paternity leave when men become parents" (Rêgo 2007, p. 46).

During the legislature of the 17th Constitutional Government (PS, 2005–2009), there was an important strengthening of the legal mechanisms to promote equality between women and men and work–family articulation. We draw special attention to the launch of the Programme for the Extension of the Social Equipment Network (PARES) and the aforementioned 2009 reform of the system of "parenthood protection", which doubled the length of the father's compulsory exclusive parental leave and provided incentives for parents to share initial parental leave, thereby promoting equal rights between women and men in parenthood. Although, according to the research carried out, the PARES programme was not the subject of a broad debate in Parliament, it was invoked on several occasions, but especially by the parliamentary group that launched it, the PS. One of the exceptions was the speech of a male deputy (PSD), who questioned the applicability of the measure, classifying the PS government's policies as "strong" in their enunciation, but "very weak" in their practical application (DAR, 10th Legislature, 2nd Legislative Session, Plenary Meeting of 23 May 2007: 31). The deputy's perspective was ultimately not confirmed, since the coverage rate of the social responses to early childhood soon surpassed the 33% target for the provision of childcare set by the Barcelona European Council objectives for 2010. Between 2006 and 2018, it rose from 26.7% in 2006 to 48.4% in 2018, in line with the increase in the number of places available in day care (GEP/MTSSS 2019).

Despite the greater predisposition of PS governments to make progress in these matters, other important modifications were accomplished during the time of the PSD/CDS-PP government. In fact, work–family articulation was a commonly discussed theme throughout the time of the 15th Constitutional Government, although often from a markedly familialist and conservative perspective. First of all, because it considered work–family articulation as one of the priority areas of intervention within the field of equality, the Government programme nevertheless pointed to "part-time work requested for the purposes of assisting underage children" as one of the exclusive measures for working mothers (Partido Social Democrata and Centro Democrático Social-Partido Popular 2002, p. 171). This results in a paradox, since part-time employment has been widely represented in the literature as a vector of sexual segregation, deepening the professional and financial asymmetries between women and men. (Casaca 2012; Rêgo 2010; Torres et al. 2005). The discussion of legislation and/or policies relating to work–family articulation in this period was mainly driven by divergences between the government and the opposition over the 2003/2004 CT proposal, although it still had the merit of intensifying the parliamentary debate on these issues. Moreover, as mentioned by Rêgo (2010, p. 73), the debates about the CT during the period of both the PSD/CDS-PP and PS governments, were moments when "great controversies and deep social divisions" broke out. In terms of work–family articulation, a female deputy (PS) highlighted how the CT "clearly discouraged the exercise of paternity rights", presenting three concrete examples: "the suppression of the right to 15 days of paid parental leave; the suppression of the ban on the transmissibility of the right to parental leave; the government's retreat on the non-renounceable nature of five-day paternity leave" (Plenary Meeting on 15 January 2003). The mandatory paternity leave would be implemented in 2004 (Law No. 35/2004 of 29 July), representing, according to Rêgo (2010, p. 73), a "fundamental advance", which made it possible to avoid "social, occupational and economic pressure" being exerted on men not to take parental leave.

The Portuguese Communist Party (hereafter referred to by the Portuguese acronym PCP) was also committed to supporting measures relating to gender equality and work–family articulation. In regard to this particular subject, female communist deputies were important protagonists, both from the point of view of the speeches that they made in Parliament and in terms of supporting legislative measures proposed within this framework.

6.2. The Key Political Actors' Views on the Core Legislative Changes and on the Major Policy Players

As a complement to the analysis provided in the previous subsection, 20 individual semi-structured interviews were undertaken with key actors (18 women and two men) who, in the period 1976–2009, contributed to the most progressive legislative improvements in the field of work–family reconciliation. Our interest in identifying "critical actors" stems from literature that, as mentioned before, highlights the importance of the involvement of key actors in the elaboration of proposals of a political nature, namely those centred on themes relating to gender equality, regardless of the number of women represented in political decision-making institutions (Childs and Krook 2008).

As noted earlier, the legislative advances in terms of work–family articulation were, for the most part, implemented by parties that identify themselves as left-wing. Therefore, our sample is mainly composed of people who are or were connected to this political area (Table 2). In certain cases, and at different stages in this period of analysis, the participants held positions of a political nature (e.g., parliamentary deputies; state secretaries) but also in trade unions and/or public bodies with responsibilities in the field of gender equality (e.g., the CGTP's women's commission; CITE). This explains why Table 2 shows a result in which the total number of people interviewed is greater than the total number of interviews carried out.

The codification of the interview segments was performed according to the following reasoning: the first two letters represent the political parties and/or bodies to which the interviewees currently belong or to which they belonged in the past (AR = Assembleia da República (the Portuguese Parliament); C = Commission; S = Trade Union Confederation); the following two digits represent the interview number/chronological order; the final letter indicates the sex of the interviewee (W = Woman; M = Man).

Software-assisted qualitative content analysis resulted in the identification of some major themes, defined through a combination of deductive and inductive approaches, together with some preconceived themes in the interview script questions, and subthemes that emerged from the participants responses. For the purpose of this article, four themes are highlighted:

Theme 1—*State, equality and the work–family articulation,*
Theme 2—*Fragilities/obstacles to equality and/or their articulation,*
Theme 3—*Emblematic measures, and*
Theme 4—*Political processes.*

The disaggregated analysis of the subthemes resulting from *Theme 1* enabled us to consider that, on the part of political agents, there was a predominantly positive tendency regarding the attitude and action of the Portuguese State in the context of equality and work–family articulation predominates. Indeed, the most commonly shared view amongst the interviewees was that Portuguese governments have introduced a *gender perspective into their policy development*. Nevertheless, the view was also expressed that equality has been relegated to a secondary position among the Portuguese State's concerns or is even absent from certain policies. The following statements are illustrative of these viewpoints:

> *I think the attitude of the Portuguese State is fairly significant in regard to this issue and extraordinarily progressive, (. . .) when I arrived in Parliament (. . .) I had the opportunity to come into contact with my peers from many other European commissions and realised that Portugal was frankly quite advanced, especially when taking into consideration the fact that we are such a recent democracy. —AR17_W*

> *I genuinely think that it has not been among the purposes of any Government, transversally, to give visibility to equality, or parity. —AR8_M*

As for the *relevance attributed by political agents to the articulation between professional and family life*, the prevailing view was that there has been notable concern around this issue in recent decades. The following response is an example of this perspective:

> *Perhaps at the turn of the 1980s to the 1990s, and especially in the 1990s, this issue began to enjoy greater visibility, and, in the first decade of this century, it has been a matter of some concern, if not identical to, at least in the same range as other concerns when we talk about social policies. —AR10_M*

Differing views were expressed about the *State's initiative in the production of policies*. The most common perspective was that Portugal has often been proactive in producing legislation, and that progress has not been subordinated to the country's European integration. Other participants considered that, in terms of legislative development, there has been a mixture of proactivity and State's simply reacting to European demands. Finally, some interviewees also expressed the view that the Portuguese State has been exclusively influenced by Europe in this matter.

> *(. . .) it was not our accession to the EEC that led to changes in our internal legislation in this area. The legislation was already there: we did it before, and we did not change anything in the internal legislation in order to comply. We had everything, because the law was already there. The rules were already there, and, when we joined, we already had them. —ARC4_W*

> *In most of these matters, the European Union has led the way. I think one of the fringe benefits of Portugal's accession to the European Community, was that it forced us to think about these laws and to make an effort. But then this also fails if it is not genuine (. . .), I still don't believe that Portugal is genuine. —AR19W*

> *Portugal has merely met European demands and then only barely so, because the legal transpositions have always been deficient. —ARS14W*

The analysis of *Theme 2* made it possible to identify the view that there was a disjunction between legislation and social practices, with the latter obstructing equality and/or work–family articulation. Thus, the most commonly mentioned fragilities and obstacles were those relating to *ideology and social practices*. In fact, although, as already mentioned, it was generally thought that a gender perspective has been integrated into the design of public policies, half of the people interviewed also considered that, in the public space, there has been a *depreciation of equality by the political agents*. Close to half of the participants considered that, in terms of ideology and social practices, the *sexual division of labour* and *employers' practices* are weaknesses/obstacles to equality and work–family articulation.

> *Pre-school measures were adopted to facilitate articulation, with great anger being displayed by some representatives of the Ministry of Education, who at the time thought that "this is a problem of education, it has nothing to do with women". (. . .) These measures are less highly valued when they are linked to the sharing of responsibilities. —ARC_4W*

> *(. . .) we all know that women have more difficulty reconciling work with family life, it is well documented, that women have more hours of unpaid work than men (. . .). —S2W*

> *I heard the story of a woman who was asked in a job interview "Are you planning on getting married soon?", and she really was about to get married. Her answer was "that's part of my private life, but I promise you this, if I get married, I won't get any dumber". They found her funny and hired her, and then she got married a few months later. Now, these things keep happening. —C1_M*

As far as the perception of *fragilities/obstacles in* the *legislation* is concerned, there was a clear recognition that the application of laws in Portugal lacks effectiveness, a problem that has been widely explored in the literature (Monteiro 2010; Monteiro and Domingos 2013). The following excerpt is an example of reference to this deficit:

> *I usually say, in short, as an enforcer of the law, because I am a fully-fledged lawyer, that I don't have so many complaints about the legislation, I have complaints about its effective application (. . .). —S5_M*

In the interviews, we tried to assess which were the most relevant aspects from the perspective of the key actors, but also to point out the *impasses/setbacks* that are inherent in these aspects. The analysis of the questions that addressed this dimension resulted in *Theme 3.* In this case, we found a wide range of measures that were considered *relevant and emblematic* by the participants. By carrying out a more detailed analysis, we were able to observe that, in terms of "parenthood protection", the 2009 CT was the law that was most highlighted by the participants. In the case of legislation relating to family support infrastructures and services, the most highly valued was the legislative framework for pre-school education. The following excerpts illustrate the importance attributed to both measures:

> *I believe that the 2009 (parental) leave underlines the maturity of the evolution that has taken place in our leaves in terms of promoting reconciliation, and it also highlights a very balanced logic (. . .) that has to do with the rights of the mother and father, but also the child's interest. (. . .) —AR11_M*

> *It is a fundamental measure from the point of view of the principle of equal opportunities in education, but it is also a most valuable measure from the point of view of reconciliation, of course. And because it has become mandatory, it therefore also forces parents to learn a little about a certain organisation of the schooling, socialisation, learning, sociability, etc., of their children. —AR17_M*

Despite the fact that the 2009 CT was the law most frequently highlighted in the interviews, it was also mentioned as the area in which there had been *most impasses and/or setbacks*. The criticisms that were made focused mostly on the much-questioned change in terminology ([Ramalho 2010](#); [Rêgo 2010](#))—from "protection of maternity and paternity" to "parenthood protection". The National Action Plans were also measures for which impasses and/or setbacks were frequently mentioned, largely because these were seen as being of an excessively theoretical nature, which led to questions being raised about their effectiveness. The excerpts transcribed below are representative of the interviewees' reservations regarding the terminology of the CT and National Action Plans.

> *There is a father and there is a mother, there is no parent, and that discredits the participation of the father, and the mother, right? So, why do we have to be so concerned about parenthood? Parenthood at the level of the European Community is something completely different; it is an exceptional support in specific situations. —S18W*

> *Now we have some new, modern things, which are the equality awards, the Gender Equality Action Plans (. . .), but these Plans, awards and other similar initiatives should be designed to give greater importance to actions that go beyond the simple requirements of the law. So, there's no point in making a big fuss about Plans or prizes for fulfilling what's in the law (. . .), are we rewarding what is a legal obligation? —S7W*

Knowing that the dynamics underlying the political process was one of the main subjects to be investigated by this research, it was the way in which the participants approached this topic that resulted in *Theme 4—Political process.* Like all the legislative advances made in the most diverse thematic areas, it was the questions of equality and work–family articulation that were focused on most frequently by the protagonists, the people and the parties, and it was this that made the legislation move forward. Among the fifty people mentioned as important for ensuring the progress of these causes, we highlight the three that were most frequently mentioned: Leonor Beleza; Maria do Céu Cunha Rêgo; and António Guterres.

> *Dr. Leonor Beleza served on the Equality Committee at the beginning, and she was the catalyst behind a significant change in the Civil Code. I will not say that she didn't have, let's say, a role in the first changes that occurred, which involved the establishment of the woman's powers and responsibilities in the family relationship. —S5_M*

> *(. . .) I think Maria do Céu (Cunha Rêgo) is a person to whom we owe a lot in terms of equality, but really a lot. She brought us equality and reconciliation. She exerted the most*

influence in the reform of the whole policy of equality and reconciliation. (...) All the legislation that came out at that time had her contribution (...). Firstly, as president of CITE, then, as Secretary of State, she was an absolutely exceptional person. (...) it was she who introduced the mandatory father's leave (...). —C12_M

I have to say that I had many struggles with Guterres, but in one regard he was reliable, (...) he took these policies very seriously. And it was undoubtedly his Government that worked the most, because he wanted to make a difference, he wanted to leave that mark, which he personally valued very highly. And I know he did, I've said it several times. —ARS14_M

As for the political parties that were most responsible for promoting the progress of these laws/policies, there was a clear predominance of left-leaning parties, confirming what we had previously observed in the analysis of the parliamentary debates. Indeed, the PS was the most prominent party, followed by the PCP and the "Left Bloc" (Bloco de Esquerda—BE). Even so, PSD's contribution in these matters was also recognised.

(...) the Socialist Party played an extremely important role in equality issues, even for the people who were there, the women that the party had, in fact, and for the policies they developed during the period they were in government. The majority of the equality legislation came from the PS. —C12_W

(...) I would say this is a subject that starts from the left of the PSD, I mean from the PSD with some contradictions, but with some very important protagonists, in various dimensions (...). I think that, in Portugal, it is difficult for the cause of gender equality (...) to be interpreted to the right of the PSD, which is the party where it is possible to find every position defended. —AR15_M

7. Concluding Remarks

Unlike the other so-called Southern European countries, where a belated and somewhat slower move away from the male breadwinner model has been found, Portugal stands out from the other EU member states with its relatively high rate of female employment and the prevalence of the dual-earner model, based on continuous and fundamentally full-time employment. Moreover, the "early return to full-time work and a gender equality oriented model" calls for a separate analysis of this country's case (Escobedo and Wall 2015). In addition to providing a comprehensive overview of the singularities of Portugal's employment patterns and work–family articulation policies, this article sought to shed light on the core political discourses that fuelled the policy debate throughout the three decades following Portugal's transition to democracy, up until the latest and most decisive legislative changes in terms of leave policies. This article also examines the key social actors' views about the political process sustaining the development of policies in this area and identifies the major players (critical actors) promoting a transformative policy agenda.

As far as advances in this area are concerned, equality between women and men and work–family articulation have been addressed by different political forces in diverse ways, although there has been a high level of consensus about the most decisive changes, both in terms of discourse and legislative production. An important explanatory factor for the transversal support for these policies among the different political parties, which has tended to prevail in recent decades amongst the different political parties, is the political context post-1974. Thus, there was a 'revolutionary' departure from the previous highly conservative path, imposed over many years by an enduring right-wing dictatorship, backed by a consensus among the main political parties about the most desirable work–family arrangement, promoting an early move towards an equality oriented model (Escobedo and Wall 2015). This context provided the political opportunities for the actors to radically change the dictatorships' political and juridical framework, introducing the principles of gender equality, as well as its relationship with work–family articulation policy, into the subsequent legislation (Wall and Escobedo 2009). Thus, as stated by Escobedo and Wall (2015, p. 225), the transition to democracy was a turning point in leave policies,

which, from 1976 onwards became more gender-oriented, placing the emphasis on the state's responsibilities for supporting both men and women's employment on a full-time basis. Parenthood protection was gradually reinforced through paid leave schemes, and the development of the public infrastructure for care dependents was promoted (Escobedo and Wall 2015). The Portuguese parties in the political spectrum from centre to left (PS, BE and PCP) assumed, however, a more prominent role in the reform of the regulatory framework, both in terms of legislative initiatives, and in the adoption of more egalitarian discourses. Nevertheless, although they did not have such a profuse legislative initiative on these issues, centre-right political forces did not offer any significant resistance to the laws and policies we have examined here. In fact, among the major actors recognised to have played the most important political role in the progress achieved in this area is Leonor Beleza (PSD), thus revealing the relative transversality of this theme across the political spectrum. The testimonies of key actors also confirmed the relevance of people with different degrees of public visibility, whose contribution was fundamental for the advances made in this area, as was the case with Maria do Céu da Cunha Rêgo (who may be considered a protagonist with less media exposure) and António Guterres (a former prime minister, with a high level of media exposure).

The challenges that are faced start with the widely documented, and here explored, participation of women in the labour market (Addabbo et al. 2015; Casaca 2012; Torres et al. 2018; Wall et al. 2016), which is greater in Portugal than in other countries in the EU but essentially does not change with motherhood. This is a reality that is far removed from the rest of the European landscape, where the employment rates of women with children tends to decrease with motherhood, bringing more difficulties to work–life articulation of women in Portugal. These difficulties are related to the fact that women are still the main caregivers, and are further magnified by the shortfall in the provision of infrastructures and services to support families in their caring for dependants, mostly with regard to early childhood care and the elderly. In terms of legislation, one of the main challenges considered be an impediment to work–family articulation is the failure to ensure the practical application of the already existing Portuguese regulatory framework. This was, indeed, a shortcoming mentioned in almost all of the interviews and whose resolution is, for most of the interviewees, a fundamental catalyst for equality between women and men and the work–family articulation of Portuguese families. Thus, we believe that there is an urgent need to develop more effective law enforcement strategies in Portugal, as a way of guaranteeing the transposition de jure into de facto equality, geared towards the different sectors of society. On the one hand, there is a need to develop strategies that lead to more gender equality oriented ideology and social practices. In particular, much still remains to be done with regard the sexual division of labour and employers' practices. On the other hand, it is necessary for most of the political agents to internalise the need to legislate using gender-sensitive approaches, in order to counteract the feminised conception of work–family articulation, reinforced by legislation aimed at women and, as pointed out by Rêgo (2012, p. 42), to strengthen the focus on public policies directed towards the male population.

Our research inevitably entailed some limitations. These limitations resulted, above all, from the constraints imposed by the length of the period under analysis (33 years), which led us to narrow the scope of our investigation. However, we believe that the constraints we experienced actually represent opportunities for future investigations. For example, starting with the analysis of the parliamentary debate, it would be interesting to carry out an extensive diachronic examination of the parties' programmes, which in this work was restricted to periods when significant progress was made in the matter of work–family articulation. Furthermore, since we were limited to analysing the debates that took place in plenary meetings, it would be pertinent to also analyse the discussions that were held in parliamentary committees. As far as the interviews that we conducted are concerned, it might be relevant to complement these with focus group sessions with Portuguese citizens, in order to assess their understanding of the rights to which they

are entitled through the legislation relating to work–family articulation. In this way, it would be possible to carry out a more comprehensive needs assessment and thus reduce the margin of error relating to the proposed law enforcement measures.

The main contribution of this study was to provide a broad overview of work–family articulation policies in Portugal since the country's transition to democracy. This is the first study to be undertaken in Portugal focusing on the political process underpinning policy development in the country, looking at the main discourses either supporting or contesting the most progressive legislative proposals, and identifying the major social actors behind the policy changes. It therefore offers new angles of analysis for examining the existing debate and may hopefully be of key importance in outlining the way forward.

Table 1. Chronology of the relevant legislation/policy within the framework of work–family balance, 1976–2019.

Year	Type of Legislation/Policy	Contribution to Work–Family Articulation (Summarised)
1976	Constitutional Law	Principle of equality *(Article 13)*
	Parental leave policies	90 days of maternity leave *(Decree-Law no. 112/76, of 7 February)*
1979	Social services and equipment	Equal opportunities and equal treatment of women and men in work and employment. Creation of *Commission for Equality in Work and Employment*—CITE *(Decree-Law no. 392/79, of 20 September)*
1982	Constitutional Law	Equivalence of paternity to maternity *(1st Revision, Article 68)*
1984	Parental leave policies	First legislation on the protection of maternity and paternity. *(Law no. 4/84, of 5 April)*
1988	Parental leave policies	Introduction of father's two days' leave of absence for birth (civil servants only) *(Decree-Law no. 497/88, of 30 December)*
1995	Parental leave policies	Increase in maternity leave to 98 days; introduction of father's right to share maternity leave by joint decision of both father and mother *(Law no. 17/95 of 9 June, amending Law no. 4/84, of 5 April)*
1997	Constitutional Law	Right to organise work in order to enable work–family articulation *(4th Revision, Article 59)*
	Parental leave policies	Introduction of a special subsidised leave (for father or mother) to assist handicapped or chronically ill child *(Law no. 102/97, of 13 September (amending Law no. 4/84, of 5 April)*
	Social services and equipment	Establishing the juridical framework for pre-school education *(Law no. 5/97 of 10 February, [Framework Law for pre-school education])*
1998	Parental leave policies	Increase in maternity leave to 120 days in year 2000 *(Law no. 18/98 of 28 April, amending Law no. 4/84, of 5 April)*
	National Action Plans	Directive 17—Reconciling professional and family life *(National Action Plan for Employment 1998)*
1999	Parental leave policies	Introduction of (optional) 'paternity leave' of five working days in the first month after birth (at 100%); introduction of leave for feeding—two hours per day (father or mother) *(Law no. 142/99, of 31 August, amending Law no. 4/84, of 5 April)*
2003/04	Parental leave policies	Five working days' 'paternity leave' in the first month after birth (at 100%) becomes compulsory *(Law no. 99/2003 of 27 August and Law no. 25/2004, of 29 July [CT and respective regulations])*
	National Action Plans	Sector area 1 with the subfield of "Reconciliation of professional with family and personal life" *(National Action Plan for Employment 2003–2006)*
2004	Constitutional Law	Attributing responsibility to the State for promoting work–family articulation through sectoral policies *(6th Revision, Article 67)*

Table 1. *Cont.*

Year	Type of Legislation/Policy	Contribution to Work–Family Articulation (Summarised)
2006	Social services and equipment	Launch of PARES (*Order no. 426/2006, of 2 May*)
2007	National Action Plans	Area 2 (subfield)—Reconciling professional, family and personal life (*National Action Plan for Employment 2007–2010*)
2009	Parental leave policies	Introduction of "initial parental leave with bonus" of one month (paid at 100%) when parents share the leave. Extension of 'father's exclusive leave' to 10 compulsory days (*Law no. 7/2009, of 12 February [revision of CT] and Decree-Law no. 91/2009, of 9 April*)
2015	Parental leave policies	Extension of 'father's exclusive leave' to 15 compulsory days; introduction of the possibility for both parents to take initial parental leave at the same time, for up to 15 days, between the fourth and fifth month (*Law no.120/2015, of 1 September [revision of CT]*)
2019	Parental leave policies	Extension of 'father's exclusive leave' to 20 compulsory days (*Law no.90/2019, of 4 September [revision of CT]*)

Sources: Marques (2017); Cunha et al. (2017).

Table 2. Interviewees by gender and current or past membership of political parties and/or bodies.

Party/Body	n	Sex	
		Women	Men
Socialist Party (PS)	9	7	2
Portuguese Communist Party (PCP)	2	2	-
Social Democratic Party (PSD)	2	2	-
Trade Union Confederation (UGT)	3	3	-
National Trade Union Confederation (CGTP-IN)	3	3	-
Commission for the Female Condition/Commission for Equality and the Rights of Women/Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CCF/CIDM/CIG)	3	3	-
Commission for Equality in Work and Employment (CITE)	3	3	-

Note: A total of 20 semi-structured interviews were undertaken, with 18 women and two men.

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