

Women and decision-making participation within rightist parties in Portugal and Spain**

This article focuses on women's participation within conservative political parties in Portugal and Spain. It deals with the factors that may explain their increased participation since the 1990s, as well as the consequences thereof. Although women's political representation in both countries has increased, the differences between the *Partido Popular Democrático-Partido Social-Democrata* (PPD-PSD) and the *Alianza Popular-Partido Popular* (AP-PP) are still considerable. This study points out the factors that may have influenced the greater participation of women within the AP-PP, in comparison with the PPD-PSD, making use of interviews with leaders, both women and men, from those parties.

Keywords: women; decision-making participation; conservative parties; PPD-PSD; AP-PP.

As mulheres e a participação política nos partidos de direita em Portugal e Espanha

Este artigo analisa a participação das mulheres nos partidos políticos conservadores em Portugal e Espanha. Explora os factores que podem justificar o aumento da sua participação nestes partidos desde a década de 90 e as consequências que daí advieram. Apesar de a representação política das mulheres ter aumentado em ambos os países, as diferenças entre o Partido Popular Democrático-Partido Social-Democrata (PPD-PSD) e a Alianza Popular-Partido Popular (AP-PP) são consideráveis. Este estudo realça as condições que poderão ter influenciado a maior participação das mulheres no AP-PP em comparação com o PPD-PSD, recorrendo aos depoimentos de líderes de ambos os sexos dos referidos partidos.

Palavras-chave: mulheres; participação política; partidos conservadores; PPD-PSD; AP-PP.

INTRODUCTION

Among Southern European countries, Spain and Portugal show the highest percentage of female decision-making participation, despite the large differences in their respective figures. As an illustration, while women rep-

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resented 36 percent of the Members of Parliament (MP) after the 2008 General Elections in Spain (Lower Chamber) they represented 28 percent in the Portuguese Parliament (*Assembleia da República*)¹. In explaining the lower level of female decision-making participation in Portugal and other Southern European countries, I argue that the behavior of conservative parties and their need, either objective or subjective, to compete for women's votes is an important variable and a plausible explanation for these differences. This article deepens the knowledge of the conservative parties in Spain and Portugal regarding their understanding and attitudes toward women's participation in political decision-making.

The article first shows how conservative parties have increased the amount of women's political representation in both countries since their transition to democracy. As mentioned above, the differences between the Portuguese *Partido Popular Democrático-Partido Social Democrata* (PPD-PSD hereinafter)² and the Spanish *Alianza Popular-Partido Popular* (AP-PP hereinafter)³ are large. Thus, the comparison serves the purpose of pointing out some of factors that may have influenced the larger participation of women within the AP-PP while keeping it lower in the PPD-PSD. Second, it analyzes the role of women within these two parties from the subjective point of view of the participants, through the analysis of in-depth interviews with leaders, women, and men of PPD-PSD and AP-PP.

CONSERVATIVE PARTIES AND THE POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN

The topic of women's political participation in conservative parties may at first seem curious. Are not all conservative parties opposed, by virtue of their own rightist ideology, to women's participation in the public sphere?

Traditionally the conservative right in Portugal and Spain have opposed women's participation in the public realm (including political participation) due to the strong links with the postulates of the Catholic Church. The links between the ideological right and women's traditional role within the private sphere were further reinforced in both Spain and Portugal during their respective dictatorships in the 20th century. The Neoconservative wave that could serve Portuguese and Spanish rightist parties as a model continued the

¹ According to the data published on the Inter Parliamentary Union web page (<http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>), updated to 31 May 2008, Spain stood at number 9 in the world ranking, followed by Portugal at number 26. Italy with 21.1% of female MPs ranked 52, and Greece was only 78, with almost 15% of female MPs.

² The *Partido Popular Democrático* (PPD), created in 1974, was the forerunner of the *Partido Social Democrata* (PSD).

³ *Alianza Popular*, created in 1977, was refounded in 1989 as *Partido Popular* (PP).

same discourse regarding women's participation in the public realm. Neoconservatism justifies the traditional gender divisions or roles and spheres based on moral as well as economic arguments (Ruiz Jiménez, 2002, pp. 291-292; Leite Viegas and Faria, 2001, pp. 39-44 and 45-54).

However, conservative parties have traditionally benefited from the support of women's votes⁴. Klausen (2001) has recently showed the extent to which this female preference for conservative parties was important to keep them in office following the Second World War to the 1960s. Nevertheless, since the second half of the 20th century women have started to change their electoral preferences from the right to the left in most advanced western democracies. It can be argued, therefore, that conservative and moderate right parties may have reacted to these changes by, among other strategies, increasing female representation in order to attract women's votes again.

Had women not gained suffrage, or had they voted as men, then Labor would have won elections from 1945 to 1979, as well as in the 1992 general election in Great Britain (Klausen, 2001, pp. 216-217; Short, 1996, p. 19; Perrigo, 1996, p. 1287-1288; Squires, 1996, p.76; Norris and Lovenduski, 1993, p. 38). In Germany, the SPD would have been the governing party in 1949; the SPD's own president, Kurt Schumacher, blamed women for the party's electoral failure. Two decades later, the president of the German Social Democracy thanked women for their support in the 1972 elections, which the party won by absolute majority (Klausen, 2001, pp. 216-217; Kolinski, 1993, pp. 117). In France, women had been a marginal electorate sometimes critical for conservative parties. This was clearly perceived by François Mitterand and the Socialist Party. In 1981 the change in the political preference of women toward the left was fundamental for the electoral success of French Socialism during the decade of the 1980s (Northcutt and Flaitz, 1985, p. 50; Appleton and Mazur, 1993, p. 100; Klausen, 2001, pp. 216-217). Also, in the USA women have been perceived as a group that is essential for the equilibrium between democrats and conservatives, both because female participation is higher than male participation and because their preferences are different. In the decade of 1990s, women played a significant role in the electoral success of Bill Clinton, who benefited from a considerable gender gap in 1992 and 1996 (Burrell, 1993, p. 300; Klausen, 2001, p. 209)⁵.

Furthermore, I have argued that in those countries where conservative and moderate right parties may have in fact reacted to this inversion of the "gender gap," increasing female political decision-making participation to

⁴ See in this regard Duverger (1955), Almond and Verba (1963, p. 388), Lipset (1960, p. 221), Campbell, Converse and Miller (1960, p. 493), Uriarte and Elizondo (1997, p. 27), Norris (1996, pp. 335-336).

⁵ We do not count on the same kind of study for Spain and Portugal.

attract women voters again, it has had an overall positive impact, generating dynamics of increasing representation throughout the whole party system (Ruiz Jiménez, 2007). Various researchers have suggested multiple factors (from economy, to education, and the type of electoral system) to explain low levels of female political participation. As several authors have noted, in the context of Portugal these factors alone do not satisfactorily explain the low percentage of women's political participation (Leite Viegas and Faria, 2001; Freire, Lobo and Magalhães, 2004; Baum and Espírito-Santo, 2007), nor are they enough within Southern European countries (Ruiz Jiménez, 2007). In the following pages I seek to show how the differences in conservative parties' strategies of competition for women's votes could help, in combination with these other factors, to explain the distance in women's decision-making participation between Spain and Portugal.

THE IMPACT OF WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

From a theoretical point of view, the idea that changes in the condition of women would take place only when women themselves participate in politics gained support first among the suffragists in the 19th century. During the 1960s and 1970s, however, there was a thoughtful debate about how advisable it was for women to participate within conventional political structures, questioning if political parties were the right vehicle to reach the objectives of the feminist movement. Notwithstanding, second wave feminism did also understand that the increase of women's participation in political parties, and within politics in general, would benefit women as well as the society as a whole (Randall, 1987, pp. 81-82; Jenson and Sineau, 1994, p. 249; Guadagnini, 1993, p. 178). Since the late 1980s the issue of women's political participation has once again moved to the fore of feminism (Lovenduski, 1996, p. 3). It has opted for a participation that allows women to introduce gender differences while engaged in politics (Arneil, 1999; Buker, 1999, pp. 148-152; Wilkinson, 1997).

From an empirical point of view, there is some evidence regarding the peculiarities that characterize men and women in their holding of public responsibilities. Davis (1997), Thomas (1994) and Skard (1980) have pointed out that women tend to see themselves as representatives of other women, and probably because of this, they also promote more legislation related to gender issues than do men (see also O'Regan, 2000, p. 23; Darcy, Welch and Clark, 1994, p. 16). Skjeie (1993) found that in Norway the increase in women's participation in the Parliament has produced a change in political parties' points of view, especially regarding the compatibility of professional and family life, social and welfare policies, environmental ques-

tions, and family matters. This conclusion is similar to that reached by Norris and Lovenduski (1989) and Norris (1996, pp. 95-104) regarding the UK. Skard (1980) confirmed that between 1960 and 1975 it was the women deputies in the Norwegian Parliament who initiated 90 percent of the debates related to women's legal, economic and social situation. She also showed that the percentage of debates on gender issues increased in parallel to the scaling of female participation in the Parliament. Gelb (1989) has pointed out that day care would not exist in Sweden without the pressure exercised by the Democratic Women's Federation. These differences seem to hold for women on both the left and right of the ideological spectrum, among those women who are in conservative parties (Davis 1997; Thomas, 1994 and Norris, 1996, p. 95).

Notwithstanding the hypothetical higher capability or sensitivity of women to understand and represent gender questions, several studies have pointed out that the probability of influencing the agenda and public policies depends a great deal on the percentage of women's representation in political institutions: the larger the percentage of representation in Parliaments and Government, the higher women's capability to influence the legislation. There is a threshold under which the political impact of women is negligible. Kanter (1977, p. 209) fixed this threshold at 15 percent; below which a minority group would experience pressures on its behaviors, social isolation, and hindrances in certain roles. Dahlerup (1988) points out that for women to be able to change politics in any significant way, they have to first reach a "critical mass" within political positions. This number should be between 15 and 30 percent of representation (see also Yoder, 1991). Thus, in those situations in which women are under the 15 percent of representation, they would be forced to follow male behaviors, since their association with gender questions exclusively could hinder their political career in their parties (Carroll, 1994; Lovenduski, 1986; Gelb, 1989; Norris, 1996, pp. 94-95; and Dobson and Carroll, 1991, p. 30). Even if women do not play any specific role regarding gender issues, their presence alone can affect the salience of those questions that concern them (Davis, 1997, pp. 26-27) and indirectly influence public policies, as a result.

PORTUGUESE WOMEN AND THE PPD-PSD VS. SPANISH WOMEN AND THE AP-PP

PPD-PSD'S DISCOURSE REGARDING WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Generally speaking, the PPD-PSD has devoted low percentages of discourse (on its electoral programs) to gender-related issues (Ruiz Jiménez, 239

2002). As regards women’s political participation in particular, this topic has received little attention. Only the electoral manifestos of 1991, 1995 and 2002 contributed 3, 2 and 0.3 percent, respectively, of their discourse on gender issues to this specific question (table 1).

Percentage of phrases that referred to gender issues and touched upon women’s political participation in PPD-PSD electoral platforms, 1974-2005

[TABLE 1]

	1974	1980	1985	1987	1991	1995	1999	2002	2005
Gender issues/whole program	4	6	3	7	4	5	6	1.5	2
Political participation/gender issues	–	–	–	–	3	2	–	0.3	–

Sources: Electoral programs; author’s elaboration (for methodological information and details, see Ruiz Jiménez, 2002).

From a qualitative point of view, 1991 and 1995 references were similar, attempting to promote women’s political participation. However, these positive remarks disappeared in the following electoral manifestos.

In this area, it is important to take a dynamic attitude able to influence social behaviors, and to persuade civil services, civil society organizations and citizens to take, in each situation, measures capable of improving the social status of women and increasing their participation within the labor market, the civic society and politics (PSD electoral manifesto 1991).

To assure real equal opportunities, improving the social status of more women and promoting a higher civic and political participation (PSD electoral manifesto 1995).

Despite this small presence in the discourse, the issue of women’s participation was the subject of Parliamentary debates during the Seventh Legislature (1995-1999). Different parties presented initiatives to modify the electoral legislation. Among them, the government proposal (169/VII) would have established that neither of the two sexes could at any given time have less than 25 percent of the party’s electoral list, and that their presence should be balanced in eligible positions according to last election’s results. The attitude of PPD-PSD in this debate was against the imposition of quotas, arguing mainly about the ineffectiveness of this mechanism. First, because it was possible to increase women’s participation in positions of responsibility without quotas, the PPS-PSD cited itself as an example. Second, because in those organizations in which quotas existed, as in the PS, they were regularly ignored, with the result that finally the percentage of women MPs in the Socialist Parliamentary Group

was lower than in other parties in which quotas did not exist (see Leite Viegas and Faria, 2001).

Although this initiative was not approved, the Socialist Government presented a new proposition during the fourth legislative session (194/VII). The goal was to warrant better opportunities for the representation of women in the electoral list for the Portuguese and European Parliaments. It proposed that the electoral list include at least 33.3 percent of the lesser represented sex. As the same proportion should appear on electoral results, it implied that men and women candidates should be distributed in the same proportion among eligible positions. Before those percentages were reached, the initiative proposed a two-election transition period during which the gender with the lower representation should not be below 25 percent. Other proposals sought to organize the working arrangement in the Portuguese Parliament so that women MPs could more easily combine their family lives with their political activities. The PPD-PSD opposed the proposal and the establishment of quotas. In the opinion of this party, women's incorporation into politics did not need this mechanism; it should rather be left to the "natural" social evolution, without any special intervention. Or, in any case, the intervention should be restricted to economic, social, and cultural conditions that were the real causes of women's under representation. Regarding consequences, the PPD-PSD thought that quotas would have a perverse effect, placing women at a subordinate position in those posts intended only and specifically for them. A hint of the "neo-conservative" character that the party had acquired was its preoccupation to find new ways of social and family organization so that increasing women's participation would not bring with it "the fracture of the bases that support society", that is, the (traditional) family. However this opposition of PPD-PSD to the quotas disregarded the preferences of its own *social-democrats* women already integrated into the party, who, in the Consultative Council of the Commission for the Equal Rights of Women had been showing their support to socialist and communist women regarding the need to establish mechanisms of this kind (Ruiz Jiménez, 2002, pp. 290-297).

The new proposal was rejected again, with votes in favor coming only from PS and the PPD-PSD woman MP Manuela Aguiar. However, it is interesting to note that just the discussion of the proposal brought some changes to each party (Leite Viegas and Faria, 2001). Even those that have declared themselves against quotas compromised to increase the number of women in their electoral list, even, rhetorically, over the numbers proposed by the government. This is an example of how those parties in government can set the agenda and exercise influence over the gender policies of parties in the opposition. Even though the proposal was rejected, its discussion in

Parliament increased the visibility (or salience) of this question among the electorate. Clearly, since this is a “valence issue” in which there is only one politically correct position, which is being in favor of women’s participation, once the issue was brought into the agenda no party could take a stand against it. Parties did demonstrate against the means or tools, that is, quotas, never against the end in itself, that is, increasing women’s political participation. Furthermore, it might be legitimate to ask about the extent to which the Socialist Government, itself, was really interested in getting the reform approved, rather than just sending out a message or increasing the salience of the issue. Since a quota of 25 percent in a more moderate proposal had not been approved previously, it made little sense that the PS would increase the quota to 33 percent and still expect that the new proposal would have been supported. This argument has to do with parties’ electoral competition. It will be important later in this article to explain the difference in the percentage of women’s participation in politics between Portugal and Spain.

Following the debate on these proposals, the reference to women’s political participation in the 2002 electoral manifesto was qualitatively different from those found in 1991 and 1995:

[The Socialist Government] got worked up with the flag of female quotas for political participation, but did nothing to solve the main real problem affecting women, which is the balance between family and working life [PSD electoral manifesto 2002].

PPD-PSD’S PRAXIS REGARDING WOMEN’S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

The discourse examined above is complemented with the analysis of the evolution of women’s political participation within the PPD-PSD at different levels: within the party, electoral lists, mayors’ offices (*câmaras municipais*) and the lower chamber (Parliament). For the analysis of women within PPD-PSD the main national governing bodies have been selected: the National Council, the National Political Commission and the National Jurisdictional Committee.

The data shown in table 2 about women’s participation in these three bodies do not reveal any clear trend. Periods characterized by high female participation are followed by others in which the participation is very low or even non-existent. The body in which the participation of women is regularly lower is the one that can be considered the most important, the National Council. These variations are not related to changes in party leadership, something that occurs quite frequently in the PPD-PSD.

However, it is possible to detect a clearer increasing trend regarding the number of women included in the PPD-PSD electoral lists. In table 3, one can see how the percentage of women increases from 7 percent in 1976 to 17 percent in 2005. This increasing trend saw only minor reversals in 1980, 1983d, and 2002. On these occasions, however, the decrease in the number of women was accompanied by the placement of the remaining women within eligible positions, in the first middle part of the list. In fact, despite the drop-off in number of female candidates, their improved position on the list and the good fortune of PPD-PSD in the 2002 Legislature marked a record in the number of women elected, as shown in table 4.

Percentage of female political participation in PPD-PSD national governing bodies elected in National Congresses held between 1975 and 2007

[TABLE 2]

	NPC	NC	NJC
II: 1975	9	3	11
IV: 1976	0	3	0
VI: 1978	17	3	11
VIII: 1981	7	3	11
X: 1983	13	7	0
XII: 1985	7	2	0
XIV: 1988	18	4	0
XVI: 1992	6	7	22
XVIII: 1996	6	5	0
XIX: 1997	6	5	0
XX: 1998	28	4	11
XXI: 1999	17	9	11
XXII: 1999	18	5	11
XXIII: 2000	18	9	11
XXIV: 2002	23	7	22
XXV: 2004	29	9	11
XXVI: 2004	23	7	33
XXVII: 2005	35	7	11
XXIX: 2006	17	11	22
XXX: 2007	12	4	22

NPC, National Political Commission.

NC, National Council.

NJC, National Jurisdictional Committee.

Sources: PSD's archive www.psd.pt; author's elaboration from nominal lists.

In a similar vein, women's participation increased, albeit less notably, among the seats of the PPD-PSD in the Parliament, as can be seen in table 4. The number of women deputies in PPD-PSD tripled between 1976 and

2002, going from 6 to 18 percent. However, the movement has not been uniform. Women's participation was almost as high in the 1980-1983 Legislature, with 15 percent deputies. Between 1983 and 1985 that figure remained at a lower level of 9 percent, which fell even further in the following legislatures, increasing again only after the elections of 1999 and in 2002. The higher presence of women deputies during the period 1980-1985, and the record reached in 2002, with 18 percent of female candidates elected, can be attributed to the fact that more than half of the candidates were placed in the first half part of the list, with higher probabilities of being elected. In the 2005 elections we observe, however, a sizable deterioration in the percentage of PPD-PSD female MPs. A twofold explanation might account for this: first the fact that PPD-PSD obtained fewer seats affected the probabilities of women being elected since they were located in worse positions on the lists; second, the exhaustion of the effect of the quotas debate lowered attention to this particular issue.

Percentage of women's candidates in PPD-PSD electoral list to the parliament, 1976-2005

[TABLE 3]

	1976	1979	1980	1983	1985	1987	1991	1995	1999	2002	2005
Percentage of women in the list . . .	7	8	7	5	7	8	11	13	16	14	17
Percentage in the first half of the list	(39)	(38)	(53)	(54)	(50)	(33)	(46)	(33)	(38)	(60)	(36)

Sources: PSD's archive (www.psd.pt; <http://leg2002.psd.pt>) and National Commission on Elections (CNE, www.cne.pt); author's elaboration from nominal lists.

Percentage of women MPs by PPD-PSD in the parliament, 1975-2005*

[TABLE 4]

Constit.	1976-80	1980-83	1983-85	1985-87	1987-91	1991-95	1995-99	1999-02	2002-05	2005-09
6	3	15	9	6	7	7	8	12	18	8

* Counted at the beginning of the first legislative session of each Legislature.

Sources: Portuguese parliament, Lisbon (www.parlamento.pt), PSD's archive (www.psd.pt) and National Commission on Elections (CNE, www.cne.pt); author's elaboration from nominal lists.

Finally, regarding local representation of women (i.e., the number of women mayors), it must be noted that, at least up to 1997, the percentages had not experienced the same kind of increasing trend observed in the Parliament (table 5). The representation at this level went only from 1 to 3 percent, thus remaining very low.

Women and decision-making in Portugal and Spain

Percentage of women mayors by PPD-PSD, 1976-1997

[TABLE 5]

		1976	1979	1982	1985	1989	1993
Over all mayors' offices in Portugal	%	0	0	1	1	1	1
	N	(1)	(1)	(3)	(2)	(2)	(2)
Over mayors' offices occupied by PPD-PSD	%	1	1	2	1	2	2
	N	(1)	(1)	(3)	(1)	(2)	(2)

Sources: PSD's archive (www.psd.pt) and STAPE (www.stape.pt); author's elaboration from nominal relation of mayors in Portugal.

In summary, the issue of women's political participation acquired some importance in the PPD-PSD until the 1990s. And even so, the presence in its electoral manifestos has been almost imperceptible. Although the PPD-PSD is against the establishment of quotas, it has been increasing the number of women on its electoral lists and in the Parliament. The same trend can be found among the national governing bodies, and in women's political participation at the local level.

A BRIEF COMPARISON WITH SPANISH WOMEN AND AP-PP

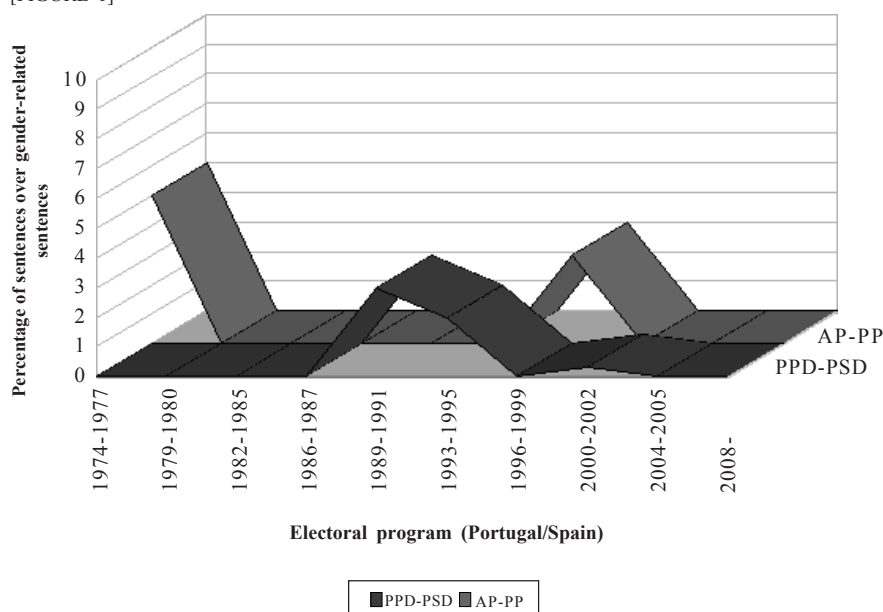
From the discursive point of view, gender-related issues have received comparatively more attention within the electoral programs of AP-PP. But in a similar vein to the PPD-PSD case, women's political participation has occupied a very modest position within these discourses. Especially in the most recent electoral manifestos, 2004 and 2008, this theme was absent.

Differences are more evident if we compare the percentages of women in the decision-making and executive bodies of both parties. Against the ups and downs of PPD-PSD, we observe clearer increasing trends with the AP-PP. Since 1999, women have been consistently above the 15 percent threshold at both the National Directive Council and the National Executive committee. By 2008 women represented 30 percent in the first, and 41 percent in the second.

Looking at the percentage of women in the electoral list of PPD-PSD and AP-PP compared to the lower chamber (Spanish and Portuguese Parliaments), the differences are quite noticeable (table 7). Both parties have increased their number of women candidates in their electoral list during the whole period, but the differences have been larger, especially since the 1990s, further increasing since the year 2000. In general, the percentage of women candidates has been larger in AP-PP electoral lists than in PPD-PSD electoral lists. In 1996 the percentage of women surpassed 25 percent in the first, doubling the percentage in the PPD-PSD list in 1995. In 2008 the percentage of female candidates from AP-PP more than tripled the PPD-PSD figure for 2005 elections.

Percentage of sentences dealing with women's political participation within the electoral programs of PPD-PSD and AP-PP, 1974-2008

[FIGURE 1]



Percentage of female political participation within decision-making and executive bodies of PPD-PSD and AP-PP, 1990-2008

[TABLE 6]

		1990	1993	1996	1999	2002	2004	2008
Deliberative body ^(a)	AP-PP	-	11	14	15	18	27	30
	PPD-PSD ^(c)	4	7	5	5	7	9	4
Executive body ^(b)	AP-PP	18	18	12	22	36	51	41
	PPD-PSD ^(c)	18	6	6	18	23	29	12

(a) PPD-PSD: National Council; AP-PP: National Directive Council.

(b) PPD-PSD: National Political Commission; AP-PP: National Executive committee.

(c) The dates for PPD-PSD are: 1988 instead of 1990, 1992 instead of 1993, and 2007 instead of 2008.

Sources: PSD's archive (www.psd.pt) and PP's archive (www.pp.es); author's elaboration from nominal lists.

In a similar vein, both parties have also increased the percentage of women MPs in their respective parliamentary groups (table 8). The PPD-PSD had a percentage of women MPs greater than AP-PP between 1980 and 1985.

During the rest of the period, the AP-PP has been the party standing out with the largest proportion of women in its parliamentary group. The difference between both parties was especially significant, and has followed an increasing trend since the 1989 general elections in Spain, when the AP was refounded as the PP. The rise in the number of women MPs in this party was especially notable in 2000, when 25 percent of the Spanish conservative party's MPs were women, increasing slightly in 2004 and 2008. At the same time, the percentage in PPD-PSD, even after a strong increase in comparison to the previous legislature, reached only 18 percent in 2002, decreasing thereafter to a percentage even lower than in 1980-1983 Legislature.

Comparison between the number of women candidates in the electoral list of AP-PP in Spain and PPD-PSD in Portugal, 1976-2000

[TABLE 7]

	–	1976	1980	1983	1985	1987	1991	1995	1999	2002	2005
PPD-PSD	% (1/2)	7 (39)	8 (38)	7 (53)	5 (54)	7 (50)	8 (33)	11 (46)	13 (33)	16 (38)	14 (60)
	–	–	1979	1982	1986	1989	1993	1996	2000	2004	2008
AP-PP	% (1/2)	–	14 (47)	11 (34)	13 (34)	17 (38)	22 (39)	26 (37)	34 (46)	36 (55)	45 (42)

% — percentage of women in the whole list; (1/2) — percentage of women in first half part of the list (over total women's candidates).

Sources: Archive of the Spanish Congress (www.congreso.es), BOE (www.boe.es); archive of the Portuguese Parliament (www.parlamento.pt), and PSD's archive (www.psd.pt); author's elaboration from nominal lists.

THE NEED TO COMPETE FOR FEMALE VOTERS IN THE PPD-PSD AND AP-PP

Although scarce, there is some evidence that conservative parties in other countries have also increased the number of women in politics. In seeking an explanation for this transformation, most authors cite changes in women's political preferences and, thus, to the need of conservative parties to compete for a female electorate that has traditionally favored the Right. This has been observed for Canada (Erickson, 1993, pp. 81-82), Germany (Kolinski, 1993, pp. 121-123 and 131; Lemke, 1994, p. 278), the United States (Burrell, 1993, pp. 302-302), and the United Kingdom (Norris and Lovenduski, 1993, p. 56). This is also the kind of argument advanced by leftist parties when trying to discredit those changes as being merely instrumental. However, to the extent that electoral competition is the base on which democracy rests, the strategy has to be regarded as legitimate. Be-

sides, it seems that precisely because leftist parties might find this strategy threatening, it generates more electoral competition, and therefore a path dependency that makes a backward movement in women’s political participation unlikely, at least in the near future.

Comparison between the percentage of women MPs by AP-PP in Spain and PPD-PSD in Portugal, 1976-2008

[TABLE 8]

	1976- -1980	1980- -1983	1983- -1985	1985- -1987	1987- -1991	1991- -1995	1995- -1999	1999- -2002	2002- -2005	2005- -2009
PPD-PSD	3	15	9	6	7	7	8	12	18	8
	1977- -1979	1979- -1982	1982- -1986	1986- -1989	1989- -1993	1993- -1996	1996- -2000	2000- -2004	2004- -2008	2008- -2012
AP-PP	6	11	2	8	10	15	14	25	27	28

Sources: Archive of the Spanish Congress (www.congreso.es), BOE (www.boe.es); archive of the Portuguese Parliament (www.parlamento.pt), and PSD’s archive (www.psd.pt); author’s elaboration from nominal lists.

The argument that parties increase women’s political participation to improve their electoral fortune is rather intuitive. It seems to fit quite well for the explanation of differences between the Portuguese PPD-PSD and the Spanish AP-PP. To the extent that AP-PP has been in the political opposition while PPD-PSD has been in office (see Table 9), it may explain why conservative leaders in Spain have promoted women’s political participation to a higher level, since they had felt more pressure to compete for the vote of women than had conservative leaders in Portugal⁶.

Participation of PPD-PSD and AP-PP in the governments in Portugal (1974-2008) and Spain (1977-2008)

[TABLE 9]

1974	1979	1981	1983	1985	1987	1989	1991	1993	1995	1996	1997	1999	2001	2002	2004	2005	2008

⁶ To explain the inertias that remained in both parties after the initial situation reverses: PPD-PSD losing elections in 1995 and 1999, and AP-PP winning in 1996 and 2000, we need to look at a wider picture, taking into account the pro-active role played by leftist parties in the promotion of women’s political participation in both countries. For a qualitative study of the previous situation, see Fernandes and Duarte (1985).

In fact, the gender gap, previously favorable to conservative parties in Spain, has disappeared and turned slightly in favor of leftist parties (Morales Díez de Ulzurum, 1999, Uriarte and Elizondo, 1997, Ruiz Jiménez, 2002, pp. 330-332). In Portugal, this inversion of the gender gap has followed a much less clear trend (Ruiz Jiménez, 2002, pp. 347-350), and currently there are no significant differences in the political behavior of men and women (Baum and Espírito-Santo, 2007; Freire, Lobo and Magalhães, 2004, pp. 274-276)⁷. The current situation is not very different for AP-PP and for PPD-PSD: what is really important is not the inversion of the gender gap itself, but the attention that leaders have paid to it and how they have evaluated and interpreted their good or bad fortunes among female voters. Obviously, due to its longer stay in the opposition, AP-PP have felt more pressed to look for new voters among all possible groups.

SUBJECTIVE PERCEPTION BY PARTIES' LEADERS

Interviews with parties' leaders seem to confirm the interpretation above. AP-PP leaders did explicitly recognize that their changes on gender issues followed the goal of improving the perception and evaluation of the party among women. The elite have perceived that there has been a change in the electoral preference of women that has benefited the PSOE. There exists the opinion that women have a better perception and evaluation of socialist gender policies and that this has had an electoral cost for AP-PP. In fact, 57 percent of the interviewees mentioned that the reason was to appeal to the female voters.

The population groups in which they had to improve their presence was, precisely, among women, in the perception that women should have about the gender policies of AP-PP:

To me, and the surveys demonstrated it, there is a better perception of the policies that the PSOE address to women, better than the perception of AP-PP gender policies. Or, that is, of AP-PP programs [interview 11]⁸.

This is an electoral market... that means, one has to sell and place its product in the market [...] And I think that this has been essential, but both for the PP as well as the PSOE [...] You need to gain the support of 50 percent of the electorate who are women. And then, if one has assets from that same

⁷ Differences are not statistically significant in the Spanish case either. The inversion of the gender gap has meant a change from a clear female preference for conservative parties to a new situation in which men and women behave in a similar way in their party choices.

⁸ Interviews were given under the condition of anonymity. A complete list of the party's leaders interviewed is given in the appendix. Transcripts of the interviews are available for purposes of replication upon request to the author.

sex it is evident that one shows them, shows them in the electoral market. [...] There are a mobilizing factor and a visualizing factor which are not often explicit, but rather implicit, they are tactical, sometimes even subliminal, however in this arena they can only give us, clearly, more voters [interview 37].

In contrast, the PPD-PSD in Portugal has understood that there is no electoral market for gender policies in Portugal, neither among women nor among the society at large. Thus, they have lacked electoral incentives to increase women's political representation among other questions. According to the leaders interviewed, "the female agenda was never an important question within the PPD-PSD", and there is certainly none about the "extent to which the Portuguese female electorate, of the population as a whole, is sensitive to gender issues"⁹. Also, since they have been a governing party for most of the period analyzed here, they have felt pressed to look for neither new voters in general, nor the female voters in particular. In fact, most of the leaders interviewed in PPD-PSD did not know about their electoral support among women, nor did they have any awareness of having lost electoral support among female voters. Only two persons were aware of any change among this electorate¹⁰. According to them, since the 1995 legislative elections, and 1996 presidential elections, women had voted for the Socialist Party (*Partido Socialista*, PS) to a greater extent than for the PPD-PSD, thus damaging the party. However this perception was quite restricted.

A QUANTITATIVE TEST OF THE ELECTORAL COMPETITION HYPOTHESIS

The hypothesis can be tested, also using quantitative data from the *Comparative Manifestos Project* (CMP)¹¹ and the *Political Data Set* (PDS)¹². Departing from the assumption that being in power allows parties to follow their own ideological preferences to a greater extent than if they were in the opposition, the relationship between the percentage of seats held

⁹ Interview 17.

¹⁰ Interview 15 and 16.

¹¹ Volkens, A. et al., *Comparative Manifestos Project: Programmatic Profiles of Political Parties in Twenty Countries, 1945-1988*, Colchester, Essex: The Data Archive [distributor], 6 July 1995. SN: 3437. Access to the data base has been facilitated through ECASS - European Centre for the Analysis in the Social Sciences- Essex University (Colchester, UK), and supported by the European Commission through the program "Improving Human Potential - Enhancing Access to Research Infrastructure programmes". Professors I. Budge and J. L. Bara (Department of Government, Essex University) made possible the access to the updated data base (1945-1998) and gave me valuable hints about the use of the data.

¹² Armingeon, Beyeler, and Menegale, (2000).

by conservative parties in their countries' lower chambers and the percentage of discourse that reflected positive attitudes toward gender related issues in their electoral programs is analyzed (see Ruiz Jiménez, 2002 for details).

For the purpose of this test, data from the CMP and PDS were integrated into a new database. If high electoral support, translated into a parliamentary majority, allows a party to set the agenda according to its ideological preferences, and assuming that conservative parties have a preference for traditional social and family models (vs. feminist demands), one may speculate that the greater the number of seats held by conservative parties in their national parliaments, the lower the percentage of discourse that will reflect a favorable attitude toward gender issues in their electoral programs. Pearson's correlation between these two variables confirms the hypothesized relationship, with $r = -.330$ ¹³. But, in fact, a party's ability to follow its own ideological preferences must be greater in the period following an electoral success (after their position in parliament and/or government is well established). The correlation between the number of seats held by conservative parties in the national parliament in one period (t) and the percentage of discourse that reflects positive attitudes toward gender issues in the next period ($t + 1$) increases, in fact, confirming this relationship ($r = -.369$)¹⁴.

Also, considering the number of seats held by conservative parties in their national parliament, the fact that these parties control the government may increase their ability to follow their own ideological (traditional) preferences on gender issues. Therefore, a partial correlation between the number of seats held by conservative parties in their national parliaments in period t and the percentage of discourse reflecting positive attitudes toward gender related issues in the next electoral period ($t + 1$) was run, controlling by the sign of government¹⁵. Under these assumptions the Pearson's correlation increases to $r = -.5715$ ¹⁶.

¹³ Within a 95% confidence interval.

¹⁴ Within a 95% confidence interval. $N = 102$. The parties in the analysis are the following: Sweden — United Moderate Party (MS); Norway — Conservative Party (Hoyre) and Christian Democratic Party; France — RPF-RPR and Conservative Party; Italy — Christian Democratic Party (DC); Great Britain — Conservative Party (CP); Germany — Christian Democratic Party (CDU-CSU); United States — Republican Party (RP); Spain — Popular Alliance-Popular Party (AP-PP); Portugal — Social Democratic Party (PSD).

¹⁵ This is a 5-values scale from 1-hegemonic right, to 5-hegemonic left.

¹⁶ Within a 95% confidence interval. $N = 69$. The analysis includes elections after 1960 and the following parties:

Sweden — MS; Norway — Hoyre and Christian Democratic Party; France — RPF-RPR and Conservative Party; Italy — DC; Great Britain — PC; Germany — CDU-CSU; Spain — AP-PP; Portugal — PSD.

But the argument that conservative parties use gender issues instrumentally when they are in the opposition to compete with leftist parties also means that the hypothesis that there exists a positive correlation between the number of seats held by leftist parties in their national parliaments and their percentage of discourse reflecting positive attitudes toward gender issues must also be proved. The fact that leftist parties bring gender issues into the agenda when they are in power, remaining electorally strong at the same time, is the mechanism that will make conservative parties try to compete in that domain, as well¹⁷. The data also confirm this hypothesis. The greater the number of seats held by leftist parties in their national parliaments in period t , the higher the percentage of discourse that reflects positive attitudes toward gender issues in the next electoral period, $(t + 1)$. The Pearson correlation is $r = .230$ ¹⁸. When controlling by the sign of government, the correlation increases to $r = .2696$ ¹⁹.

The conclusion to be drawn from the analysis shows two quite different situations for conservative parties: those periods when they are strong in electoral terms and able to follow (and to some extent impose on other parties) their own ideological preferences, and those other periods when they are weak in electoral terms. When parties are weak, not only are they less able to follow their own ideological preferences on gender issues, but, if leftist parties are in power, things might be even more difficult. Leftist parties will bring gender issues into the agenda and into the electoral competition, thus forcing the conservative parties, too, to compete in that arena. This is the situation that can be found in Spain between 1977 and 1996: a strong socialist party

¹⁷ This is derived from Downs (1957), who explicitly assumes that the main objective of parties is to reach the government through their competition in regular democratic elections. Therefore, he understands that parties' main motivation is electoral (electoral maximization, which is the previous and necessary step to realize their main objective of getting to power). Those parties that lose elections would compete in elections imitating the party in power. Nevertheless, there is a debate in which other authors have pointed out that parties might also have other objectives (Schlesinger, 1975; Panebianco, 1988; Kitschelt, 1989; Strøm, 1990; Harmel and Janda, 1994; Roemer, 1998). I tend to agree with Müller and Strøm (1999) and Wolinetz (2002), that the different motivations and objectives of parties are not exclusive. To a point, a certain electoral motivation (electoral maximization) is a prerequisite to realize any of the parties' possible objectives.

¹⁸ Within a 90% confidence interval. $N = 102$. The parties in the correlation are the following:

Sweden — Social Democratic Party (SDA-SSA); Norway — Labor Party (DNA); France — Socialist Party (PSF); Italy — Socialist Party (PSI); Great Britain — Labor Party (LP); Germany — Social Democratic Party (SPD); United States — Democratic Party (DP); Spain — Socialist Party (PSOE); Portugal — Socialist Party (PS).

¹⁹ Within a 95% confidence interval. $N = 60$. The analysis includes elections after 1960 and the following parties:

Sweden — Social Democratic Party (SDA-SSA); Norway — DNA; France — PSF; Italy — PSI; Great Britain — LP; Germany — SPD; Spain — PSOE; Portugal — PS.

(PSOE) in power for more than 20 years, that has incorporated part of the feminist movement's demands into its programs and policies (including women's political participation), and a weak conservative party (AP-PP), which over the years has changed its attitudes toward those gender issues in an attempt to compete with the socialist party. On the contrary, if conservative parties are strong in electoral terms they could follow their own ideological preferences, as seems to be the case with the conservative parties in the UK and USA. The situation for the PSD in Portugal, the main right-wing party in this country, is similar to the conservative parties in the UK and USA. The PSD took part in, or formed, governments since 1979 until 1995, and so this party had felt less pressed to increase its share of the female vote because it did not feel threatened. Although the electoral competition with the left has been tighter lately, the Socialist Party in Portugal has been less pro-active than the PSOE in Spain during the years of its governments (1995-2002 and 2005 onwards). Leite Viegas and Faria (2001, p. 40) reveal how the ideological discourse of the PS in favor of female political participation has been far from fulfilling despite the internal quotas intended for the party bodies, established at 25 percent in 1988. In fact, after having proposed new legislation that would force parties to position women on the list in such a way as to guarantee that 33 percent of those elected were women, the PS succeeded in electing only 20 percent.

THE SOPHISTICATION OF LEADERS

The electoral competition hypothesis entails the assumption that women will vote for an electoral candidate of their same sex with a higher probability than for a male candidate. This is arguable and cannot be assured. However, it does not invalidate the hypothesis. Leaders in AP-PP acknowledged the impossibility to be certain that having more women candidates would increase their share of female voters. Moreover, they even doubted that women would cast their vote based only on the evaluation of the gender policies offered by different parties. Nevertheless, they feared that not being receptive to gender issues might have brought electoral costs, since women could feel that they were not represented by the party. Therefore, one can still talk about an electoral strategy, although the rationale behind it in the case of AP-PP has been to minimize electoral cost instead of to directly maximize electoral revenues.

Regarding the future of women's political participation within the PPD-PSD, it seems that it will depend in the future evolution of the Portuguese electoral scenario. That is, how sensitive is the currently governing Socialist Party to gender issues at large, and women's political participation in particular (Freire and Lobo, 2006; Almeida and Freire, 2005). The period be-

tween 1995 and 2002 seem to have been a lost opportunity in this sense. The debate on the quotas' proposals had some effects on all parties (Leite Veigas and Faria, 2001), but due to internal obstacles the Socialist Party in Portugal has not been as pro-active as the Socialist Party in Spain in the promotion of female political elite. The fact that the Socialist Party wants to enforce it by law for all parties shows its own internal weaknesses, and its doubts that the strategy of increasing women's presence will pay off. To the extent that the issue is brought again into the political agenda, and the PS increases its female political participation, it will press other parties to follow the same path.

WOMEN'S POLITICAL IMPACT WITHIN PPD-PSD AND AP-PP

The comparison between PPD-PSD and AP-PP confirms that the percentage of women participating has an impact on their willingness and ability to influence partisan policies. In fact, it has been seen that even after notably increasing the percentage of women, this remains in the Portuguese PPD-PSD below or only slightly over the hypothesized threshold of 15 percent. The consequence is that women in the PPD-PSD have been constrained in their promotion of gender policies. In contrast, women in the AP-PP have been more numerous and able to act as a lobby within the party.

Up to 60 percent of those leaders interviewed in the AP-PP pointed out that it was obvious that women had a special sensitivity to specific issues and "contrary to men, an inclination to defend other women"²⁰. Accordingly, it was stated that "no one can show and talk about women's needs better than women, themselves"²¹, or that "when women are in politics they have a different vision (...), neither better nor worse, but different to that of men"²². In the same vein, the underrepresentation of women in other spheres was lamented as the reason that women's rights were often neglected. This affected not just politics²³, but also labor unions²⁴:

Want it or not, parties are macho [...] and, in fact, it is very hard for us, women, to get initiatives such as this one approved, that the political group takes them into consideration and includes them [in the program]. [...] Often women had different visions of some issues. If you are on an equal footing with men, then these topics can be discussed. Even though they may think about other topics, because they do not feel that these [gender issues] are so important [interview 8].

²⁰ Interview 1.

²¹ Interview 39.

²² Interview 43.

²³ Interview 8.

²⁴ Interviews 6 and 9.

Moreover, and besides their special sensitivity to gender issues, 48 percent of the leaders interviewed in the AP-PP recognized that, in fact, women have played a significant role in the promotion of gender policies within the party. Only 8 percent of those interviewed said that women had not always, nor necessarily, played such a significant role. As understood by interviewees, in the AP-PP women have been the ideological avant-garde, that is, they have taken on the leading role regarding gender policies²⁵, especially from important positions in the party or the Government²⁶. In fact, women consider it crucial to occupy these posts in order to be able to “influence, coordinate and designate strategies” related to gender issues in an effective way²⁷. They think that the “greater the number of women in relevant posts, the better the result will be”²⁸:

From the moment that there are women in those relevant representative positions [...] directive positions, representative positions, in positions with decision power within the party itself, it follows that there are important issues that they promote, that is: the role of women in the Spanish society, women’s incorporation in the labor market, the problems of women housekeepers, [...], that is, any think that it can affect women [interview 38].

It has already been shown how the percentage of women’s participation has increased lately in the AP-PP over the “critical mass” threshold of 15 percent in the party and as MPs. They have also occupied important roles in the Government. This may have allowed them to influence the party in a way different to that of women in the PPD-PSD, as will be seen below. Besides, women have influenced the AP-PP through their participation in European and international women’s meetings and conferences. Speaking in the name of their party, they have forced their president, or the governing bodies, to behave according to their declarations made in forums of the greatest importance.

An unexpected factor that has shown itself to be quite important in developing and sustaining gender policies in the AP-PP has been women’s participation in the women’s organization, Women for Democracy (*Mujeres para la Democracia, MpD*), ideologically related to the Spanish conservative party. It has been pointed out (Lovenduski, 1993) that the existence of some kind of female organization either linked to or independent from the party has had a positive impact on the incorporation of women and gender policies within partisan organizations. Usually, these organizations have helped the

²⁵ Interviews 11, 12 and 36.

²⁶ Interviews 13 and 12.

²⁷ Interviews 5 and 43.

²⁸ Interview 8.

initiative of campaigns in favor of gender equality and the opening of debates on gender roles within the parties. These strategies are more effective when accompanied by women's participation in the parties' governing bodies, or what Lovenduski (1993) labeled "dual strategy". Corrin (1999, p. 179) adds that these types of organizations facilitate a faster progress of women in their political objectives. However, if women work only in those realms traditionally considered as "female issues", an autonomous organization may contribute to the marginalization of women's resources and capabilities.

The "dual strategy" referred to by Lovenduski (1993, p. 9) can be found in the AP-PP. There exists a women's organization ideologically close to the party, many of whose affiliates work within the political structure of AP-PP. Thirty-two percent of the interviewees considered the organization MpD quite relevant in the evolution of gender issues within the party. The influence of the party takes place through indirect channels, exerting pressure as a women's lobby²⁹. One of the more important channels in this process is the double militancy of many women: 30 percent of those affiliated with the MpD are also active in the party, many of them in posts of responsibility³⁰. Many of these women also participate in the National Commission for Women, in the Parliament and the Government. They bring gender issues to those institutions and press for those issues to receive attention and action³¹.

Electoral programs and government programs are written, but not by Women for Democracy (MpD), because MpD is not really the female section of the party, but it influences, and greatly, these (gender) programs and policies [interview 10].

What happens is that yes, in our organization there are women that belong to PP, or with responsibility posts within the party. And, in fact, there are women that have come out from this organization and had occupied high responsibility posts within the party [...]. They are there, dealing with politics, as I tell you the influence is both direct and indirect, since [...] we defend gender issues that the PP does not, or that it did not, but after the PP has assimilated those issues as their own [interview 9].

In contrast, in Portugal women's incorporation to politics within and through the PPD-PSD has been far more restricted, as shown above. The number of interviewees in this party who think that women have a special or higher sensitivity toward gender issues, and therefore are more capable of representing women's interests is significantly lower than the same percentage in the AP-PP. Up to 48 percent said that women in PPD-PSD had not always, nor necessarily, had an important role in the promotion of

²⁹ Interview 39.

³⁰ Interview 5.

³¹ Interview 12, 4 and 11.

gender issues, in contrast to the 8 percent who shared this opinion in the AP-PP. There is a reluctance among PPD-PSD women to work on gender topics, due to the perception that such “defense of women’s problems is damaging”³². In contrast to the use of power that women in the AP-PP exercise to promote gender issues within the party, “the largest part [of PPD-PSD women], when they reach important positions, have to behave as men and to pretend that they do not care about women’s questions”³³. Thus, women prefer to “discuss the issues that anybody else discusses, instead of emphasizing always their concerns with gender issues notwithstanding how fair those might be”³⁴. One of the reasons identified as causing difficulties for the promotion of gender issues within the party is the low participation of women in politics³⁵, the lack of a critical mass of women, which helps to bring those issues into the political agenda:

Because there is no critical mass within the party, or within the Assembly [of the Republic, i.e. Parliament], ideas are much more difficult to bring into the political agenda, and women make a great effort and obtain very little reward in return for their effort, and that may also undermine their confidence [...] If there were many more women within the party, many more women in the Parliamentary Group in the Assembly, probably those issues would strengthen and reach the political agenda [interview 19].

On the other hand, PPD-PSD also lacks a women’s organization similar to MpD in AP-PP, which would make a “dual strategy” for the women of PPD-PSD easier. Initially, there was an attempt to create a “Vice-rectorate for Women”, during the presidency of Sá Carneiro (1974-1979). Even though it did not work very well, PPD-PSD women regarded its creation as positive³⁶. Later on, during the presidency of Cavaco Silva (1985-1995), there was a new endeavor to create a group of Social-Democrats Women. It belonged to the so-called Studies’ Cabinet, which was in charge of writing the party’s programs. According to the women who belonged to that group, they were very active and listened to, despite not having a formal status³⁷. However, it seems that the organization was, overall, a tool for partisan mobilization, as well as being formative and the ideological instrument of the party among PPD-PSD women, as one of the party’s presidents recognized³⁸. After the presidency of Cavaco Silva, the activity of the Social-

³² Interview 17 and 18.

³³ Interview 17.

³⁴ Interview 35 and 15.

³⁵ Interview 20.

³⁶ Interview 18, 24 and 29.

³⁷ Interview 32.

³⁸ Interview 32.

-Democrats Women has been virtually non-existent³⁹. In contrast to the winning of responsibility posts by Women for Democracy in Spain, from which they press in favor of gender policies, the same strategy is not at work in the case of the Social-Democrats Women: “the representative of Social-Democrats Women in the Consultative Council for the Female Condition almost never shows up”⁴⁰, and if she shows up, she is not authorized by the party to speak on its behalf⁴¹.

The lower adhesion of conservative women to the PPD-PSD and to politics in Portugal, as well as the absence of a women’s organization that helps women to develop their political careers and objectives may have been an influence too, and together with other factors, it is a fact that gender policies are more conservative within PPD-PSD than within AP-PP.

CONCLUSIONS

First of all, this article has shown that the percentage of female participation at the decision-making level has increased notably in both the PPD-PSD and AP-PP since their transition to democracy. It has been pointed out that this trend has also characterized other conservatives and rightist parties in Europe. There has been a widespread tendency among parties on the right to include female political participation at the decision-making level in response to an increase in women’s preference for leftist parties. That is, in many European countries, rightist parties have felt pressured to compete for female voters, who represent more than 50 percent of the voters; an increasing presence of women in the electoral list and in party bodies has been an instrumental tool striving toward such an end. In some rightist parties this initial instrumentalization did, however, create a path dependency that changed their ideological profile. In other words, it can be said that there has been an ideological convergence between left and right regarding female political participation at the decision-making level. The differences regarding gender remain between left and right on other issues, especially those related to sexual matters (abortion, for the most part), but have relaxed regarding female political or labor participation.

At the same time, it is also clear that the differences between PPD-PSD and AP-PP have been, and remain, great. Macro-variables alone cannot explain the differences (Ruiz Jiménez, 2007). As a complementary explanation, I have argued that it has been the different electoral environment in Spain and Portugal that forced AP-PP to compete for female voters, while

³⁹ Interview 29.

⁴⁰ Interview 17.

⁴¹ Interview 15.

PPD-PSD felt a much milder need to do so: PPD-PSD participated in Portuguese governments since early after transition, while AP-PP remained in the opposition until 1996. The plausibility of the explanation has been tested with aggregate data from different countries in different years. The tests have shown that rightist parties are less open to women's demands when they are in power, which also means that they are more inclined to favor female political participation at the decision-making level when they are in the opposition. However, there are also path dependency effects. The electoral success of this strategy for the PP, the strong presence of women within the party, and the solid pro-active role of the socialist party have prevented any back-sliding in Spain, even when the conservative party occupied the government.

The fact that PPD-PSD has been a governing party to a much greater extent than AP-PP explains why the former has also been less inclined to female political participation at the decision-making level. This, on the other hand, has had another consequence. Women's participation is much greater in AP-PP, and as a consequence, they have been able to influence the party to a greater extent than women in PPD-PSD. Women have remained below the 15 percent threshold in the Portuguese party until very recently, and according to their own testimony, have felt pressured to "act as male politicians", being afraid of spoiling their political career if they try to press forward with gender related issues. Female political participation within the PPD-PSD has very recently risen above this 15 percent threshold. It remains to be seen to what extent this will alter women's political behavior in the party. Other variables that may influence this are the following: first, the capability of the Portuguese Socialist Party to increase its female political participation at the decision-making level, thus giving public visibility and increasing the salience of the issue; second, the revitalization of the PPD-PSD women's organization, so that it can play a significant role in the promotion of women as politicians within the party, as well as being the channel to press for gender related issues.

Finally, it must be pointed out that despite the differences, both parties have followed the same increasing trend, although at different speeds. The social evolution in both countries, as well as the political influence coming from the EU, cannot be disregarded as complementary factors explaining these changes.

**Appendix: leaders interviewed in PPD-PSD
in Portugal and AP-PP in Spain**

Spain	Portugal
María Jesús Díaz Pérez	António Capucho
Pilar Ayuso	Magarida Salema
Rafael Hernando	Ligia Amâncio
Luisa Fernanda Rudi	Maria João Sande Lemos
Celia Villalobos	Manuela Bragança
María Fernanda Barrios	Ana Maria Braga da Cruz
María Victoria Cabanillas	Maria Eduarda Azevedo
Isabel San Baldomero	Joana de Barros
Guillermo Gortázar	Manuela Ferreira Leite
Pío García Escudero	Maria Raquel Ribeiro
Ángeles Muñoz Oriol	Miguel Júdice
María Jesús Sainz García	Fernando Correia Afonso
Gabriel Díaz Berbel	Assunção Esteves
Miguel Ángel Rodríguez	Maria Teresa Gouveia
José María Michivila	Manuela Aguiar
Esperanza Aguirre	Maria Amélia Oliveira
Pilar Dávila	Albino Aroso
Soledad Becerril	Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa
Teófila Martínez	Margarida Silva Pereira
Damián Caneda	Pinto Balsemão
María Visitación Pérez Vega	Maria do Céu Ramos
Carmen Parto	
Inmaculada Juárez	

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Women and decision-making in Portugal and Spain

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Women and decision-making in Portugal and Spain

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