



Parity in Management Positions in Local Public Administration in Portugal

A Case Study

Bruna Marisa Monteiro Pinto¹, Amândio Pereira Baía² and Maria Manuela Santos Natário^{3,*}

¹Instituto Politécnico da Guarda; bruna_marisapinto@hotmail.com

²Instituto Politécnico da Guarda; CICF-IPCA, baia@ipg.pt

³ Instituto Politécnico da Guarda; GOVCOPP- UA, CICF-IPCA, CITUR, m.natario@ipg.pt

* Corresponding Author

Received: December 3, 2024; **Accepted:** December 30, 2024; **Published:** December 31, 2024.

Citation: Pinto, B. M. M., Baía, A. P., & Natário, M. M. S. (2022). Parity in Management Positions in Local Public Administration in Portugal: A Case Study. *International Journal of Business Innovation*. 3(3). e308206.

<https://doi.org/10.34624/ijbi.v3i3.38206>

Abstract: This study aims to analyse parity in management positions in Public Administration. Two districts. The analysis focuses on the study of various indicators of candidates and elected officials for the Presidency of Municipal Councils and candidates and elected officials for the Assembly of the Republic. The data was collected from the Portal do Eleitor website (<https://www.portaldoeleitor.pt/Default.aspx>) and from the website of each local council. For the Presidency of City Councils, data from the last four electoral periods were considered: 2009, 2013, 2017 and 2021. For the number of candidates and elected representatives to the Assembly of the Republic, the last five periods were considered: 2009, 2011, 2015, 2019 and 2022. The analysis concludes that there has been a slight improvement in terms of gender parity in public administration management positions. The data considered for the case study confirms the increase of women in politics. In management bodies, the number of women has increased over the years, mainly due to the implementation of the Parity Law. The study focused only on two districts in Portugal and analysed local authorities, not other public sector bodies. The study comes coupled with the implementation of the Parity Law, which is the main driver behind this positive increase in female candidates and elected representatives in Portugal. Contributing to raising awareness of gender equality, particularly in public administration.

Keywords: Parity, Public Administration, Gender Equality, Gender Inequality, Parity Law

1 Introduction

Inequality between women and men is a current issue, persistent and complex, not only in Portugal but also around the world. In the very recent past, women were "directed" to the care of the house and children, while men were responsible for the economic support of the family, leading to the origin of a relationship directed to dependence (Sobral & Ribeiro, 2018).

According to Costa (2000), the women represented in popular literature are equivalent to old images of the woman who is "faithful versus perverse, seductive, domineering and castrating versus fragile, submissive and respectful". However, despite all the changes over the years, today the sexism created between men and women is still present in our daily lives.

"This inconsistency of male attitudes towards women suggests that men have always been ambivalent about the other sex. However, male sexism, even when expressed in an ambivalent way, is always defined by the oppression of women, reflected in derogatory attitudes and discriminatory actions based on the bio-cultural assumption that women are inferior to men" (Costa, 2000, p.280).

The massive entry of women into traditionally masculine spheres (namely in the education system and the labour market) constitutes a line of changes that, since the 1960s, have crossed Portuguese society, throwing women out of the family (Wall & Amâncio, 2007).

The approach to inequality proposed by Therborn (2006) states that inequality has three fundamental dimensions: the vital, the existential and the resource inequality.

1. Vital inequality is inequality in the face of life, death, and health. That is, it is the one that can be measured by life expectancy, mortality, and the incidence of malnutrition. This type of inequality is directly linked to living and health conditions.
2. Existential inequality refers to the recognition of individuals as persons. Inequalities result from oppression and restrictions on individual and collective freedom, discrimination, humiliation and stigmatization, such as slavery and racism.
3. The inequality of resources involves both material and symbolic resources. Namely, inequalities in income and wealth, education and professional qualification, cognitive and cultural skills, hierarchical position in organizations and access to social networks.

However, due to large women's social movements and large transnational institutions, such as the United Nations (UN), the European Union (EU) and the Council of Europe, the recognition of gender inequalities has led countries in different parts of the world to develop actions and implement different types of positive action measures, to increase women's representation in politics more quickly (Santos & Espírito-Santo, 2017).

In Portugal, the process of building an egalitarian legal and institutional framework made significant progress in 1998, with the presentation in the Assembly of the Republic of a Draft Law known as the "Quota Law". However, this attempt failed but contributed to the introduction of the theme of inequality in politics. In 2006, the Parity Law was approved, which established a minimum representation of 33.3% of each sex on the lists for the Assembly of the Republic, the European Parliament and Local Government bodies. Thus, the Portuguese legislator adopted the "double-quota" or "zipper" system, relating to the ordering of the elements of the two sexes in the lists, which determines that each third candidate is of the opposite sex. This fact prevents female candidates from being placed at the bottom of the lists, with little chance of election (Saraiva, 2017).

In 2019 with Organic Law No. 1/2019 of 29 March, "Second amendment to the law on parity in the bodies of political power, approved by Organic Law No. 3/2006, of 21 August", the minimum representation of each sex increased to 40%, according to Article No. 2.

In this way, it is intended to analyse gender parity in Public Administration, in particular in the management bodies of Local Public Administration, specifically in two Districts of Portugal: Aveiro and Guarda. The study of this theme implies a quantitative analysis, where statistical methods and mathematical tools will be used to identify patterns and/or trends, based on the data available online and/or requests to the Municipalities studied.

The study is structured in 3 sections, after the introduction. The first point presents the progress of women in politics over the years until the Implementation of the Parity Law and the results of these advances in society and politics. In point two, the methodology used in this study will be presented. In point four, the results of the study of the various Municipalities and the respective discussion of the analysis of parity in positions in public administration are presented. Finally, the conclusion is presented, with the limitations and some suggestions for possible future investigations.

2 Theoretical Framework

2.1 Women in Political Power in Portugal

Historically, men have been predominating in leadership positions in organizations, which does not give them a greater advantage over women in the performance of leadership roles. There are essential characteristics in a good leader that are more easily found in the female gender than in the male gender, by adopting a more democratic style, of encouragement and involvement, sharing power and information and team development (Sobral & Ribeiro, 2018).

With late access to education, their voice should not be heard in public. Thus, the political hierarchy was, in a way, "blocked" to the female sex. That is, if a woman wanted to rise in this environment, she had to align herself with a kind of "representation" where they should be cold and aggressive like their colleagues of the opposite sex, even so, they ran the

risk of being rejected. Even if they had feminine traits, they were considered unfit for the challenges of the world of politics (Guimarães, Lamy & Silva, 2019). However, the presence of women in politics increased globally throughout the twentieth century.

In Portugal, the first woman to vote was Carolina Beatriz Ângelo, she was a doctor, widow and mother who in 1911 invoked her status as head of the family to vote in the elections for the Constituent Assembly. In the absence of specific laws on gender, and given that she was not given the right to register as a voter, she appealed to the courts, having been granted the right to vote by Judge João Baptista de Castro. She was the first European woman to vote. As a consequence, the new electoral law of July 13, 1913, explicitly denied the right to vote to women, even if they were heads of household, attributing the vote exclusively to male citizens (Almeida, 2015a).

With the 1933 Constitution, the first law was issued that granted the right to vote to women (explained above) but limited to heads of families or holders of secondary or higher education diplomas. Between 1934 and 1973 only 14 women were represented in the National Assembly and the Corporate Chamber. With the transition to democracy in Portugal, the electoral law established for the first-time total gender equality in Decree-Law No. 621-A/74, of 15/11/1974, as well as several other laws paved the way for equal civil, social and political rights (Vargas, 2000).

2.2 The Parity Law in Portugal – The Implementation

Since the beginning of the democratic regime in Portugal (1974), there has been a permanent concern with women's political participation. In the first decades of democracy, this concern was expressed mainly by the most important women's policy agency – currently called the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality (CIG) (Teixeira, Espírito-Santo, & Santos; 2021). Founded in 1975, the Commission for Citizenship and Gender Equality is a national body responsible for the promotion and defence of equality that seeks to respond to the profound social and political changes in society in terms of citizenship and gender equality (CIG, 1975).

If it is true that in the 1990s the debate on parity in Portugal began, there seems to be a lack of knowledge of all the active involvement of many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for women's rights that, in Portugal and throughout the European Union, have mobilized strongly to promote the study and discussion about, namely, the electoral systems that are more favourable to the election of women (Jordão, 2015).

The first attempt to introduce a Gender Quota Law in Portugal took place soon after, in 1998. It was introduced by the centre-left Socialist Party (PS), which at the time controlled only 112 of the 230 seats in the unicameral Parliament or Assembly of the Republic of Portugal (VII Legislature, 1995-1999) (Baum & Espírito-Santo, 2012). Although the attempt to approve the Quota Law to promote equal opportunities on electoral lists failed, it contributed to introducing the issue of *de facto* inequality in women's political representation on the political agenda (Saraiva, 2017).

After the 1999 elections, the PS retained exactly half of the seats in Parliament (VIII Legislature, 1999-2002). Parliament rejected the 1998 proposal and two other bills presented in 2000 and 2003 by the PS and two more introduced in 2001 and 2003 by the far-left Left Bloc (BE). All of these bills introduced a fixed number of candidates of each sex on the parties' nomination lists (Baum & Espírito-Santo, 2012). In April 2006, the PS already had a majority in Parliament and approved its draft law.

The Parity Law (Organic Law No. 3/2006, of 21 August) represented a fundamental milestone in the promotion of gender equality in Portugal. It resulted from the approval of Bill 224/X (Monteiro, 2011).

The Parity Law establishes that the lists for the Assembly of the Republic, the European Parliament and Local Authorities are composed in such a way as to ensure a minimum representation of 33% of each sex (Portugal, 2006). To guarantee this percentage, the multiannual lists submitted may not contain more than two candidates of the same sex in consecutive order. This last rule does not apply to the composition of lists for community bodies (parishes) with 750 or fewer voters or municipalities (municipalities) with 7500 or fewer voters (Baum & Espírito-Santo, 2012).

According to the Parity Law (Organic Law No. 3/2006, of August 21) in its Article 2:

"1. For this Law, parity shall mean the minimum representation of 33.3% of each sex on the lists.

2. To comply with the provisions of the previous paragraph, the plurinominal lists submitted may not contain more than two candidates of the same sex placed consecutively in the ranking of the list.

3. In elections in which there are single-member constituencies, the respective electoral law shall establish mechanisms that ensure the minimum representation of each of the sexes provided for in paragraph 1.

4. The composition of the lists for the bodies of parishes with 750 or fewer voters and the bodies of municipalities with 7500 or fewer voters is excepted from the provisions of paragraph 1" (Portugal, 2006).

Subsequently, a proposal for Law 117/XIII/3º (GOV) was made to amend the Parity Law. The proposal was brought to parliament in March 2018, however, it began to take effect almost a year later (January 2019).

Thus, the draft law under discussion intended to adopt at least a threshold of parity or a minimum of 40% of both sexes on the lists of candidates (a concept defined by the Council of Europe in 2003 in the Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers). In addition to this proposal, it introduced a change in the criteria in the first two places (a woman and a man). The ordering of the lists should always be 1+1 (a woman/a man or a man/a woman), the so-called zipper system and the replacement by a person of the same sex is, of course, consistent with the spirit of the parity law. There is no other way to guarantee the representativeness of women if they are replaced by men. On March 29, 2019, the changes were approved (PPDM, 2019).

With Organic Law No. 1/2019 of March 29, "Second amendment to the law of parity in the bodies of political power, approved by Organic Law No. 3/2006, of August 21", the minimum representation of each sex was then increased to 40%, according to Article No. 2.

"1. Parity shall be understood, for the application of this law, as a minimum representation of 40% of each sex, rounded up, where necessary, to the nearest unit.

2. To comply with the provisions of the previous paragraph, no more than two candidates of the same sex may be placed consecutively in the ranking of the list.

3. (Repealed.)" (Portugal, 2019).

2.3 The Inclusion of Women in the Presidency of the Chambers

With the transition to democracy, there was a complete discontinuity of the local elites, where traditionally the mayors were rural landowners, usually from the South, linked to professions of local prestige, with higher qualifications (engineers, army officers, doctors and teachers). However, in the democratic regime, once the recruitment criteria were changed from nominative to elective, the group of rural landowners was removed from the position of mayor (Almeida, 2015).

Some chambers already included women in their body of councillors, such as Ponte de Sor between 1957 and 1961 (Dr Jovita Sousa Maia de Carvalho) and Loulé in 1973 (Dr. Isilda Maria Renda Pires Martins) and on May 22, 1973 the first woman deputy mayor in the Municipality of Gouveia was appointed, Guarda District (Maria de Lurdes Fernandes de Almeida, graduated in Law). During the Estado Novo period, there was not a single woman to hold the position of mayor, there were women as heads of secretariat and treasurers in municipal councils, that is, administrative work (Almeida, 2013).

The first women appointed presidents of administrative committees were: in Arruda dos Vinhos, District of Lisbon, Aldina Ester Ribeiro da Silva Graça, graduated in Law, notary, and in Oleiros, District of Castelo Branco, Maria Guiomar Romão, domestic (Ordinances of 08/07/1974, DG II, nº 178, 01/08/1974, and 14/09/1974, DG II, nº 233, 07/10/1974) (Almeida, 2015b).

Between 1976 and 2005, 37 women mayors were elected, which represents 2.8% of the total number of those elected in that period.

3 Methodology

The main objective of this research is to analyse parity in management positions in public administration. In particular, it is intended to understand if there is parity in the number of women and men occupying management positions at the level of Local Authorities.

The specific objectives are:

- To analyse the number of women mayors about their involvement in decision-making processes since the implementation of the Parity law (Organic Law No. 1/2019, of 29 March);
- Understand and systematize how gender parity is found considering several indicators: in the Municipal Executive, Municipal Assembly, Mayor's Office and Assembly of the Republic.

To achieve the proposed general objective, data collection was carried out, which implied a previous construction of idea planning to organize objective information. To achieve the specific objectives outlined, in which the main one focuses on the study of parity in management positions in the Public Administration, the Municipalities of two Districts of the Central Region of mainland Portugal were selected: one located on the Coast (District of Aveiro) and the other located in the interior (District of Guarda). Thus, it was sought to encompass two distinct territorial diversities.

One of the main challenges in quantitative research is the amount and management of data collected. The data were collected on the website of the Voter Portal (<https://www.portaldoeleitor.pt/Default.aspx>) and the website of each City Council.

The study continues with the analysis of the elected members of the Municipal Executive and Municipal Assembly in the year 2021. The analysis of the number of elected presidents, councillors, 1st secretary, 2nd secretary and deputies by gender will also be carried out. Finally, information was collected from all candidates and elected to the Presidency of the City Councils and Assembly of the Republic. For the Presidency of the Chambers, data referring to the last four electoral periods were considered, that is, the years 2009, 2013, 2017 and 2021. The number of candidates elected to the Assembly of the Republic is relative to the last 5 years: 2009, 2011, 2015, 2019 and 2022.

4 Results

4.1 Composition of the Municipal Executive (2021)

According to the Legal Regime of Local Authorities (RJAL, 2013a) the Municipal Executive of a City Council is made up of the president, the vice-president, the full-time councillors and the councillors on a non-permanent basis.

The composition of the Municipal Executives of the selected Districts is presented below: Aveiro and Guarda in 2021 by gender, concerning the president, vice-president, full-time councillors and councillors on a non-permanent basis. It should be noted that in this case, the data refer to the elected and not to the candidates and that only data for 2021 were available.

4.1.1 Aveiro District

Table 1 summarizes the information on the composition of the Municipal Executive for the District of Aveiro, by gender, for the year 2021 and also for the different Municipalities that constitute it.

Table 1. Municipal Executive of the District of Aveiro

Counties	2021									
	Presidente		Vice President		Full-time councillor		Councillor (on a non-permanent basis)		Total	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Águeda	-	1	-	1	1	1	1	2	2	5
Albergaria -a-velha	-	1	-	1	2	-	1	2	3	4
Anadia	1	-	-	1	1	1	-	3	2	5
Arouca	1	-	1	-	-	2	2	1	4	3
Aveiro	-	1	-	1	2	2	1	2	3	6
Castelo de Paiva	-	1	-	1	1	-	-	4	1	6
Espinho	-	1	-	1	2	-	1	2	3	4
Estarreja	-	1	-	1	2	-	2	1	4	3
Ílhavo	-	1	-	1	1	-	1	3	2	5
Mealhada	-	1	1	-	-	2	1	2	2	5
Murtosa	-	1	-	1	1	1	-	1	1	4
Oliveira de Azeméis	-	1	-	1	2	2	2	1	4	5
Oliveira do Bairro	-	1	-	1	2	-	1	2	3	4
Ovar	-	1	-	1	1	3	2	1	3	6
Santa Maria da Feira	-	1	-	1	2	3	1	3	3	8
São João da Madeira	-	1	-	1	2	-	1	2	3	4
Sever do Vouga	-	1	-	1	1	1	1	2	2	5
Vagos	-	1	-	1	3	1	1	-	4	3
Vale de Cambra	-	1	-	1	1	2	-	2	1	6
Total	2	17	2	17	27	21	19	36	50	91
%	10,5	89,5	10,5	89,5	56,3	43,8	34,5	65,5	35,5	64,5

Source: (Câmara Municipal de Águeda, 2023); (Câmara Municipal de Albergaria-a-Velha, 2023); (Câmara Municipal de Anadia, 2023); (Câmara Municipal de Arouca, 2023); (Câmara Municipal de Aveiro, 2023); (Câmara Municipal de Castelo de Paiva, 2023); (Câmara Municipal de Espinho, 2023); (Câmara Municipal de Estarreja, 2023); (Câmara Municipal de Ílhavo, 2023); (Câmara Municipal de Mealhada, 2023); (Câmara Municipal de Murtosa, 2023); (Câmara Municipal de Oliveira de Azeméis, 2023); (Câmara Municipal de Oliveira do Bairro, 2023); (Câmara Municipal de Ovar, 2023); (Câmara Municipal de Santa Maria da Feira, 2023); (Câmara Municipal de São João da Madeira, 2023); (Câmara Municipal de Sever do Vouga, 2023); (Câmara Municipal de Vagos, 2023); (Câmara Municipal de Vale de Cambra, 2023).

Analysing Table 1, it can be seen that in 2021 in the Municipal Executive of the District of Aveiro, there is no gender parity. In the District as a whole, only 35.5% are female. Although this value is within the parameters required by the *Parity Law of August 21, 2006*,

which requires a minimum representation of 33.3% of each gender, it does not reach the values defined by the Parity Law of 2019, which requires that the percentage of each gender per list be equal to or greater than 40%.

It should be noted that in terms of elected Presidents and Vice presidents, only two Municipalities are represented by the female gender, Arouca (President and Vice-President), Anadia (President) and Mealhada (Vice-President) with the remaining 17 Municipalities represented by the male gender.

Regarding full-time Councillors, more than 50% are female. The vast majority of Councillors in a non-permanence regime are men 65.5%.

4.1.2 Guarda District

In the District of Guarda, the information on the composition of the Municipal Executive, by gender, for the year 2021 and also for the different Municipalities that constitute it is summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Municipal Executive of the District of Guarda

Counties	2021									
	Presidente		Vice President		Full-time councillor		Councillor (on a non-permanent basis)		Total	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Aguiar da Beira	-	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	2	3
Almeida	-	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	2	3
Celorico da Beira	-	1	-	1	-	1	1	1	2	3
Figueira de C. Rodrigo	-	1	-	1	1	-	-	2	1	4
Fornos de Algodres	-	1	-	1	1	-	2	-	3	2
Gouveia	-	1	-	1	1	1	2	1	3	4
Guarda	-	1	1	-	1	-	2	2	4	3
Manteigas	-	1	-	1	-	-	1	2	1	4
Mêda	-	1	-	1	1	-	-	2	1	4
Pinhel	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	2	2	3
Sabugal	-	1	1	-	-	2	1	2	2	5
Seia	-	1	1	-	-	2	-	2	1	5
Trancoso	-	1	-	1	1	-	-	2	1	4
Vila Nova de Foz Côa	-	1	-	1	1	-	1	1	2	3
Total	0	14	4	10	10	6	12	21	27	50
%	0	100	35,7	64,3	62,5	37,5	36,4	63,6	35,1	64,9

Source: (Câmara Municipal de Aguilar da Beira, 2023); (Câmara Municipal de Almeida, 2023); (Câmara Municipal de Celorico da Beira, 2023); (Câmara Municipal de Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo, 2023); (Câmara Municipal de Fornos de Algodres, 2023); (Câmara Municipal de Gouveia, 2023); (Câmara Municipal de Guarda, 2023); (Câmara Municipal de Manteigas, 2023); (Câmara Municipal de Mêda, 2023); (Câmara Municipal de Pinhel, 2023); (Câmara Municipal de Sabugal, 2023); (Câmara Municipal de Seia, 2023); (Câmara Municipal de Trancoso, 2023); (Câmara Municipal de Vila Nova de Foz Côa, 2023).

Analysing Table 2, it can be seen that in 2021 in the Municipal Executive of the District of Guarda, there is no gender parity. In the District as a whole, only 35.1% are female. Although this value is within the parameters required by the *Parity Law of August 21, 2006*, which requires a minimum representation of 33.3% of each gender, it does not reach the values defined by the *Parity Law of 2019*, which requires that the percentage of each gender per list be equal to or greater than 40%.

In addition, in terms of elected Presidents, there is no Municipality in the District of Guarda represented by the female gender. In terms of Vice-Presidents, five Municipalities are represented by the female gender, namely the Municipalities of Celorico da Beira, Guarda, Pinhel, Sabugal and Seia, with the remaining nine Municipalities represented by the male gender.

Regarding full-time councillors, the situation of gender parity changes substantially, since it is mostly represented by the female gender (more than 60% of councillors).

As for Councillors on a non-permanence basis, the female gender represents only 36.4% of councillors, very similar to the general average of parity of women for the District of Guarda.

Comparatively, regarding the composition of the Municipal Executive in global terms, by gender, in the year 2021, there are no significant differences between the composition of the District of Aveiro and the District of Guarda, as they comply with the minimum required by the *Parity Law of August 21, 2006*, and still falling short of the values defined by the *Parity Law of 2019*. The big differences are in terms of the elected Presidents, who in the District of Guarda are not represented by the female gender and who in the District of Aveiro have some representation (although low by 10.5%).

4.2 Candidates for the Presidency of the City Council (2009 – 2021)

The Mayors were appointed in their respective Municipalities, preferably members of the municipal council, former councillors or graduates with a higher education degree. The terms of office lasted six years. The Administrative Code of 1940 changed the duration of mandates to eight years, due to the difficulty in finding people available to exercise the positions, especially in municipalities in the interior. This phenomenon is related to the need for qualified people to hold a position with some demand and unpaid in most chambers. The mayors were chosen from among the local notables, the representatives of the groups that gathered the most prestige. And sometimes there was difficulty in finding someone willing to make this "sacrifice for the Nation". The mayor also had police functions (Almeida, 2015a).

According to Ribeiro (2022, p.28), from 2014 onwards, a growing number of women mayors in the main capitals of the world and large cities stood out as a phenomenon in political representation, characterized by the significant numerical inferiority of women in leadership positions.

Given the above, this section presents the data on the candidates elected by gender to the Presidency of the City Council for the period from 2009 to 2021, for the two selected

Districts. These relate to candidacies for the elections that were held in the years 2009, 2013, 2017 and 2021 and taken from the Voter Portal. It is intended here to analyse whether there was a framework of the Parity Laws of 2006 and 2019 and whether there was any at the level of this body.

4.2.1 Aveiro District

Table 3 presents the candidates by gender for the Mayor of Aveiro during the years 2009, 2013, 2017 and 2021.

Table 3. Candidates and Elected to CP in the District of Aveiro by gender (2009 to 2021)

		2009	2013	2017	2021
Candidates for Mayor - in the District of Aveiro In no	Women	8	6	13	16
	Men	75	82	77	96
	Total	83	88	90	112
Candidates for Mayor - in the District of Aveiro As % of total	Women	9,6	6,8	14,4	14,3
	Men	90,4	93,2	85,6	85,7
	Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
Mayor Elected - in the District of Aveiro In no	Women	0	1	2	2
	Men	19	18	17	17
	Total	19	19	19	19

Source: Adapted from SGMAI (2009a, 2013, 2017, 2021).

From the analysis of Table 3, in terms of the candidates by gender for the Presidency of the Chamber in the District of Aveiro, it can be seen that the male gender predominates, with this value being far below parity. However, in 2017 and 2021 there was an increase in female candidates, which may be the result of the impact of Organic Law No. 1/2019, of March 29 – Parity Law, especially in 2021.

In terms of female presidents-elect, there was also a slight improvement in the period under review, from zero in 2009 to two in 2017 and 2021.

It should also be noted, and considering the data taken from the Voter Portal, that:

- In 2009, no woman was elected as Mayor in any Municipality of the District of Aveiro;
- In 2013, the only woman elected Mayor belongs to the Municipality of Anadia;
- In 2017 the two women elected as Mayor were from the Municipality of Anadia and the Municipality of Arouca;
- In 2021, the Municipality of Anadia and the Municipality of Arouca continue to be the only Municipalities in the District of Aveiro with an elected woman Mayor.

4.2.2 Guarda District

Table 4 presents the candidates by gender for the Mayor of the District of Guarda during the years 2009, 2013, 2017 and 2021.

Table 4. Candidates and Elected to PC in the District of Guarda by gender (2009 to 2021)

		2009	2013	2017	2021
Candidates for Mayor - in the District of Guarda	Women	5	4	8	13
	Men	48	48	53	44
	Total	53	52	61	57
Candidates for Mayor - in the District of Guarda	Women	9,4	7,7	13,1	22,8
	Men	90,6	92,3	86,9	77,2
	Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
Mayor Elected - in the District of Guarda	Women	0	0	0	0
	Men	14	14	14	14
	Total	14	14	14	14

Source: Adapted from SGMAI (2009a, 2013, 2017, 2021).

In the District of Guarda, in terms of candidates by gender for the Presidency of the Chamber, it can be seen that, from the analysis of Table 4, the number of male candidates predominates. However, in 2021 there is an increase in the weight of female candidates in the total number of candidates, which may be associated with the impact of Organic Law No. 1/2019, of 29 March – Parity Law.

In the District of Guarda, in the different Municipalities, in the period under review, none of the elected presidents is female.

According to the information contained in the Voter Portal, we find that:

- In the years 2009 to 2021, no woman was elected as Mayor in any Municipality of Guarda. In the fourteen Municipalities of the District of Guarda, those elected as Mayors were all male.
- Between 2009 and 2021, in both Districts, there was an increase in women candidates for the Chambers, and even so, the majority of male candidates predominate. The elected presidents are still almost all men.

4.3 Composition of the Municipal Assembly (2021)

The Municipal Assembly of the municipalities is made up of the president, 1st secretary, 2nd secretary and deputies. According to article 24 of the Legal Regime of Local Authorities (RJAL, 2013b), it has the duty of appraisal and supervision and the operating powers provided for in this law.

The composition of the Municipal Assembly, by gender, of the Municipalities of the District of Aveiro and the District of Guarda is presented for the year 2021. Table 5 summarises these data.

Table 5. Composition of the Municipal Assembly, by gender, of the Districts of Aveiro and Guarda in 2021

		2021	
		No.	%
Aveiro District	Women	170	29,8
	Men	401	70,2
	Total	571	100
Guarda District	Women	150	30,4
	Men	343	69,6
	Total	493	100

4.3.1 Aveiro District

In 2021 (Table 5) there is no parity in the composition of the Municipal Assembly of the Municipalities of the District of Aveiro since it is made up of 170 women and 401 men. The female gender represents only 30% of the total.

As for the presidents of the Municipal Assembly, there are 5 female presidents, namely in the Municipalities of Espinho, Estarreja, Oliveira de Azeméis and São João da Madeira, in the remaining 14 Municipalities the presidents are male.

As 1st secretary, 4 are females belonging to the Municipality of Águeda, Albergaria-a-Velha, Aveiro and Vagos and 15 males in the remaining Municipalities. As 2nd secretary, 13 are female and 6 are male in the Municipalities of Albergaria-a-Velha, Murtosa, Oliveira de Azeméis, Sever do Vouga, Vagos and Vale de Cambra.

Finally, in 2021, it can be seen that the number of male deputies was always higher than that of women in all Municipalities of the District of Aveiro except for the Municipality of Murtosa, which has 9 female deputies and 7 male deputies. It should be noted that in this District there is no gender parity in this body in all Municipalities.

4.3.2 Guarda District

In the District of Guarda, in 2021 (Table 5) there is also no parity in the composition of the Municipal Assembly since it is made up of 150 women and 343 men. The female gender represents only 30% of the total.

As for the presidents of the Municipal Assembly, there are 5 female presidents, namely in the Municipalities of Celorico da Beira, Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo, Fornos de Algodres, Pinhel and Seia, in the remaining 9 Municipalities the presidents are male.

As 1st secretary, in 7 Municipalities they are female, namely in Aguiar da Beira, Figueira de Castelo Rodrigo, Fornos de Algodres, Gouveia, Guarda, Trancoso and Vila Nova de Foz Côa. The remaining 7 Municipalities have 7 men as 1st secretaries. In the Municipality of Aguiar da Beira, Almeida, Gouveia, Manteigas, Mêda, Sabugal and Trancoso the 2nd secretary was female, in the remaining Municipalities of the District of Guarda the 2nd secretaries were male.

Finally, in 2021, it can be seen that the number of male deputies was always higher than that of the female gender in all the Municipalities of the District of Guarda, with no gender parity in this body of the Municipalities of this District.

It is thus concluded that in terms of the composition of the Municipal Assembly, by gender, the District of Guarda presents worse results than the District of Aveiro in gender parity, in its different bodies.

4.4 Candidates for the Assembly of the Republic (2009 - 2022)

To start the debate on the Assembly of the Republic, one must start with the electoral system, the set of rules and mechanisms through which citizens can select the political agents who make decisions on their behalf. The electoral system consists of a transmission mechanism that makes it possible to transform the votes that voters cast in the ballot boxes on election day into mandates and, ultimately, to create a majority of support for the government. In addition to allowing the selection of political agents, elections are also the moment that allows citizens to evaluate the performance of their representatives. Thus, voters can choose to renew the trust established in previous elections or punish political agents, withdrawing the political trust they had placed in previous elections (Fernandes, 2016, p.11).

The following is the data on the candidates elected by gender to the Assembly of the Republic in the period from 2009 to 2022, for the two selected Districts. These relate to candidacies for the elections that were held in the years 2009, 2011, 2015, 2019 and 2022 and taken from the Voter Portal.

4.4.1 Aveiro District

Table 6 presents the candidates (in %) by gender for the Assembly of the Republic in the District of Aveiro during the years 2009, 2011, 2015, 2019 and 2022.

Table 5. Candidates and Elected to the AR in the District of Aveiro by gender (2009 to 2022)

		2009	2011	2015	2019	2022
Candidates for AR in the District of Aveiro In no	Women	112	109	123	182	161
	Men	151	165	170	210	178
	Total	263	274	293	392	339
Candidates for AR in the District of Aveiro As % of Total	Women	42,6	39,8	42,0	46,4	47,5
	Men	57,4	60,2	58,0	53,6	52,5
	Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
Elected to the AR in the District of Aveiro In no	Women	4	4	4	6	6
	Men	12	12	12	10	10
	Total	16	16	16	16	16

Source: Adapted from SGMAI (2009b, 2011, 2015, 2019 e 2022)

From the analysis of Table 6, in the District of Aveiro, in terms of parity, there was a small improvement in the period under analysis, 2009, 2011, 2015, 2019 and 2022, both in terms of candidates for the Assembly of the Republic and in terms of elected to the Assembly

of the Republic, mainly in the years 2019 and 2020, which may be the result of Organic Law No. 1/2019, of March 29 – Parity Law.

It should be noted that the District in 2009, 2011 and 2015 presented values higher than those required by *the Parity Law of August 21, 2006, which requires a minimum representation of 33.3% of each gender*.

Also, for 2019 and 2022, the District of Aveiro presents values higher than those required by *the 2019 Parity Law, which requires that the percentage of each gender per list be equal to or greater than 40%*.

In terms of those elected to the AR, the number of women increased in 2019 and 2021, representing 37.5% of the number of deputies elected by this District.

4.4.2 Guarda District

Table 7 shows the candidates (in %) by gender for the Assembly of the Republic (AR) in the District of Guarda for the years 2009, 2011, 2015, 2019 and 2022.

Table 6. Candidates and Elected to the AR in the District of Guarda by gender (2009 to 2022)

		2009	2011	2015	2019	2022
Candidates for AR in the District of Guarda In no	Women	31	38	47	54	40
	Men	57	57	58	53	44
	Total	88	95	105	107	84
Candidates for AR in the District of Guarda As % of Total	Women	35,2	40,0	44,8	50,5	47,6
	Men	64,8	60,0	55,2	49,5	52,4
	Total	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0	100,0
Elected to the AR in the District of Guarda In no	Women	0	1	2	1	1
	Men	4	3	2	2	2
	Total	4	4	4	3	3

Source Adapted from SGMAI (2009b, 2011, 2015, 2019 e 2022)

From the analysis of Table 7, in the District of Guarda, in terms of parity, in the period under review, 2009, 2011, 2015, 2019 and 2022, of candidates (in %) by gender for the Assembly of the Republic, there was an improvement in the indicator, which registered an increase of more than 10 percentage points in terms of candidates for the Assembly of the Republic, mainly in the years 2019 and 2020, which may be the result of Organic Law No. 1/2019, of March 29 – Parity Law. In terms of those elected to the Assembly of the Republic, the figure fluctuated.

It should be noted that the District of Guarda in 2009 complied with the requirements of *the Parity Law of August 21, 2006, which requires a minimum representation of 33.3% of each gender*, but in 2011 and 2015 substantially improved these values, reinforcing the number of female candidates.

For 2019 and 2022, the District of Guarda presents values higher than those required by *the 2019 Parity Law, which requires that the percentage of each gender per list be equal to or greater than 40%, approaching 50%*.

From the 2019 elections, the District of Guarda lost one deputy in the Assembly of the Republic (from four to three), and the number of women elected in 2019 and 2022 decreased to 33%. In 2015, two women had been elected, corresponding to 50% of the total number of deputies (four) elected by the District.

From the above, it is thus concluded that in terms of candidates by gender for the Assembly of the Republic, the District of Aveiro and the District of Guarda present a similar situation in 2022, approaching gender parity. However, the District of Guarda started (in 2009) from a less favourable situation than the District of Aveiro.

In terms of those elected to the Assembly of the Republic, the District of Aveiro stands out for the closest approach to gender parity.

5 Conclusions

The present study aimed to analyse parity in management positions in Public Administration. In this sense, the study was carried out in the different Municipalities of two Districts, analysing the data regarding the composition of the Municipal Executive, the candidates for Mayor, the composition of the Municipal Assembly, and the candidates elected to the Assembly of the Republic. It was intended to compare the data of the female gender with those of the male gender and confirm whether the Law of parity was complied with.

Equality is a crucial topic that addresses economic, social and political justice and equity. Women in different parts of the world have always faced challenges and gender stereotypes. Over the years, there have been achievements and advances in this area, in the search for gender equality. From equal access to educational and professional opportunities to the creation of public policies aimed at promoting equality.

In this work, the first objective was to analyse the evolution of women in society and politics. In general, the evolution of women's participation in politics has been and has been a gradual and continuous process over time. Although there are still challenges and imbalances, it can be said that there have been significant advances in recent times: from the right to vote to the implementation of the Parity Law and women being able to be elected to political office. However, despite significant progress, challenges remain in gender equality.

In a second objective, we sought to understand whether the Parity Law in Portugal, which established in 2006 the minimum representation of 33.33% of each gender in the lists for the Assembly of the Republic, for the European Parliament and local authorities, and which in 2019 required the representation of 40%, was being applied in the Public Administration and if it led to changes, more specifically in the City Councils of the two Districts established as case studies: the District of Aveiro and the District of Guarda.

It can thus be seen that the Parity Law has improved the situation of women in politics and that, today, it is easier to have access and be a woman in politics. The data considered for the case study confirm the increase in the weight of the female gender in

politics, and as can be seen from the results, women's rights have evolved, such as the right to vote and access to schooling.

The number of full-time and non-permanent councillors by gender, in 2021, in each Municipality was also analysed. The female gender prevails both in the District of Aveiro and in the District of Guarda, at the level of full-time councillors. At the level of part-time councillors, the male gender prevails in both districts.

It is essential to seek parity in management positions in public administration to build a fairer and more egalitarian society. Gender representation is not only a matter of rights but also a determining factor for sustainable development and the effectiveness of public policies. The equal presence of men and women in management positions in public administration contributes to more comprehensive and effective decision-making, making the diversity of perspectives enrich the decision-making process, where more innovative and representative solutions will originate. The fight against gender stereotypes, by showing that men and women are equally capable of leading public administration, promotes a more inclusive culture.

By way of conclusion, it was found that local government continues to be managed predominantly by men, although the presence of women has, both in the various municipal bodies and in the Assembly of the Republic, increased very significantly, also as a result of the Parity Law.

By having women in leadership positions in Public Administration, they become a source of inspiration and empowerment for future generations, sending a message of encouragement for women to consider a leadership position in various sectors of society as a goal.

The present study has limitations that must be considered to understand it. The main limitation is the fact that only the municipalities of two districts are studied, one in the interior and the other on the coast.

For future research, it would be interesting to extend the case study to another country of the European Union and compare the data with those referring to Portugal, making the information more diversified and, thus, comparing behaviours and evolution of different societies with similar implemented laws.

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