

# MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS OF THE FEMALE MEMBERS OF THE PORTUGUESE PARLIAMENT:

## the “case” of the Parity Parliament

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**RESUMO** This article is part of a wider research project entitled “Female politics - gender policies and visibility strategies of female MPs”, whose objective is the study of representations of female members of Parliament in the journalistic and photojournalistic discourse after the Portuguese democratic revolution of April 25, 1974. Here we can draw some conclusions arising from the empirical analysis of the journalistic coverage of the “Parity Parliament”, a pseudo-event which took place from January 31 to February 1, 1994, at the national Parliament, organized with the goal of bringing the problems of gender inequality in the political arena into the media agenda.

**Keywords:** Gender. Politics. Image and textual discursive analysis.

### INTRODUCTION

This article is part of a wider research project entitled “Female politics - gender policies and visibility strategies of female MPs”<sup>1</sup>, whose objective is the study of representations of female Members of Parliament in the journalistic discourse, as well as the strategies of media visibility, in three cycles of Portuguese political life: in the period after the democratic revolution of 1974 (the so-called ongoing revolutionary process of 1976); during the three governments led by Social Democrat Aníbal Cavaco Silva (1985-95) and during the two terms in office of Socialist António Guterres (1995-2002). In the course of our investigation, we deemed it relevant to include, as a case study, the analysis of the 5<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Government, the only one in Portugal led by a woman, Maria de Lourdes Pintasilgo (1979), as well as the “middle bloc” Government, resulting from an alliance between the Socialists and Social Democrats (1983-85).

We shall present some conclusions from the empirical analysis

of the journalistic coverage of the “Parity Parliament”, a pseudo-event which took place between January 31 and February 1, 1994, at the national Parliament, organized with the goal of bringing the problems of gender inequality in the political arena into the agenda of the media. This was an initiative by Members of Parliament Maria Belo (Socialist Party), Margarida Salema (Social Democratic Party) and Maria Santos (Ecology Party - “the Greens”), in which each female MP invited a male politician as her partner, in order to experience two days of perfect parity between men and women in the house of democracy.

In the wake of the revolution of April 25, 1974 – that ended an authoritarian regime of almost half a century – the topic of “*participation of women in labor union life, local authorities and political decision-making centers*” (Bulletin of the Commission on Women’s Condition, 1975) was considered a priority by the newly established Commission on Women’s Condition. The Constitution of the Portuguese Republic of 1976 enshrined gender equality, as according to article 13 of the original version no one shall be privileged, benefited, harmed, deprived of any right or exempted from any duty on grounds of gender.

Ten years later, the same Commission for equality would diagnose, in a study on the legislative aspects of discrimination against women, that in Portugal “*legislation is indeed advanced with regard to the issue of equality [...] but one must, however, bear in mind the distance from law to practice and the need for a profound change of mentality in relation to women and their role in society*” (News of the Commission on Women’s Condition, 1986, p. 13).

The organization of the Parity Parliament in 1994, anticipated the relevance that the issue of gender equality in the political sphere would acquire from the second half of the decade onward. Indeed, the identification of this under-representation of women became a political issue requiring solution, mainly from the 90s onward, due to the contrast between the progress achieved by women in various social areas and their absence from the formal institutions of power. On the other hand, the issue of political rights of women gained renewed strength at the international level – in 1995, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action were adopted<sup>2</sup> – with an influence on national agendas. While it is worth mentioning the progressive nature of the Constitution of 1976, the constitutional revision of 1997 paved the way for the adoption of mechanisms for positive discrimination, as the continuation of a *gender gap* was acknowledged in the political field two decades after the democratic revolution.

In the first part of the article we shall draw an outline of the representation of women in the national Parliament and the sociological profile of female holders of parliamentary seats, followed by a second part, in which we shall present the results of discourse analysis of the news coverage of this event by three daily newspapers: *Público*, *Diário de Notícias* and *Correio da Manhã*, and two weekly newspapers, *Expresso* and *O Independente*, regarding both text and image.

### A gender portrait of Parliament from 1991 to 1995

The period between 1991 and 1995 corresponds to the 6<sup>th</sup> parliamentary term, during which the disproportion between male and female representation in Parliament was quite evident<sup>3</sup>. Among all parliamentary seat holders (totaling 313), only 37 were women<sup>4</sup> (fig. 1).

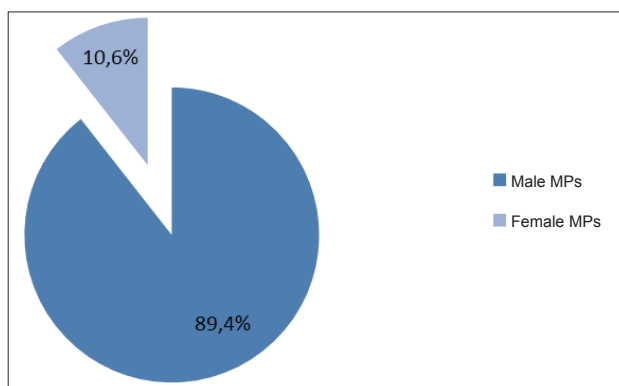


Figure 1. Gender representation of the holders of parliamentary seats in the 6<sup>th</sup> parliamentary term (1991-1995)  
N = 350 holders of parliamentary seats (313 male and 37 female holders)

In the 6<sup>th</sup> parliamentary term, the Social Democratic Party was the one with the largest parliamentary representation, followed by the Socialist Party – the two political forces that in Portugal alternate in power. CDS (Christian Democrats), the Portuguese Communist Party and the Ecology Party (“the Greens”) had smaller parliamentary representations. A larger number of parliamentary seats reflects a larger number of female MPs elected by the major parties, which together make up more than 80% of the total MPs in the period under review (fig. 2).

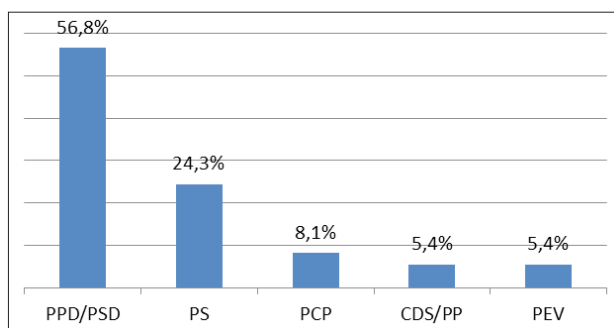


Figure 2. Distribution of holders of parliamentary seats by political party in the 6<sup>th</sup> parliamentary term (1991-1995)  
 N = 37 holders of parliamentary seats (PPD/PSD; 21 of PS 9; 3 of PCP; 2 CDS/PP; 2 of PEV)

In a comparative analysis, we noted that the gender distribution of the holders of MP seats for each political force replicated the overall values of this distribution, with a ratio of 90% of male MPs to 10% female MPs. The exception is the small party “the Greens”, with an absolutely equal distribution (fig. 3).

Political Party	Male MPs		Female MPs		Total	
	N.º	%	N.º	%	N.º	%
CDS/PP	18	90	2	10	20	100,0
PCP	27	90	3	10	30	100,0
PEV	2	50	2	50	4	100,0
PPD/PSD	176	89,3	21	10,7	197	100,0
PS	89	90,8	9	9,2	98	100,0
PSN	1	100	-	-	1	100,0
Total	313	89,43	37	10,57	350	100

Figure 3. Distribution of holders of parliamentary seats by political party in the 6<sup>th</sup> parliamentary term (1991-1995)  
 N = 350 holders of parliamentary seats (313 male and 37 female)

In the 6<sup>th</sup> parliamentary term, 70% of the women had completed university studies, 11% had attended the university and 16% had completed secondary school education (fig. 4). Thus, in 1994 we had a Parliament with a reduced number of members with a high level of schooling, from the most socially demanding professions in terms of qualifications and leadership. Even so, that hardly improved female representation within the parties.

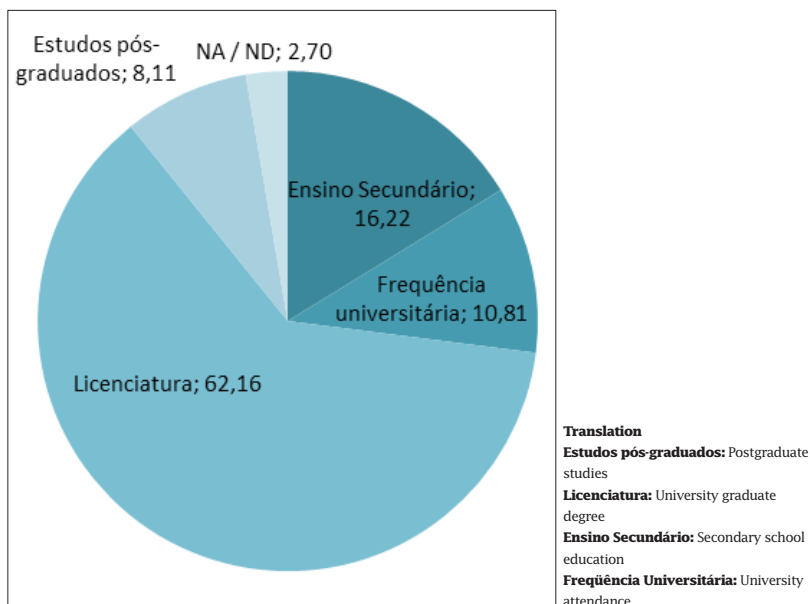


Figure 4. Qualifications of female holders of parliamentary seats in the 6th parliamentary term, by parliamentary group (1991-1995)

N = 37 female holders of parliamentary seats (6 with secondary education; 4 with university attendance; 23 with graduate degrees; 3 with postgraduate studies; 1 Not applicable/No answer)

### Analysis of the representation of women in journalistic texts and images

The press provided coverage to this new subject in Portugal. The news coverage of the “Parity Parliament” lasted for a longer period than that of the event. Hence, for analysis purposes, we shall consider not only January 31 and February 1, 1994, but also the period of a month before and one month after the initiative, so that we can analyze how, when and with what kind of framework the subject appeared in the press and then ceased to be mentioned (fig. 5).

During the period analyzed, the news coverage was relatively mild: out of five newspapers surveyed, we found a total of 18 journalistic stories, mostly concentrated on both days of the event (31 January to 1 February) and the next day (February 2) (fig. 5). On those days, the three daily newspapers ran a first page coverage with a photograph. However, the subject was addressed in more detail in the inside pages. The latest stories with photographs are from February 6, 5 days after the event. Of the 18 stories, 15 of them had photographic highlighting, with a total of 26 photos.

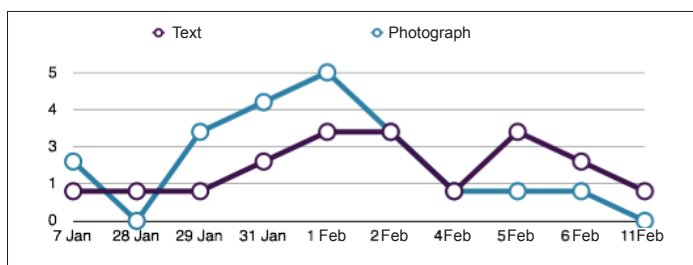


Figure 5. Media attention cycle of Parity Parliament, according to the total of journalistic stories and photos per day, with all newspapers of the corpus globally considered

In the field of studies of the effects of the *media*, the concept of framework does not yet stand as a consistent theoretical model (SCHEUFELE, 1999). For Entman (1993), there is only some dispersed conceptualization on framing; however, there are many evidences of this ideological work in the journalistic field that require decoding. The data collected in this research, with respect to the photographs and texts, make this process clear.

Thus, as regards textual analysis, we have identified seven words or expressions that summarize the tone of each story: cynical, ironic, social column, political intrigue, tolerance, apologetic and neutral. In fact, eight of the 18 stories analyzed display a neutral framework. Figure 6 shows that, in the period under review, two stories had a cynical framework; two others ironic; another dealt with the subject according to a social column framework; in one story the author opted for placing its emphasis on political intrigue; and two others presented frameworks of tolerance and disappointment.

Framework	Nº	%
Cynical	2	12,50%
Ironic	2	12,50%
Social Column	1	6,25%
Political intrigue	1	6,25%
Tolerance	1	6,25%
Disappointment	1	6,25%
Neutral	8	50%
Total	16	100%

Figure 6. Dominant Framework  
 N = 18 – there are two categories that were not encoded regarding frameworks: opinion articles and Chronicles

In contrast, the photojournalistic approach was especially conducted according to social column criteria, typical of celebrity news magazines, which can be interpreted as a way of devaluing the subject and categorizing it by using the stereotypes of the dominant representation of the female world.

The newspapers that gave the event the largest photographic highlighting were *Público*, with 3 stories and 9 photos, and *Independente*, with 4 stories and 7 photographs. *Expresso*, the main Portuguese weekly reference newspaper, did not attribute much relevance to the event and published only one news story and a photograph, on the first Saturday after the event.

The near absence of this matter in *Expresso* is most likely a result of the less than serious framework the issue received from the press and from the parliamentary sources themselves. The issue was undervalued by members of Parliament and the usual institutional sources.

The female MPs obtained the support of the Chairman of Parliament, Barbosa de Melo, who offered the main room of the Parliament. However, the leaders of the main parliamentary groups objected on the grounds that it was a meeting where the majority of the participants were not elected MPs in the legislature. This event was thus assigned a secondary stage: a room usually used as support room, where normal and “real” sessions never take place. This change of stage contributed to the devaluation of the event both politically and to the eyes of the media.

The female MPs that promoted the event also obtained the support of Mário Soares, the historic Socialist who was at the time President of the Republic. However, the social democratic parliamentary majority contested this once again, claiming that the President can only come to the Assembly of the Republic to address the MPs officially, not to deliver speeches to “mock-MPs”.

This means that the press followed the framework upheld by the majority group in power, as regards both text and image. We shall now analyze this “narrative” concerning the “joke” and how it dominated the textual and photojournalistic approach.

### **The “gossip-style” narrative in text and image**

The analysis of this case suggests that the way the subject is released in the public space determines all subsequent news coverage, especially in the case of pseudo-happenings. We will therefore examine the journalistic story that launched the subject, published by *O Independente*, one month before. Then we shall present some examples of journalistic treatment evidencing contagion.

That weekly newspaper, of a conservative tendency, was known at the time for its metaphorical and corrosive style, as evidenced by the dominant tone identified in our study – irony. This newspaper was important in the empowerment of photojournalists in the context of the newsrooms, upholding a vision of the photographer as author, giving great emphasis to the genres of photo reporting and photographic essay, which led to the connotative use of photography, tending to reinforce, in most cases, implicit meanings in texts.

In the case of the first story, published on January 7, 1994, entitled “Would you care to dance?”, it immediately establishes the overall tone: a jolly little initiative, rather entertaining, though lacking any substantial political value. The “motto” used was the fact that each female MP was required to invite a male MP, which immediately led journalist Rosa Amaral to invoke the image of a ball and all its stereotypes associated with the romantic universe: seduction, appearance, courteous games between man and woman, with “dumping” scenes, unrequited love, gossip, desire to receive invitations, etc. Although the journalist stressed the role reversal – “some sort of a prom. Only this time women are the ones leading the dance”, as one can read in the lead – stereotypes remain, contributing to a picture of little credibility of the female MPs and the event. This title and lead also set the way the photographs are to be interpreted. By relating the event to images of two female organizers (Fig. 7), they instantly become authors of the invitation, which implies that the spectator is male (MULVEY.1989).

These photographs frame the female MPs in close-up, expressing



Figure 7. Maria Belo and Maria Santos: *O Independente* (January 7, 1994)  
Photos of the article “Would you care to dance?”



proximity with the viewer. One of them smiles, establishing a direct and intimate relationship. Both photographs are from the archive of the newspaper and, thus, are used out of their original context. However, their use reinforces the idea that the invitation is real. By applying the categories of Kress and Van Leeuwen we can conclude that we are, in the case of the image of the smiling MP, beholding an “image-request” that leaves no doubt that the viewer is the receiver from whom something is expected. On the other hand, by not appearing in action, it becomes a conceptual and non-narrative image (KRESS; VAN LEEUWEN, 2006), purporting to show an essence. The photograph on the right, although representing the female MP in full discursive action, by intentionally excluding the context of this intervention, transforms what could be an image centered on action into just another conceptual picture, reducing it to a “static” element, an “image-offer” (one that excludes the viewer).

If we consider the caption – “Maria Belo and Maria Santos: who else would come up with the idea of a Parliament led by women?” – where, with some irony, the members are put into the category of “bad girls”, as only these dare to launch invitations to men, the transformation of the meaning of the photographs is evident. Although in a joking tone and a certain hint of benevolent familiarity (being a “bad girl” is somewhat original), the stereotype is still present. Thus these pictures, apparently with the sole function of identifying the protagonists of the action, end up providing the support for a narrative of transgression that in many ways marks the entire news coverage.

*Público* was one of the newspapers that gave the event the greatest prominence. Not due to the number of stories entirely dedicated to the Parity Parliament, but by the amount of text concerning women, unequal opportunities and European statistics on these matters. However, the categories “cynicism” and “tolerance” are the frameworks that occur most often. Though the works of the female MPs are reported, the journalist does not resist mentioning that “there is still time for brushing the hair and a few strokes of blush to disguise the dark circles, as soon as someone warns that the photographer is outside waiting” (PÚBLICO, January 31, 1994, p. 2). One other comment – seemingly from outside the Parliament – is thus reported: “hey, idiot, are you going to the Parity thing’ joked a group of ‘multicolored’, on the steps of the House” (PÚBLICO, January 31, 1994, p. 2). It is not discernible who are those “multicolored” referred to by the author of the story, but it clearly gives the idea that this initiative has hardly been taken seriously. *Público* also features a framework of disappointment regarding the event. Journalist Áurea

Sampaio expressed disappointment regarding the Parity Parliament, in her *lead*: “They wanted to be different, but only accomplished this in the original idea. Moreover, it was a session like so many others in the House. Many speeches, several tributes, abundant quotes, drowsiness to match. The Parity Parliament began yesterday “(PÚBLICO, February 1, 1994, p. 4).

*Correio da Manhã* refers to the event as follows: “one of the attractions of this meeting, according to the organizers, in addition to the debate on issues like non-discriminatory democracy and citizenship, would be seeing who would be the male guests, and that expectation was largely fulfilled.” [...] “We already know that Maria Belo will be taking Almeida Santos and Maria de Lurdes Pintassilgo invited Vítor Constâncio [...]”. The dominant social framework is the society column type and the matter was treated as a *fait-divers*. (CORREIO DA MANHÃ, January 31, 1994, p. 26). This society column framework clearly devalues the event and suggests something along the lines of a social gathering of more or less prestigious friends, while overlooking the subject under discussion.

No article elaborated on the issue in debate, the charter of citizenship and the charter of non-discriminative democracy, which launched the debate on quotas, and a few newspapers highlighted the speeches made during the two days of work. Surprisingly, the photos show male and female MPs parading as if they were on a catwalk (fig. 8), waiting for their turn to receive the accreditation documents (fig. 8) and to attend the event (fig. 9). The entire event was photographically absent.



Figure 8. Maria Belo delivers documentation to Jorge Sampaio; Maria de Lurdes Pintassilgo with Alberto Martins: *Público* (February 1, 1994)

*Expresso*, on its single story on the subject, stressed that the initiative had caused division among women, and gave voice to women who are not members of Parliament and occupied different positions: entrepreneurs, actresses, sociologists, among others. However, they all devalued and mocked the initiative, deeming it unnecessary (EXPRESSO, February 5, 1994). The same division is mentioned in the caption of *Expresso's* single photograph that shows MPs Edite Estrela and Helena Roseta in the foreground, not identified in the caption, smiling and in casual conversation with another woman who appears cut off by the framing. Once again, the moments of pause and relaxation are the focus of attention.



Figure 9. MPs attend work (offscreen)  
Correio da Manhã (February 1, 1994)

### The main and secondary actors

The individuals that make up social and political organizations have distinct interests and simultaneously the will and ability to act independently and interact with the *media* (COOK; WHITMEYER, 1992). According to Benjamin I. Page (1996, p. 20) “the concept of political actor applied to media, implies an observable action that is also intentional”.

Accordingly, we can identify a secondary actor in accordance with the action in which he is involved, either because he is the protagonist, or because his opinion emerges in the journalistic text through affirmation of divergence. Our intention in the analysis of primary and secondary actors, and considering the issue of gender representation in Parliament, is to understand to what extent the press has valued female voices, as this was an initiative of female MPs, to the detriment of male voices, i.e. we are interested in finding out who spoke and whom is spoken about. The same applies to photos, only this time

the focus shall be on who shows up or not, and how they appear (in action, as major or minor characters).

Actors/Stories	Men	Women	Total
Main Actor	21	38	59
Secondary Actor	124	89	213
Total	145	127	272

Figure 10. Total of Actors in journalistic stories

As shown on Fig. 10, as lead actors we have 38 female MPs and 21 male MPs. However, in relation to secondary actors the situation is reversed, 124 male MPs and 89 female MPs. But when we look at the sum of main and secondary actors (fig. 10), we note that there are a total of 145 male MPs for 127 female MPs. Hence, although the female MPs are the main protagonists in this event, given its nature, the presence of men as a whole is the most notorious. In addition, the promoters of the event do not appear as explicit sources of information and their active voice, in direct speech, is reduced.

Something similar happens in the photojournalistic coverage, since most of the photos show female MPs as leading figures; however, as we have seen, the treatment has highlighted typical representations of the private sphere, rather than professional and political values.

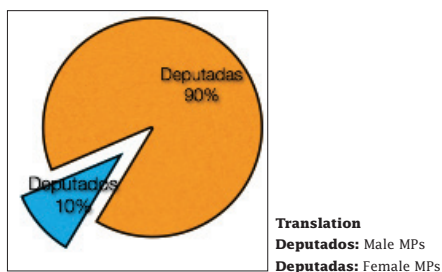


Figure 1. Main actors in the photographs, by gender of MPs

In fact, even when the central theme of the news is the Parity Parliament, the actors' focus shifts toward the male sector and, above all, to the notoriety of male parliamentarians who had been invited.

Another highly exploited aspect throughout the stories is linked to the differences between actors regarding the initiative: the political parties and their actors did not adhere in the same way to the Parity Parliament initiative. The Socialist Party was the most enthusiastic.

Guterres, the Secretary-General and at the time opposition leader, was present on the two days and made proposals, namely the one that would cause the most controversy, the quotas. Interestingly, Guterres did not get any photographic highlight, although his involvement in the sessions has been the object of much attention throughout the texts.

PSD acted elusively and some of its MPs even criticized the initiative quite violently. Pacheco Pereira considered the initiative “ridiculous”; Rui Gomes da Silva did record that he was “a difficult man”, favoring the approach adopted by the journalists. Many other MPs attended because not attending would be “nasty” and this was the idea of Duarte Lima. Others considered simply: “Supporting women, for sure. But I do not agree much with how this was done”, says Narana Coissoró, CDS.

Pacheco Pereira absolutely opposed any sort of “positive discrimination”. Maria Belo, in this context, argued that she “supports quotas for women, as well as EEC funds for Portugal”, in one of the rare times her voice is cited. António Capucho defended the initiative “for Portuguese women to conquer in decision-making centers the same representativeness they have in society.” Cavaco supported the initiative and sent Marques Mendes. Soares hosted a dinner party (DIÁRIO DE NOTÍCIAS; PÚBLICO; CORREIO DA MANHÃ; INDEPENDENTE). Manuela Ferreira Leite was the only female member of the government invited and did not attend.

These divergent voices from well-established powers help to understand the values that were mobilized in the approach to this subject.

### Conclusions

Held during the “cavaquismo” period, “Parity Parliament” was the most important “gender” event promoted by female MPs but still not an initiative by members of the Portuguese Parliament, but rather by three MPs from three different parties.

The defense of parity, in order to have an effect on society, needed to go beyond the walls of the House and the media were the vehicle required for such diffusion.

The Parity Parliament event was prepared by three promoters that had the intention of implementing the initiative and carrying it into the *media* field. This event can certainly fit into what Boorstin (1961; 1971) called a pseudo-event. This type of event tends to become natural to the point of being confused with routine events.

Boorstin (1961; 1971) stresses that are not only promoters need the *media* field to make their initiatives visible, but the *media* field

also constantly needs raw material to produce news and fill newspaper pages. Pseudo-happenings are ideal for the work of journalists, as they provide drama, generate questioning and are intelligible and dynamic and can be easily socialized.

There is no doubt: the press became interested in the subject and treated the theme in several stories, in some cases even mobilizing related matters to complete the central theme and provide the reader with more elements. Several photojournalists had been sent out and every newspaper displayed significant photographic coverage in terms of prominence and number of images published. Until this point, we can assert that this event had the proper format for good media coverage. Moreover, the promoters took good note of the necessary ingredients to attract the press. The values linked to “spectacularization” listed by Boorstin were present, particularly in photojournalism.

The *media* shape the image of realities and bring to the public news that is the result of a complex production process. In this respect, Tuchman argues that the news “not only sets and resets, constructs and reconstructs social meanings, but also sets and resets, constructs and rebuilds the way of doing things: existing processes in existing institutions” (TUCHMAN, 1983, p. 210).

And this was no ordinary event. It was the Parity Parliament, where female MPs advocated equality of representation. In this respect, Gay Tuchman (1979, p. 531) argued that the *media* distort the situation of women and their social role and fail to present models going beyond the usual stereotypes (mother, family, domestic affairs, education). The same author noted that there are few women in newsrooms and addressing the issues of women’s liberation is uncomfortable for the audience and subverts the symbolic portrait, in this case of the American woman. But, as the same author argues, female journalists in newsrooms resort to the same stereotypes as male journalists, as we have noted in our work.

Thirty-four years later, Swert and Hoogle (2010, p. 70) pointed out the fact that “for more than a decade, female news sources have been proved to receive little attention on television newscasts”. In this case, the promoters had enough notoriety to attract the *media*, largely due to their positions, and at the same time the theme itself, on the political agenda of international institutions, favored the inclusion of this news in journalists’ concerns.

When we focus on framework analysis we understand that the female MPs were not taken seriously in a significant part of the journalistic stories. The stereotypes pushing women into domestic activity, as well

the ones regarding women's concern with their own image, tendency toward *fait divers* and the need to appear well-combed, perfumed, well-dressed, for purposes of posing for the photographers, were all present. The promoters were unable to avoid this kind of framework.

The analysis of actors allows us to draw another conclusion: regardless of the parity of this Parliament, MPs are always significant actors and much sought after by journalists to provide testimonials. But the newspapers also emphasized that male MPs hardly took this initiative seriously. In 1994, the Portuguese Parliament had 23 female MPs, as we have seen, with higher education, professionally active, politically engaged: all participating in the work of parliamentary committees and in plenary sessions.

Yet the most controversial issue was precisely the proposal made on the second day by António Guterres, suggesting that electoral lists should include one woman for every four members. He had to face the opposition of the PSD and CDS parties, above all; the position of the Portuguese Communist Party was somewhere in the middle ground, integrating the situation of women into the larger issue of class struggle.

The conclusions of the Parity Parliament were almost completely overlooked by the press and resulted in two motions: "Citizenship" and "charter for political party participation".

Awareness of the empowerment of women, one of the goals envisaged by the Beijing Conference of 1995, is a fundamental orientation whose meaning is associated with the emergence and assertion of power, autonomy, self-confidence and accountability. "The situation of women thus evolved from a perspective of victimization to one of assertion" (VICENTE, 1997, p. 12).

In fact, in the following political cycle the situation of female MPs would change, as a few general measures aimed at stressing the issues of gender equality would be introduced. Returning once more to the substantive arguments on the *de facto* situation of women, as Banducci (2005) advocates, if women are excluded from democracy, democracy itself fails.

## I NOTES

- 1 The Project, coordinated by Ana Cabrera, was carried out in the Media and Journalism Research Center (a center associated with the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences of the New University of Lisbon) and funded by the Science and Technology Foundation.

- 2 On the 4<sup>th</sup> UN World Conference on Women, in Beijing, 189 countries agreed on an action platform establishing that no government shall be deemed democratic if equal representation of women is not ensured.
- 3 Within the scope of the project, a database on female MPs was created on SPSS, monitoring the period from 1975 (Constitutional Assembly) to 2011 (when the 12<sup>th</sup> Parliamentary term ended), utilizing as sources the Historical Parliamentary Archive of the Portuguese Parliament, biographical data on MPs, the databases of the Documentation Center of the Parliament (PLC and GODE), as well as attendance books of parliamentary commissions and the Diaries of the Portuguese Parliament.
- 4 As we are dealing with positions that face a great degree of variability throughout each single parliamentary term, due to alternating MPs and the constant interruptions and replacement of MPs, we have considered all those who held mandates as MPs regardless of their respective duration as seat holders, for the purpose of putting together the database. As a result of this methodological option, the number of MPs considered always exceeds the total number of mandates. For instance, during the 6<sup>th</sup> parliamentary term, there were a total number of 350 seat holders, corresponding to 230 parliamentary mandates.
- 5 We believe that there is no place for neutrality in journalism and that all news naturally has an intention. Nevertheless, here the term is used and is balanced with respect to the obvious characteristic of the intentional nature of the other frameworks.

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