

Our (scientific) Community and Our Society: rethinking the role and dilemmas of national sociological associations - the Portuguese case

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Abstract

The late institutionalisation of sociology in Portugal, over the last 30 years, has been a successful process, as it became relevant both scientifically and professionally: sociology's strong presence in our society is surprising considering as Portugal hasn't had a long sociological history.

The involvement of our science in the political democratisation process of Portuguese society after 25th April 1974 and the enthusiasm, especially in the first years, to discover the world and the country, permitted, open and created an important space and contributions of sociologists in several domains of social and economic life. Sociological knowledge, especially in public sphere, has been accepted as a useful tool. Nowadays, global competition demands a better understanding of societies and so the research instruments developed by sociologists have been generalised in processes of organizational evaluation and quality control.

But, where are sociologists and what is their role in these contexts? Which are the professional domains where sociological perspectives matter? As the President of ISA, Michel Wieviorka, said in the message sent to 6th Portuguese Sociological Congress (Lisbon, 2008), that our main role may be to develop the reflexivity of actors involved in social processes.

We know sociologists are working in universities, in schools, in research units, in government and local authorities, in enterprises, in NGOs, in media and so forth. Yet, and paradoxically, we need to know more, through our research techniques, about where exactly they are, what are they doing, and to where they want or wish to go. During these last 30 years, we have grown in numbers, we have created new knowledge and skills, but, during this process, we became a difficult profession to define. We know that there are about 10 thousand people with diplomas in sociology and that there are more than 2,000 in our national association.

Since 1985, the Portuguese Sociological Association (APS) has always worked with all sociologists, creating a permanent dialogue between the scientific discipline and those employed as "professionals" outside the academy. Scientifically based with a multiple paradigmatic perspective, Portuguese sociology has developed through the dialogue between the theoretical and the empirical production, informed by different sciences and national origins. We have an inclusive vision of sociology and sociologists. APS offers an open space for professionals working in very different contexts, in different moments of their careers and even with varied relations to the sociological world.

But even if it is now possible to say that sociology has been recognised as useful, is it possible to say that the future is safe for sociology's new generation? And what will be the role of the national association?

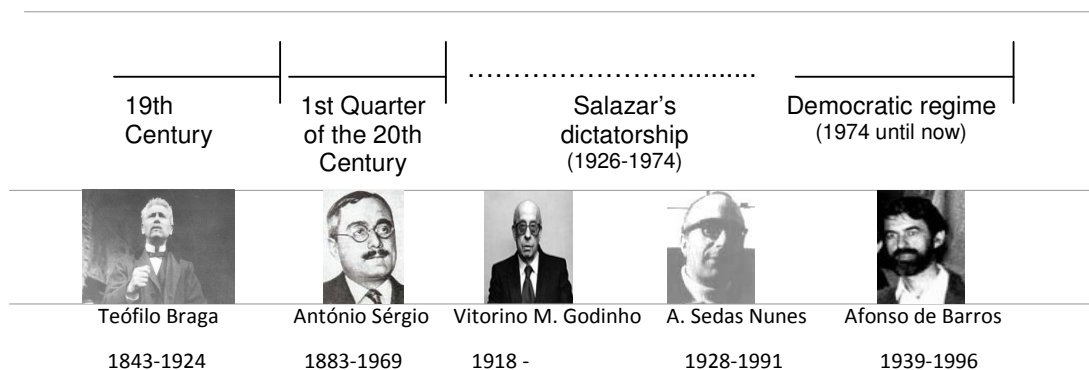
1. The late institutionalisation of the Portuguese sociology

Sociology was born in Portugal with the impact of August Comte's positivism, and strictly limited to the university realm at that time. Nevertheless, early sociologists - perhaps more accurate to call them social philosophers -, and their sociological readings had the capacity of influence the new republican ideas and agenda at the beginning of the 20th century, even before the monarchy breakdown.

Some of them were republican activists, or Masonry members, in general distinct intellectuals from the academy. Their influence during the 1st Republic – from 1910 to 1926 – can not be diminished. Teófilo Braga was one the most representatives of that generation, and assumed the highest political responsibilities: first, as Prime-Minister and later as President of the Republic.

Despite the role that those pre-sociologists played in the later 19th century and in the early two decades of the 20th century, or in fact because of that role, during the period of the dictatorship (1926-1974), sociology as a discipline was banished from the academia, and intellectuals interested in it were regarded as subversive people.

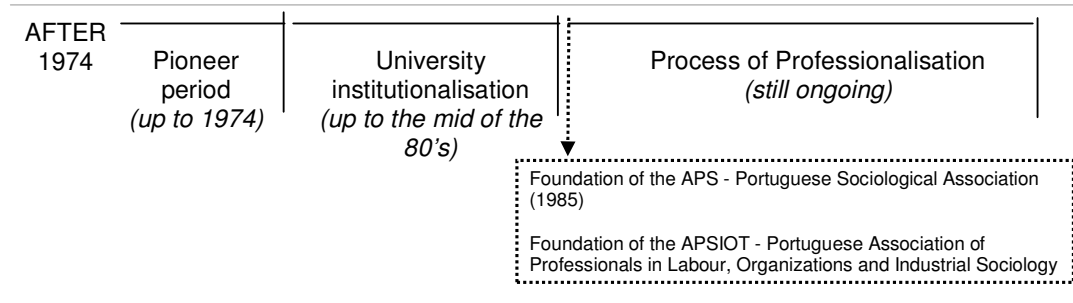
Scheme 1 – The four historical periods of the Portuguese sociology and some of the major representatives in each one



Although the political regime remained narrowed mind as to the development of the social sciences, some progresses were done during the 60's, mostly by influence of Sedas Nunes. But it was only after 1974 that the first fully-fledge university courses were set up and the first sociologists were graduated in Portugal (five years later).

We can say that the institutionalisation of sociology in Portugal began with its release by the new democratic regime (see Scheme 2).

Scheme 2 – Historical trends of the Portuguese sociology development after 1974



Without democracy, it would be impossible to reinforce this scientific field and related professional activities. This close relationship is symbolically underlined by this fact: since we have APS National Conferences (the first took place in 1986, and has a 4 years period), in all, the President of the Portuguese Republic came and made a speech. This tradition was broken last year.

We identify three important historical landmarks for the development of Portuguese sociology:

1. The political and scientific exile of many intellectuals, forced a precocious internationalisation of early sociologists, causing the establishment of important informal personal networks, namely within Europe (France, Germany, England).
2. The prohibition of teaching sociology in the universities forced the appetite for a more interdisciplinary work (cross fertilisation with history, philosophy, economics, demography, science of law and justice, social psychology and linguistics).
3. The inexistence of sociologists graduated in Portugal until 1980 allowed that during the 80's and mid 90's the demand of such professionals remained high (namely at the Central and Local administrations).

2. The sociological labour in a profound changing society

There are some key indicators about Portuguese society that could be useful in order to understand the societal environment in which the institutionalised Portuguese sociology grew up, and to which it belongs and plays its role. This society constitutes a challenge to sociologists, not only for the local ones. Portugal express itself the European diversity and their cultural heritage. It could be useful to take a look on the demographic dimension of the Portuguese contemporary society.

Table 1 – Resident population (No.) by Sex and Age group (by life cycles)

Data reference period: 2007	MF	Male	Female
Total	10 617 575	5 138 807	5 478 768
0 - 14 years	1 628 852	835 491	793 361
15 - 24 years	1 236 004	630 723	605 281
25 - 64 years	5 902 888	2 900 188	3 002 700
65 and more years	1 849 831	772 405	1 077 426

Source: National Institute of Statistics. Annual; Statistics Portugal. Annual estimates of resident population. This data last updated: May 29, 2008.

The crude rate of increase has been extremely low (0,17% in 2007), revealing a negative crude rate of natural increase (-0,01% in 2007) and a positive crude migratory rate (+0,18% in 2007). Quoting Carrilho (2008):

«At the beginning of the XXI century, Portugal remains a country with low fertility, increasing life expectancy and decreasing net migration. In 2007, the natural increase was negative, a situation that had been recorded in 1918, due to pneumonic flu. While the pace of population growth has slowed down, and immigration flows remain its important component, the population is ageing.

The significant fall in the number of marriages, the increasing of average age at marriage, and the rise in both the number of wedlock births and the number of divorces, influence the new familiar models in Portugal».

It is not a surprise that roughly half a million of the residents today are foreigners, predominantly coming from the ex-Portuguese colonies in Africa. But the national territory has also large communities of Europeans citizens, as well as from Brazil, India, Pakistan, Popular Republic of China and several other countries.

Along with the growing social mix, namely within urban settings, since the last four decades Portugal is experiencing an intensive process of social change, which is reflected through several socio-economic and demographic indicators (see Table 2).

In the last decades, Portuguese society registered a profound transformation in their social structures and social institutions. The human development index reflects, in a certain way, those changes (see Chart 1).

Table 2 – A brief portrait of Portugal, using macro-indicators for socio-economic characterisation, demographic sustainability and territory

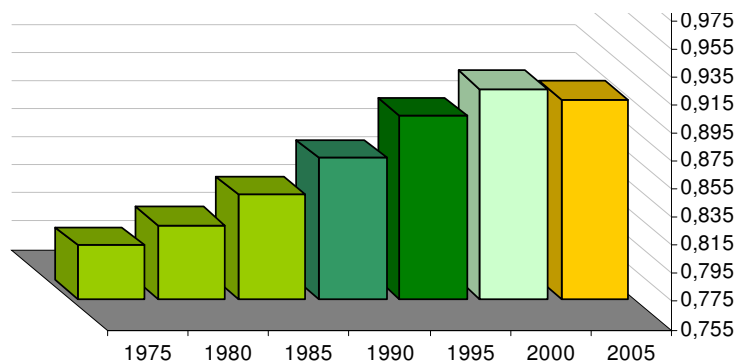
Indicators for the socio-economic characterisation			Indicators Demographic sustainability and territory characterisation	
Male activity rate (%) ^(a)	69,3		Crude birth rate (‰)	9,7
Female activity rate (%) ^(a)	55,9		Total fertility rate	1,3
Active population by highest completed level of education	%		Life expectancy at birth (Year)	Women = 80,98 Men = 74,53
⇒ Basic education - Third cycle	70,8		Infant mortality rate (‰)	Women = 3,35 Men = 3,53
⇒ Secondary and post-secondary education, and higher education	29,2		Mean age at first marriage (Year)	Women = 27,8 Men = 29,4
At-risk-of-poverty rate (after social transfers - %) of residents with 18 and more years old by activity status (most frequent) – Male and Female ^(b)	In work	Not in work	Foreign population with legal status of residence	Nº = 401 612 % total residents = 3,8
	10	27		
GDP per capita (PPP US\$) in 2005	20 410		Young-age dependency ratio (%) ^(z)	22,8
Employees by net monthly wages ^(c)	10 ³	%	Renewal index of the population in active age (No.) by Sex ^(k)	Women = 107,6 Men = 124,1
	⇒ Less than 600 euros	4092,6		
⇒ From 600 to less than 900 euros	1479,5	19,7	Concentration index of the resident population in cities (%) ^(m)	44,9
⇒ From 900 to less than 1200 euros	1035,2	13,8		
⇒ From 1200 to less than 2500 euros	743,9	9,9		
⇒ 2500 euros and more	133,3	1,8		
⇒ Don't know/ No answer	25,3	0,3	Primacy index of the urban system ⁽ⁿ⁾	2,15
⇒ Total	7509,8	100,0	Population's density (No./ km ²)	115,3
Gini coefficient (%)	37		Population projection for 2050	9 302 487
Proportion of overcrowded living quarters (%) ^(d)	15,9			

Source: National Institute of Statistics. See notes below.

Notes:

- (a) Last available period: 4th Quarter 2008. ACTIVITY RATE (population aged 15 years old and over): rate that defines the relation between the active population (labour force) and the working age population (population aged 15 years old and over).
- (b) Last available period: 2007. The indicator was calculated using the households' annual net monetary income in the previous year. The net income was transformed into the equivalent household income per individual, using the OECD-modified equivalence scale. For each household, the equivalent household income per individual is obtained from the quotient of household's total income and the household's size in terms of equivalent adult members, and this value is assigned to each household member.
- (c) Last available period: 4th Quarter 2008.
- (d) Last available period: 2001. This indicator is based on the DWELLING OCCUPANCY INDEX: an indicator of the number of rooms lacking or in excess of the number of residents in accommodation
- (y) Last available period: 2007. Population aged between 20 and 29 years old/P(55,64)=Population aged between 55 and 64 years old* 100.
- (z) Last available period: 2008. Quotient between the number of persons aged between 0 and 14 years old and the number of persons aged between 15 and 64 years old (expressed for 100).
- (k) Last available period: 2007. WORKING AGE POPULATION RENEWAL RATIO: The ratio between the population that is potentially entering and that which is leaving the labour market, normally defined as the quotient between the number of people aged between 20 and 29 years and the number of people aged between 55 and 64.
- (m) Last available period: 2005. Sum of absolute values of differences between the resident population proportion and the number of cities proportion, divided by two and multiplied by 100.
- (n) Last available period: 2005. Resident population of the largest city/Resident population of the second largest city.
- (t) Last available period: 2007. AGEING INDEX: The ratio of the number of elderly persons of an age when they are generally economically inactive (aged 65 and over) to the number of young persons (from 0 to 14), expressed for 100.

Chart 1 – Portuguese human development index (HDI) trends



Source: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Human Development Report 2007/2008

Note: The human development index (HDI) is a composite index that measures the average achievements in a country in three basic dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, as measured by life expectancy at birth; knowledge, as measured by the adult literacy rate and the combined gross enrolment ratio for primary, secondary and tertiary schools; and a decent standard of living, as measured by GDP per capita in purchasing power parity (PPP) US dollars.

Between the period from 1975 to 1985 (*light green bars*), the take off was slower but yet continuous. After Portugal's accession to the EEC (1986), the country knew a period of great socio-economic expansion (*green-green bars*), partially supported by European funds. After 2000 economic difficulties and political instability, along with growing external economic and financial problems', human development was less

evident (*orange bar*). In 2005 Portugal was in a recessive trend. Consequently, the last four years have been difficult. This is an important issue in order to understand the near challenges we have to face, as a sociological community but also as committed citizens.

For one hand, the weak economic growth has been registered in a context of adjustments in some of the macro economic imbalances in the Portuguese economy, which means unemployment for many and lost of purchasing power for almost everyone, as well as the amount of disparity in the average monthly earnings, contributing for a greater social inequality and unbalanced society (it means, a society with less social cohesion and greater disparities).

For another hand, given its high degree of economic and financial openness, the Portuguese economy is particularly vulnerable to more recent developments (global economic and financial crisis). The effects of the interplay between financial turbulence and worldwide economic deceleration have unfavourable implications on external demand for Portuguese goods and services, on intertemporal consumption and investment decisions by economic agents and on the evolution of its solvency conditions. Neither the recent past nor the very present and near future economic situation allows us to say that a social crisis can be avoid and their consequences mitigated within the more fragile social groups.

In fact, and albeit the extraordinary raise of the infra-structures assets and the growing availability of an acceptable standard of living for the majority of the population, made possible in the last two decades, the relevant sociological fact is that some structural constraints still remain, and the dualist societal profile did not complete disappeared. The Gross National Product per capita strongly remains below the UE average (65%, to be exact).

Thus, the heritage from almost 50 years of dictatorship and odd policies, which had to be scientifically analysed, but above all, the social processes of adjustment to the forthcoming society, refreshed by democracy and socially more European based, claims for an extraordinary *platoon* of sociologists.

Social exclusion, poverty, social movements, politics, housing, relocation programmes, urban settlements development, rural exodus, emigration, immigration, education, health, demographic change, ageing, family, criminality, drug abuse, divorce, family relations, lifestyles, social identities, interpersonal violence, among other sociological conventional domains and issues turned prosperous the engagement with the observational research. However, as Madureira Pinto (2008) points out, «*Portuguese sociology has early embraced, coherently with its critical perspective on the empiricist model of knowledge, the epistemological*

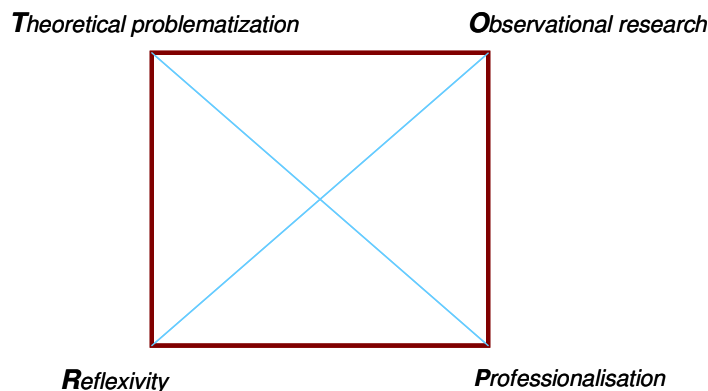
principle termed the “command function of theory” in scientific research. But it has also overtly adopted the reciprocal demand to confront interpretative hypotheses raised by the movement of theoretical questioning with the results of observational research».

And he added:

«(...) If this project had been achieved with overall success, this was due to the virtuous interaction between four poles of activity that was established in the field of Portuguese sociology since its very beginning. They are:

- (i) The theoretical problematization pole, representing the set of efforts which, in the scientific domain in question, seek to encourage theoretical updating and discussion among peers in a systematic way;*
- (ii) The observational research pole, relating to the analysis of concrete social situations through theoretically and methodologically informed procedures for gathering and processing empirical information;*
- (iii) The reflexivity pole, embracing critical and self-critical questioning on positions of principle and foundations of the theoretical options and the technical-methodological operations required by sociological work.*
- (iv) The professionalisation pole, over-determined by the demands of social intervention in relatively circumscribed “practical” contexts and in contact with specific “lay publics”».*

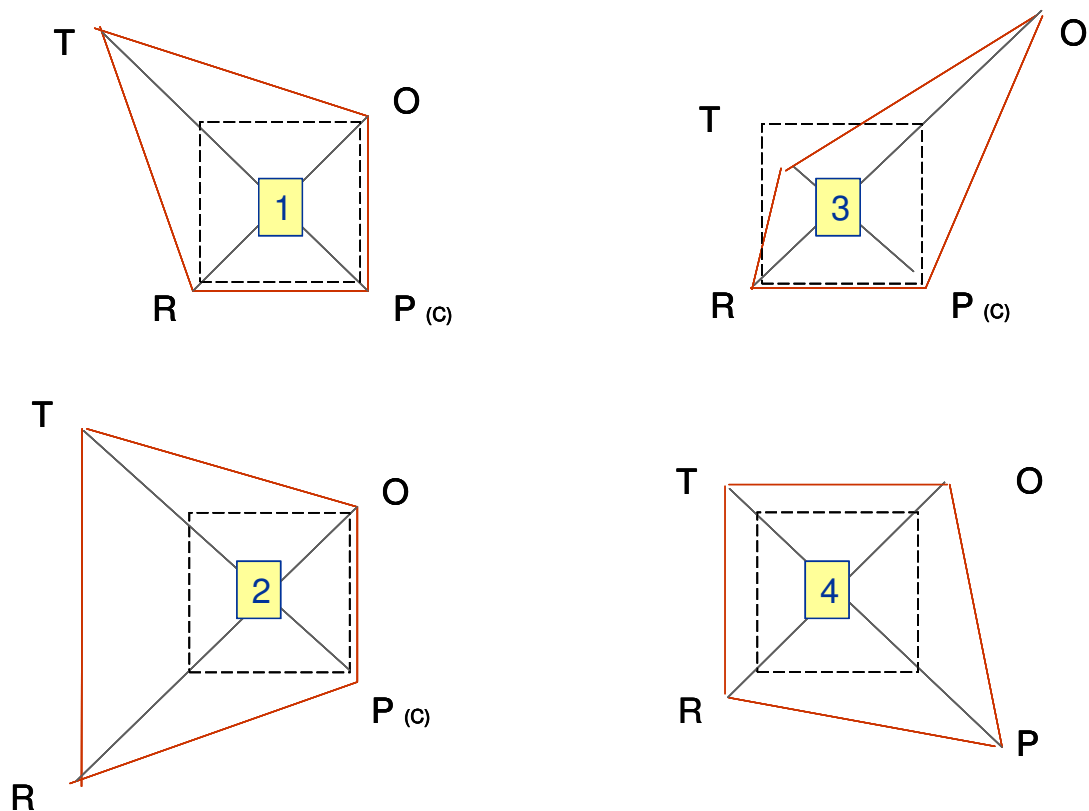
Scheme 3 – The polygonal virtuous interaction of the Portuguese sociology



Source: courtesy from Madureira Pinto, 2007. (Not published)

Discussing the actuality of Madureira Pinto’s proposition, it can be recognised four different ideal-types of the current Portuguese sociological work (see Scheme 4).

Scheme 4 – Four ideal-types of contemporary sociological work



The ideal-type 1 emphasises the theoretical problematization pole and it's usually recognized as the academic sociological work, clearly ascribed to just a few of colleagues (the 'theorists').

The ideal-type 2 remains the *battle field* of the 'charismatic's', having an even greater peer recognition and the capacity of sociological regeneration and scientific upgrading than the 'theorists'.

The ideal-type 3 emphasises the observational research pole, sometimes with a slice prejudice of the theoretical pole and supported by descriptive methods and quasi ethnographic purposes (used by the 'empiricists').

Finally, the ideal-type 4 could be understood as a fresh new approach that expands the poles O, T and R but is pushed by the professionalisation pole, looking for the equilibrium point between the (external) demand and the (internal) supply of knowledge. The 'professionals' are people linked somehow to universities (teaching, researching) but could be also employees in the consultancy market (with no direct relation with universities).

In conclusion, the rapid growth of employment in non-academic sectors, whether public and private, whose jobs request a more «applied» expertise and skills, has

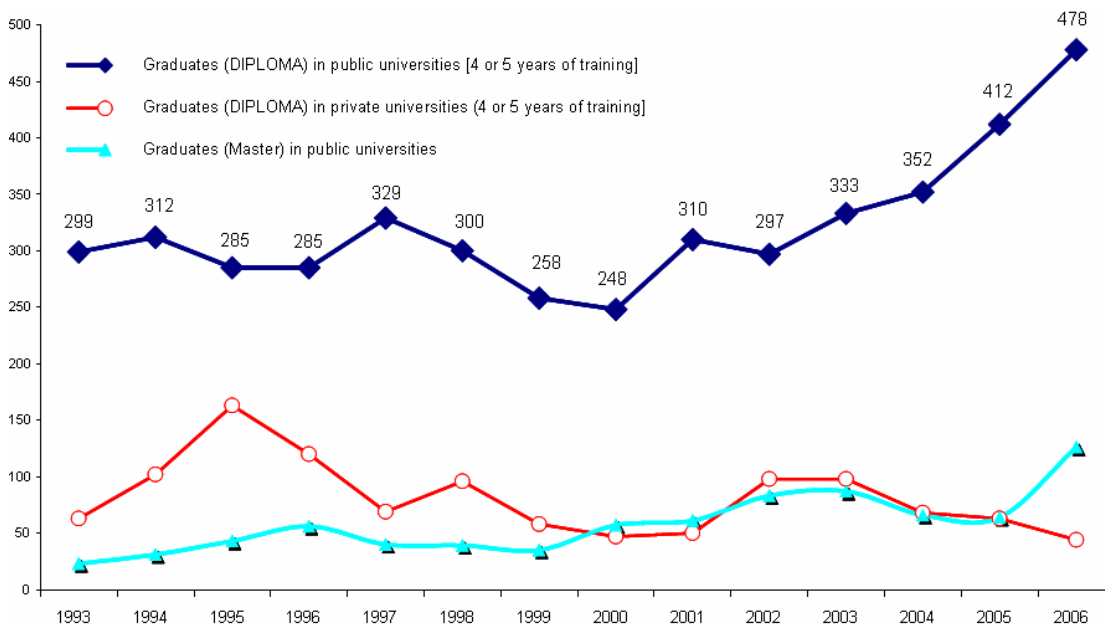
been provided both by the university system (namely through the research centres) and by the private sector (namely by firms of research consultancy and consulting|studies and development) begins to follow the new trend.

3. The arising of the sociologists

This is not surprising that for doing such hard work and to overtake the absence of social analysis, Portugal has had to build a brand new generation of sociologists (see Chart 2). We can estimative the total of graduates in sociology since 1980. Crossing the data from de Census 2001 and the data from the last graduates in higher education institutions, we see that Portugal has nowadays probably more than 10 thousand individuals with a degree in sociology. The large majority is graduated (4 years of university training).

In Portugal, the *Licenciatura* (before the Bolonha process) usually took four years to be completed (but could be 5 years if the student has a field work or took a training post outside the university). It was the common higher education qualification under a system of 4 plus 2 years of graduation (*Licenciatura* and Master).

Chart 2 – Number of Portuguese graduate students in sociology



Source: Observatory of the Higher Education. MINISTRY OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND HIGHER EDUCATION

For the period considered, roughly 400 students got a *Licenciatura* every year (in average). Nevertheless, a considerable difference should be underline: the period from 1993 until 2000, and the last 6 years, with almost a strong and linear growth.

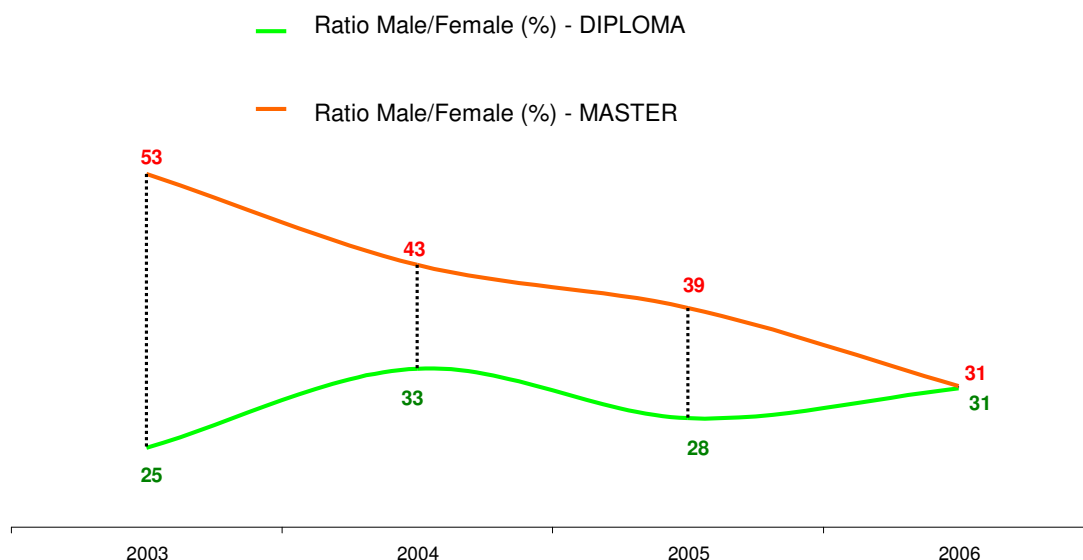
With a Master Degree in Sociology, Portugal should have now 900 graduates. For the same period, the average of new masters was 68 per year. Until recently, only public universities had all the necessary requisites to graduate sociologists with a master. In fact, in Portugal only public institutions provide all the possible Higher Education Qualifications in sociology (Bsa, Master and PhD), and the same could be said for the major part of the sciences teach.

A necessary remark should be done in what concerns the institutional origin and genre composition of all those graduates. Chart 2 allows us to recognize the importance of the public system vs. the private educational system as far as the sociology process of learning, graduation and later upgrading education.

Who are the students that wish - as a first choice - to study sociology in public universities and that are the majority of them?

They are young people, coming up from public secondary schools, predominantly living in cities, not far from the universities, escaping from Mathematics and Physics, even though defending their *sociological vocation* (vocaçã). Moreover, in the last years we have seen an increasing in the numbers of working students, already with a job and a profession, that have chosen sociology, as well as other courses, for practical reasons, namely related with the management of their careers, especially when in the public administration. In two of the public universities settled down in Lisbon, we estimate that those students can represent more than 25% of the all new cohorts in each year.

Chart 3 – Ratio Male/Female (%) in four cohorts of Portuguese sociology students



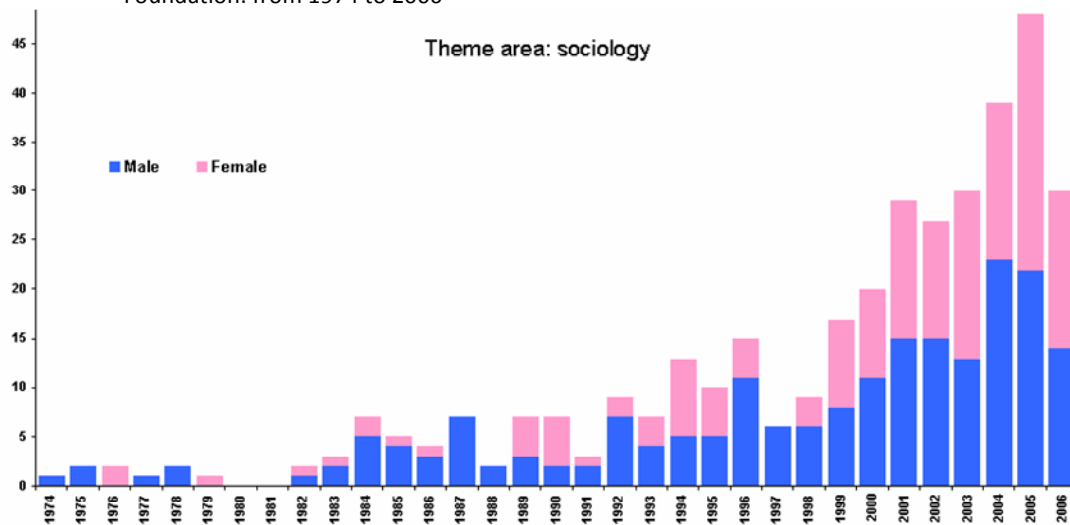
Source: Observatory of the Higher Education. MINISTRY OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND HIGHER EDUCATION

In terms of genre composition, there is one point that should be underlined and that is visible in Chart 3: the feminization of the Portuguese sociological community of students and, later, the feminization of the sociological manpower.

Data for the period 2003-2006 reveals that the prevalence of females has been reinforced in the MASTERS programs, and remained practically the same in the 1st degree (the so called Diplomas).

If the increased number of sociologists with a degree in Sociology can be considered relevant, what happened with the PhD graduation (see Chart 4)?

Chart 4 – Number of thesis (PhD) registered by year at the Portuguese Science and Technology Foundation: from 1974 to 2006



Source: Portuguese Science and Technology Foundation

A little different phenomenon occurs within the PhD scenario. After a short period, numerically dominated by male authors, the number of female authors quickly increased (after 1989). Globally speaking it can be said that there are more PhD's men than women, but the genre equilibrium seems to be reached in the last five years.

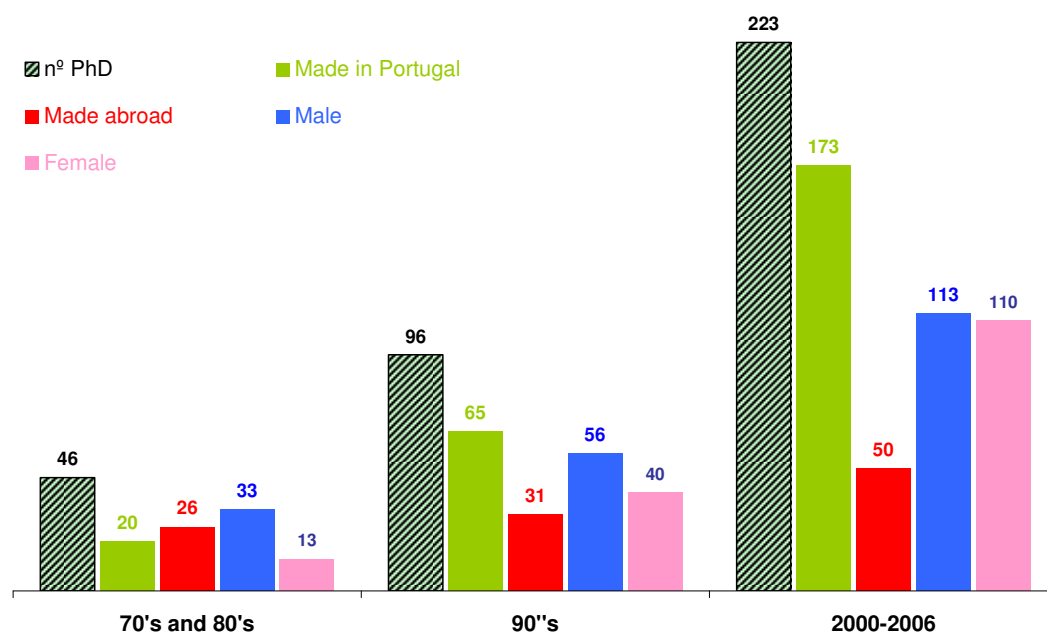
Anyway, in the presence of this chart something more should be said. The chart represents the raise of the Portuguese sociology and the advent of its own academic and scientific capabilities. After 2000 the expression PhD sociological boom is probably adequate and as a natural consequence of the take off registered two decades before in terms of Research & Development public investment.

Until 2006, the Portuguese Science and Technology Foundation registered 365 titles from Portuguese Ph Doctors in Sociology. It is the complete figure, since there were not sociologists with a PhD before 1974.

More interesting could be the data presented in Chart 5. Crossing the information from the former (Chart 4), with a secondary variable “Institutional place where the thesis grew up”, we understand that the majority (71%) of all Doctors in Sociology developed their thesis in a Portuguese university (look at the green bars).

This is more relevant as prior to 1993 the situation was completely different for reasons already known - until the mid of the 80's, the majority of the PhD's were done abroad, namely in European universities (France, United Kingdom, Italy, Belgium).

Chart 5 – Number of thesis (PhD) registered by decade, by sex and origin



Source: Portuguese Science and Technology Foundation

In fact, it is quite interesting to note the changes that have occurred in the last three decades in what concerns: the numbers of PhD's, where they were made, and by whom. The 70's and the 80's were decades of clear male domain and strong influence of the graduation conducted in a foreigner institution. This could be seen as a kind of precocity level of internationalisation (as framed by socio-political constrains). By the contrary, in the last six years, the epistemological, theoretical and experimental capacities of the Portuguese institutions have been absolutely evident.

4. A necessary balance

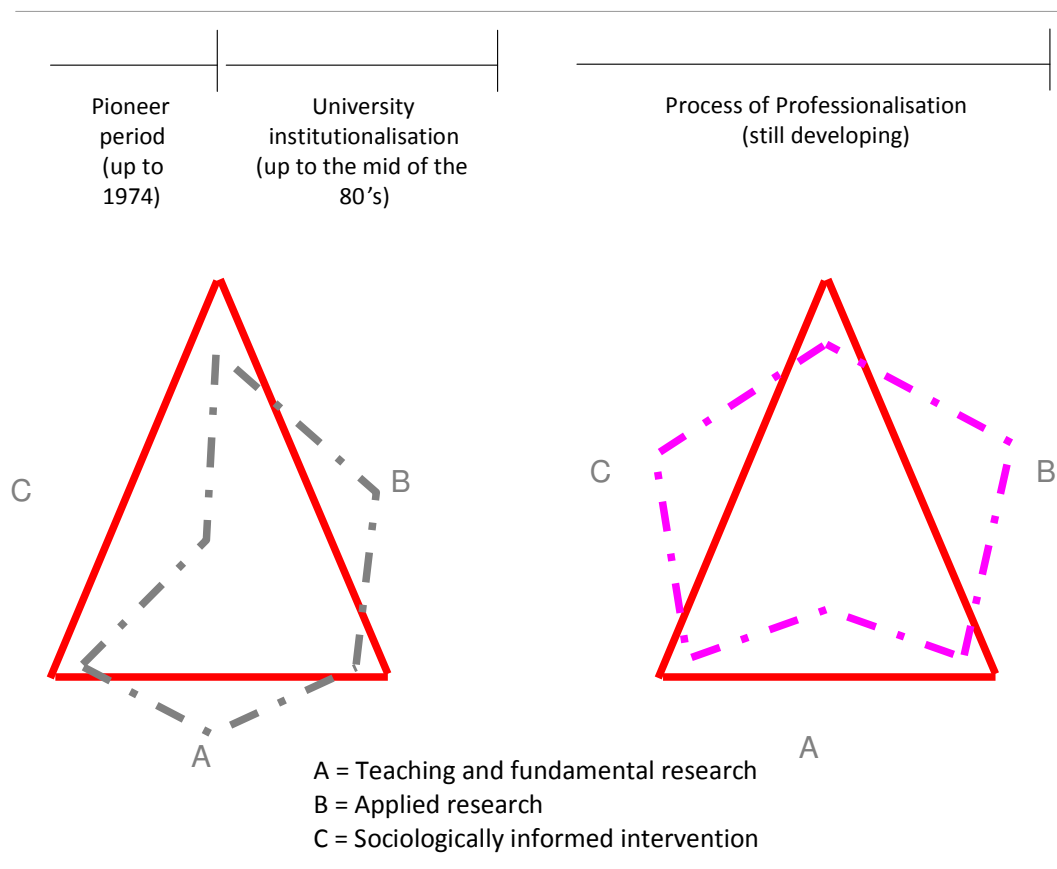
What has happened to these people, in terms of their professional careers? Is it possible to make a balance on the presence of sociologists teaching at the

universities and institutes, making research in the research centres, inside and outside universities, working as professionals in municipalities, national agencies or enterprises, in NGOs or in the media?

Apart from the growing number of sociologists, the interesting result is that the sociological work has changed, fitting the demands arising from the public and the private sector nowadays much more diversified and complex.

Crossing an old attempt to catch the great periods of the Portuguese sociology development, made some time ago by Firmino da Costa, and published in one of the volumes of the International Sociology review (AA.VV., 1994), we can probably say that until the end of the process of university institutionalisation (mid of the 80's), the most important form of sociological activity was either teaching and/or fundamental research. The second one could be the applied research, and because we didn't have sociologists in the field, the third was the sociologically informed intervention via the wide spread of the professional roles achieved by all of us (see Scheme 5).

Scheme 5 – Metamorphosis of the sociological *métier* in Portugal



It seems that two extremely positive changes occurred. Firstly, a higher continuity (relation) between those three forms. Secondly, the boom of jobs that required a sociologist and, in consequence, the process of professionalisation¹ period is marked by the intervention of the sociologist in our society. Regarding the idea of continuity, and quoting Madureira Pinto (2008):

«[In Portugal] *The sociological studies on poverty and social exclusion which have been developed almost simultaneously with the former implementation of Portuguese welfare state are a good example of the fruitfulness of the interaction between sociologists with academic and non-academic institutional affiliations. Benefiting from a solid knowledge about Portuguese social structure and, simultaneously, from a precise inventory of social exclusion diversity, those studies have in fact produced a large and well founded information on the conditions and domains of social vulnerability in the Portuguese society, on social categories with greater incidence of poverty, on the specific ways of life of poor and excluded groups, on the institutional actors and practices in welfare networks, etc*».

4.1. Short notes regarding the PhD Portuguese sociologists

Our Association tried to turn on that gap, promoting a questionnaire on line to the more than 2.300 members. The figures regarding the PhD's members – based on a random sample - can be seen in the Table 3. The fulfilment of the questionnaire was not obligatory. On line since April 2008, we received 86 responses from PhD's colleagues and PhD's students (all APS members) until the end of February 2009.

The results turn evident some specificities of the Portuguese sociological community. Although recent in terms of graduation length, the PhD's average age, both for students as for graduates, is high, comparing with other communities. The academic livelihood management process still imposes a long journey across the desert before the creation of conditions to develop and conclude the PhD studies.

The degree of concentration in Lisbon, in terms of region of residence, and the lack of Portuguese mates living outside the country do not facilitate the establishment and the development of new opportunities on a local basis. This is particularly true inside the country.

Of course, the new technologies of information and communication can easily smooth the progress of the establishment of networks, even strongest than the 'live at' ones. Nevertheless, the existence of reader's, students, teachers or researchers

¹ By professionalisation we mean the social process whereby sociologists come to engage in an activity for pay or as a means of livelihood within his social and professional setting. However, there is a gap of knowledge in what concerns the full picture in terms of professional activity.

living abroad could be a facilitator in order to reach and reinforce the Portuguese sociological visibility. The academic mobility index is correlated with the previous results, and underlines the lack of mobility.

Table 3 – Some figures about the PhD Portuguese sociologists (sample)

Indicator		PhD students		PhD graduates	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
Age	n	11	25	23	27
	μ	40,1	38,5	49,2	44,2
	σ	8,8	6,4	8,3	6,5
Nº residents, by region	Lisbon	7	12	10	12
	North	1	6	3	9
	Centre	2	4	4	4
	South	1	2	2	0
	Autonomous Territories	0	1	3	2
	Foreign country	0	0	1	0
Average years at the condition of PhD' student or already as PhD	n	8	15	23	27
	μ	7,9	7,5	8,0	4,8
	σ	4,7	4,5	7,0	3,8
Year (average) that reached the status of PhD student or PhD graduate	n	8	15	23	27
	μ	1998	2000	2000	2003
	σ	8,3	5,9	7,0	3,8
Academic mobility index (% persons that change from the university where they reached the 1 st degree in Sociology to another as PhD students)	n	11	17	15	23
	%	36,4	52,9	66,7	47,8
Occupancy rate (% persons having a job)	n	9	23	23	27
	%	100,0	73,9	95,7	100,0
Degree of perceived social acceptance and social reward for the sociological work [scale 1-5]	n	11	21	22	25
	μ	4,3	4,3	4,3	4,2
	σ	1,1	0,9	0,6	0,7
Degree of personal satisfaction with the activity that the person is carry on [scale 1-5]	n	11	21	22	26
	μ	3,9	4,1	4,4	4,2
	σ	1,2	1,1	0,6	0,7
Degree of satisfaction with the relationship between colleagues [scale 1-5]	n	11	21	22	26
	μ	3,7	3,8	3,9	4,0
	σ	1,4	1,2	0,7	0,6
Degree of professional autonomy in your daily professional activities [scale 1-5]	n	11	21	22	25
	μ	3,8	4,3	3,9	4,3
	σ	1,0	0,7	0,9	0,6

Table 3 – Some figures about the PhD Portuguese sociologists (sample) [cont.]

Indicator		PhD's students		PhD's	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
Degree of satisfaction with the work timetable [scale 1-5]	n	11	21	22	26
	μ	4,4	4,1	4,0	4,1
	σ	0,8	1,0	0,9	0,8
Degree of expectancy concerning professional opportunities [scale 1-5]	n	11	21	22	25
	μ	2,7	3,0	3,6	3,2
	σ	1,4	1,0	1,1	1,3
Degree of satisfaction with the net wage level [scale 1-5]	n	11	21	22	26
	μ	3,1	3,0	3,2	3,1
	σ	0,8	1,0	0,6	1,0
Degree of perceived professional stability (security having a job) [scale 1-5]	n	11	22	22	26
	μ	2,2	2,8	3,6	2,8
	σ	1,3	1,5	1,2	1,4

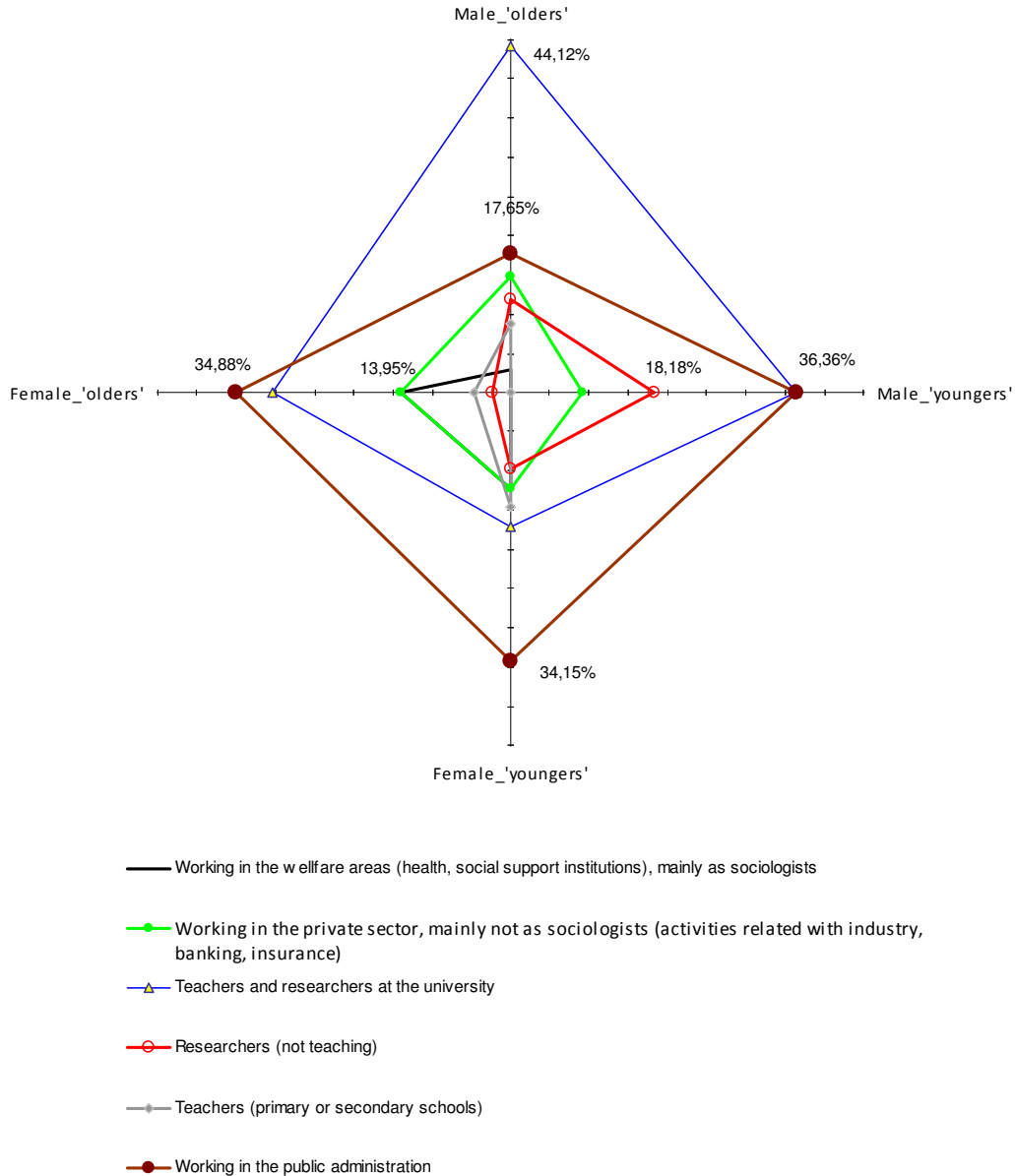
Note1: Data collection supported in the APS on line survey.

Note2: The representativeness function can not be calculated and inferential analysis is not allowed, because the random sample can not be controlled.

In what concerns the scale of satisfaction with the profession, we can say that this community is in general satisfied with their social environmental conditions: high perceived external social acceptance, high personal satisfaction with the activity which is carry on, good relationship between colleagues, recognition of a professional autonomy, high satisfaction with the work timetable. The less favourable evaluations go to the future professional opportunities, net wage level and perceived professional stability. Differences between male and female and between PhD students and PhD graduates could be recognised, but not tested in terms of its level of statistical significance.

In a previous on line survey results analysis (Machado, 2007), we pointed out that the professional sociological path is changing quickly in our community. Chart 6 allow us to recognize the switch between the 'olders' (colleagues with 40 or more years old) and the 'youngers' (less than 39 years old), but also the asymmetric status considering the gender.

Chart 6 – Clusters of professional activity of the APS members (random sample)



The results show a long way to run. Even globally positive, but having as reference a critical learning of the social, of the social worlds in which we participate and in which we act, and understanding the reflexivity of the actors involved (as mentioned by Michel Wieviorka, President of the Sociology Internal Association), it seems necessary to recognize that something should be done to reinforce the social role of those who are working in or as sociologists.

This dynamic allowed the recognition of sociological work, where APS has a crucial part, thanks to the model conceived by its founders: the one of a scientific-

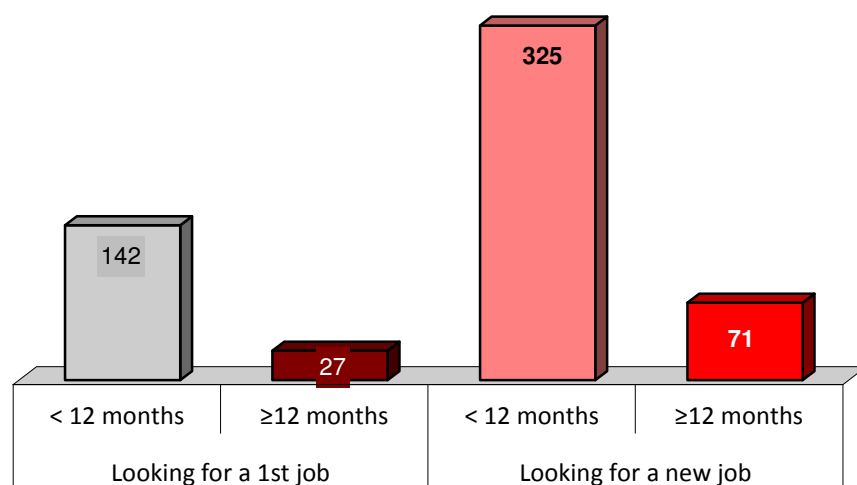
professional association, which has been growing and becoming one of the largest worldwide sociological associations.

5. The future of the Portuguese sociology

But if this entire dynamic allows a scientifically and professional work recognition, can we speak of a safe future for sociologists?

Far from this. If our time has shown us something is that nothing is secure. Nothing can be taken for granted. In a short time period, uncertainty as replace job's certainty and safety. The presumption that the implementation and consolidation of a valid and socially useful science within several social and economical sectors, as disappeared.

Chart 7 – Number of unemployed sociologists, by the period of inactivity and type of situation (looking for a 1st job vs. looking for a new job): situation in June 2008

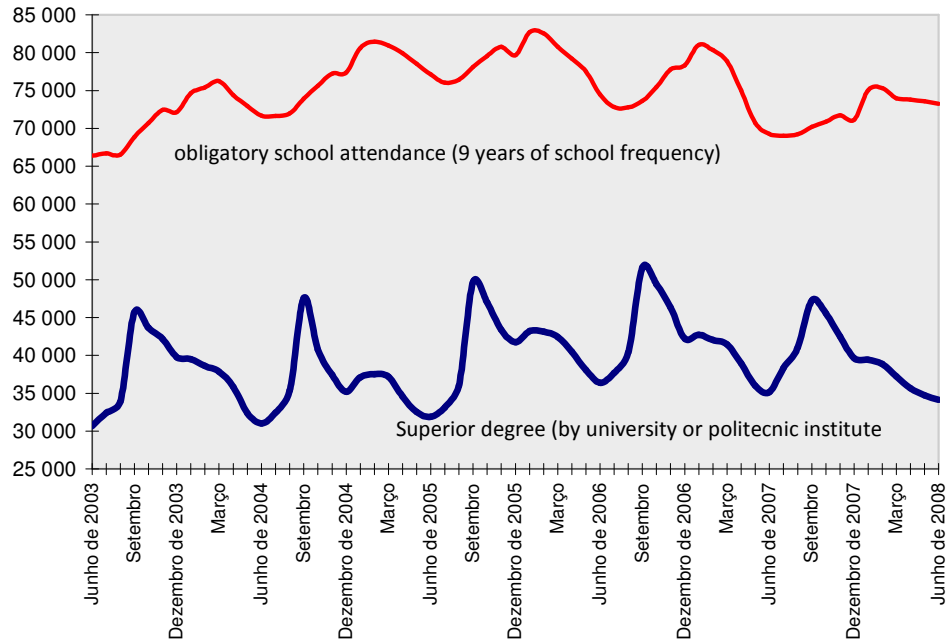


Source: Monthly Bulletin from the Institute for Employment and Professional Training.

The greatest real ghost is the unemployment. Data from June 2008 (see Chart 7) revealed a rate of unemployment around 12% (considering all the sociologists with a degree (1st, 2nd or PhD level, achieved since 1997; N= 4592).

Like other modern societies, having a university degree has to be better than just having the obligatory minimum school attendance (see Chart 7). School qualifications are required for a lot of job supply. According to the available data, and at least until June 2008, the job market is still absorbing the greatest part of the new coming cohorts of graduates.

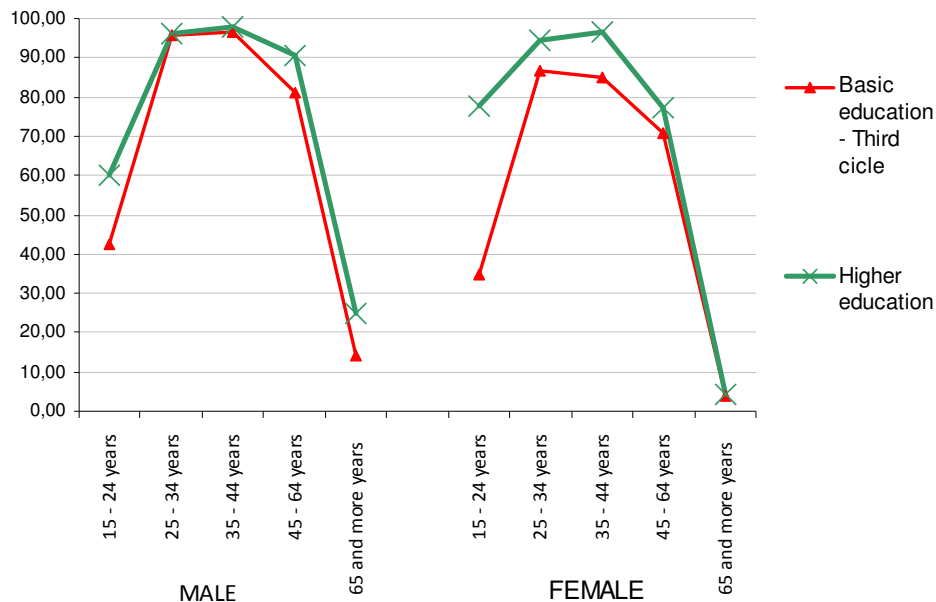
Chart 7 – Number of unemployed people in Portugal, by the highest completed level of education: situation in June 2008



Source: Monthly Bulletin from the Institute for Employment and Professional Training.

However, when we take a look to the existent labour force (see Chart 8), we understand that the last statement is more truthful when associated with the younger employees and especially between the young and middle age women. For the rest of the labour force the differences are not evident and do not have statistical significance.

Chart 8 – Rate of Activity by sex, age group and highest completed level of education



Source: INE, Rate of Activity Quarterly Statistics, Portugal, Labour force survey.

We live hard times. Life itineraries are less restrictive, with more choices, but simultaneous, associated to a higher risk and inconstant awareness. An open world, an uneven open world, one must say, has put not only Portugal but also Europe facing a complex and difficult situation, even more if understanding the close society that we were.

The times are changing. But how can we – sociologists – still participate throughout our work of social deciphering and decision support, in an accelerated, uncertain, risky, and difficult to intervention, social world?

What is the sociologist social role in our current times?

The answer can be this one: participating in our social institutions as professionals and as citizens, in order to give them the capabilities to answer positively to the challenges faced, becoming more active spokesman and spokeswomen in qualitative social process changes, or if one prefers, change to quality.

As Lemert wrote (2004), *«sociology is among those academic fields that have, in part at least, lost vital contact with their most important values, with their reason for being»*.

In a certain way, this point of view underlies Michael Burawoy idea (2005), when he wrote:

«Responding to the growing gap between the sociological ethos and the world we study, the challenge of public sociology is to engage multiple publics in multiple ways. These public sociologies should not be left out in the cold, but brought into the framework of our discipline. In this way we make public sociology a visible and legitimate enterprise, and, thereby, invigorate the discipline as a whole».

Within the pursuit of this objective, simultaneously professional and civic, what do we APS have, as a representative association, as a patrimony for this future?

We have the founder's legacy, and more, the compromise shaped in our Deontological Code: understanding sociology in a double level – as a science and as a professional praxis.

Scientifically based in a multi paradigmatic perspective, sociology has based its comprehension of social worlds in a close and permanent articulation between theoretical and empirical scientifically production, through its multi patrimonies, from different national and academic origins. This way of understanding sociology allowed APS to be an open space for sociologists, from different backgrounds, in different professional stages, and even with different liaisons to sociological praxis.

Our vision is one of an inclusive Association – one that does not exclude.

It is also clear to us that in our history we have an important fact: the sociological education is not and does not orientate to a specific job profile. In fact, it broadens perspectives as to professional contexts, with different levels of knowledge application. "Being a sociologist" gathers all professions where sociologists are, as where sociologist knowledge is require and relevant. In certain circumstances, before having a cut clear "sociologist job", the sociologist should have previously shown efficiency as to knowing how to and understanding the why. Only praxis and results allows the understanding of what is to be sociologists.

Therefore, sociology is a practical knowledge, not an explained profession. Its importance, there is to say, its force, is based within its own comprehension of social reality as a mean to improve collective live, as a mean to involve citizens.

Having explained the social, economical and political conditions that have structured APS, what are the concerns that must act as guidelines to our activity?

First of all, we must address the protection of those who choose sociology and their professional praxis. With the creation of an European educational system, where multi disciplinary education are stimulated, we are going to have more and more dynamic and heterodoxies paths. Freedom of choice as far as under graduated and graduated education is an undeniable asset.

In this scenario, it is important to work in cooperation with official entities, in order to guarantee access to job in public and private sector, trough clear profile and competences definitions. It is not sufficient to demand education quality; it is necessary to mediate imprecise and conflict situations.

Facing all the questions that we have been discussing – professional profile, and new diploma's configuration under Bologna -, it is essential to define what is to be understood as best practices, insofar sociology and social sciences in general, regarding institutional management. The Sociology Portuguese Association has been developing its reflection, as far as this matter, through its Deontological Council.

APS has done everything within its power, and it will continue to do it so, in order to incentive a strategy that turns national dimension a minimum scale of our international work. How? By stimulating scientific reflections, promoting national debates on sociological work, and bring to us European and international experiences.

And what can't we leave behind? And what issues must we take we us into the future?

Some lessons from the past helps us to clarify this. First of all, notwithstanding its reflective and intervention role, Portuguese sociology has maintained a healthy

distance in generic social reflection. It is not frequent for national sociologists to, and for instance, appears in the media, speaking on other subjects rather than the ones that have as basis their own social research, its results and its relevance to the public. It's a sociological diet that one must maintain as it is a deontological issue and thus does not impeach the role of an 'active citizen'.

Portuguese sociology is not subdued to any specific epistemological doctrine or analytical practice that produces followers rather than critical analysts, able to face social change challenges. Its non filiations in scientific, cultural, currents areas, maintains the doors open to scientific debate and active criticism, able to question the alleged establish certainties as an action of and to demystified social certainties.

Portuguese sociological research has been gaining an increasing international space, trough the publication in scientific magazines, projects, and through contact with international researchers, from differentiate scientific, geographical and cultural profile. It has maintain its notice on comparative work, without forgetting the uniqueness of each society – that is to say, that societies communicate through language and that internationalization is made in the languages one speaks, thinks and built society and culture. Portuguese sociologists do not exclude the idea that nowadays, to enrich their work (scientific and cultural work) they must understand several languages – as a European Union prerogative.

Our relation with others that make Portuguese language their own, it's a central dimension of our internationalization. Our relation with countries that share with us Latin base languages and close cultural codes is another sphere of international collaboration that has starting to show its outputs – for instance, ReSu network² – and allows to see the world in its plural shape.

For the future we take the idea that we all are sociology makers and that only in sharing practices, despite the forms it takes, or sociological matrix, we will have conditions to a better understanding of the Social Worlds in which we live.

As Lemert (2004) wrote: the future of sociologists is their present.

² ReSu is an ad-hoc network of sociological national associations from the Southern Europe, which includes Greece, Italy, France, Spain and Portugal, and has a steering committee composed by representatives of national associations.

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Note:

This paper has been written to be presented at the 2009 Conference of the Council of National Associations of the International Sociological Association, March 23-25, Taipé, Taiwan