

Variation in age at marriage in Portugal from the seventeenth century to the early twentieth century*

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Abstract

This paper analyzes age-related regional contrasts at first marriage by gender and seasonality of marriage in Portugal, from the seventeenth to the early twentieth century, and further deepens the research on consanguineous relationships between spouses in five selected parishes.

In the past two decades, using regular parish records, genealogical databases have been put together by researchers from the Population History Group (former NEPS at the University of Minho), following the parish reconstitution methodology (Amorim: 1991). In order to enrich life pathways, some of those databases include information gathered from other documentary sources.

Taking the variation in age at first marriage in the several districts studied as our point of departure, the following findings should be highlighted: the high median age at first marriage for males throughout the country; the early age

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at which males married in some areas of Northern Portugal, particularly in the Alto Minho; the marked differences between the age at which males and females married in the South, the only geographical area where female age at marriage was lower; a smaller gap between the age of marriage for males and females in the Centre region; and these variations tended to become more uniform after the turn of the 20th century.

The study of marriage by age and by region has shown that, before modern times, people complied differently with the religious precepts of Lent and Advent, as well as revealing significant regional differences between districts, associated to their prevailing economic activities.

The regional contrasts found in a small country like Portugal are an important motive for reflection, inviting us to consider the intersections between marriage rates and demographic phenomena, such as mortality / differential mobility, as well as between marriage / sociocultural phenomena, and property systems / limited access to inheritance, among others.

Keywords: Historical demography, parish reconstitution methodology, marriage rate, age at first marriage in Portugal, marriage seasonality, consanguineous relationships, differential behaviors.

Variação na idade do casamento em Portugal a partir do século XVII até o início do século XX

Resumo

Para Portugal, do século XVII a inícios do XX, observando a idade ao primeiro casamento por géneros, destacamos as elevadas médias ao primeiro casamento masculino em todo o país, embora no Norte, e particularmente no Alto Minho, o casamento masculino se apresente mais precoce do que o feminino; a marcada anterioridade do casamento masculino no Sul, única zona onde o casamento feminino se apresenta precoce; e a maior proximidade de comportamento masculino e feminino no Centro, antes da entrada numa modernidade com tendência de uniformização.

Os contrastes evidenciam-se também na sazonalidade ao casamento, com acatamento diferenciado aos preceitos religiosos da Quaresma e do Advento e marcada influência das atividades económicas predominantes.

Os resultados conseguidos convidam-nos ao aprofundamento das interseções entre a Nupcialidade e os fenómenos demográficos da Mortalidade e da Mobilidade diferencial e entre a Nupcialidade e fenómenos socioculturais, sistemas de propriedade e limitações no acesso à herança, entre outros.

Palavras-chave: Demografia histórica, metodologia de reconstituição de paróquias, nupcialidade, idade ao primeiro casamento em Portugal, sazonalidade ao casamento, relações de consanguinidade, comportamentos diferenciais.

Variation de l'âge au mariage au Portugal à partir du XVII^e siècle au début du XX^e siècle

Résumé

Au Portugal, avant l'entrée dans la modernité avec une tendance d'uniformisation des comportements, en analysant l'âge du premier mariage par genre du XVII^e au début du XX^e siècles, on met en évidence les hauts moyens âges en tout le pays, bien qu'au Nord, particulièrement dans le Haut Minho, le mariage masculin est plus précoce; une marquante antériorité du mariage masculin au Sud, la seule région où le mariage féminin est précoce; et une grande proximité entre les comportements masculin et féminin au Centre.

On trouve aussi des contrastes dans la saisonnalité au mariage, avec une conformité différentielle aux préceptes religieux (Carême et Advent) et une influence notable des activités économiques prédominantes.

Les résultats obtenus nous invitent à l'approfondissement des intersections entre la Nuptialité et les phénomènes démographiques de la Mortalité et Mobilité différentiel et entre la Nuptialité e les phénomènes socio-culturels, systèmes de propriété et limitations à l'héritage, parmi d'autres.

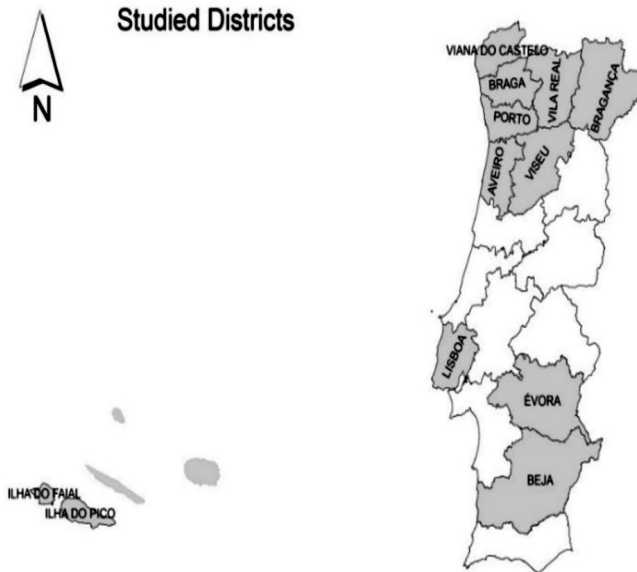
Mots clés: Démographie historique, méthodologie de reconstitution de paroisses, nuptialité, âge au premier mariage au Portugal, saisonnalité du mariage, relations de consanguinité, comportements différentiels.

INTRODUCTION

For a small country, almost 92,212 km² in area, Portugal is geographically very diverse, with a mountainous and rainy North contrasting with a flat and dry South. The northern coastal region is characterized by a high population density, with little connection between communities, contrasting with concentrated and isolated communities in the southern and inland regions.

It is a challenge for a demographic historian to understand the relations between the demographic variables and to analyze the reproduction of communities over time when exposed to such diversified natural environments, bearing in mind furthermore the role played by the Coastal North and the Azores in the Portuguese overseas expansion.

FIGURE 1
Map of Portugal



Given the relative regularity of fecundity up to the 20th century and the diversity and variation in mortality, marriage stands out as a regulator not only in balancing the population but also the domestic units.

In a traditional society, to marry and to choose a spouse were extremely important decisions in life that constrained family and society. Understanding the Portuguese reality concerning marriage behaviors between the 17th and the 20th century may lead to interesting research paths on compared demographic evolution and social and mentality changes. Furthermore, some demographers have noted the diversity of regional patterns (Hajnal, 1965; Rowland, 1989; 1997) and it is important to deepen the historical analysis in different regions of each country. Thus, we believe the results of this paper can contribute to providing further insights on this matter.

The analysis will focus on variation in age at marriage, by gender, from the 17th century to the early 20th century, but will also include observations relating to the end of the last century, when available. Another marriage indicator, marriage seasonality, may reflect differences in timing due to seasonal activities (Garcia, 1975; Amorim,

1987; Kussmaul, 1990). The observance of religious seasons, such as Lent and Advent, and regional superstitions regarding good and bad months to get married (Guilhaume & Poussou, 1970), are also factors to be considered. The evolution of these behaviors over time may be an important indicator of modernity.

The systematic genealogical lines available to us for some communities serve to trace consanguineous relationships between spouses, in direct connection with the greater or lesser openness of the marriage market, while also reflecting cultural habits and social requirements. For this indicator, we focused on four geographically distant communities¹: Vila Praia de Âncora (ancient parish of Gontinhães) in Alto Minho (district of Viana do Castelo), S. Pedro de Poiares in Trás-os-Montes (district of Bragança), S. Joaninho in the center of the country (district of Viseu), and São João, in the Azorean island of Pico (district of Horta). The analysis of the fifth community, Fermentões in Baixo Minho (district of Braga), was performed over a shorter time period.

1. SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

The first results on the demographic behaviors of the Old Regime using a specific methodology for family reconstruction was presented in 1971 in an academic study on Rebordãos, a rural parish in the region of Trás-os-Montes (Amorim:1973). Later on, an urban area was the focus of analysis (Amorim: 1987), but it was not until 1992 that the parish reconstitution method was applied (Amorim: 1991). Researchers from NEPS/GHP (University of Minho) and master's students from ISCTE widened the geographic scope, developing databases with

1 For providing the databases used in this study, we thank: Hermínia Mesquita (parish of Criação Velha-Açores); Odete Paiva (parishes of Avidos, Santo André); Manuela Ventura (parish of Mouquim); Glória Solé (parish of Meadela); Palmira Gomes (parish of Ovar); Elza Carvalho (parishes of Carvalho, Tecla); José Faustino (parish of Calvão); Rui Maia (parishes of Maia); Conceição Reis (parish of Ericeira); Manuela Silva (parish of Pombeiro); Arminda Machado (parish of Facha); Fábía Raposo (parish of Palaçoulo); Anabela Godinho (parish of Selmes); Natália Silva (parish of A dos Cunhados). These and other databases are continuously being built, enriched and expanded based on cross-analysis of various documental sources.

the life pathways of individuals in a genealogical line. Databases with individual lifelines in a genealogic sequence were developed. The research has now moved towards inter-parish data crossing with a view to developing a National Genealogical Repository².

TABLE 1
Districts of Portugal Studied

District	Period	Male	Female	M+F	District
		N	N	N	%
Bragança	1640-1979	1,201	2,459	3,660	2.54
Vila Real	1700-1865	342	475	817	0.57
Braga	1610-1989	22,551	28,304	50,855	35.23
Viana do Castelo	1650-1989	2,636	3,349	5,985	4.15
Porto	1650-1919	702	1,300	2,002	1.39
Viseu	1700-1896	479	645	1,124	0.78
Aveiro	1640-1910	1,038	1,338	2,376	1.65
Lisbon	1670-1909	3,102	4,042	7,144	4.95
Évora	1620-1799	392	661	1,053	0.73
Beja	1680-1859	429	615	1,044	0.72
Pico and Faial	1640-1979	32,147	36,147	68,294	47.31
Total		65,019	79,335	144,354	100

Source: 91 parish databases.

Ninety-one databases were analyzed for this study, which include the districts of Bragança, Vila Real, Braga, Viana do Castelo, Porto, Viseu, Aveiro, Lisbon, Évora, Beja, and the islands of Pico and Faial in the Azores, with a total of 144,354 observations.

As we can see from the Table 1, the available databases do not cover the entire country. There is more information on the district of Braga and the Azorean islands of Pico and Faial. Marriage behavior in the Azores has been studied from the 17th century in the city of Angra

2 www.genealog.uminho.pt

do Heroísmo. In the cases of Trás-os-Montes (districts of Bragança and Chaves), Alto Minho (district of Viana do Castelo), Douro Litoral (district of Porto), Beira Alta (district of Viseu), Estremadura (district of Lisbon), Alentejo (districts of Évora and Beja), and Algarve (district of Faro), information is available only on dispersed communities.

The databases are highly representative of the districts on which the most information has been gathered, as in the case of Pico and Faial (archipelago of the Azores) and Braga. For districts with a lower number of observations, we can only outline tendencies for average age at first marriage, as highlighted in the examples of Viseu, Évora and Beja.

Although the researchers have generally studied the data available from public records (mostly from the early 17th century to 1911), in some cases, further work has been done until the end of the 20th century, such as on the Municipalities of Bragança (parish of Poiares), Braga (parishes of Fermentões, Costa, Mesão Frio, Senhora da Oliveira, Sampaio, São Sebastião), Viana do Castelo (parish of Facha), Pico and Faial (parishes of São João, São Mateus, Ribeiras, Santa Luzia, Santo Amaro, Candelária, Lajes do Pico).

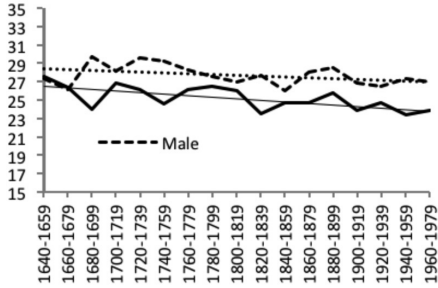
2. RESULTS

2. 1. Variation in age at marriage by district

In a traditional society, the age at marriage became critical for family size. The variation in age at marriage among the various Portuguese districts refers not only to the different set of demographic variables, but also to socio-professional and cultural constraints, among which male mobility is one of the most influential.

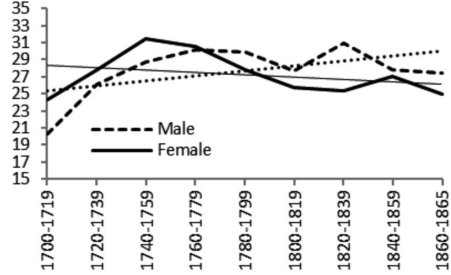
In the two parishes in the district of Bragança, S. Pedro de Poiares (municipality of Freixo de Espada à Cinta) and Palaçoulo (municipality of Miranda do Douro) (Figure 2), women tended to marry at a younger age than men, with a difference of almost two years. From 1820, there is a decrease in age at marriage especially among women, but also evident in males. In fact, before 1820, the average marriage age for females was around 26 years, dropping gradually until the end of the period analyzed to under 24 years.

FIGURE 2
Age at marriage in the district of
Bragança (1640-1979)



Source: Poiares and Palaçoulo databases.

FIGURE 3
Age at marriage in the district of
Vila Real (1700-1865)

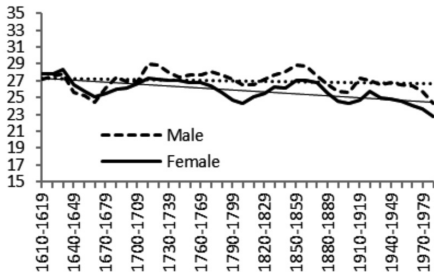


Source: Calvão database.

Between 1640 and 1979, the average age at first marriage tended to decrease by two to three years in relation to the beginning of the period studied.

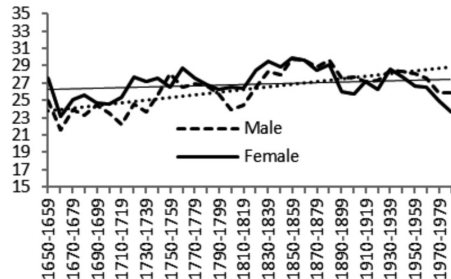
Until 1759, the average age at marriage in the parish of Calvão, municipality of Chaves, district of Vila Real (Figure 3), increased for both genders, with females being two to three years older than males. Between 1760 and 1865, this trend was inverted. In fact, the average age at marriage decreased for females whereas the age at marriage for males remained higher, ranging between 24.9 and 27.4 years of age, respectively, at the end of the period studied.

FIGURE 4
Age at marriage in the district of
Braga (1610-1979)



Source: 43 parish databases of Braga.

FIGURE 5
Age at marriage in the district of
Viana do Castelo (1650-1979)



Source: Meadela, Facha, Romarigães and V. P. Âncora databases.

There is an ongoing data reconstitution project for the district of Braga, covering 26 parishes in the municipality of Fafe, 12 parishes in the municipality of Guimarães, of which three are urban parishes, the parishes of Carvalho and Tecla in the municipality of Celorico de Basto, and the parishes of Avidos, Santo André and Mouquim in the municipality of Famalicão.

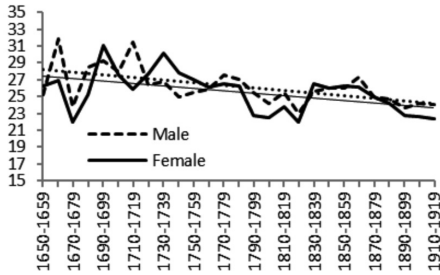
After merging the different databases for the district of Braga into a single database, we were able to verify that three distinct periods stand out (Figure 4) in the timespan analyzed. Up to 1669, the average female and male age at first marriage followed similar patterns, although female age was slightly higher, but both decreased from 27 to 25 years. However, between 1670 and 1749, male age at marriage varied. Men tended to marry later than women, and there were decades in which the average age at marriage for both males and females was about 26-27 years. A lower age at marriage for females than for males became more frequent with a difference of one to two years. Towards the end of the 19th century, female age at marriage had dropped to 24 years and it was a general rule until 1969, averaging 22.7 years in the last decade of observation.

Four parishes were analyzed in the district of Viana de Castelo: Meadela, municipality of Viana do Castelo, Facha, municipality of Ponte de Lima, Romarigães, municipality of Paredes de Coura, and Vila Praia de Âncora, municipality of Caminha (Figure 5). As a general rule, until 1869, females married later in life than males by one to three years, reaching around 30 years of age by that year. From then on, though, the trend inverted, with the female age at marriage below that of males, and a gradual decrease in average age at marriage, more so for females. Between 1980 and 1989, the average age for males and females was 25.9 and 23.6, respectively.

Three parishes were studied in the district of Porto: Pombeiro, in the municipality of Felgueiras, Maia, in the municipality of Maia, and Miragaia, in the municipality of Porto. Figure 6 shows that in 1719 there was a tendency for female age at marriage to be lower than the males', with fluctuations in their average ages. The period between 1720 and 1769 was characterized by the later marriage of females in comparison to males, with a difference of two to three years. A new cycle between 1770 and 1829 shows a higher mean male age at marriage than females by about two years. Thereafter, the mean age at marriage converged to 26-25 years, although at the end of the period under study, a decrease in age at marriage was observed, standing at 24.2 and 22.7 years for males and females, respectively.

FIGURE 6

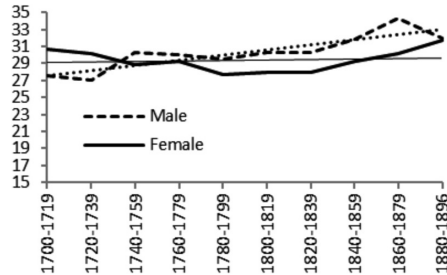
Age at marriage in the district of Porto (1650-1919)



Source: Pombeiro, Maia and Miragaia databases.

FIGURE 7

Age at marriage in the district of Viseu (1700-1896)



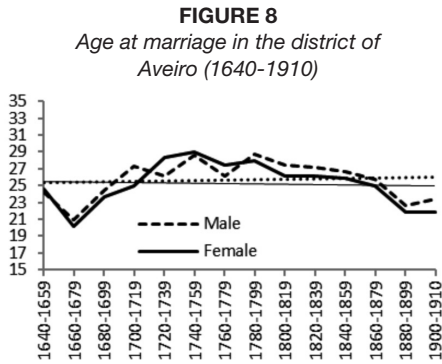
Source: Couto and S. Joaquinho databases.

For the two parishes studied in the district of Viseu, Couto do Mosteiro and S. Joaquinho in the municipality of Santa Comba Dão, there was a higher mean age at first marriage for both genders, peaking at 34.3 years for males and 31.7 years for females (Figure 7). Throughout the observation, the mean female age at marriage was about 30 years, higher than that of males in the first period (1700-1739), whereas in the second period, the mean male age at marriage increased gradually to 30 years and female age decreased to 28-29 years. At the end of the period under analysis, we found a convergence of age at marriage between men and women, averaging close to 32 years.

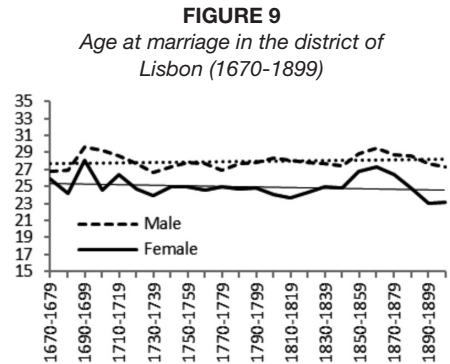
Over the 200 years of observation, we highlight the persistently high age at first marriage in both genders, although more constant for females, and a tendency to increase for males.

Despite the low number of observations in this district, the trend found is similar to that of other parishes in the same region (Beira Alta) in the mid-19th century (Rowland, 1989: 533).

In the municipality of Ovar, district of Aveiro, the Cortegaça parish was also studied, among others (Figure 8). With the exception of the period between 1710 and 1779, females tended to marry younger than males. We found that the mean age at marriage tended to increase until the end of the 18th century, reaching 28 years. A gradual decrease followed this period until 1910, where age at marriage for males and females was 23.4 and 21.9 years, respectively.

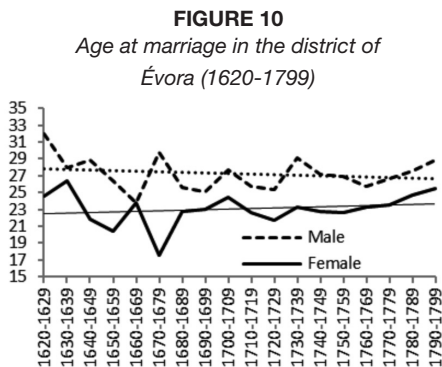


Source: Cortegaça database.

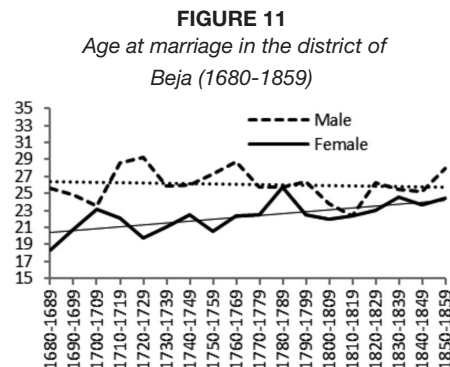


Source: A dos Cunhados, Castelo and Ericeira databases.

Three parishes were analyzed in the district of Lisbon: A dos Cunhados, Santa Maria do Castelo in the municipality of Torres Vedras and Ericeira in the municipality of Mafra. Throughout the observation period (Figure 9), there was a prevalent trend in which the mean male age at first marriage was always higher than the females'. If in the late 17th century and early 18th century the age at marriage of men was around 29 years, until the mid-1800s, it was between 27 and 28 years. These values increased to 28-29 years until near the end of the observation, followed by a slight decrease to 27.3 years. In general, females maintained the age at marriage at 24 to 25 years for most of the period, with an increase after 1849 followed by a decrease after 1869 to 23 years between 1890 and 1909.



Source: Santo Antão and Divor databases.



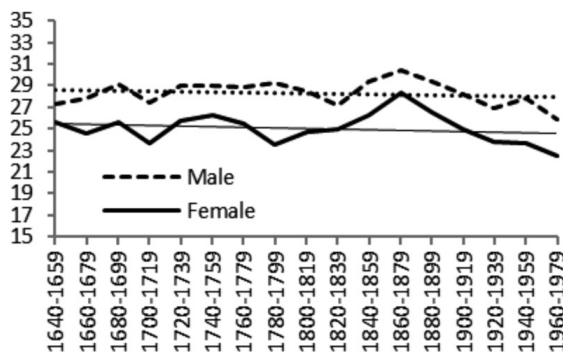
Source: Selmes database.

In the two parishes studied in the district of Évora, Santo Antão and Divor, both in the municipality of Évora, we found that throughout the period studied, men tended to marry later than women (Figure 10). Until 1679, there were large variations in mean age at marriage for both genders, after which male marriage occurred generally at 25 to 27 years while female age at marriage was between 22 and 23 years. Towards the end of the period studied, there was an increase in the mean age at marriage, settling at 28.9 years for males and 25.5 years for females.

In the district of Beja, we analyzed the parish of Selmes. Except for the 1700-1709 and 1810-1819 periods, the mean age at marriage of males was always higher than the females' (Figure 11). Between 1710 and 1769, the age difference varied between 3.5 and 9.4 years. The mean age at marriage for males increased until 1729 with a peak at 29.2 years, followed by a gradual decrease until 1819, reaching a minimum of 22.4 years. In general, and until 1819, females married before 23 years of age, at around 22 years. At the end of the period, the mean age at marriage for both genders increased, settling at 27.9 and 24.5 years for grooms and brides, respectively.

We only have three databases for these districts, with a limited number of observations on average age at marriage. Nevertheless, the results found correspond to those published for the same region of the Alentejo (Rowland, 1989: 513).

FIGURE 12
Age at marriage in the islands of Pico and Faial (1640-1979)



Source: Pico and Faial island databases

A single reconstitution database for the 30 parishes of the neighboring islands of Pico and Faial is about to be concluded. Figure 12 shows marriage at an earlier age for females by about two to four years (except for the 1780-1799 period, when the age difference was nearly six years). Until 1839, the mean age of women at first marriage varied, as a rule, between 23 and 25 years. Between 1840 and 1879, this mean age increased to 28.3 years. Thereafter, and until the end of the observation that extended throughout the 20th century, there was a gradual drop in age at marriage, which stood at 22.5 years in the twenty-year period from 1960-1979.

Focusing now on variation in age at marriage by district in Portugal, we found that in the northern districts, particularly in Viana do Castelo, Minho, the female age at marriage was higher than the males'. This trend weakens towards the south, where male age at marriage tended to approach that of females, although it was still high. In the South, females married earlier and with a large age difference in relation to males.

Taking demographic variables into consideration, we believe we can relate the diversity in age at marriage for males and females with variations in mortality behavior, which then translates into highly differentiated levels of mobility.

In Minho, the biggest market for migrants, male mobility was related to the prevalence of small property, the imbalance between resources and population, the reproduction of social systems, and delays in the distribution of estates to their respective heirs (Amorim, 1998: 20-27). These migrations explain the imbalance in the bridal market favorable to males, which raised the mean age at marriage for females and led to very high levels of celibacy.

In the Northwest, due to high mortality levels, female marriage occurred earlier than in the Center region, where age at marriage was persistently high for both genders. In the South (districts of Évora and Beja), the even more acute mortality rate led to a receiving migrant market and a resulting surplus of male population, more favorable to earlier marriage in women and a higher age at marriage for males. In the islands of the Azores we studied, an exceptionally low mortality rate, with relatively moderate ages at first marriage, led to intensive territorial occupation, driving the mass exodus of the mid-19th century of both males and females, resulting in an earlier entry into modernity (Amorim & Boleda, 2009).

We find signs of this modernity when we extend our research into the 20th century, with a decrease in the mean age at first marriage in all cases, although the age remained lower for females. The controlling role of marriages in population balance decreased and industrialization loosened the ties of the traditional systems of social reproduction, transmission of property and inheritance. Males required longer preparation times to assume family responsibilities, in comparison to females.

According to macro-analytical data resulting for the first official censuses in Portugal (Annex 1), the average age at first marriage at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th (Bandeira, 1996: 511-512) in the districts analyzed reflect the trends we identified in our microanalysis.

3. 2. Seasonality of marriage

The choice of the date for the celebration of marriage is not random, but must be analyzed in the broader context of each parish and each region, and the observance of religious precepts. In fact, several authors have remarked on the ways in which the seasonal movement of marriages in Catholic Europe was conditioned by religious precepts corresponding to the periods of Lent and Advent (Guilhaume & Poussou, 1970).

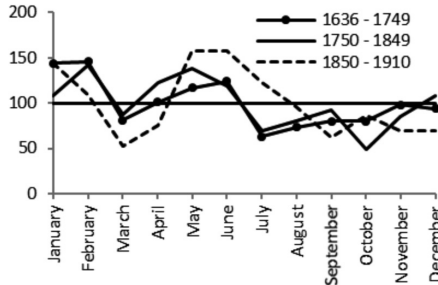
As a rule, the observance of these religious precepts has changed over the centuries, resulting from changes in attitudes due to political and economic factors, such as the secularization of the state and migrations, and leading to a decline in these cultural practices.

However, it was not only religious constraints that influenced the annual distribution of marriages in these societies. In subsistence economies, the annual cycles of agricultural work conditioned the choice of when to marry, pushing marriage celebrations into the months of lower agricultural activity. Indeed, given the uncertainty of the outcome of harvests, peasant prudence imposed rules for household survival through the concerted management of available resources. Male migration also influenced the timing of wedding celebrations, particularly those of pronounced seasonality (Garcia, 1975; Amorim, 1987; Kussmaul, 1990).

It is noteworthy that the seasonality of marriage in the district of Bragança seems to bear a direct relationship with the agricultural calendar, with a preference for the first semester of the year (Figure 13). The interdicts of Lent and Advent were respected, but in the last period (1850 and 1910), a greater compliance prevailed, compared to previous periods.

FIGURE 13

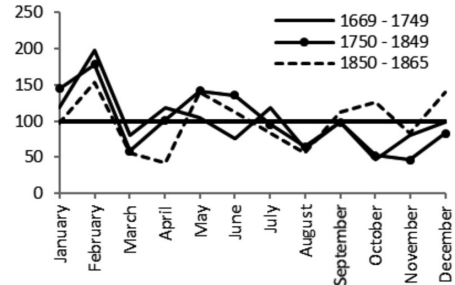
Seasonality of marriage, district of
Bragança (1636-1910)



Source: Poiares and Palaçoulo databases.

FIGURE 14

Seasonality of marriage, district of
Vila Real (1669-1865)



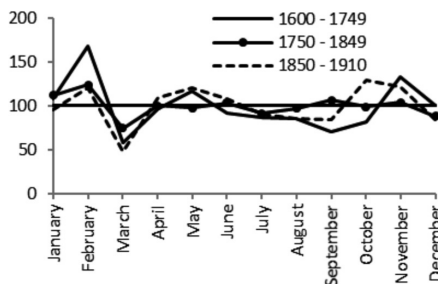
Source: Calvão database.

In the district of Vila Real (Figure 14), religious precepts were not so clearly observed, even though we noted a prevalence of marriages performed in the months of January and February and a drop in the months of March and December. Between 1750 and 1849, the months of May and June were preferred. In the long term, contrary to what would be expected, no significant changes in behavior were found.

Figure 15 reveals that in the district of Braga, home to one of the most influential dioceses of the country, the seasonality of marriage in the period between 1600 and 1749 seems to show a more pronounced relationship with the cycles of agricultural life as well as the observance of Lent and Advent. The subsequent periods followed the same trend, apparently not reporting a decline in these cultural practices.

FIGURE 15

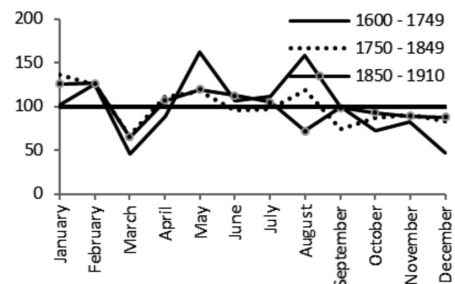
Seasonality of marriage, district of
Braga (1600-1910)



Source: 43 parish databases of Braga.

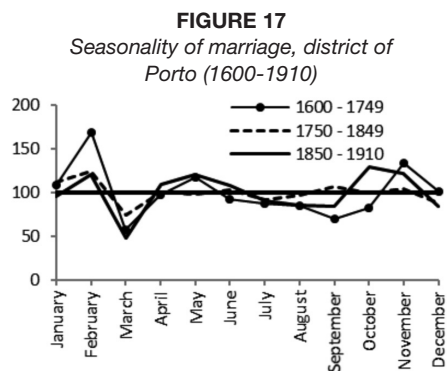
FIGURE 16

Seasonality of marriage, district of
Viana do Castelo (1600-1910)

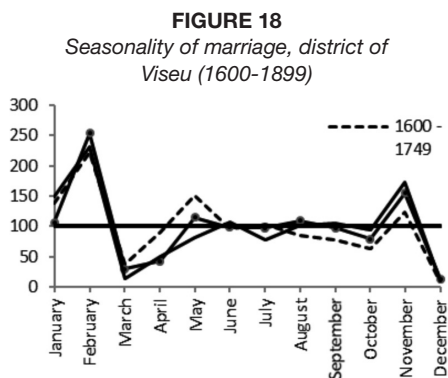


Source: Meadela, Facha, Romarigães and V.P. Âncora databases.

In the district of Viana do Castelo (Figure 16) between 1600 and 1749, there was significant compliance with the prohibitions of Lent and Advent, and a clear relationship to male agricultural and migratory cycles, especially between 1600 and 1749. This seasonal pattern became more attenuated over time.



Source: Pombeiro, Maia and Miragaia databases.

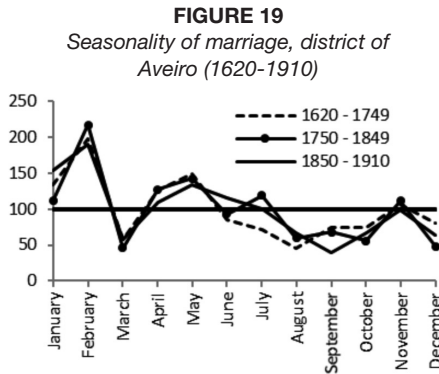


Source: Couto and S. Joaquinho databases.

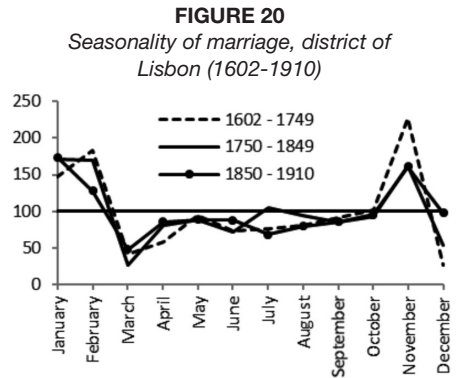
Between 1600 and 1749, the seasonality of marriage in the district of Porto (Figure 17) was much more pronounced than that found for the two following periods, particularly when related to the months of religious constraints. This trend seems to weaken between 1750 and 1849, although until the end of the observation, it rose again, now also highlighting the month of May, as well as October and November.

In the district of Viseu (Figure 18), and over all the periods, religious compliance was particularly observed, although more so during Lent, as we can see by the number of marriages that took place in February. The month of May (considered conducive to the celebration of marriages) placed third in the options until 1849, after which the trend tended to disappear.

It was during the period between 1620 and 1749 that, in the district of Aveiro, we detected a stricter compliance with religious precepts, particularly during Lent (Figure 19). In fact, the seasonality of marriage was concentrated in the months of January, February, April and May, with the remaining months reserved for agricultural activities. This trend continued until 1910, although also distributed over the months of January, July and November.



Source: Cortegaça database.

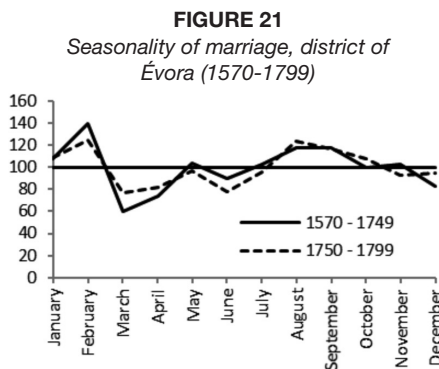


Source: A dos Cunhados, Castelo and Ericeira databases.

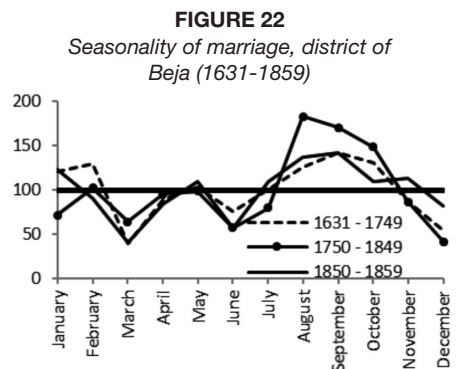
In the district of Lisbon (Figure 20), compliance with religious interdiction is very evident, particularly between 1602 and 1749, with wedding celebrations occurring predominantly during the months of January, February and November.

Although these three parishes are located in very different geographical settings (Castelo – urban parish; Ericeira – coastal parish; and A dos Cunhados – rural parish), their seasonal marriage behaviors reflect compliance with religious precepts which may result from specific activities developed in each of these areas.

Until 1749, there were two trends in the seasonality of marriage in the district of Évora (Figure 21): a greater compliance with the period of Lent and an important concentration of unions between August and September, which might relate to cycles of seasonal work and the existence of broader marriage markets. These behaviors continued in the following period.

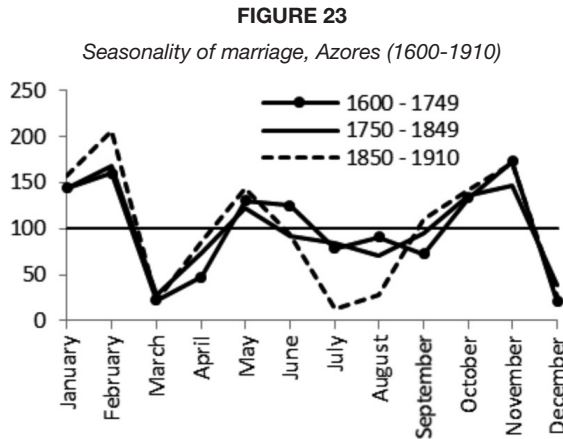


Source: Santo Antão and Divor databases.



Source: Selmes database.

In the district of Beja (Figure 22), with variations among the different periods, we highlight religious restrictions, on the one hand, and a significant number of marriages between August and October, on the other, related to the seasonal work of reaping or harvesting olives. This trend is particularly evident between 1750 and 1859.



Source: Pico and Faial islands databases.

For the three periods, Pico and Faial in the Azores (Figure 23) revealed the following significant trends: the strict observance of religious interdictions, Lent in particular; preference for the spring month which was considered protective of marriages, May; and significant seasonality between October and November, related to the end of agricultural tasks. Contrary to what would be expected in times of political changes, these behaviors were amplified over the period of observation.

3. 3. Consanguineous marriages

Much as the Church constrained marriages at Lent and Advent, it also restricted marriage between relatives. Prohibited marriages between relatives in direct or collateral line in the second degree (brothers); marriage between uncle and niece (or nephew and aunt), third-degree relatives; between cousins at the same generational level with a common grandfather (fourth-degree relatives); and even cousins in the same generational level with a common great-grandfather (sixth-degree relatives), required a sometimes long process to justi-

fy the interest of the marriage, and to obtain an order of exemption, which would go up in the hierarchy of the Church according to the closeness of the relationship.

The greater or lesser frequency of consanguineous matrimony may be related to the marriage market size, the parish size and greater or lesser openness of the parish to the outside. But it can also be related to family interests in heritage preservation or protection of the young.

For a comparative analysis of these behaviors, we chose four communities of similar size (Table 2), but geographically distant from each other: Poiares (district of Bragança), Vila Praia de Âncora (district of Viana do Castelo), S. Joaninho (district of Viseu) and S. João (district of Horta, Azores).

We divided our observations into two periods: between 1730 and 1839 and between 1840 and 1910. For the first period, only marriages until the 8th degree of consanguinity (cousins on the same generational level with a common great-great grandfather) were accounted for, because records for S. João and Vila Praia de Âncora only became more systematically kept in the late 17th century, limiting the generational chains.

TABLE 2
Consanguineous marriages (1730-1839)

Degree	Poiares			Vila Praia de Âncora			S. Joaninho			S. João		
	N	%	cum.%	N	%	cum.%	N	%	cum.%	N	%	cum.%
3	0	0	0	1	0.2	0.2	0	0	0	0	0.0	0.0
4	3	0.5	0.5	0	0.0	0.2	0	0	0	6	0.9	0.9
5	6	1.0	1.5	0	0.0	0.2	3	0.5	0.5	5	0.7	1.6
6	14	2.4	3.9	12	2.4	2.6	6	1.0	1.5	21	3.1	4.7
7	3	0.5	4.4	11	2.2	4.8	6	1.0	2.5	11	1.6	6.3
8	32	5.4	9.8	17	3.4	8.2	3	0.5	3	20	2.9	9.2
Total	591			501			596			686		

Source: Poiares, V. P. Âncora, São Joaninho and S. João databases.

As Table 2 shows, we found only one marriage between uncle and niece in this period in Vila Praia de Âncora. Marriage between cousins on the same generational level with a common grandfather occurred

in Poiares and S. João, but was avoided in Vila Praia de Âncora and S. Joaquinho. Indeed, in S. Joaquinho, only 3% of marriages took place between relatives up to the 8th degree, showing openness to outside communities. The less open parish in this regard was Poiares, followed closely by S. João, and then by Vila Praia de Âncora.

TABLE 3
Consanguineous marriages (1840-1910)

Degree	Poiares			V. Praia de Âncora			S. Joaquinho			S. João		
	N	%	cum.%	N	%	cum.%	N	%	cum.%	N	%	cum.%
3	0	0	0	2	0.3	0.3	0	0	0	1	0.2	0.2
4	1	0.2	0.2	7	1.2	1.5	10	2.2	2.2	9	2.1	2.4
5	1	0.2	0.4	1	0.2	1.7	2	0.4	2.6	5	1.2	3.6
6	7	1.7	2.1	6	1.0	2.7	8	1.7	4.3	10	2.4	6.0
7	4	1.0	3.1	1	0.2	2.9	9	1.9	6.2	8	1.9	7.9
8	8	2.0	5.1	6	1.0	3.9	13	2.8	9.0	21	5.0	12.9
9	13	3.2	8.3	6	1.0	4.9	12	2.6	11.6	28	6.7	19.6
10	26	6.4	14.7	13	2.2	7.1	9	1.9	13.5	48	11.5	31.0
11	22	5.4	20.1	8	1.3	8.4	12	2.6	16.1	32	7.6	38.7
12	41	10	30.1	24	4.0	12.5	5	1.1	17.2	35	8.4	47.0
13	33	8.1	38.2	22	3.7	16.2	4	0.9	18.1	29	6.9	53.9
14	28	6.9	45.1	24	4.0	20.2	2	0.4	18.5	7	1.7	55.6
15	29	7.1	52.2	20	3.4	23.6	0	0	18.5	6	1.4	57.0
16	8	2.0	54.2	30	5.1	28.6	0	0	18.5	2	0.5	57.5
Total	408			594			463			419		

Source: Poiares, V. P. Âncora, São Joaquinho and S. João databases.

Longer genealogical lines have allowed us to expand the analysis up to the 16th degree of relationship (cousins on the same generational level with a 7th common grandfather) for the four communities (Table 3).

In Vila Praia de Âncora, we found two marriages between uncle and niece and one in S. João. Such cases did not occur in both Poiares and S. Joaquinho.

In Poiares, marriages between 8th-degree cousins were less frequent than in the previous period. Nonetheless, community isolation is clearly expressed in the cumulative percentage of kinship up to the 16th degree, above 54% of the marriages, only exceeded in S. João, where it tended to 58%. In the latter community, marriage between close relatives was always more frequent, approaching 13% of the marriages up to the 8th degree of kinship.

In Vila Praia de Âncora, Galician immigrants changed the community's demographic profile after 1825, reducing the percentage of marriages between close relatives (8th degree relationships decreased from 8.2% to 3.9%) to under 30% for relatives up to the 16th degree from the first to the second period.

Although S. Joaninho was the most open community to the outside in the first period, in the second period we find an unusual behavior, with the highest number of marriages between cousins of the same generational level with a common grandfather. In this parish, as would be expected given the trend of the first period, the cumulative percentage of marriages until the 16th degree is the lowest in the observation, at less than 20%.

For the parish of Fermentões, in the district of Braga, we focused on the last observation period, given the persistent gaps in the records until the second decade of the 18th century. Between 1840 and 1910, out of a total of 469 marriages, only 3.2% were among relatives up to the 8th degree of kinship. Marriage between cousins in the 4th degree stands at 1.3%, lower than that found in Vila Praia de Âncora.

Overall, marriage between close relatives seems to have been avoided throughout the period of observation; however, in both S. Joaninho and S. João, contrary to Poiares and Vila Praia de Âncora, there was an increase in marriages between cousins with a common grandfather in the second period. We can probably relate this behavior to strategies to safeguard family assets.

FINAL REMARKS

Although the number of observations and the representativeness in each district is not identical, this study is a point of departure for further research, which may serve to widen the sample of parishes in

the least represented parishes. Nevertheless, for reasons we have already mentioned previously, we believe the trends in behavior reflect the patterns found in the first Portuguese censuses.

Regional contrasts found for average age at first marriage in Portugal between the 17th and the 20th century could be associated with various factors like the environment, population density, property systems or inheritance system.

In terms of environment, the North and the Islands have high annual precipitation, a mountainous terrain, small-sized property, and dispersed settlements, while the South has a dry climate, vast plains, large-sized property and concentrated settlements (Daveau, 1998).

The high population density in the North and Islands was favored by a balanced diet (corn, legumes, vegetables) and a dense hydrographic network, making potable water available to the population (Ribeiro, 1966).

Portugal's different property systems should also be noted, such as fragmented, small-sized properties and polyculture in the North and Islands as opposed to large properties and intensive cereal and olive production in the southern plains, while a transition between these two models occurred in the Center region (Medeiros, 1991).

With regard to inheritance, in the North and Islands, families tended to postpone property distribution among the heirs, thus leading to a higher average age at first marriage, expulsion of younger, single sons through mobility, matrimonial market unbalances, high rates of definitive female celibacy, and illegitimacy. In the South, large property distribution led to low population density, although open to seasonal rural workers. Average age at first marriage for these migratory, hired populations was lower, because they did not have obstacles related to inheritance or the need to postpone marriage. In the Center region of Portugal, a *hinterland* area, there was either a persistently high age at first marriage or its gradual decrease (Livi-Bacci, 1971; Rowland, 1997).

The following are linear conclusions to this work: there was a high average age at marriage for males in the country; a noticeable difference between male and female age at first marriage in the South, the only region where female marriage occurred at a relatively young age; a smaller gap between males and females in the Center; a younger age at marriage for males than females in parts of the North, particularly in the Alto Minho; and a tendency to become more uniform after the turn of the 20th century.

We found that generally religious restrictions were observed by the marrying population in all the districts and islands studied over time, with a much more expressive compliance of Lent. The interiority of some districts, geographically more distant from their dioceses or influence (Bragança and Vila Real, for example) seems to be the cause of reduced marriage seasonality during religious seasons.

Due to the prevalence of subsistence economies, governed by their own agricultural calendars, in most districts of the North and Center of the country (with the exception of Lisbon which enjoyed an urban seasonal nature), the choice of the month in which to wed was usually in the first semester, prior to the major annual agricultural periods. In the southern districts (Évora and Beja), areas where landlordism prevailed, the choice was mostly during the months of August and September, a behavior explained by the existence of a greater openness of communities to the outside during harvesting or olive picking. The behavior of spouses in the district of Viana do Castelo seems to confirm the important movements of migrants, belonging to specialized professional areas (military, religious and civil construction, for example), and the specific arrival and departure times for contracts.

We highlight the seasonality of weddings during the month of May, because the spring months were considered protective of weddings, a trend that was found in the Pico and Faial islands.

The observations made in this study on consanguineous relationships clearly point to the importance of continuing the monitoring of life paths, so as to expand an integrated database. If isolated communities, such as S. Pedro de Poiães, pursued a balance between population and resources through marriage, this situation was not so clear in other cases. For example, in S. João, in Pico, also with a restricted marriage market, marriage does not assume the same regulatory role, being more an effect of fluctuating emigration, affecting males more than females. The case of Vila Praia de Âncora becomes very interesting, due to the change in its demographic profile brought about by the arrival of Galician immigrants in the 19th century. The average age at first marriage decreased, the population increased and became socially more complex. In S. Joaninho, with a relatively larger marriage market, we find an astonishing regularity in the average age at first marriage for both males and females, pointing to a balance in demographic variables. In Fermentões, featuring a very open marriage market, the evolution of the mean age at first marriage reflects the gradual influence

of industry in an agrarian society, reducing the average age at first marriage for both genders as from the late 18th century.

These results raise a number of significant challenges. The first consists in widening the geographical area in order to obtain greater representativeness in relation to the national total. The second challenge is to further explore the significance of the interaction between marriage rates and other demographic phenomena, particularly mortality and mobility, without neglecting socioeconomic and cultural aspects.

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ANNEX 1

Average age at marriage per district in Portugal
(1864-1910 Censuses)

District	1864		1878		1890		1900		1910	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Bragança	29.00	25.40	28.70	25.70	29.20	26.06	28.70	26.09	28.46	25.72
Vila Real	29.30	26.50	28.60	26.40	28.97	26.77	27.84	25.56	27.65	25.59
Braga	27.90	27.40	27.00	26.60	28.37	29.16	27.68	28.35	26.93	23.91
Viana do Castelo	28.60	28.00	27.90	27.80	28.06	27.52	27.82	26.46	28.20	26.97
Porto	27.50	26.80	26.30	24.90	26.23	24.13	26.22	24.35	26.54	24.97
Viseu	29.40	27.10	29.40	26.40	28.34	26.72	28.20	29.03	27.59	28.34
Aveiro	28.10	27.20	26.70	26.30	26.76	25.81	26.61	25.10	26.74	25.52
Lisbon	29.50	26.70	29.70	25.00	28.96	25.10	28.42	25.26	28.32	26.09
Évora	29.20	24.10	29.00	24.30	29.28	25.14	28.20	24.75	27.42	24.18
Beja	28.00	24.10	27.20	23.20	27.68	23.78	27.59	24.33	26.93	23.91
Azores	27.83	27.48	26.89	26.10	26.37	24.67	26.23	23.46	26.32	21.68

Source: BANDEIRA, M. (1996: 511-512).

ANNEX 2

Average age at marriage per district and periods in Portugal

<i>District of Bragança</i>		
<i>Period</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
	<i>M.A.</i>	<i>M.A.</i>
1640-1659	27.4	27.6
1660-1679	26.2	26.3
1680-1699	29.8	24.0
1700-1719	28.2	26.8
1720-1739	29.6	26.2
1740-1759	29.3	24.6
1760-1779	28.4	26.1
1780-1799	27.6	26.4
1800-1819	26.9	26.0
1820-1839	27.7	23.5
1840-1859	26.0	24.7
1860-1879	28.0	24.7
1880-1899	28.5	25.8
1900-1919	26.9	23.9
1920-1939	26.5	24.7
1940-1959	27.4	23.4
1960-1979	27.0	23.8

<i>District of Vila Real</i>		
<i>Period</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
	<i>M.A.</i>	<i>M.A.</i>
1700-1719	20.3	24.3
1720-1739	26.1	27.8
1740-1759	28.7	31.5
1760-1779	30.2	30.6
1780-1799	29.9	27.8
1800-1819	27.7	25.7
1820-1839	30.9	25.4
1840-1859	27.8	27.0
1860-1865	27.4	24.9

<i>District of Braga</i>		
<i>Period</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
	<i>M.A.</i>	<i>M.A.</i>
1610-1619	27.2	27.8
1620-1629	27.5	27.8
1630-1639	27.8	28.3
1640-1649	25.6	26.6
1650-1659	25.2	25.7
1660-1669	24.5	25.0
1670-1679	26.2	25.5
1680-1689	27.5	26.0
1690-1699	27.0	26.1
1700-1709	26.9	26.7
1710-1719	29.0	27.3
1720-1729	28.9	27.1
1730-1739	27.9	27.1
1740-1749	27.4	27.0
1750-1759	27.7	26.7
1760-1769	27.7	26.8
1770-1779	28.1	26.4
1780-1789	27.6	25.7
1790-1799	27.2	24.8
1800-1809	26.6	24.3
1810-1819	26.5	25.2
1820-1829	27.2	25.5
1830-1839	27.6	26.2
1840-1849	28.0	26.2
1850-1859	28.9	27.0
1860-1869	28.7	27.0
1870-1879	27.6	26.7
1880-1889	26.5	25.4
1890-1899	25.8	24.6
1900-1909	25.5	24.3
1910-1919	27.2	24.7
1920-1929	27.0	25.7
1930-1939	26.5	24.9
1940-1949	26.8	24.9
1950-1959	26.6	24.6
1960-1969	26.4	24.0
1970-1979	25.7	23.7
1980-1989	24.3	22.7

<i>District of Viana do Castelo</i>		
<i>Period</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
	<i>M.A.</i>	<i>M.A.</i>
1650-1659	24.9	27.5
1660-1669	21.6	23.2
1670-1679	23.9	25.1
1680-1689	23.2	25.7
1690-1699	24.4	24.7
1700-1709	23.5	24.6
1710-1719	22.3	25.3
1720-1729	24.5	27.7
1730-1739	23.6	27.1
1740-1749	25.6	27.5
1750-1759	28.1	26.5
1760-1769	26.5	28.7
1770-1779	26.9	27.5
1780-1789	26.6	26.8
1790-1799	25.7	26.3
1800-1809	23.9	26.5
1810-1819	24.4	26.4
1820-1829	26.6	28.5
1830-1839	28.3	29.6
1840-1849	27.9	28.9
1850-1859	29.7	29.9
1860-1869	29.6	29.7
1870-1879	28.9	28.5
1880-1889	29.6	29.1
1890-1899	27.5	26.0
1900-1909	27.6	25.7
1910-1919	27.1	27.2
1920-1929	27.3	26.3
1930-1939	28.5	28.6
1940-1949	28.3	27.7
1950-1959	28.1	26.6
1960-1969	27.6	26.5
1970-1979	25.9	25.0
1980-1989	25.9	23.6

<i>District of Porto</i>		
<i>Period</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
	<i>M.A.</i>	<i>M.A.</i>
1650-1659	25.2	26.2
1660-1669	31.8	26.9
1670-1679	23.8	22.0
1680-1689	28.5	25.2
1690-1699	29.3	31.0
1700-1709	27.9	27.5
1710-1719	31.4	25.9
1720-1729	26.4	27.7
1730-1739	26.8	30.1
1740-1749	24.9	27.8
1750-1759	25.5	27.0
1760-1769	25.9	26.1
1770-1779	27.5	26.5
1780-1789	27.1	26.2
1790-1799	25.5	22.7
1800-1809	24.2	22.5
1810-1819	25.5	23.8
1820-1829	23.1	21.9
1830-1839	25.6	26.6
1840-1849	25.9	26.1
1850-1859	26.0	26.3
1860-1869	27.3	26.1
1870-1879	25.0	25.0
1880-1889	24.7	24.1
1890-1899	23.6	22.8
1900-1909	24.2	22.7
1910-1919	24.0	22.4

<i>District of Viseu</i>		
<i>Period</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
	<i>M.A.</i>	<i>M.A.</i>
1700-1719	27.5	30.7
1720-1739	27.0	30.1
1740-1759	30.3	28.9
1760-1779	30.0	29.3
1780-1799	29.5	27.7
1800-1819	30.3	28.0
1820-1839	30.3	28.0
1840-1859	31.8	29.2
1860-1879	34.3	30.2
1880-1896	32.0	31.7

<i>District of Lisbon</i>		
<i>Period</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
	<i>M.A.</i>	<i>M.A.</i>
1670-1679	26.8	25.9
1680-1689	26.9	24.2
1690-1699	29.6	28.1
1700-1709	29.3	24.6
1710-1719	28.6	26.4
1720-1729	27.7	24.7
1730-1739	26.6	23.9
1740-1749	27.3	25.0
1750-1759	27.9	24.9
1760-1769	27.7	24.6
1770-1779	26.9	25.0
1780-1789	27.6	24.7
1790-1799	27.8	24.9
1800-1809	28.3	24.0
1810-1819	28.1	23.7
1820-1829	27.8	24.3
1830-1839	27.6	25.0
1840-1849	27.4	24.8
1850-1859	28.9	26.8
1860-1869	29.5	27.3
1870-1879	28.7	26.4
1880-1889	28.6	24.8
1890-1899	27.7	23.0
1900-1909	27.3	23.1

<i>District of Aveiro</i>		
<i>Period</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
	<i>M.A.</i>	<i>M.A.</i>
1640-1659	24.2	24.6
1660-1679	20.9	20.1
1680-1699	24.4	23.7
1700-1719	27.3	24.9
1720-1739	26.1	28.4
1740-1759	28.6	29.0
1760-1779	26.1	27.4
1780-1799	28.7	28.0
1800-1819	27.4	26.1
1820-1839	27.2	26.1
1840-1859	26.7	25.9
1860-1879	25.7	24.9
1880-1899	22.6	21.8
1900-1910	23.4	21.9

<i>District of Evora</i>		
<i>Period</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
	<i>M.A.</i>	<i>M.A.</i>
1620-1629	32.0	24.6
1630-1639	27.9	26.4
1640-1649	28.8	21.9
1650-1659	26.4	20.4
1660-1669	23.8	23.8
1670-1679	29.8	17.5
1680-1689	25.7	22.8
1690-1699	25.1	23.1
1700-1709	27.7	24.4
1710-1719	25.7	22.7
1720-1729	25.3	21.7
1730-1739	29.1	23.3
1740-1749	27.2	22.8
1750-1759	26.9	22.6
1760-1769	25.7	23.3
1770-1779	26.7	23.5
1780-1789	27.5	24.7
1790-1799	28.9	25.5

<i>District of Beja</i>		
<i>Period</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
	<i>M.A.</i>	<i>M.A.</i>
1680-1689	25.6	18.3
1690-1699	24.8	20.8
1700-1709	23.5	23.2
1710-1719	28.6	22.1
1720-1729	29.2	19.8
1730-1739	25.9	21.1
1740-1749	26.0	22.5
1750-1759	27.3	20.5
1760-1769	28.7	22.4
1770-1779	25.8	22.5
1780-1789	25.8	25.7
1790-1799	26.4	22.5
1800-1809	23.8	22.0
1810-1819	22.4	22.4
1820-1829	26.2	23.0
1830-1839	25.5	24.6
1840-1849	25.2	23.6
1850-1859	27.9	24.5

<i>Islands of Pico and Faial (1640-1979)</i>		
<i>Period</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
	<i>M.A.</i>	<i>M.A.</i>
1640-1659	27.3	25.6
1660-1679	27.8	24.6
1680-1699	29.1	25.6
1700-1719	27.4	23.7
1720-1739	28.9	25.7
1740-1759	29.0	26.3
1760-1779	28.9	25.5
1780-1799	29.3	23.6
1800-1819	28.5	24.6
1820-1839	27.2	24.9
1840-1859	29.4	26.3
1860-1879	30.4	28.3
1880-1899	29.4	26.5
1900-1919	28.2	24.9
1920-1939	26.9	23.8
1940-1959	27.8	23.6
1960-1979	25.9	22,5