



Previdência Social as an Experience of Society: A Case Study of Civil Servants in the Portuguese New State, 1933–1974

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INTRODUCTION

This chapter analyzes the development of the social benefits conferred to civil servants during the New State dictatorship.¹ This authoritarian and corporatist regime ruled Portugal between 1933 and 1974, first under António de Oliveira Salazar (1889–1970) and, from 1968 onwards, under Marcelo Caetano (1906–1980). The investigation into this subject will

¹This research is financed by FCT/MCTES through national funds, under the postdoctoral grant with reference SFRH/BPD/113250/2015. This work was carried out at the R&D Unit Center for Functional Ecology—Science for People and the Planet, with reference UIDB/04004/2020, financed by FCT/MCTES through national funds (PIDDAC).

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P. Haapala et al. (eds.), *Experiencing Society and the Lived Welfare State*, Palgrave Studies in the History of Experience,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-21663-3_5

follow two levels of analysis that constantly intertwine. On the one hand is the impact of social benefits in the daily life of the social class and its significance in the definition of the relationship between the individual and the state. On the other hand is the importance of *Previdência Social*² for achieving the objectives of the New State and for its own legitimization.

It is important to note that the term *Previdência Social* does not correspond to the concept of the *welfare state*. *Previdência Social* in the New State was a system of social protection that granted some individuals the opportunity to pay a certain sum in order to receive a number of social benefits. Its organization is similar to a social insurance system, although the New State regarded the latter as an individualistic concept.³ In addition, access to these social benefits was not universal; it depended on several factors.

Previdência Social did not begin with the New State, as the First Republic (1910–1926) already had a very basic system of social insurance. However, the New State tried, at least on the surface, to depart from the republican concept and from some international examples seen as reckless excesses. The corporatist nature of the political regime, suspicious of both liberalism and socialism, sought a social protection system based on the citizen's initiative⁴ and on the professional organization, granting the state a supporting role. Eventually, the New State's Bismarckian logic was bound to get closer to a Beveridgian model.⁵ The *Previdência Social* was broadened, encompassing a larger number of professions and social risks, and—particularly from 1962 onwards—it started to pave the way for the welfare state, characterized by the aim of universal social security and its recognition as a social right. This, however, would only be fully created after 1974, despite the term being present in some legal texts from the late 1950s onwards.⁶

The expansion of the social benefits attributed to civil servants has not yet been the subject of an in-depth study. On the one hand, this is because

² Due to the particularities of the concept and the translation issues, the Portuguese term will be used.

³ Pereira, P. T. (1933). *As ideias do Estado-Novo: Corporações e Previdência Social*. Subsecretariado de Estado das Corporações e Previdência Social, 33.

⁴ Carolo, D. (2006). *A Reforma da Previdência Social de 1962 na institucionalização do Estado-Providência em Portugal*. Instituto Superior de Economia e Gestão, 18.

⁵ Branco, R. (2017). Entre Bismarck e Beveridge: Sociedade Civil e Estado Providência em Portugal (1960–2011). *Análise Social* 52 (224), 553–554.

⁶ Carolo (2006), 18, 122.

it was an exception in the *Previdência Social* system, being the only case where the state—as an employer—has, since the beginning, played an interventional role. On the other hand, the great variety of economic, geographic, and work categories and situations within the civil service creates countless differences in the social benefits made available, which makes an in-depth analysis of the subject rather difficult. In addition, it is also necessary to understand the various contexts that intersect in this process. These include the priorities of a regime which, in an increasingly adverse situation, sought to legitimize itself through the promotion of economic development and the progressive creation of a Social State; the importance of economic planning and the role of the administrative reform project, which, similarly to what happened internationally,⁷ assigned great importance to the improvement of the economic and social situation of the civil servants for the increase of administrative efficiency; and, finally, the problems caused by low wages, the lack of a sound social protection system, and the limitations of the public administration, which was undermined by a growing loss of employees attracted by the private sector's higher wages.

The extension of social benefits to the civil servants also reveals clear economic objectives, appearing as an alternative to raising salaries, a measure which could jeopardize the priority given to financial restructuring—the great motto of the dictator Antônio de Oliveira Salazar. Therefore, the state chose to implement, progressively and with co-funding, social benefits that led to direct improvements in the socio-economic conditions of civil servants. The state recognized the right to child benefit; granted sickness, disability, death, and retirement benefits; developed initiatives in affordable housing; and created *Assistência na Doença aos Servidores Cíveis do Estado* (Assistance in Sickness for Civil Servants). These measures would be responsible for objective improvements in the lives of a significant part of the civil service, creating logics that would eventually be continued after the Revolution of 1974 and which are often understood as solely democratic achievements. However, limited by the financial capacity of the state and its own fragility, these would end up being considered insufficient, with the civil service continuing to lose its ability to attract

⁷ Azevedo, A.C. (2019). Reformar a Administração Pública no novo mundo saído da guerra: Projeto nacional ou dinâmica global? (1950–1970). *Revista de Administração Pública* 53 (5), 960–974.

new employees and seeing increased abandonment of public posts for private sector jobs.

Methodologically, the topic is challenging. The first challenge concerns the diversity of the civil service, which encompasses various categories of employees, from schoolteachers to ministers, as well as diverse realities in terms of *Providência Social* that would be impossible to fully characterize within the limits of this chapter. As such, this chapter will only analyze the reality of the ministry officials based in Lisbon regarding four types of social support: child benefit, health care, affordable housing, and retirement pensions. In addition, the study of a dictatorship often implies a lack of sources regarding the citizens' experiences. To overcome this difficulty, a varied bibliography, as well as archive documentation, parliamentary debates, statistics, and legislation, will be used. Furthermore, in addition to the top-down sources, the clandestine press and publications of Catholic groups and social sectors will be used. For the development of a bottom-up approach, statistics will be most useful, allowing the interpretation of the relation between social benefits, salaries, and cost of living to draw conclusions about the real impact of *Providência Social* in daily lives.

THE EVOLUTION OF *PREVIDÊNCIA SOCIAL* IN THE NEW STATE

There is no consensus among authors regarding the beginning of the Providence State in Portugal.⁸ Nevertheless, similarly to other European dictatorships of this time,⁹ the New State ideology incorporated the ideal of *Providência Social*. Inserted into the corporative organization, it subordinated individual rights to the class and *status quo*, and replaced class struggle with class concordance as the answer to the “Social Question.”¹⁰ This doctrine explains how *Providência Social* would come to develop in

⁸ Guibentif, P. (1997). *La Pratique du Droit International et Communautaire de la Sécurité Sociale: Étude de Sociologie du Droit de la Coordination, à l'exemple du Portugal*. Helbing et Lichtenhahn; Lucena, M. (1976). *A Evolução do Sistema Corporativo Português—O Marcelismo*, volume II. Perspectivas e Realidades; Esping-Andersen, G. (1993). *Orçamentos e Democracia: o Estado-Providência em Espanha e Portugal, 1960–1986*. *Análise Social* 28(122), 589–560; ou Mozzicafreddo, J. (2002). *Estado-Providência e Cidadania em Portugal*. Celta.

⁹ Giorgi, C. (2014). Le Politiche Sociali del Fascismo. *Studi Storici* 1, 93–108.

¹⁰ The influences of the Social Doctrine of the Church are visible. Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum Encyclical* 9, 1891.

the New State. Just like the relationship between the individual and state, so too *Previdência Social* depended on and was mediated by corporative bodies. The social benefits would vary according to the professional sectors and the position of each individual in society and the family, and would be, in some cases, dependent on social and political behavior.

The *Previdência Social* system was, thus, structured into four categories: institutions of *previdência* for corporative bodies; retirement or *previdência* pension funds; associations of mutual help; and institutions of *previdência* for Civil Servants and Administrative Bodies—the *Caixa Geral de Aposentações* (General Retirement Fund) and the *Montepio dos Servidores do Estado* (Civil Servants’ Fund).¹¹ In the first years of the New State, this stratified model created deep social rifts, as the coverage of the benefits contrasted with the egalitarian principles gaining strength in Europe. It was based on the primary position of the family as the main caretaker; on the principle of the state as a supporting entity to fulfill basic needs; on individual responsibility; on the subordination of the *previdência* programs to the organized corporation according to economic activities; and on the absence of state financial co-funding.¹² However, the *previdência* of civil servants was an exception to this doctrine, since the state had the duties of an employer.¹³

The model this organization rested upon was, also, altered throughout the years, and it can be subdivided into four main periods.¹⁴ The first one stretches from the 1930s to the end of World War II and is characterized by a nascent and fragmented *Previdência Social* regime, even though direct intervention by the state in the development of the system began in the 1940s.¹⁵ The 1950s would bring a drive for reform, to which the transformations brought about by World War II are connected. Indeed, internationally, the “Glorious Thirty,” referring to 1945–1975, was the

¹¹Pereirinha, J. and Carolo, D. (2006). *Construção do Estado-Providência em Portugal no período do Estado-Novo (1935–1974): Notas sobre a evolução da despesa social*. Instituto Superior de Economia e Gestão, DE Working papers n° 30-2006/DE/CISEP, 9.

¹²Rodrigues, F. (1999). *Assistência Social e Políticas Sociais em Portugal*. ISSScoop/CPIHTS, 158.

¹³Carolo (2006), 23.

¹⁴Pereirinha, J. and Carolo, D. (2008). The origins of the welfare state in Portugal in the Estado Novo period (1935–1974): Structure and trends of social expenditure. *Congreso de la Asociación Española de Historia Económica*, 11.

¹⁵Rodrigues, C. & Carolo, D. (2020). A *Previdência Social*. In J. M. B. Brito and P. B. Santos (eds.), *Os anos sessenta em Portugal: Duas governações, diferentes políticas públicas?* Edições Afrontamento, 149.

heyday of the Social State. In Portugal, it would continue to lag behind Europe. However, the state continued to take on new functions as the promotor of economic and social development, which would influence the growth of *Previdência Social*. This is, therefore, the beginning of a second period that continued up to the 1960s and which was characterized by an extension of the material coverage of the *previdência* system.

These experiences paved the way for the Reform of 1962, which marks the beginning of the third phase of the development of *Previdência Social*. It represented a break with the supporting function of the state, which was forced to become the funding body of the system. Indeed, there was a strong increase in social spending throughout the 1960s, in a logic of greater convergence with the models of the European welfare state.¹⁶ This would also be the development stage of another project that would end up having an impact on, and even assimilating, the development process of *Previdência Social* for civil servants. This is the project for the reform of the public administration, which defended the improvement of the economic and social situation of civil servants as a vehicle to increase administrative efficiency.¹⁷

The replacement of António de Oliveira Salazar with Marcelo Caetano in 1968 would accentuate the previous dynamic, beginning a new stage of the development of *Previdência Social*: the Marcellist Social State. Although it is debatable that the New State effectively constituted a Social State, this is a statement which originates from the political discourse of the time as a form of legitimization of the regime.¹⁸ Nevertheless, an extension of social benefits is visible starting in 1968, both in terms of the introduction of new types and regarding its coverage. This extension was significant considering the negligible levels shown before, but it was modest if compared internationally. In addition, it becomes clear that there was a tendency toward a universalization of the system. It was achieved through a greater connection between *previdência* and assistance,¹⁹ that is, the charitable social protection schemes, also state coordinated, for those who do not have personal means to deal with misfortune or are not covered by social insurance. This greater connection was a step forward in the

¹⁶Rodrigues and Carolo (2020), 157, 169.

¹⁷Azevedo, A. C. (2020). A caminho da reforma administrativa: O Grupo de Trabalho n.º 14 e a criação do Secretariado da Reforma Administrativa (1965–1969). *Revista Portuguesa de História* 51, 223–242.

¹⁸Guibentif (1997), 59.

¹⁹Rodrigues and Carolo (2020), 147, 152, 170.

development of the concept of a universal Social Security,²⁰ which, however, would only be consecrated as a social right in the democratic period.²¹

THE *PREVIDÊNCIA SOCIAL* OF THE CIVIL SERVICE

The *Previdência Social* of civil servants had some particularities. Civil servants were state government employees, and their economic and social situation had a direct impact on the image of the regime and on the efficiency of public administration, so it was essential that civil servants had dignified living conditions and did not need to seek better pay and social perks in the private sector. However, although the administrative elite had always benefited from a relatively high social status, for most citizens, joining the civil service would no longer be understood as a privilege in the late 1940s.²² It is true that some of the social benefits granted to the civil servants, especially retirement pensions, would continue to give it a certain notion of privilege in the early years. Nevertheless, the issue of low salaries in the civil service would be constant throughout the period, and it is only from this problem that both the priorities that marked the development of social benefits and some of the reactions of civil servants to its implementation can be understood.

In the early years of the New State, entry into the civil service was still an aspiration of the urban petty bourgeoisie, mainly because it provided guarantees of stability and the right to a retirement pension. However, the salaries of most civil servants did not allow them to aspire to more than a meager life. Most salaries were around 500\$00²³ or 600\$00 per month, at a time when the minimum wage necessary to meet the basic subsistence of a family had been set at 1080\$00.²⁴ This situation had obvious impacts on the workers' life projects, making it difficult to start a family, rent a house,

²⁰ Barreto, A. (1995). Portugal na periferia do centro: Mudança social, 1960 a 1995. *Análise Social* 30(134), 847.

²¹ Rodrigues and Carolo (2020), 170.

²² Garrido, A. (2016). *Queremos uma economia nova*. Temas e Debates, 125.

²³ Five hundred *escudos*, the Portuguese currency at the time. In relation to the *escudo*, the US dollar had an exchange rate of 25\$00 in 1939 and 28\$75 in 1949. Between then and the 1970s, the exchange rates were relatively stable. Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações do Centenário da República (2011). *O Escudo: A nova unidade monetária da República*. Imprensa Nacional—Casa da Moeda, 62–63.

²⁴ Rosas, F. (1994). Comerciantes e funcionários. In J. Mattoso (ed.), *História de Portugal: O Estado Novo*. Editorial Estampa, 108.

and pay basic expenses. In addition, the low salaries did not allow for the maintenance of the lifestyle socially required from civil servants, which included limitations on the wife's work or the requirement to undertake further studies for at least one of the sons. The higher-ranking civil servants earned salaries of 1500\$00 or 2000\$00, but this did not mean they had a more comfortable life, since their status implied much higher expenses in terms of housing, clothing, education, medical assistance, culture, and leisure, which they were socially obliged to meet.²⁵

The post-war period would bring important increases in civil service salaries. However, the cost of living also increased, which made improvements in their living conditions difficult.²⁶ In 1957, more than 87,000 civil servants, about 57 percent of the total, earned a monthly salary that did not reach 2000\$00.²⁷ In 1968, the percentage would rise to about 60 percent, out of a total of almost 161,000 civil servants.²⁸ In 1972, 80 percent received less than 2600\$00 per month.²⁹ This context explains the choices made by the state in terms of *Previdência Social*, with some social benefits trying to respond to daily problems or functioning as a wage supplement that would bring civil service salaries closer to the corporatist logic of fair wages.³⁰

But *Previdência Social* was not only a mechanism for wage compensation. By making possible an increase in salaries and bringing the social benefits of civil servants closer to those offered by the private sector, it not only avoided the loss of civil servants, but also decreased their tendency to have more than one job.³¹ Furthermore, *Previdência Social* would also end up including forms of behavioral control. In fact, to access a public office it was necessary that the candidate demonstrated good moral behavior,

²⁵ Rosas (1994), 108–109.

²⁶ In the 1960s, the subsistence minimum for a worker residing in Lisbon and not integrated into any *previdência* system was set at 1495\$00. Ribeiro, M. (1971). *Fixação e Atualização do Salário Mínimo e Problemas Conexos*. Gabinete de Planeamento do Ministério das Corporações e Previdência Social.

²⁷ Diário das Sessões da Assembleia Nacional (DSAN) 46, December 10, 1966, 824.

²⁸ Only ministry officials were accounted for. *Inquérito Inventário dos Servidores do Estado. Continente e ilhas adjacentes. 31 de dezembro de 1968* (1970). Instituto Nacional de Estatística, 13–17.

²⁹ DSAN 172, 21 March 1972, 3431.

³⁰ Seabra, F. (1943). *O Corporativismo e o Problema do Salário*. Centro de Estudos Económicos-Corporativos.

³¹ Contemporary Archive of the Ministry of Finances (ACMF), CIPIE - Grupo de Trabalho n.º 14, Situação e perspetivas da eficiência da administração, 1967.

had a positive report from the political police,³² and, as of 1936, took the anti-communist oath.³³ However, the granting of the social benefits associated with the position depended on keeping up this good moral, social, and political behavior, ultimately functioning as another means to maintain discipline in the civil service.³⁴ In essence, the *Previdência Social* of civil servants was based not so much on the recognition of social rights, but on the achievement of the priorities of the regime.

Nevertheless, its importance was recognized by civil servants. In fact, the right to a retirement pension was one of the factors attracting candidates to the civil service, while the very tendency of civil servants to join the private sector was related to a search for the better social benefits offered there.³⁵ However, social benefits were not always perceived as an advantage, not only due to the limits of their effectiveness but, above all, due to the fact that the employees were responsible for the co-payment of the system. In the context of low salaries, the monthly payments were seen as another element that prevented civil servants from reaching the “level of social decorum compatible with the demands and needs of the hierarchy of the respective functions.”³⁶

EXPERIENCES OF A BETTER LIFE AND FORCED OBEDIENCE

The state recognized that the level of salaries did not allow its civil servants to meet their daily expenses and maintain dignified living conditions. However, it also assumed that the priority given to the reorganization of public finances made it impossible to increase salaries. Instead, the New State used *Previdência Social* as a wage supplement.³⁷ This objective is quite clear in the creation of child benefit in 1942, extended to civil

³² Rosas (1994), 108.

³³ “I declare on my honor that I am integrated in the social order established by the Political Constitution of 1933, actively repudiating communism and all subversive ideas.” Decree-law no. 27003, *Diário do Governo* 216/1936, September 14.

³⁴ Decree-law no. 49373, *Diário do Governo* 264/1969, November 11; Decree-law no. 32659, *Diário do Governo* 32/1943, September 9.

³⁵ ACFM, CIPIE, Situação e perspectivas.

³⁶ DSAN 114, December 14, 1951, 70.

³⁷ Pereirinha, J., Arcanjo, M., and Carolo, D. (2008). Social protection and family policy in the Portuguese corporatism: The creation and development of family allowances in the *Estado-Novo* period. *Congreso de la Asociación Española de Historia Económica*, 7.

servants the following year.³⁸ Portugal was one of the first countries to grant this type of support,³⁹ which contrasts with the relative lag in the development of the welfare state in the country. In fact, it was a response to a context of great social unrest and a high cost of living caused by the indirect effects of World War II on the Portuguese economy. Child benefit was a social policy of the state, with financing programs that implied national solidarity and reinforced public funding, which contrasted with the logic of the *Previdência Social* that advocated the supporting role of the state.⁴⁰

In 1943, child benefit varied, depending on the salary level, between 30\$00 and 70\$00 per month per dependent, progressively increasing until the end of the 1950s.⁴¹ In the early years, this social benefit would end up favoring the maintenance of the status quo because, understanding that consumer spending varied according to the social position of individuals, the amounts of the benefit followed the hierarchy of positions. This situation would only change in 1958, when it came to be considered that the child benefit was intended for meeting basic needs and, as such, should be identical, so the monthly amount was unified at 100\$00 per dependent.⁴² Despite having higher amounts than those established for other professional categories⁴³ and its financing being entirely the responsibility of the state,⁴⁴ child benefit did not solve the problem of low salaries for civil servants. In fact, even after the standardization of the monthly amount to 100\$00 per dependent, a civil servant earning 1500\$00 per month and having two school-age children could only add 200\$00 to his salary, which was clearly insufficient to meet the family's expenses.⁴⁵

The same goal is visible in another of the New State's social projects: the Affordable Housing Program. The low salaries of the civil service, combined with the rising cost of living, made the housing issue one of the

³⁸ Decree-law no. 32192, *Diário do Governo* 188/1942, August 13; Decree-law no. 32688, *Diário do Governo* 41/1943, February 20, 1st supplement.

³⁹ Leal, A. (1983). *Abono de Família*. In *POLIS - Enciclopédia VERBO da Sociedade e do Estado*. Verbo, 5.

⁴⁰ Rodrigues and Carolo (2020), 149, 157.

⁴¹ Decree-law no. 32688, *Diário do Governo* 41/1943; Decree-law no. 39844, *Diário do Governo* 223/1954, October 7, 1954.

⁴² Decree-law no. 42046, *Diário do Governo* 278/1958, 23 December, 1st supplement.

⁴³ *Previdência e Habitação* (1961). Junta da Acção Social, 195.

⁴⁴ Costa, A (2011). *A Evolução da Previdência Social em Perspectiva Comparada: 1935–1974*. Universidade de Aveiro, 42–43.

⁴⁵ DSAN 114, 14 December 1951, 76.

most cited problems in the diagnosis of the economic and social situation of civil servants.⁴⁶ Especially those who worked in Lisbon were faced with house rents that were disproportionate to their resources, which had inevitable consequences for their ability to buy basic products. Often, the option was to rent rooms or parts of a house,⁴⁷ and this did not meet the conditions required for housing a government employee. These issues also posed moral and even hygiene problems caused by cohabitation, in addition to preventing the free development of the family by imposing a limitation on the number of children.

The Affordable Housing Program, promoted by the regime starting in 1933, would try to respond to this situation. The rules that regulated the allocation of houses stipulated that accommodation would be assigned to heads of families, aged between 21 and 40 years old, who were “employees, workers or other salaried employees who were members of the national unions, civil and military public servants, and workers of the permanent staff of state services and municipal councils.”⁴⁸ The payment of monthly installments for 20 or 25 years gave the tenant the right to own the house. Until the late 1950s, the Program created four typologies of affordable housing, distributed according to each family’s income and household size.⁴⁹ The monthly payments were less expensive than the rents in Lisbon, and could not exceed one-third of the household income.⁵⁰ However, the amounts, which in Lisbon could range between 330\$00 and 1280\$00,⁵¹ continued to impede access to lower-income employees. Even so, obtaining affordable housing was seen as a privilege, of which civil servants were the major beneficiaries,⁵² and the program did in fact provide significant improvements in the lives of many state employees.

⁴⁶ Atas da Câmara Corporativa (ACC) 5, 10 December 1957, 30–31.

⁴⁷ Renting of rooms in private houses, with access to common areas.

⁴⁸ Decree-law no. 23052, *Diário do Governo* 217/1933, September 23, 1664.

⁴⁹ Silva, S. and Ramos, R. (2015). Housing, Nationalism and Social Control: The first years of the Portuguese Estado Novo’s Affordable Houses Programme. In J. Leal, M. Maia, and B. Torras (eds.), *Southern Modernisms: From A to Z and back again*. Centro de Estudos Arnaldo Araújo - CESAP/ESAPIHA e Instituto de História da Arte, FCSH-UNL, 260.

⁵⁰ Decree no. 41143, *Diário do Governo* 129/1957, June 4; Decree-law no. 42951, *Diário do Governo* 98/1960, April 27.

⁵¹ A family consisting of a couple and two children would pay around 600\$00 monthly. *Previdência e Habitação* (1961), 337.

⁵² Antunes, G., Lúcio, J., Soares, N., and Julião, R. (2016). Políticas de habitação social precedentes a abril de 1974. *GeoInova* 13, 80.

However, the Affordable Housing Program also posed some constraints on the civil servants' lives, namely regarding the constitution of the family. Having a large family with children of both sexes could be an impediment to the allocation of a house, especially for low-income employees who could not afford larger houses. In addition, the type of house assigned enforced birth control, since the enlargement set out in law did not always allow for accommodating daughters and sons in separate bedrooms. Only after 1947 would the possibility to request a transfer to a larger house become available, and then only if the increase in family size or salary justified it.⁵³ Moreover, the Affordable Housing Program, like child benefit, despite implying a great financial effort by the state, could not encompass the vast majority of civil servants, and ended up being restricted to large cities and a few other urban centers.⁵⁴ Finally, the Affordable Housing Program was more about wage compensation, social control, and the ability to keep civil servants in the service of the state than about recognizing social rights.

The same was true of health care assistance. Under the New State, access to health care was not universal; it varied according to the economic possibilities of each household as well as their place of residence. As such, a situation of illness, besides implying the loss of working days, meant heavy financial burdens that the lowest-ranking civil servants had difficulty bearing.⁵⁵ Until the 1960s, and in contrast to employees in the private sector, civil servants were only entitled to assistance due to an accident at work or tuberculosis.⁵⁶ If they suffered from any other illness, they were only entitled to an allowance for a period of six months, after which unpaid leave of up to 90 days followed, and, if there was no right to retirement, dismissal.⁵⁷ An effective, family-friendly health insurance program was thus an essential measure to improve the economic and social situation of

⁵³ Almeida, P. (2010). *Favor, Recompensa e Controlo Social: os Bairros de Casas Económicas do Porto (1935–1965)*. Universidade do Porto, 47.

⁵⁴ DSAN 69, January 20, 1971, 1406.

⁵⁵ In the 1960s, a doctor's consultation in a normal regime could cost over 200\$00. ACMF, CIPIE, Ofício de Vasco Eça para António de Oliveira Salazar, 1965.

⁵⁶ Ministério das Finanças (1960). *Melhoria das condições económico-sociais do funcionalismo público. Relação das propostas de lei e correspondentes diplomas legais*. Ministério das Finanças, 12.

⁵⁷ Só a unidade de ação conseguirá o aumento para os funcionários públicos (1957). *Avante* 244, 2.

the civil service.⁵⁸ Furthermore, the promotion of social development turned out to be a legitimization tool for the regime—which proved itself to have the capacity to improve the standard of living of the population—as well as to prevent the loss of the best employees to the private sector and to limit the economic impact of lost working days.⁵⁹

Until the 1960s, the social benefits of private sector employees were higher than those granted to civil servants, except for the tuberculosis assistance. Tuberculosis was, in fact, one of the main health problems in Portugal and one of those with the greatest economic impact. Access to the civil service required a health certificate confirming the absence of tuberculosis. However, if the disease developed later, the low salaries of civil servants would not allow them to meet the costs of treatment. As such, as early as 1927, assistance to civil servants suffering from tuberculosis was decreed.⁶⁰

From the 1940s to the 1960s, tuberculosis assistance developed greatly, although the system maintained some compensatory measures that were not always to the liking of civil servants, such as salary discounts and limitations on assistance. As long as they subscribed to the General Retirement Fund or another legally equivalent fund, civil servants became beneficiaries of Tuberculosis Assistance to Civil Servants and Their Families. This allowed access to inpatient and outpatient health care through the payment of contributions ranging from 2\$00 per month for salaries up to 500\$00, to 30\$00 per month for salaries over 5000\$00.⁶¹ Despite the clear benefits, taking advantage of this support meant a further cut in the already meager salaries. In addition, despite being a strong financial effort by the state and allowing civil servants to enjoy health care to which they might not otherwise have access, the tuberculosis assistance program was not always considered sufficient to address the constraints caused by the disease.

The need for access to other medical specialties led to the creation of health services in some ministries, which made the level of illness protection to which civil servants had access depend on the ministry for which

⁵⁸ ACMF, CIPIE, Ofício de Vasco Eça para António de Oliveira Salazar, 1965.

⁵⁹ DSAN 4, December 10, 1957, 98.

⁶⁰ Decree no. 14192, *Diário do Governo* 191/1927, August 31.

⁶¹ Decree-law no. 48359, *Diário do Governo* 101/1968, April 27; Decree-law no. 40365, *Diário do Governo* 236/1955, October 29.

they worked.⁶² To get around this reality, Assistance in Sickness for Civil Servants (ADSE) was created in 1963, “aimed at gradually promoting the provision of assistance in all forms of illness to civil servants of the state.”⁶³ ADSE provided access to home visits and consultations with general practitioners and specialists, auxiliary diagnostic resources, therapeutic resources, hospitalization, and surgical interventions.⁶⁴ ADSE meant a great advance in the state social protection system, demanding an enormous financial effort on the part of the state, and it is seen as a privilege of the civil service even today. However, financial limitations meant that it took a long time to reach the same level as some of the benefit types offered to employees in the private sector,⁶⁵ while its slow and uneven national distribution ended up excluding important portions of the civil service.⁶⁶ In addition, the salary-based co-payment system⁶⁷ created new rifts in the civil service, highlighting relevant differences between the benefit types granted to employees of different categories.⁶⁸

Despite its limitations, the development of *Previdência Social* contributed to the betterment of the living conditions of civil servants. Nevertheless, it also included forms of social control, as well as forms of forced obedience, that had an impact on personal and family dynamics. Taking the example of child benefit, the granting of this social benefit depended on the good moral and professional behavior of the civil servant. In addition, it was also associated with the defense of the family ideal promoted by the New State. This is visible in a decree-law of 1958,⁶⁹ which stated that if a couple did not live together, the benefit would be granted to the head of the household, regardless of whether the dependents were supported by him or her, a rule that had clear implications in cases of separation. Likewise, illegitimate children were not considered in the allocation of the benefit, and legitimized ones would only be considered

⁶² Gato, A. P. (2020). O Estado Novo e a saúde dos pobres. In M. F. Barros and P. Gato (eds.), *Desigualdades*. Cidehus, 11.

⁶³ Decree-law no. 45002, *Diário do Governo* 100/1963, April 27, 429.

⁶⁴ Almeida, A. (2017). *A Saúde no Estado Novo de Salazar (1933–1968): Políticas, Sistemas e Estruturas*. PhD Thesis, Faculdade de Letras da Universidade de Lisboa, 348.

⁶⁵ DSAN 111, December 13, 1967, 2111.

⁶⁶ ACFM, CIPIE, Notas explicativas sobre o projeto de revisão do decreto-lei n.º 42800, March 25, 1966.

⁶⁷ Almeida (2017), 348.

⁶⁸ DSAN 4S1, December 10, 1965, 29.

⁶⁹ Decree-law no. 41671, *Diário do Governo* 124/1958, June 11.

if they had been recognized before marriage and provided that the civil servant lived with the legitimate family.⁷⁰ In fact, a decree of 1960 is clear in stating:

Through the system of the benefit, the aim should be [...] to promote the formation of legitimate families, ensuring that they have the necessary stability. Indeed, it is fundamental that the family institution be consolidated and developed, as the ‘primary basis for education, discipline and social harmony.’⁷¹

Identical limitations can be seen in health care assistance, which covered only legitimate children or children legitimized before marriage, as long as the civil servant lived with the legitimate family.⁷²

The Affordable Housing Program, a propagandistic project of the New State, presented similar goals, which included forms of social control and the binding of civil servants to the regime. In fact, although the official discourse stated that it was aimed at poor families, the program would end up being used as a reward for a middle class that supported the regime,⁷³ the class the regime intended to control. Civil servants were eligible for affordable housing provided they complied with the rules to which they were bound, especially with regard to the good moral and professional behavior of the entire household. This good behavior had to be proven by the head of service of each civil servant, and then confirmed daily by the neighborhood inspectors.⁷⁴ Accessing affordable housing also implied the acceptance of a series of conditions that, if not followed, resulted in the loss of the property, regardless of the number of installments paid.

Civil servants in the program lived under a permanent threat, which functioned as a form of “preventive violence.”⁷⁵ Both they and their families had to maintain good moral behavior, abstain from politics, and

⁷⁰ Decree-law no. 32688, *Diário do Governo* 41/1943; Decree-law no. 39844, *Diário do Governo* 223/1954.

⁷¹ Decree-law no. 17963, *Diário do Governo* 222/1960, September 23, 2065.

⁷² Decree-law no. 42953, *Diário do Governo* 98/1960, 27 April; Decree-law no. 48359, *Diário do Governo* 101/1968.

⁷³ Pereira, V., Queirós, J., Silva, S., and Lemos, T. (2018). Casas económicas e casas desmontáveis: Génesis, estruturação e transformação dos primeiros programas habitacionais do Estado Novo. In R. Agarez (ed.), *Habitação: cem anos de políticas públicas em Portugal, 1918/2018*. Instituto da Habitação e da Reabilitação Urbana, 97.

⁷⁴ Pereira, V., Queirós, J., Silva, S., and Lemos, T. (2018), 92.

⁷⁵ Rosas, F. (2012). *Salazar e o Poder: a arte de saber durar*. Tinta da China.

maintain the lifestyle that was imposed on them. More than any other social benefit, the housing support provided by the state had trade-offs that directly touched the daily lives of civil servants, implying an adjustment of behavior in the domestic environment and the surveillance of private space.

THE EMERGING EXPERIENCE OF SOCIAL RIGHTS

In general, the *Previdência Social* of civil servants reflects a utilitarian and dependent relationship between the individual and the state. It is utilitarian because, for the state, the attribution of social benefits aimed, above all, to achieve its various objectives, while the individual, in turn, was always seeking to improve their standard of living. This relationship was still defined by dependence, since social benefits depended on the will of the state and on the respect for the New State order. However, from the 1960s onwards, these assumptions gradually began to change because of the development of the concept of the Social State, based on the idea of an interventive role of the state in society and economy. Instead of a supporting role, the state was to develop an interventive approach in order to fulfill basic social needs and guarantee a certain degree of equality between citizens, shortening the social distances resulting from wealth distribution.⁷⁶ However, the ideas of Social Catholicism were important as well, particularly regarding social peace and fair wages. They influenced part of the legislation of that time, which was also created with the support of some technocrats responsible for economic planning and social development.⁷⁷

Although the idea of social support as a salary supplement continues to be found,⁷⁸ social benefits gradually began to be understood not as a consequence of state generosity, but as a social right that was earned after a lifetime of work and contributions, and, as such, could be claimed. The

⁷⁶Caetano, M. (1974). *Depoimento*. Record, 127.

⁷⁷Azevedo, A. C. (2021). Das campanhas de produtividade ao trabalho humano: uma evolução tecida nas teias do Estado Novo. In *Da Escravidão ao Trabalho Digno: Nos 150 anos da abolição da escravidão em Portugal e nos 100 anos da criação da OIT*. GEP-MTSSS, 121–134.

⁷⁸For example, in 1972, the Government provided civil servants with an extra salary as a compensation for not being able to increase the monthly amounts. However, it was only after the Carnation Revolution that it became mandatory. Decree-law no. 457/72, *Diário do Governo* 266/1972, November 15, 1666–1667.

retirement pension is perhaps the social benefit in which this development becomes more visible. In the idea of the civil service, the right to receive a retirement pension—and the future stability it provided—was one of the main reasons that made public careers attractive, especially when this benefit was not yet enjoyed by other workers. In fact, it provided a guarantee of support at the end of one's working life that was intended to compensate for the low levels of salary and the consequent inability to accumulate savings.⁷⁹ As such, for the state, more than a form of justice toward its former employees, retirement pensions were a way to avoid the loss of active employees to the private sector.

Retirement pensions were paid by the General Retirement Fund, created in 1929 within the *Caixa Nacional de Previdência* (Previdência National Fund),⁸⁰ and they were initially seen as a perk of civil servants. However, this idea began to fade as retirement pensions were progressively extended to other professional sectors, while excluding servants who did not receive a “salary or wage paid through funds specifically allocated for personnel in the General State Budget or in those of the administrative bodies or autonomous services and organisms.”⁸¹ In turn, for all those who were in these conditions, access to the retirement pension depended on contributions of 6 percent of monthly remuneration, up to a limit of 1500\$00,⁸² which represented a further blow to low salaries.

The retirement pensions awarded were considered quite low, generally not enough to cover daily expenses. The amounts of the pensions and the fact that, in the beginning, they did not keep up with the rising cost of living became the target of constant criticism that reached the ministries and the National Assembly, where several members warned of the “shadow of misery”⁸³ that hovered over many former state servants. The issue was also mentioned in the national press, with some newspapers running real campaigns to call the Government's attention to the deplorable situation of civil service retirees.⁸⁴ Public opinion demanded that retirement pensions should receive the same increases that were being given to active civil servants. This would be a way to ameliorate the rising cost of living that

⁷⁹ DSAN 199, March 22, 1969, 3677.

⁸⁰ Decree no. 16667, *Diário do Governo* 70/1929, March 27, 1st supplement.

⁸¹ Decree-law no. 36610, *Diário do Governo* 273/1947, November 24, 1174.

⁸² DSAN 5, December 11, 1957, 173.

⁸³ DSAN 41, April 23, 1970, 853.

⁸⁴ Matos, A. (February 14, 1968). O agradecimento de aposentados. *Diário Popular*, Lisboa.

affected everyone equally and prevented civil servants from maintaining their standard of living after retirement.⁸⁵

These campaigns show a change in citizens' perceptions of *Previdência Social*. No longer considered a state concession, the retirement pension was now understood by society as a right of all of those who had dedicated their lives to public service and found themselves abandoned by the state in their old age. In fact, in 1969, assemblyman António José Brás Regueiro stated in the National Assembly that since the retirement pension was a food subsidy,⁸⁶ it was close to the right to exist itself.⁸⁷ Marcelism would thus end up agreeing to increase the amounts of retirement pensions. In fact, the image of the state as a "person of good" and its ability to attract and keep the best civil servants in its service was also in question. Civil servants had believed that the state they served would protect them in their old age. As such, public exposure of the situation of former civil servants was yet another factor driving them away from the civil service⁸⁸ and, consequently, decreasing its level of efficiency.

CONCLUSION

The lived experience of *Previdência Social* was many things to many people. For the New State, it was a legitimizing tool, an instrument that ensured the maintenance of the regime and its good image, the control of civil servants, and a sound public administration. For the civil servants, it meant better living conditions, at least compared with most of the population, though it also meant the acceptance of several regulations that aimed at controlling their daily lives and family dynamics. As for most of the citizens, the social support for the civil servants was further proof of their privileged condition.

From a broad perspective, *Previdência Social* is another layer of an experience of society based on the dependence of the citizen regarding the state. It is an experience in which inequalities are established, forced obedience is consecrated, and the emergence of social rights is slow. It also shows the utilitarian relationship between the individual and the state, in

⁸⁵ DSAN 136, December 9, 1959, 118.

⁸⁶ Caetano, M. (1980). *Manual de Direito Administrativo*, volume 1. Edições Almedina, 507.

⁸⁷ DSAN 199, March 22, 1969, 3678.

⁸⁸ Os aposentados (November 13, 1967). *Educação Nacional*, Porto.

which social benefits are granted according to the person's capacity to fulfill the objectives of the regime, and its downside is accepted because it grants the chance to achieve a better life.

As such, the development of social benefits during the New State presented relevant differences in relation to European trends. What was at stake, above all, was not the recognition of social rights or a convincing movement toward a Beveridgian model. On the contrary, the major goals were the legitimization of the regime, maintenance of social equilibrium, promotion of economic and social development, increase of the efficiency of public administration, assurance of social control, and promotion of the regime's idea of family. Nevertheless, there was a widening and deepening of the social benefits provided to civil servants that allowed for objective improvements in their standard of living, especially when compared to other professional sectors, such as rural workers, housewives, or the self-employed. The financial effort of the state as a financier of *Previdência Social* also increased greatly from the early 1960s onwards.

However, a bottom-up analysis shows that the impact of the expansion of social benefits to the civil service cannot be analyzed only through the enormous financial strain it represented to the state's treasury. In fact, in a context of rising living costs, this has always been considered insufficient to achieve substantial improvements in the lives of civil servants. Finally, it becomes evident that, progressively, a change in the concept of *Previdência Social* was taking place, being visible throughout the 1960s. Gradually, social benefits began to be understood as social rights that could be claimed and to which the state should respond.

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