Chapter 8

Familialism and Welfare Arrangements in Old Age

Introduction

This thesis was developed within a theoretical and empirical body of research on welfare state and welfare provision, focusing on welfare arrangements in old age. It addressed specifically the Portuguese case and it aimed at, not only contributing to unravelling some features of a national context that only very rarely is considered in mainstream literature, but also at enlarging the discussion on familialism as a system of welfare provision in old age. At a time when most research on welfare in old age discusses the effects of welfare state retrenchment and the variations in social policies addressing family-based care, this study works on a national case where there is not much to retrench given that it has never fully developed and matured, and where formal policies addressing families are practically non-existent. These general traits configure the case of a familialist welfare state, a model of welfare state functioning that considers families as the main locus of welfare provision and that assumes families do not fail in performing that role.

The assumption behind the thesis was that the terms of the debate on welfare provision in old age in familialist welfare states are different from those systems where some degree of de-familialisation has taken place. The thesis brings some contributions to defining those differences.

This is the concluding chapter of the thesis and is structured in four inter-connected sections.

The first section addresses the main findings of the thesis, discussing their articulation with the research questions and the research hypothesis. The second section summarises the contours of the more general discussion on welfare state research and identifies some contributions to the theoretical framework on familialism that arise from the thesis. In section three we find a summary of the main limitations of this study, as perceived by the author, and a discussion on how some of those limitations could be overcome by further research. The last section of this chapter relates more clearly to the national case analysed and to the policy implications of the arguments developed along the thesis. This section puts forward a

set of considerations on how social policies in Portugal address the issue of welfare in old age, the pitfalls and the opportunities of the Portuguese system and even some broad recommendations for future developments.

1. Welfare arrangements of the Portuguese elderly: main trends and constraints

In mainstream literature one often finds references to the model of welfare provision in South European countries, among which Portugal is included, as a case of comparatively more intense exchange of support within the extended kinship network. This is a feature that is commonly taken as a distinctive element in the analysis of the living arrangements and welfare provision arrangements of the elderly in those countries when compared to their European counterparts. It is a trait seen as part of a model that compensates the gaps of the weak formal system of welfare provision by means of resilient and strong informal provision.

In this thesis, and in order to unravel the logics of welfare provision in old age in Portugal, the conceptual framework presented an understanding of welfare arrangements that puts them in the confluence of three main dimensions of collective life: the institutional dimension; the family dynamics dimension; and the normative dimension. According to this approach, familialism as a model of welfare provision for the elderly was first addressed from the perspective of the existing policies and formal mechanisms within the state-based social security and social assistance system, in view of identifying not only the available resources to tackle old age related needs, but also the ideology/philosophy of provision that characterises the formal system of provision.

In chapters 2 and 3 of this thesis it was seen that the Portuguese welfare state system, developing late in time and within a context of structural constraints that have never allowed for it to fully mature, has taken as a main pillar for social policy design the familialist principle. Largely in sequence of a previous path of strong reliance on primary solidarities fostered all along the 20th century under the dictatorship, the Portuguese welfare state clearly shows signs of a familialised approach to welfare provision, especially when it comes to the elderly.

The analysis of the social policy framework, and more broadly of the process of emergence and consolidation of the welfare state in Portugal, has lead to some main

founding prepositions to understand the nature of the welfare arrangements among the Portuguese elderly in present times:

1. The Portuguese welfare state has emerged along with a very specific process of modernisation and within a *sui generis* socio-economic model that largely explains some of its current characteristics and some of its main challenges.

2. The Portuguese social protection system counts on families to perform as primary welfare providers. This is largely rooted in the historical process of consolidation of a system of provision marked by: the strong influence of the Catholic doctrine of subsidiarity; a model of social organisation where kinship ties remain strong in the outcome of a more or less straightforward jump from an agrarian society to a post-fordist society; the patchy development of social policies within a welfare state project that emerged late and in times of global economic and financial crisis.

3. The main elements of the Portuguese social policy framework concerning old age reproduce: a strong principle of fraternity in solidarity; a strong belief in subsidiarity; a 'naturalisation' of the roles of women as carers; a clear priority given to family. From a material perspective and focusing on effective levels of provision, one finds in Portugal a pension system characterised by generalised low old age pensions, not so much because of a lack of generosity of the system but more as a reflection of the socio-economic model of that country. Social assistance mechanisms are patchy, fragmented and assistencialist, clearly developing outside the realm of social rights.

4. The underdevelopment of the care system and the generalised low levels of old age pensions and old age related cash benefits suggest that the welfare of the elderly can hardly be met by formal provision by public instances.

5. The generally meagre old age related cash benefits do not make credible any significant expression of private, market-based, welfare arrangements.

6. The expansion of the non-profit sector in the field of assistance to the elderly has been done guaranteeing a minimum safety net to tackle the cases of nearly destitution and privileging a principle of subsidiarity in relation to family provision.

The overall conclusion one takes from the analysis of the existing social policy framework in old age related issues is that the elderly and their families remain confronted with a system that leaves them without any alternatives in terms of

welfare arrangements, but to look for the maximisation of resources within the kinship network. Currently there are no signs that things will change from the side of public provision. Despite some expansion of services in the last ten years, the official discourse still takes for granted the availability of strong informal ties within the family. Social programmes from the two political parties that alternate in government do not create any expectations of significant expansion of the public provision in the coming years.

In times of erosion of the traditional social fabric that sustained familialism and that made it credible to assume that families did not fail when asked to take the primary role as welfare providers, the logical question to ask seemed to be: How resilient is familialism and how well is familialism performing as a model of welfare provision for the elderly? The broad research hypothesis to test along the thesis was precisely that familialism is no longer resilient or performing well as a model of welfare provision for the elderly.

To address this hypothesis the thesis has made an attempt to measure familialism from the side of family dynamics and from the side of social norms and values. The ultimate goal was to shed some light on how resilient familialism is and how well it is performing, in actual terms, in the welfare arrangements of the elderly, the relative importance of families for those arrangements and the expressed willingness and acceptance among the Portuguese to comply with a familialist model of social provision.

The research hypothesis was broken down into subordinate research questions. The answers to those research questions were expected to allow testing the research hypothesis. The questions were:

1. What are the living arrangements and the living conditions of the Portuguese elderly compared to their elderly counterparts?

2. How and how much are Portuguese families engaging in welfare provision to the elderly?

3. What are the perceptions, the expectations and the preferences of the Portuguese in terms of welfare arrangements in old age?

The analysis of family dynamics and normative prepositions has suggested two main consequences in the lives of the Portuguese elderly arising from familialism as a model of social welfare provision. To a large extent they can be pointing to what may be considered essential to address by social policies in that country.

1.1. Aggravation of the dichotomy included/excluded

There are two opposite trends coexisting in the living arrangements of the elderly Portuguese. On one side, we see a resilient relevance of extended households; on the other side, an increasing share of elderly living alone. This stems directly from familialism and reveals the dual character of the system.

The overall scenario points to hardship in old age and increasing difficulties for families to perform as sole welfare provision agencies. The social policy framework does not offer more than two alternatives: either family is available to look after the elderly; or institutionalisation must be considered. This crossroad may actually explain why the levels of institutionalisation in Portugal are so close to the European Union average. The same cannot be said for the levels of home help, considerably below the EU figure (as seen in chapter 3).

What the analysis has demonstrated is that the trends in the living arrangements of the elderly go both ways. The extended household remains an important arrangement for the Portuguese elderly. But side by side with that we see more elderly living alone, a potential signal that there is a growing share of individuals for whom the activation of family resources may be more difficult.

In a familialist social policy framework, families do not have much help when performing as welfare agencies. This has one immediate consequence: engagement in caring for an elder person is a household matter, therefore a very intense activity, with clear gender implications and eventually with implications in terms of quality of care and life both for the elderly looked after and for their carers. That is what probably explains why the global levels of engagement in caring for the elderly are not higher in Portugal when compared to the rest of the EU, and in fact are lower than what is found in some of the more de-familialised welfare states, as discussed in chapter 5.

This type of evidence clearly adds up to the research that tries to demonstrate the fallacy of the substitution argument in the area of social policies/family solidarity.

With regards to the more de-familiased systems, it is often said that social policies in general and social care systems in particular developed as a response to the growing individualisation of societies and to the weakening of family ties and family solidarity. The reverse is said about familialist systems: the pressure to develop social policies is not felt given the strong family ties and the resilient family solidarity model. The

evidence gathered throughout the thesis suggests precisely the other way around. The lack of public support/formal social policies targeting families in their role as welfare agencies ends up weakening family solidarity: not because families refuse to perform that role, but because it is increasingly difficult for them to do so.

It is not the praising of family support that is at stake here. The thesis does not share in any way an idyllic view of family as the best solution for tackling old age related needs, or as a matter of fact of the family as a functional space of fulfilment of individual needs. Families are also spaces of conflict and of inequalities. What seems unavoidable is that the Portuguese public social protection system is not widening its scope in a substantial way. The financial crisis that affects the Portuguese state is a consensual topic among the main political forces and the need to contain public expenditure widely accepted as a prime political priority. Therefore, in the years to come it is not realistic to expect any significant change in the extension of welfare provided by public instances.

However, what this study seems to demonstrate is that it is equally unavoidable that if nothing is done to help families they will not cope for much longer as generalised instances of welfare provision. In a context of increasing life expectancy, of population ageing, of deep economic and financial crisis, the system seems to be at a critical moment. For some the family network will remain a resource. For many it is not credible to think so, not necessarily because they do not have potential networks of support within family, but because that potential cannot be turned into effective support.

As long as social care policies reproduce the subsidiarity principle instead of adopting the complementary principle, the trend of erosion of family solidarity is doomed to leave more and more elderly people exposed to the risk of social exclusion.

1.2. Increasing difficulties in fulfilling the cycle of giving

There is a second duality in familialism that the thesis has unravelled and that needs to be considered both in welfare state research and in policy design. That duality stems from the fact that in familialist systems the elderly cannot be considered only in their quality of recipients of support from the extended family. They need to be considered equally as sources of support to the extended family. The implications of this duality are several.

The evidence discussed along the thesis has showed that the Portuguese elderly are effective contributors to the welfare of the extended household: financially, providing accommodation and providing care, namely child-care, as discussed in chapter 6. The limitation of not having data on inter-households exchanges of support means this statement cannot be empirically extended. However, there are good reasons to admit that the role of the elderly as sources of help for the extended family, especially to descendants, may be even more significant than what the data have showed.

In any case this means that the debate on the increasing number of elderly people in societies cannot take as a starting point that the elderly represent a burden to families. On the contrary, and particularly in familialist settings, they seem to play an important role as agents of welfare provision to younger generations. In a context marked by the underdevelopment of housing policies, by increasing problems of unemployment along the age line and particularly of insertion in the labour market among the youngest, the roles of the elderly as compensators of the weaknesses of the socio-economic structures and of the welfare state model are likely to continue and eventually to increase.

However, once more there is the other side of the coin. Although one might presume that the importance of the elderly as welfare providers may create and strengthen ties between members of the extended family, there is no certainty about that. The concept of cycle of giving can work, in this context, as an interesting concept to understand inter-generational relations in familialist systems. However there are no certainties about how well it actually performs. Too many variables interfere in this cycle and to take it for granted in terms of social policy design only reinforces the potential imbalances of family solidarity in terms of distribution of support among its members.

Again the discussion takes us to the importance of shifting the principle of subsidiarity in social policy design to the principle of complementarity. If in fact there is the potential among families to act as key welfare providers, that potential must be turned into effective support by means of social policies that help families coping with the demands and the consequences arising from engaging in support to elderly relatives.

The fulfilment of family solidarity is in fact one of the most important fields of tension that the thesis has unravelled and an important element to consider in the debate about the welfare arrangements of the elderly in familialist systems.

The thesis has reinforced the argument about family solidarity being the norm across countries and not an exclusive of familialist countries. What differentiates familialist systems seems to be the extent individuals are willing to go to fulfil family solidarity. That, however, can be argued to be more related to socio-economic structures and to perceived opportunities and less to clear-cut differences in adherence to family solidarity.

The main piece of evidence to highlight seems to be the comparatively higher willingness of Portuguese families to accept co-residence with elderly parents in situations of dependency of the old person, as seen in chapter 7. To what extent this reflects real preferences or perceived lack of alternatives to guarantee the welfare of an elder parent cannot be fully disentangled. Yet, and in light of what was discussed along the thesis, it may very well be the case of the later.

Overall, this relates also to the fulfilment of the cycle of giving and reinforces the picture of familialist social protection systems as vicious circles: the deficient or even absent formal provision forces families to find their ways using their own resources, which in turn creates expectations and pressures families to actually do it, making it possible in turn that the underdevelopment of the formal system remains almost unquestioned.

The forces constraining this functional circle of giving are accumulating. The tensions within the system are visible precisely at the level of the distance between generalised expressed preferences for family care and the effective levels of engagement of families in caring after their elderly.

The pressuring element in terms of policy design seems to be the need to move away from the subsidiarity principle and to implement the complementary principle. If Portuguese families are more willing to take in their elderly than their European counterparts, than social policies need to help them fulfil that willingness.

2. Welfare arrangements in old age: contributions for welfare state research

Welfare arrangements in old age were conceptualised in this thesis as the outcome of three dimensions of social life: the institutional design of the welfare state; family

dynamics of exchange of support; social norms and values concerning solidarity. This has meant considering welfare arrangements as a multi-sided, complex phenomenon that cannot be reduced to a relatively straightforward outcome of social policies. On the contrary, welfare arrangements in old age appear in the confluence of a more complex scenario where family dynamics, namely intergenerational dynamics, and normative dispositions have a very important role to play.

This methodological/theoretical point of departure was central to the way the study of welfare arrangements of the Portuguese elderly has evolved along the thesis, and to unravel the complexity involved in the relations between social policies and living arrangements in old age.

Path dependent theories, and new institutionalism readings in general, have shown to be very important in conceptualising the historical determinants of the contemporary relations between state, family and the labour market. In the Portuguese case, they are quintessential to define familialism and to understand how it shapes contemporary social policies in general, but particularly in the area of old age, and overall to understand national specificities that may sometimes look like paradoxes in light of established typologies.

However, one cannot be confined to deriving from the existing policy framework in a certain national context the responses of individuals and families in terms of welfare arrangements. Certainly the institutional setting delimitates the universe of possibilities and defines the constraints and resources available for families and individuals to tackle old age related needs. Yet, it is important to articulate that institutional setting with the analysis of family dynamics, unravelling their inner logics. Only by doing that can we capture the full extent of the impacts of the social policy framework on people's lives but also its 'side effects' and 'confounding effects', all interacting to explain the resilience of a certain social model.

The Portuguese case is particularly illustrative in this respect and points to some issues that should be addressed with caution in some research on welfare provision in old age. For example, one often finds a pretty straightforward stated association between familialist policies and the reproduction of traditional family models. These are then associated to greater availability of family resources for the elderly. The research carried out within this thesis calls for some caution in this type of explications.

It was demonstrated along the thesis that the welfare arrangements of the Portuguese elderly are marked by two opposing but coexisting trends: on one hand, we saw that there are significant shares of elderly living in the extended household with three or more adults; on the other hand, we saw that the share of elderly living alone is also increasing. This is particularly worrying given that familialist social policy frameworks are ill equipped to tackle the lack of family support, leaving the elderly in much worse situation that their European counterparts, for whom the defamilialisation of welfare provision is a generalised principle, if not *de facto*, at least in the public agenda. An excessive focus on the reproduction of traditional family models and on the performing side of familialism can mask the particularly pervasive effects of changing conditions in the social systems of these countries.

But even if one focuses on the traditional forms of family organisation, establishing a direct association between their availability and the availability of informal support in old age, this can be an equally misguiding route. The thesis has clearly demonstrated that for the Portuguese case that link does not hold with unquestionable clarity. On the contrary, it was shown that the extended household is more often responding to the needs of the younger generations and as such to the household as a unified budget unit, and less to the needs of the elderly. In fact, even if there is evidence to make a case for support in old age taking place within the extended household, it was shown that the extended household goes much beyond the needs of dependent elderly and as such may not be a resource that is activated to respond to the needs of the elderly and instead something already there preceding the needs of the elder person. Although one could argue that the outcomes would be the same in any case – the extended household as a source of support in old age – the reality is that understanding the motivations underlying that particular living arrangement unravels the nature of the resources really available in familialist systems to tackle old age related needs: The extended household takes place in specific social milieus being far from cutting across all social classes; the extended household involves more often functional elderly that are likely to have an important role in the domestic economy than dependent elderly.

This in turn is related to the third dimension of analysis addressed in the thesis: normative dispositions and predispositions. Again this is a topic of research where one often finds pretty straightforward associations between familialist social policies

and a normative social milieu prone to accept family solidarity and in particular, extended family obligations beyond the nuclear family.

The thesis has provided evidence to at least question this linear reasoning, suggesting that normative dispositions and perceived obligations may in fact be a reflection of perceived opportunities and less the reflection of some sort of idyllic social warmth that keeps people integrated in the kinship network. I am not defying the fact that in familialist countries we do seem to have a more resilient acceptance of family solidarity as the desired source of support in old age. What I am defying is the reading of that resilient trend as a reflection of a *de facto* willingness to perform the role prescribed to families.

Overall, the thesis adds up to the research that claims the need to go beyond the traditional analysis of policy frameworks when doing research on welfare state provision, and to incorporate the analysis of within family dynamics and normative dispositions. This is particularly relevant for the research carried out in national systems where families are assumed to be the main locus of social aid and where one often masks the true nature of the arrangements individuals develop by focusing solely on the legally defined policy framework.

3. Limitations of the study

As stated in chapter 4, the broad goal of the thesis was to provide some sort of a holistic synthesis to explain the welfare arrangements of the Portuguese elderly, hoping that by doing so we would enrich the existing body of research that informs social policy design and social policy debate in that country.

This synthesis was only partially achieved in the sense that some dimensions of analysis had to be left outside the research. Those are dimensions that the existing data do not contemplate in the surveys design and, as such, should be considered simultaneously as limitations of the study and as clues for further research and suggestions for improving the existing large-scale surveys that much of the research on welfare provision across Europe uses as an empirical base.

There are three principal dimensions of analysis unaccounted or only briefly explored in the thesis that, had I been in a position to design the surveys, I would have liked to include:

Between and within family dynamics

At a time when the relevance of families in the lives of the elderly is more or less established, it would be interesting if surveys like the ECHP would not confine themselves to a methodological equivalence between the household and the family.

Certainly the conditions within the household largely determine the living conditions and resources available to individuals. Yet, they do not suffice to fully capture the extent of the importance of families in the lives of the elderly, especially if focusing on the material/instrumental importance.

In this study, I was limited to analysing exchanges of support taking place within the household. It was not possible to take into account exchanges between households, namely financial exchanges. In contexts marked by strongly familiased social policies in old age, confining the analysis of welfare arrangements in old age to within household exchanges of support may be loosing some indicators of the reconfiguration of familialism itself.

Family line perspectives

Living conditions in old age are not only determined by the existing conditions at that time, but are very much related to the building up of opportunities along life. This holds for several aspects of social life, from family life to employment history. There is one aspect though that seems fundamental to understand the structure of opportunities the elderly have and that needs be taken into account in the analysis of their welfare arrangements: demographics of family line. Under this designation, I include data on parenthood, on residential distance between the elder person and their relatives (especially descendants), on frequency and content of contacts between elder person and their descendants and other close relatives.

The absence of these data often leads to short-sighted associations between certain types of living arrangements and opportunities/demands related to the kinship network. This, in a way, builds up on what was laid down in the previous point and can be overcome in some aspects by taking into consideration between households dynamics.

In any case, the absence of these data was the main reason why the longitudinal analysis of the ECHP was not developed in this thesis.

Assessment of needs

One last topic where limitations of the data available were felt particularly significant was that of assessment of needs. In studies about welfare arrangements in old age that aim at giving some contribution for policy discussion, it is very important to have reliable data on needs, namely on needs for social support and care.

The ECHP survey relies exclusively on self-perception of health status, defined in very broad terms. One declaring being "severely hampered", on top of the subjectivity bias, does not say much about the intensity of needs resulting from this status. Also, surveys like this are doomed to lose those individuals that may be precisely the most interesting ones from a social policy design perspective: old people confined to a bed; old people with mental health problems. All these cases, even if present in the household, will be unaccounted for purposes of analysis, which can, at least potentially, introduce an underestimation bias in the research on fulfilment of needs by the family in old age.

Adding to the limitations arising from the data used, it would have been interesting as well to articulate the more quantitative approach developed along the thesis, with a qualitative reading that could, not only enrich the discussion on the multiple dimensions of welfare arrangements in old age, but also include the views of the agents involved in the provision of welfare to the elderly. This could have been achieved by means of interviewing key policy makers and key providers, among others. Time limitations have not made it possible to develop this qualitative side of the analysis.

Despite these limitations, the research hypothesis of this thesis was broadly tested and, in light of the elements put forward so far, it could be sustained it was generally corroborated. There are indicators that familialism is no longer as resilient as the formal social protection system seems to continue assuming it is, and there are clear indicators it is not performing so well in the fulfilment of the elderly people's needs in Portugal.

This general conclusion has several implications in terms of social policy design and evolution. The last section of this chapter addresses those.

4. Familialism and welfare arrangements in old age: social policy implications and future developments

Overall, it seems fair to say that the Portuguese elderly and their families are experiencing a period of transition from a deeply familiased global logics of welfare provision to something we are not yet sure of. It is as if the global system of welfare provision in Portugal is in a state of limbo, this meaning the familialist reference is gradually fading away without being perceptible what can be developed to replace it.

The analysis developed along the thesis provides enough evidence that the availability of families to act as primary welfare providers, within a social policy context that does not foster that ability, is being reduced. Based on the recent trends of evolution of the Portuguese society, namely those related to the changes in the labour market, especially with the increasing participation of women, but also those related to changing life styles, to individualisation and diversification of life trajectories, it can be expected that the erosion of the traditional social fabric sustaining familialism as an operative social model, will continue to take place.

The main challenge facing the formal system of social welfare seems to be that of expanding formal mechanisms. Yet, the financial situation of the country, and the likely scenarios in the near future, do not make it feasible to believe a universal expansion of social protection mechanisms will be available for the Portuguese elderly.

It is really difficult to guess at this stage, how the Portuguese system will evolve.

Other countries that share the familialised imprint of their social protection systems seem to be following the path of expansion of formal mechanisms. That is for example what has been taking place in Spain in the last couple of years, with deep reforms in the public policies targeting the elderly pointing to the reinforcement of formal provision. Yet, it is too soon to tell if those reforms will go further away than the documents that state them.

In Portugal, things are quite fuzzy and the likely evolution of social policies can be dependent on a series of factors that are yet to be clarified. What will be the pressures from stakeholders? Who will verbalise them towards answering which agenda? What will be the dynamics of provision in the near future, namely how will the private for-profit sector position itself?

One thing seems clear: One of the major challenges for the Portuguese state, and a core area for social policy design, will be that of avoiding the widening of social inequalities in old age that are likely to be strengthened by the erosion of familialism. Social cohesion in that respect shows as a likely priority to address when thinking of providing welfare to the elderly. How will that be achieved? Can it be achieved by developing a targeted system? What can be the role of the non-profit sector in that process? These are questions that need to be answered and that could be taken as starting points for some further research.

The main contribution of this thesis, despite showing that the elderly are being increasingly deprived from family resources, left in the vacuum of an underdeveloped formal system, and more exposed to the risk of social exclusion and poverty, is that there is still a comparatively tighter social fabric pressuring towards family solidarity. This can signal the need to invest public resources in strengthening and maintaining informal/family based support networks to the elderly, namely by helping their informal carers. Less familialised systems across Europe seem to have chosen that path. It would apparently make more sense to take that road in a system where families have not yet fully withdrawn from the global logics of social provision.

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Research on the lives and on the needs of the Portuguese elderly is a field that is now taking its first steps. Contrary to other countries where the topic has acquired large visibility for quite some time, in Portugal both the public debate and the research agenda seem to keep it as a secondary theme.

More significant though is the continuous and conspicuous absence of any gender lobbying, of any pressures from representatives of families or of aged people to bring the issue of old age and of social protection in old age to the front public arena. The public debate, quite heated in fact, that was recently seen in Portugal on account of the reforms in the pension systems came mostly from the traditionally better protected sectors of employed workers, namely from the public sector area, that see their historical privileges being questioned. It was not grounded or expressing any national consensus on how and where to go.

Today's elderly people, the ones considered in this thesis, were born between 1910 and 1930, in any case individuals heavily marked in their life courses by the conditions in the country during the dictatorship period. Meanwhile, Portugal has

undergone profound changes, ranging from changing fertility patterns to increases in education levels and changes in labour market structures. All those changes, alongside others such as changing family models or changing life-styles, are expected to impact on old age related issues. How will these be dealt with? And how resilient should we expect familialism to remain in the future?

At the end of this research one cannot avoid the feeling that we are only starting to spot the size of the problem in a familialist system such as Portugal. Simulations, cohort studies and other basis for projections are of crucial interest at this point to inform social policy decisions and options. We have certainly come a long way since the patriarchal family of the dictatorship. However, the pressures on families seem to remain, more subtly expressed at times, but still there.