

International Journal of Iberian Studies

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https://doi.org/10.1386/ijis_00043_1

Received 9 July 2020; Accepted 7 April 2021

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Everyday life under the PIDE: A quantitative survey on the relations between ordinary citizens and Salazar's political police (1955–74)

ABSTRACT

This article examines the relations between Portuguese society and Salazar's political police (PIDE) from the perspective of the everyday lives of ordinary citizens – in contrast to the small minority of oppositionists that has so far monopolized the attention of historians. It is based on a quantitative survey of 400 respondents in four separate locations across Portugal and addresses two main research questions: To what extent did the sample of ordinary citizens experience the PIDE as a disruptive influence on their daily lives? Was the PIDE 'normalized' by them as part of the framework of everyday life? The data analysis calls upon the inputs of the international bibliography of everyday life under dictatorship and critically engages with the existing historiography of the PIDE.

KEYWORDS

Estado Novo
Salazar
political police
PIDE
ordinary citizens
everyday life

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Estado Novo
Salazar
polícia política
PIDE
cidadãos comuns
vida quotidiana

RESUMO

Contrastando com as análises centradas na pequena minoria de opositores que têm dominado o campo historiográfico sobre a polícia política de Salazar, este artigo analisa as relações entre a sociedade portuguesa e a PIDE na perspectiva do quotidiano dos cidadãos comuns. Baseia-se num inquérito quantitativo de 400 inquiridos em quatro localidades distintas em Portugal e explora duas linhas de investigação: Até que ponto este grupo de cidadãos comuns viu a PIDE como uma influência disruptiva no seu dia-a-dia? Foi a PIDE ‘normalizada’ no quadro da sua vida quotidiana? A análise de dados leva em conta os contributos da bibliografia internacional sobre o quotidiano dos indivíduos no contexto de regimes ditatoriais e assume uma visão crítica relativamente à historiografia portuguesa sobre a PIDE.

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1. Thus Pimentel's *História da PIDE*, still the main reference work on Salazar's political police, delves at length into the experiences of the minority of oppositionists who were effectively persecuted by the PIDE (from communists to progressive Catholics) and the modalities of repression used against them. Taken together, these aspects occupy four of the book's five parts.

INTRODUCTION

The Salazar dictatorship (or Estado Novo) ruled over Portugal from 1933 to 1974. Marked by low-intensity ideological mobilization and, especially after 1945, a purposeful thrust towards political demobilization, it is best defined as a form of conservative authoritarianism in which nationalism and 'traditional' social and moral values, carried by the Catholic Church, were taken as references for the process of 'national regeneration' (Pinto 2011: 1–54). Its durability rested partly on the action of its political police, which is the subject of the present article. The International and State Defence Police (Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado, PIDE) was founded in 1945, in replacement of the Surveillance and State Defence Police (Polícia de Vigilância e Defesa do Estado, PVDE, 1933–45), too closely associated with memories of the 1930s 'era of fascism'. In 1969, during the so-called 'Marcellist Spring', the PIDE was itself rebranded, again for cosmetic reasons, as the Directorate-General of Security (Direcção-Geral de Segurança, DGS), maintaining most of its predecessor's extensive arbitrary powers and using them with increasing intensity in the context of growing contestation against the regime (Pimentel 2011: 147).

The historiography of the PIDE has so far been defined by its overwhelming focus on the political police's modalities of repression and the small minority of oppositionists these were directed at. Indeed the (few) works devoted exclusively to the political police have concentrated on individual cases of dissident intellectuals – namely Miguel Torga (Nunes 2007) and Fernando Namora (Silva 2009) – on the main 'perpetrators' of PIDE violence – such as Fernando Gouveia (Pimentel 2008), António Rosa Casaco or Casimiro Monteiro (Pimentel 2019) – and on the detailed diachronic analysis of the practical methods of repression resorted to by the PIDE, from postal interception and phone-tapping to the use of psychological and physical torture (Madeira 2007; Pimentel 2007).¹ In historiographical terms, the overall result has been to reduce the bulk of the population – that is, the mass of 'ordinary

citizens² – to the status of passive victims of the PIDE, allegedly crippled by the fear-inducing impact of the political police on their daily lives (Simpson 2018: 8–9). To quote two of the most influential historians of political repression under the Estado Novo, the PIDE, in addition to its role in stamping out the opposition, served to sustain a ‘clima de intimidação’ (‘climate of intimidation’) through the ‘surda socialização do medo’ (‘insidious socialisation of fear’) (Rosas 2012: 200). In practical terms, ‘neutraliz[ando] selectivamente os poucos que lutavam contra o Estado Novo’ (‘by selectively neutralis[ing] the few who fought against the New State’) and simultaneously propagating ‘a ameaça do que podia acontecer aos que entravam em dissidência’ (‘the threat of what could happen to those who dissented’), the PIDE is seen as having succeeded in ‘espalh[ar] medo’ (‘spread[ing] fear’) across society (Pimentel 2007: 535). According to the established historiographical narrative, one would thus expect ordinary citizens to have experienced the PIDE as a constant and deeply stifling influence on their daily lives.

By shifting the analytical focus away from the tiny minority of oppositionists and onto the majority of ordinary citizens in their experience of everyday life under the PIDE, this article aims to question such non-empirically sustained statements and, more broadly, to challenge the current historiographical consensus on the influence of the political police on Portuguese society. Accessing the past experience of common citizens in their relation to the political police is a challenging task for the historian. The vast majority of the population never came into contact with the PIDE. Consequently, the type of archival material generated by the political police on ordinary citizens remains, despite its significance, either fragmentary (such as the dispersed reports on ‘public opinion’ produced by various State organisms) or highly specific (such as letters of denunciation and other ‘signals from below’).³ Secondary forms of access to past experience, in particular memoirs and autobiographies, though abundant, present their own deficiencies. Written almost exclusively by prominent personalities (the ‘great men’ of their time) or members of the opposition, their accounts of broader society, inasmuch as they elaborate on the subject at all, are heavily tainted by the authors’ personal experience of repression under the Estado Novo and tend precisely to reinforce the representation of Portuguese society as the passive victim of the PIDE (Ventura 2001).

In this article, we have tried to overcome the lack of primary and secondary sources on everyday life under the PIDE by directly accessing the recollections of a sample of ordinary citizens with first-hand experience of life during the dictatorship. This was achieved by means of an opinion survey designed to generate exploitable empirical data, itself part of a broader research programme that will include the use of oral history to deepen the analysis from a qualitative viewpoint. The survey was designed to address two main research questions: Did the sample of ordinary citizens experience the PIDE as a disruptive influence on their daily lives, and if so, how and to what extent? Can the existence of the PIDE be said to have been ‘normalized’ by respondents as part of the framework of everyday life? The survey thus encompasses three main thematic areas: the respondents’ perception of their relation with the PIDE; the assessment of the PIDE’s capacity to influence individual behaviour; the potential ‘coping mechanisms’ (Lüdtke 2016: 26) resorted to by the participants in response to the PIDE’s existence. Each of these thematic areas will be examined according to the six dimensions of the personal data provided by each of the respondents: socio-economic status; degree of politicization; level of education; location; age; sex. Ultimately, our objective is

2. The term ‘ordinary citizens’ is here used to designate the bulk of the population, in contrast to the oppositionist minority within it. It is not meant to reflect a conception of the ‘ordinary’ Portuguese citizen along essentialist lines.
3. To use Sheila Fitzpatrick’s (1996) expression.

to open up the subject area to the broader issues involved in the relations between the PIDE and Portuguese society under the New State, and to allow for a more complex understanding of these relations than is suggested by the prevailing victim-centred historiographical narrative of violence and fear. This will include exploring some of the deeper underlying trends that fashioned the nature of the relations between Salazar's political police and society and contributed to the durability of the regime, such as the demobilization of the population and the eventual 'normalization' of the PIDE by ordinary citizens.

THE SURVEY

The survey was run between 22 January and 16 February 2020 in the form of a person-to-person street inquiry, implemented by a team of nine interviewers specially trained for the project. In total, 400 questionnaire-based interviews were conducted, using closed-ended questions. These were equally distributed by sex (200) and location, in Lisbon, Faro, Viseu and Braga (100 per city). The survey was directed at respondents aged 60 or more, ensuring a minimum age of 15 at the time of the regime's downfall in April 1974. Another precondition for participation in the survey was that respondents needed to have lived their entire life in one of the survey locations. Finally, the questionnaire included an additional screening question designed to ensure that the participants conformed to the definition of ordinary citizens used in this article. In line with this definition, participation was limited to individuals who had not, at any time, been either arrested or questioned by the PIDE. This provided a reliable, though not infallible, means of accessing the population beyond the small circles of active oppositionists that have so far attracted the attention of historians.

In methodological terms, the survey will thus serve as the basis for a correlational, questionnaire-based study implemented in the form of interviews. It is articulated along two non-probabilistic sampling methods. The first is quota sampling, namely the non-aleatory sampling of the target population by age groups. These groups were designed to prioritize participants with a significant period of socialization under the New State. Consequently, they are not proportional to their presence in the total population. Participants were divided into four age categories in order to ensure an equal distribution per survey location (Table 1). Numerical emphasis was placed on the intermediate categories (65/69 and 70/74, corresponding to an age range of 19–28 in 1974). Whilst increasing the number of participants in the fourth age category (75 or more) would have allowed for more respondents with a longer period of socialization under the dictatorship, temporal and material constraints recommended against it, owing to the difficulty in procuring respondents aged over 75.

The second non-probabilistic sampling method is convenience sampling. Participants were interviewed until the predetermined number of respondents (400) was reached. The survey thus makes no claim to national representativeness, though the aggregate and social diversity of the participants (Table 2) will allow us to delineate broad intra- and inter-location trends among individual respondents as far as their personal experience of everyday life under the PIDE was concerned.

From its distribution in terms of profession and subjective household income before 1974 (51.8 per cent of participants reported either 'living comfortably' or 'earning enough to get along', whilst a further 19.5 per cent

	Total	Male				Female			
		60/64 years old	65/69 years old	70/74 years old	75+ years old	60/64 years old	65/69 years old	70/74 years old	75+ years old
Lisbon	100	10	15	15	10	10	15	15	10
Viseu	100	10	15	15	10	10	15	15	10
Braga	100	11	15	14	10	9	16	15	10
Faro	100	10	15	15	10	12	13	15	10
Total	400	41	60	59	40	41	59	60	40

Table 1: Sample distribution by city, sex and age group.

	Survey location			
	Braga (per cent)	Faro (per cent)	Lisbon (per cent)	Viseu (per cent)
Intellectual and scientific activities	5.0	6.0	15.0	6.0
Technicians and intermediate level professions	1.0	2.0	3.0	1.0
Administrative staff and civil servants	12.0	17.0	12.0	17.0
Security, protection and personal services and salespeople	15.0	16.0	21.0	17.0
Agriculture, forestry and fishery	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0
Qualified industrial workers, civil construction and craftsmen	9.0	3.0	4.0	8.0
Machinery operators and assembly workers	2.0	6.0	1.0	0.0
Unqualified labourers	4.0	7.0	1.0	13.0
Unqualified workers in agriculture, forestry, animal production and fishery	8.0	1.0	0.0	2.0
Unqualified workers in the extractive and conditioning industries, civil construction and transport	21.0	15.0	7.0	18.0
Education (school/higher education)	16.0	24.0	31.0	13.0
Unemployed	3.0	1.0	0.0	1.0

Table 2: Sample of respondents by profession (per survey location).

experienced 'very difficult living conditions'), the sample is best defined as generically embodying the lower and incipient middle classes, although this definition obviously glosses over the greater socio-economic diversity of the sample. One particular aspect of the sample must be highlighted on account of its divergence from the composition of Portuguese society in the final two decades of the regime, namely the overrepresentation of secondary and higher education students (21 per cent). This is due mostly to the ageing of the

4. Social memory covers the process through which a knowledge of past events is 'sustained within human societies', allowing 'individuals within those societies [to be] given the sense of a past that extends beyond what they [...] personally remember'. As such it involves 'the operation of a wide variety of cultural devices, and of elements of institutional and social structure', leading to an acquired sense of the past 'envisaged as being somehow [...] collective' (Cubitt 2007: 14–15).

cohorts available for survey today, meaning that most of the respondents (80 per cent) were young (15–28) in 1974. This overrepresentation is likely to have impacted the survey results by inflating the degree of perceived PIDE interference in the respondents' daily lives. Indeed, both the secondary and higher education systems were marked by increasing sociopolitical unrest from the late 1950s onwards, and consequently the object of heightened surveillance by the PIDE. The survey results will also have to be assessed in this light.

Our approach to the data was fashioned by two methodological considerations that must be highlighted from the outset. Firstly, whilst the data generated by the survey will be treated as sufficiently 'stable' recollections of the past – rather than as elements for the study of memory processes per se – it is nevertheless essential to acknowledge the fact that such recollections are inevitably fashioned by the complex dynamics of memory, in particular the influence of 'social memory'⁴ on individual remembrance (Cubitt 2007: 77–81). This is especially relevant in the Portuguese case. Indeed, a deeply ingrained victim-centred, 'antifascist' social memory of the PIDE has prevailed in Portugal since gaining hegemonic status during the Carnation Revolution (Simpson 2020b). The nature and influence of the social memory of the PIDE – with its heavy emphasis on notions such as 'the people as victim', the 'omnipresence' of the PIDE and the systematic brutality of its agents – need to be taken into account since it is also likely to have influenced the participants – i.e. by accentuating the tendency to overstate the degree of PIDE interference in their daily lives. Secondly, the treatment of the data will not limit itself to a merely descriptive analysis of the survey results from a quantitative standpoint. Nor do we aim to put forward an exhaustive examination of the multiple dimensions and correlations enabled by the survey. Instead, the analysis will also include a strong element of qualitative interpretation, as a purposeful means of engaging critically with the current historiographical consensus on the PIDE as an overwhelming, crippling influence, acting upon a society of 'passive victims'. Owing to the diversity of themes encompassed in the questionnaire, and to avoid repetition, the interpretation of the data has been interspersed in the presentation of the survey results. The conclusion will in turn serve as an interpretative synthesis of the main survey results.

Finally, to conclude this presentation of the survey and its methodological implications, we must explain the factors that led us to select Lisbon, Viseu, Braga and Faro as survey locations. The first is that they allow for a broad geographical coverage of the country: Lisbon in the littoral Centre, Viseu in the interior Centre, Braga in the North and Faro in the South. The extensive, latifundia-based region of the Alentejo was purposefully left out of the study, since the preponderance of Communist-led resistance in the area meant that respondents would have been especially prone to answer the questionnaire through the prism of the dominant 'anti-fascist' social memory.

The second factor is that each location provides a different sociopolitical profile in the final two decades of the regime. Lisbon offered the most diversified and politicized setting of the four. In 1970 the city was home to 760,150 inhabitants (Anon. 1973: 42). Its political culture ranged from the (widespread) quiescent acceptance of the regime to rising discontent in the late 1950s, as the capital provided the scene for the Opposition's most important initiatives – from student movements to political rallies in the periods of 'semi-authorized' electoral campaigning, under the impulse of Communists, Republicans, Socialists or 'progressive' Catholics (Rosas 1994: 523–43, 554–58). In social terms, the city remained marked by the 'plebeian' nature of its

population (França 2005: 73), indeed increasingly so as a result of the incoming exodus of impoverished rural dwellers in search of work. In spite of the economic and social betterments that resulted from rising public expenditure in the early 1960s (Ramos 2009: 687–90), Lisbon was very much a microcosm of the ‘dualist society’ described by Adérito Sedas Nunes in the mid-1960s (Nunes 1964). The rise in modernized secondary and tertiary sectors of activity coexisted with extreme poverty, the proletarianization of the labour force and deficient living conditions.

In contrast, Viseu was a medium-sized town in the heart of the rural, Centre region of Portugal. Its population in 1970 was 73,010. Socially and politically, the town was defined by deep-rooted conservatism, the power of traditional local notables (notwithstanding the presence of Republican individualities), and the influence of the Catholic Church (França 1981: 53–55). Whilst the town comprised some secondary sector activities (such as the production of textile and metallurgy), its economic fabric and the political outlook of its inhabitants remained intertwined with the surrounding rural setting of small-crop farming, dependent on the influence of large property owners and lacking any form of organized activity by the Opposition before the April revolution (Sobral 1999: 351). In the northern town of Braga, the influence of the Catholic Church was even more pronounced (França 1981: 55). Seat of the Archbishop Primate (by norm a staunch supporter of the New State throughout the existence of the regime), the town was home to 96,220 inhabitants in 1970. Conservative in social and political outlook (not without reason, the military coup of 28 May 1926 that brought the First Republic to an end had originated in Braga), the town was the scene of virulent anti-communist demonstrations in August 1975, during the so-called ‘verão quente’ (‘hot summer’) (Ferreira 1994: 264). Notwithstanding the importance of secondary sector industry in the town (such as metallurgy and civil construction), the town’s economic fabric and sociopolitical outlook were also permeated by the circumambient rurality, characterized by small-unit farming under the effective control of the ‘conservative bloc’ of prominent landowners (Silva 1987: 445). Larger and less isolated geographically, Braga was undoubtedly less ‘depoliticized’ than Viseu, both in terms of its marked conservatism and also of fringe efforts at oppositionist activity – such as occasional communist activism among secondary sector labourers.

Faro, in contrast, located on the Algarve coastline, was characteristic of the small, relatively ‘de-Christianized’ town of the South (França 1981: 63–64). In 1970 its population was 30,535. In socio-economic terms, the local population was employed in the fisheries industry and small secondary sector enterprises, such as cork transformation (Carrega 2019: 39–40). Peripheral and lacking in any established tradition of opposition to the regime, the town was nevertheless increasingly marked by the impact of modern ‘western’ lifestyles during the 1960s tourist boom (Barreto 2015: 114).

Finally, each of the cities presented specific features regarding the presence of the PIDE. The headquarters of the political police were located in Lisbon. It was thus in the capital that its presence can be expected to have been experienced most strongly by the population. In contrast, the PIDE had no permanent presence in Viseu. Instead, the town was covered by the PIDE Delegation in Coimbra (the most important at the national level after Lisbon and Porto). Located 92 km to the South of Viseu, agents were dispatched from Coimbra whenever deemed necessary. The same situation applied in Braga, whose population was placed under the jurisdiction of the PIDE Delegation in

Porto, 55 km to the south-west. Faro, by contrast, included both a PIDE Post in the town itself and, after 1965, a Frontier Post at the international airport (Pimentel 2007: n.pag. [Map 3]).

Smaller rural towns and villages were not considered as potential survey locations, since the policing of these local communities was by norm entrusted to the National Republican Guard (Guarda Nacional Republicana, GNR) (Cerezales 2011: 264). Our primary concern in the choice of survey location was thus to encompass a diversity of social settings, in areas where the PIDE would have made its presence felt in varying degrees.

SURVEY RESULTS AND DATA ANALYSIS

One of the central ideological tenets of the New State since its inception in 1933 was that 'politics' should remain the preserve of a duly prepared governmental elite (Pinto 2011: 43–44). According to Salazarist propaganda, this would prevent any relapse into the 'chaos' of the factional First Republic (1910–26), presented as the immediate cause of 'national decadence' (Catroga 1998: 260). As a result, the authorities repeatedly instructed the population not to engage in political affairs (other than to support and implement Salazar's policies) or risk exposing themselves to the action of the PIDE. As a starting point in this study, it is thus important to examine how the sample of ordinary citizens responded to the regime's official ban on politics, for it would largely have determined its degree of exposure to the PIDE.

Depoliticization: Internalizing the rules or the 'normality' of everyday life under the PIDE

Three of the survey questions related to participant interest in politics during the dictatorship. As part of the sociodemographic data gathered on each of the respondents, we asked the participants to assess their interest in politics during the dictatorship. In total, over three quarters of participants (76.5 per cent) reported having had either 'little' or 'no' interest in politics. The percentages were particularly high in Viseu and Braga (84 per cent) but also significant in Faro (72 per cent) and Lisbon (66 per cent). A univariate analysis of variance confirms that political interest before 1974 was higher in Lisbon than in Braga and Viseu ($F(3;391) = 7.781, p < 0.001$; post hoc tests: $p's < 0.01$). This was partly the result of the greater social diversity and political activism in the capital, especially following Humberto Delgado's landmark presidential campaign for the Opposition in 1958 (Delgado et al. 1998). Overall, however, interest in politics during the Estado Novo can be said to have been low among the survey participants.

Age and low interest in politics were positively correlated at a significant level ($r = 0.416, p < 0.01$), meaning that older participants, who had experienced a longer period of socialization under the dictatorship, were more prone to assimilate the official ban on politics. The fact that younger participants essentially experienced a period of the regime marked by intensifying contestation (Raby 1988) would also undoubtedly have contributed to their greater relative interest in politics, although the point should not be overstated. Indeed, in contrast to the small politicized student population, the overwhelming majority of Portuguese youth remained under-educated and as a consequence rapidly integrated the labour market, mostly in isolation from any of the focal points of politicization (Pappámikail 2011: 215–16).

The survey also included a question on how frequently participants discussed politics in the privacy of the household. The aim was to assess the extent to which they may have internalized the regime's ban on politics. In total, over three quarters of participants (78 per cent) reported either 'never' or 'rarely' doing so. The percentage was particularly high in Viseu (92 per cent), Braga (80 per cent) and Faro (76 per cent), and lower – though still substantial – in Lisbon (64 per cent).

Overall, despite the overrepresentation of students in the sample, the overwhelming majority of participants, in particular in Viseu and Braga, complied with the regime and did not meddle in politics. The fact that the majority of respondents did not discuss politics even in the privacy of the household raises two important points. First, it strongly suggests that they had internalized the ban on politics. By this it is meant that as a result of the 'routinization' of the normative framework imposed by the regime (Fullbrook 2018b: 14), the avoidance of politics had evolved into a form of unconsciously assumed behaviour. The significance of the overall results – notwithstanding the lower percentage in the (more politicised) capital – further reinforces this interpretation. It also suggests that the conclusions reached in the (very few) surveys carried out by oppositionists in the final years of the regime – which sought to emphasize the overall interest of the population in public affairs and explain its lack of electoral expression as a result of the unstimulating civic environment at the time – probably included a strong element of wishful thinking (Duarte et al. 1973: 15; Estudos IPOPE 1973: 53–54). Second, it also means that the phenomenon cannot be interpreted as a simple retreat from the public sphere into the private, the latter of which, as highlighted in the international bibliography of everyday life under dictatorship, usually included a significant degree of political discourse (Peukert 1993: 77; Gieseke 2014: 122; Corner 2016: 88; Mailänder 2016: 403). Indeed, both in public *and* private, the vast majority of respondents simply appeared not to have considered politics as a valuable subject of discussion.

Two factors can help to explain this process. On the one hand, Salazarist efforts to depoliticize the masses benefited from the predisposition of Portuguese society in the first third of the twentieth century. In Portugal, the depoliticization of the masses had deep historical roots, stemming both from the advent of liberal *caciquismo* during the constitutional monarchy (Almeida 1991) and the persistence of widespread illiteracy – 76 per cent of the population in 1890 (Silva 1993: 101). The First Republic, in spite of the numerous strikes and trade union activities that marked the period – most of which severely repressed by the authorities (Samara 2009: 156–58) – merely prolonged the trend by limiting the franchise (Almeida 1998: 733), maintaining networks of electoral clientelism, and ultimately keeping decision-making in the hands of a small group of politicians in Lisbon (Serra 2000: 111–12). On the other hand, part of the societal changes taking place in the 1960s also contributed to depoliticization. Post-war socio-economic changes may have encouraged the growing expression of political discontent, as has been commonly emphasized, but the concomitant modernization of lifestyles – in particular the rapid growth in ownership of radios and television sets (Barreto 1996: 146) – also carried developments which 'positively emphasised the individualised private sphere' (Peukert 1993: 78) to the detriment of engagement in public affairs.

Finally, participants were presented with a statement aimed at determining the extent to which political (dis)engagement intersected with their perception of the PIDE as an influence on their daily lives. The statement postulated that 'quem não se metia na política podia viver uma vida normal sem ter que se preocupar com a PIDE' ('[p]roviding you did not get involved in politics, one could lead a normal life without having to worry about the PIDE'). On average, participants agreed with the statement ($M = 2.81$; $SD = 0.833$). In total, over two thirds of respondents (69.6 per cent) either 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed'. The percentage was highest in Lisbon (73.2 per cent), closely followed by Viseu (69.9 per cent), Braga (68.3 per cent) and Faro (66.7 per cent). A univariate analysis of variance reveals no significant differences between locations ($F < 1$). Although this leaves a non-negligible minority of respondents disagreeing with the statement (30.5 per cent), these results are unexpectedly high, especially in light of the predictable influence of the social memory of the PIDE (i.e. that of an all-pervading, life-disrupting PIDE) on individual recollection, and the current historiographical consensus on the nature of the relations between society and the political police.

We then tested the sociodemographic variables through regression analysis (age, subjective income, education, religious participation, political orientation and interest in politics) to gain further insight into the social dynamics at play. Lower subjective incomes ($\beta = -0.168$, $t(255) = -2.497$, $p = 0.013$) and higher levels of education ($\beta = -0.128$, $t(256) = -1.791$, $p = 0.074$) respectively acted as significantly negative and marginally significant negative predictors – meaning that both categories of respondents were less inclined to agree with the statement. This may result from the fact that both low-income respondents and those with a higher level of education would have developed a more cautious perception of the PIDE. In the case of the former, because of the general precariousness of their situation; in the latter, as a consequence of their higher expectations in terms of social advancement, which the PIDE to a large extent conditioned by controlling access to employment in the public sector (Rosas 2012: 197).

On the other hand, low interest in politics acted as a significantly positive predictor ($\beta = 0.225$, $t(255) = 3.300$, $p = 0.001$). That this category of respondents should have tended to agree with the statement merely reinforces the idea that the vast majority of participants led perfectly 'normal' lives under the PIDE, precisely as a result of their apolitical stance.

On the whole, these results suggest an overwhelming sense of acquiescence in relation to the official thrust towards depoliticization, particularly in the conservative communities of Viseu and Braga. Depoliticization in turn removed the threat posed by the PIDE for the vast majority of respondents and created the conditions for them to lead a 'normal' life. Prior to examining the participants' conception of 'normality', it will be useful to assess the perceived influence of the political police on their daily lives and its place in the society generated by Salazarism.

The (non)influence of the PIDE on everyday life

The survey included two questions designed to access the everyday experience of the sample of ordinary citizens under the PIDE. Participants were first asked to assess the extent to which they might have been influenced by the existence of the PIDE in the conduct of their daily lives. On average, participants considered that the PIDE did not influence their lives to any great extent ($M = 2.12$;

SD = 1.111). In total, nearly two thirds of participants (63.3 per cent) reported that the PIDE had exerted either 'no' (40.5 per cent) or 'little' (22.8 per cent) influence on their daily lives. Again, in light of the social memory of the PIDE, the current historiographical consensus and the disproportionate number of students in the sample, these numbers are surprisingly high and suggest that the presence of the PIDE was simply not experienced as particularly intrusive by the respondents.

Using regression analysis, we tested whether the sociodemographic variables predicted the perceived influence of the PIDE on the respondents' daily life (mean values). On the one hand, the right-wing orientation of respondents acted as a significant negative predictor of the PIDE's influence ($\beta = -0.164$, $t(264) = -2.612$, $p = 0.010$). On the other hand, a lower subjective income operated as a significant positive predictor ($\beta = 0.225$, $t(264) = 3.464$, $p = 0.001$). These results can be explained by the fact that right-wing respondents would have been at least partly aligned with Salazarist policies, and therefore less inclined to consider the political police as a disruptive influence. In contrast, the vulnerability of low-income respondents left them more exposed to external intrusions, all the more so considering the type of 'socially selective' repression exercised by the PIDE, which hit those at the bottom of the social hierarchy the hardest (Pimentel 2007: 531).

We then asked participants if they had felt that the PIDE was constantly surveilling them. Contrary to what might have been expected, on average the participants disagreed with the statement ($M = 2.48$; $SD = 0.841$). In total, 53.4 per cent of respondents either 'disagreed' or 'completely disagreed'. Whilst the overall results are certainly not clear-cut – indeed 46.6 per cent of respondents agreed with the statement – they nevertheless suggest the need for a far more nuanced account of repression than the present historiographical emphasis on the PIDE as a 'panoptic' entity (Madeira 2007: 100; Pimentel 2011: 145; Rosas 2012: 200; Silva 2019), especially if the survey's aforementioned conditioning factors are duly borne in mind. This point is further reinforced if the differences between survey locations are considered. Indeed, nearly two thirds of participants in Lisbon (64.3 per cent) either 'disagreed' or 'completely disagreed' with the statement. The number reached 59.6 per cent in Viseu and 52.6 per cent in Faro. In contrast, most participants in Braga either 'agreed' or 'completely agreed' with the statement, at a relatively high level (63.2 per cent). Braga's singularity may be partly explained, as we have seen, by its particular sociopolitical environment – i.e. a small community with a marked conservative outlook. External factors were undoubtedly important too, in particular the higher density of PIDE informers in the North of the country relative to the South (Pimentel 2007: 337). The significant discrepancy in results between Braga and Viseu, despite their similarities in sociopolitical terms, is particularly striking, and can partly be ascribed to the latter's characteristics as an 'interior' territory, significantly more distant not only from the centres of political decision-making but also from the closest site of permanent PIDE presence, namely the PIDE Delegation in Coimbra.

Gender also played a part in the respondents' assessment of the PIDE's influence on daily life. Sex and the reporting of 'little' or 'no influence' of the PIDE are indeed correlated, albeit at a marginally significant level (Fisher's exact test, $p = 0.069$). Female respondents tended to consider that the PIDE influenced their lives to a greater extent than their male counterparts. We shall see in the next sub-section how such gender differences may be interpreted.

On the whole, a strong majority of respondents thus did not consider the PIDE to have exerted a significant influence on the conduct of their daily lives. Nor did the majority of respondents, except in Braga, experience the PIDE as a panoptic entity scrutinizing their daily activities.

The PIDE and Portuguese society: Between ambiguity and normalization

Participants were then presented with the following statement, designed to examine their perception of the place occupied by the PIDE in the society engendered by Salazarism: '[d]urante o Estado Novo, a PIDE podia ser uma opção aceitável de carreira profissional, especialmente para quem não tinha meios materiais ou formação escolar' ('[d]uring the Estado Novo, the PIDE could provide an acceptable professional career option, especially for people lacking material resources or formal education') – that is, effectively the vast majority of the population throughout the period considered (Barreto 2015: 129–30, 132).

Once more, in light of the dominant social memory of the PIDE and the overrepresentation of the student population in the sample, one would expect such a statement to be rejected emphatically. If, on average, participants indeed disagreed ($M = 2.34$; $SD = 0.845$) – 56.9 per cent of respondents either 'disagreed' or 'strongly disagreed' with the statement – these numbers are unexpectedly low. Indeed, they leave a significant minority of respondents (43.1 per cent) either 'agreeing' or 'totally agreeing' with the given statement. The point is even more salient if one considers the disparities between survey locations. In Viseu, the majority of respondents (53.2 per cent) actually 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with the idea that the PIDE could provide an acceptable professional career option for those lacking in material resources or education. From this viewpoint, it is perhaps no coincidence that much of the PIDE's personnel originated precisely from the rural areas in the interior Centre of the country (Pimentel 2007: 57), particularly affected by rigid social hierarchies and the lack of opportunities for economic betterment. In Lisbon too, the percentage reached nearly half of respondents (47.7 per cent).

Such figures suggest that the perception of the PIDE among participants was by no means a simple one, and that the relation between society and the political police cannot be reduced to a dichotomist antagonism between persecutors and persecuted. Rather, the results hint at a more porous dividing line between ordinary citizens and the PIDE, and a far more ambiguous societal stance towards it than is commonly recognized in the historiography's constant references to a universally 'despised' PIDE (Pimentel 2007: 303). Ultimately, these figures support the argument previously put forward in our studies of the phenomenon of spontaneous interactions between the population and the political police (such as petitions, denunciations and application letters). For the mass of common citizens, engaged in the everyday struggle against poverty, the PIDE could just as easily be seen as an economic opportunity in a society tragically short of them than as a threat to their 'freedom' and 'well-being', both of which were severely restricted by their material destitution anyway (Simpson 2018: 23).

Male respondents agreed with the statement significantly more than female respondents ($F(1;302) = 9.308$, $p = 0.002$), as did older participants (aged 75 or more) compared to their younger counterparts (aged 60–64) – though only at a marginally significant level ($t(119) = -1.926$, $p = 0.056$). This

further suggests that female participants had a more negative perception of the PIDE than their male counterparts. In a deeply conservative society, where women were the object of particularly constricting norms (Ferreira 2011: 255–57), the political police was more likely to be seen by them as an intrusive disciplinary institution. Considering that the PIDE was in part responsible for controlling the ‘pernicious’ influence of modern lifestyles on traditional catholic morals, it is likely that female respondents saw the political police as yet another instrument of female subordination in the New State’s panoply of disciplinary entities. The results also support the idea that the longer the period of socialization under the regime, the deeper the process of ‘normalization’ of the PIDE was likely to be – in this case, as an acceptable career opportunity. The concept of ‘normalization’ is here envisaged as a mechanism of change over time. The exceptional longevity of the New State indeed allowed for a significant period of ‘stabilisation [...] and the associated [...] routinisation of institutional structures and regular patterns of behaviour’ (Fulbrook 2008b: 15). As ‘processes of political, economic, and social change t[ook] place in which people’s changing experiences affect[ed] their attitudes and patterns of behaviour’, the public ‘adapt[ed] to new circumstances and s[ought] to realise their interests in changing socio-political environments, in the process also changing their own conceptions of “normality”’ (2008b: 14–15). As we have seen, the avoidance of politics seemed to have been internalized as one aspect of ‘normality’. So was, one may argue, the PIDE itself. The numerous ‘spontaneous application letters’ sent to the PIDE by ordinary citizens eager to join its ranks further support this argument (Simpson 2020a: 14–15).

Secondly, in order to assess the place of the PIDE among the various disciplinary entities binding society under the Estado Novo, we asked participants which of the following entities best represented the repressive side of the Estado Novo (Table 3). In addition to the PIDE and GNR, these included: the Public Security Police (Policia de Seguranca Pública, PSP), entrusted with enforcing public order in urban areas; the Judicial Police (Policia Judiciaria, PJ), responsible for investigating major criminal activity; and the Portuguese Legion (Legiao Portuguesa, LP), a paramilitary militia created in 1936 in the context of ‘fascistization’ of the regime. Participants could select only one of these five options.

Although overall the PIDE was the most frequently cited institution (29.8 per cent), this number is again surprisingly low (less than one third of respondents) considering the socially dominant representation of the PIDE as ultimate symbol of Salazarist repression since 1974.

	Per cent
GNR	22.5
PSP	18.3
PIDE (DGS after 1969)	29.8
PJ	1.3
LP	9.3
Does not know/no answer	19.0

Table 3: Institutions symbolizing Estado Novo repression in the participants’ locality (total numbers).

	City			
	Braga (per cent)	Faro (per cent)	Lisboa (per cent)	Viseu (per cent)
GNR	40.0	15.0	17.0	18.0
PSP	23.0	8.0	23.0	19.0
PIDE (DGS after 1969)	12.0	42.0	37.0	28.0
PJ	3.0	0.0	2.0	0.0
LP	12.0	17.0	6.0	2.0
Does not know/no response	10.0	18.0	15.0	33.0

Table 4: Institution that best represented the repressive side of the Estado Novo (per city).

As a result of the different functions exercised by each of these disciplinary entities, there were also significant disparities between survey locations (Table 4).

As Table 4 shows, in Braga, most participants singled out not the PIDE but the GNR as prime symbol of Salazarist repression (40 per cent). The PIDE came only in third position, behind the PSP (23 per cent) and in equal proportion to the LP (12 per cent). In Viseu, although the PIDE was the most frequently cited entity (28 per cent), the inordinately high percentage of participants who chose not to answer the question (33 per cent) must also be highlighted. The percentage of non-responses is in fact high in all four locations. This suggests a measure of uncertainty – or indifference – among respondents, confirmed by the relatively high percentage of participants in Viseu who opted either for the PSP (19 per cent) or GNR (18 per cent). In contrast, in Faro (42 per cent) and Lisbon (37 per cent), the PIDE emerged unequivocally as the foremost symbol of repression, undoubtedly reflecting the permanent presence of the PIDE in both locations. Even in these two cases, however, the numbers did not come close to an absolute majority.

These results allow for two conclusions. The first is that the numbers are broadly – though not evenly – distributed between the PIDE, the GNR (22.5 per cent) and the PSP (18.3 per cent). In contrast to the current centrality of the PIDE as paramount symbol of Salazarist repression, the practical experience of repression among respondents emerges as more diverse. The second is that the PIDE certainly did not stand out as an ‘abnormal’ entity among the regular police forces, a further indication of its normalization by the sample of ordinary citizens. Rather than a PIDE-centric image of repression, consecrated in the social memory of the PIDE, what emerges is a broader front of repressive entities, in which all policing entities played an important role. In this particular case, the survey results support the common historiographical argument according to which the regime fundamentally relied on a panoply of repressive instruments acting in collaboration – though not devoid of tension – to enforce its social and political order (Araújo 2015: 342; Carvalho 2009; Pimentel 2007: 78–84).

Whilst we have argued that there was a measure of historical continuity in the depoliticization of ordinary Portuguese citizens, predating the Estado Novo, this does not preclude from the fact that the PIDE itself may have played a role in furthering the process of demobilization. Historians of the Salazar regime have long been keen to emphasize the PIDE’s role as an instrument of ‘preventive repression’ geared towards the ‘political atomization of society’, eschewing mass violence by cultivating its fear-instilling impact

on society (Martins 1978: 457–58; Lucena 1979: 61). The survey provided an opportunity to test this argument empirically. Was fear of the PIDE a reality of everyday life among respondents, as might be expected? Did ‘preventive repression’ contribute to their demobilization? To what extent was the ‘normality’ of daily life conditioned by the PIDE?

Fear of the PIDE

Participants were first asked to assess the degree of personal fear caused by the PIDE. On average, the respondents reported a moderate degree of fear ($M = 2.67$; $SD = 1.167$). In total, the majority of participants (63.3 per cent) reported having experienced either a ‘moderate’ (33.5 per cent) or ‘strong’ (29.8 per cent) sense of fear towards the PIDE. Whilst this left a considerable minority of respondents – over one third (35.5 per cent) – reporting either ‘no’ or ‘little’ experience of fear, personal fear of the PIDE seems very much to have been a reality of the everyday lives of respondents, even if the three aforementioned conditioning factors are likely to have influenced the survey results by inflating their recollections of individual fear.

The participants who reported fearing the PIDE were then presented with three explanatory factors (Table 5).

Two factors emerge as outstanding causes. The first is ‘[k]nowing that the PIDE was violent and resorted to torture’ (93.1 per cent), and the second ‘[b]elieving that the PIDE was omnipresent through its informers’ (90.5 per cent). The third factor (‘[k]nowing that the PIDE could prevent employment in the public sector’) was also considered to be either ‘important’ or ‘very important’ by two thirds of respondents (66.6 per cent). Male participants reported significantly less personal fear than female respondents ($F(1;393) = 3.618$, $p = 0.058$).

The experience of fear differed between survey locations. Participants in Braga reported a higher level of fear than participants in Faro, Lisbon and Viseu ($F(3;391) = 7.187$, $p < 0.001$; post hoc tests: p 's < 0.02). This result is again unexpected, considering the absence of any permanent presence of the PIDE in Braga. In spite of the town’s proximity to the PIDE Delegation in Porto, this suggests that the fear generated by the PIDE was not necessarily tied to its local presence or visibility. Rather, it may have been conveyed by local social actors (which we shall seek to identify through the use of oral history) and, more importantly perhaps, by the PIDE’s successful projection of a reputation for omnipresence – as suggests the high number of participants in Braga

	No importance (per cent)	Little importance (per cent)	Important (per cent)	Very important (per cent)
Knowing that the PIDE could prevent employment in the public sector	18.4	15	27.1	39.5
Knowing that the PIDE was violent and resorted to torture	3.7	3.3	24.3	68.8
Believing that the PIDE was omnipresent through its informers	3.2	6.3	24.9	65.6

Table 5: Reasons for fearing the PIDE (total numbers).

who reported fearing the presence of PIDE informers. As we have seen, PIDE informers were indeed more numerous in the North of Portugal. The uncertainty over their identity and status, as well as the unpredictability of their reports to the PIDE, undoubtedly reinforced their potential to induce fear.

The survey also included a question on the perception of fear at the societal level. We asked participants whether they agreed that '[d]uring the Estado Novo, an atmosphere of terror permeated Portuguese society'. On average, respondents concurred with the statement ($M = 2.73$; $SD = 0.776$). Whilst over a third of participants (35.6 per cent) disagreed, 64.4 per cent either 'agreed' or 'totally agreed' with the statement, although once more it is important to see these results in light of the factors which conditioned the survey results – in particular the social memory of the PIDE, with its heavy emphasis on the fear-inducing impact of the political police and its concomitant self-exculpatory notion of 'the people as victim'. The percentage was again highest in Braga (72.6 per cent), followed by Faro (63.1 per cent), Lisbon (63.5 per cent) and Viseu (58.2 per cent). A univariate analysis of variance confirms that participants in Braga agreed with the statement to a greater extent than those in Viseu ($F(3;373) = 3.028$, $p = 0.029$; post hoc tests: $p = 0.019$). This result must again be linked to Viseu's status as an 'interior' territory.

Overall then, individual fear of the PIDE – though moderate – and its impact on social relations were a reality of everyday life among the respondents. As a result of the routinization of the structures imposed by the regime, the sample of ordinary citizens may have perceived their daily lives in terms of 'normality', but it was nonetheless a 'conditioned normality' in practical terms. We may now see how, and to what extent, the existence of the PIDE affected the respondents in their daily lives.

Coping with the PIDE: Avoidance strategies

If fear of the political police had any practical effect on respondents, it was likely to have induced behaviour adjustments – or coping strategies – in the conduct of their daily lives, as highlighted in the international bibliography (Fulbrook 2008a: 312–13; Lüdtke 2008, 2016; Mailänder 2016). The survey included two questions designed to determine whether such coping strategies existed and, if so, why they were resorted to.

Participants were first presented with a series of ten social situations and asked to assess the extent to which they had felt compelled to adjust their behaviour in each case. These were chosen for being commonly referred to in the historiography as 'typical' cases of PIDE influence on daily life. The implicit logic in each situation is that any adjustment in behaviour equated to a strategy of avoidance caused by the respondents' awareness of the PIDE's existence.

In six of the ten social situations, almost two thirds of respondents (64.9 per cent) considered the PIDE to have exerted either 'no' or 'little' influence on their conduct. This applied to: 'Dating in public' (77.6 per cent); 'Choosing one's friends' (76.9 per cent); 'Passing near the PIDE Headquarter, Delegation or Post in or closest to your locality' (74.7 per cent); 'Reading certain books' (54.3 per cent); 'Being part of a group (three or more persons) in a public space' (54.3 per cent) and 'Frequenting certain places, such as bookshops and cafés connoted with the Opposition to the regime' (51.2 per cent). The last three of these cases, more evenly divided in percentual terms, provide a first indication of the PIDE's influence on the respondents' conduct in certain situations.

Indeed, in the remaining four scenarios, a solid majority of participants (57.9 per cent) considered the PIDE to have exerted a 'considerable' or 'strong' influence on their behaviour. The percentage was particularly high with regard to '[s]peaking about politics in public' (64.2 per cent). Speaking in public about illegal emigration (57.1 per cent) or the colonial war (55.8 per cent) also aggregated significant majorities, closely followed by '[f]requenting people known to hold ideas contrary to the regime' (54.4 per cent).

These numbers highlight two important points. The first is that in the majority of the ten situations, the greater part of respondents – almost two thirds on average – did not feel the influence of the PIDE to any relevant extent. The second is that, in spite of this, the PIDE does appear to have made its influence felt precisely on the issues that would have contributed the most to its role as an agent of coercive depoliticization, namely the public discussion of politics, illegal emigration or the colonial war, and the decision not to associate with known 'anti-situationists'. Although even on these issues a surprisingly high number of respondents (42.1 per cent) were not significantly influenced by the PIDE, the political police restricted the behaviour of the majority of respondents as regarded the more politically sensitive issues. In this sense, its mere presence can be said to have provided an incentive to further demobilize, in a society whose degree of politicization had been minimal decades before the Estado Novo even came into power.

The situation is more complex, however, if one considers the disparities between survey locations. The percentage of participants who considered the PIDE to have exerted a 'considerable' or 'strong' influence on their '[s]peaking about politics in public' was indeed significantly higher in Braga (72.7 per cent), Viseu (69.7 per cent), and Faro (64.3 per cent) than in Lisbon (51.5 per cent). This result may be explained by their relatively smaller size, which made the public discussion of politics all the more conspicuous – especially in the context of ingrained conservatism in Braga and Viseu. Bearing these reasons in mind, it is less surprising to find a similar disparity in relation to '[c]ontacting with people known to hold ideas contrary to the regime', which reached 69.4 per cent in Braga and 69.3 per cent in Viseu, compared to 44.5 per cent in Faro and only 36.4 per cent in Lisbon. In each of these cases, the percentage is unexpectedly low in Lisbon. The fact lends itself to several interpretations. First, the larger scale of the city offered more possibilities for anonymity, despite the institutional presence of the PIDE. It was also obviously possible to contact with 'anti-situationists' without personally engaging in politics, as the results in Faro also emphasize. That this kind of social interaction was possible for the vast majority of sampled Lisboners reinforces the idea that the experience of fear was of an overall *moderate* nature. It also suggests that the PIDE's capacity to influence behaviour was a geographically differentiated phenomenon, particularly efficient in smaller (though urban) conservative communities, irrespective of a permanent presence of the PIDE locally.

This geographical differentiation was also linked to the socio-economic particularities of the North and Centre regions of Portugal in the final two decades of the regime. This was particularly visible with regard to '[s]peaking about illegal emigration in public', where the percentage of participants who considered the PIDE to have exerted a 'considerable' or 'strong' influence on their avoiding the subject reached 77.7 per cent in Braga and 71.1 per cent in Viseu, compared to 46.6 per cent in Faro and a mere 33 per cent in Lisbon. This disparity can be explained by the fact that from the mid-1950s onwards most emigrants, whether legal or illegal, issued precisely from the North and

Centre of the country. As a result, the inhabitants of Braga and Viseu would have been significantly more aware of the issue than their counterparts in Faro and Lisbon, and more cautious about discussing it in public. The fact that both towns were important locations for the *engajadores* who recruited would-be migrants prior to their integration in the illegal emigration networks (Pereira 2012) merely heightened the need for caution among the local population.

CONCLUSION

The results of the survey show that the overwhelming majority of respondents, in particular in the smaller, conservative towns of Braga and Viseu, did not engage in politics, instead abiding by the regime's official ban on politics. The significance of the results suggests that the respondents had internalized their disengagement from politics as part of an experienced 'normality', allowing them to conduct their daily lives without concern for the PIDE. Accordingly, and contrary to what might have been expected, the majority felt that the political police exerted little or no influence on their everyday lives.

The survey results also suggest a more complex and subtle subjective experience of the PIDE than acknowledged in the social memory of the PIDE and the historiography itself. The PIDE emerges not as an 'abnormal' policing entity or the overbearing symbol of Salazarist repression, but merely as one amongst the Estado Novo's several disciplinary institutions. The significant minority of respondents who, despite the factors conditioning the survey results, considered the PIDE to have been an acceptable career option for the uneducated and impoverished – and, in the case of Viseu, a majority of respondents – further emphasizes the ambiguity of the relations between Portuguese society and the PIDE. The fact calls for a renovated analytical framework capable of encompassing the PIDE's alternative social functions beyond mere repression – in this particular case, as an economic opportunity in a society riddled with poverty. Such a framework will also have to accommodate for the process of normalization of the PIDE, resulting from the routinization of new behaviour norms aimed at facilitating the conduct of daily life in an authoritarian context. Contrary to the argument of the established historiography, ordinary citizens were anything but passive in their relation with the political police.

Finally, the survey indicates that individual fear of the PIDE was both a moderate and geographically differentiated phenomenon, sufficient nonetheless to condition what the respondents had come to consider as the 'normality' of their everyday lives. As such, the PIDE certainly acted as a relatively efficient agent of 'preventive repression' among ordinary citizens, although not to the extent envisaged in the historiography of the subject area. More importantly, it is the apparent normalization of the PIDE by the sample of ordinary citizens which deserves to be highlighted – and investigated in its multiple dimensions – as an important component among the factors that contributed to the Estado Novo's exceptional longevity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research was made possible thanks to a Marie Curie Research Scholarship (Grant ID: 842320). Many of the issues discussed in the article were debated in the course of research seminars held at ICS-ULisboa. The authors are thankful to the participants for their stimulating engagement with the subject. We are especially grateful to Alice Ramos for her insightful comments on the organization of the survey and questionnaire.

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SUGGESTED CITATION

Simpson, Duncan and Louceiro, Ana (2021), 'Everyday life under the PIDE: A quantitative survey on the relations between ordinary citizens and Salazar's political police (1955–74)', *International Journal of Iberian Studies*, pp. 1–22, article first, https://doi.org/10.1386/ijis_00043_1

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