IOSR Journal of Business and Management (IOSR-JBM)
e-ISSN:2278-487X, p-ISSN: 2319-7668. Volume 26, Issue 12. Ser. 4 (December. 2024), PP 44-52
www.iosrjournals.org

Retirement Age In Brazil: Impacts And Challenges For The Efficiency Of The Pension System

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Abstract:
This study aims to assess the efficiency of the changes introduced by the 2019 pension reform, focusing on the impacts on the INSS fund and its beneficiaries. Using the classification methodology proposed by Kruger (2023), which systematizes the analysis of public policies in terms of efficiency, equity, and sustainability, the research adopts an explanatory-descriptive approach of an applied nature. The study investigates and describes the implications of the new rules for beneficiaries of the General Social Security Regime (Regime Geral de Previdência Social, RGPS). The results indicate that the requirement of a minimum retirement age and the increase in contribution time aim to improve the financial sustainability of the system, significantly reducing the pension deficit in the long term. However, the impacts are uneven: vulnerable groups, such as informal workers and less developed regions, face greater difficulties in meeting the new requirements. Additionally, the complexity of the rules creates barriers to understanding and accessing benefits. The conclusion highlights that, although the reform has the potential to enhance the efficiency of the RGPS system, its benefits depend on complementary policies that promote the formalization of labor and reduce regional inequalities. Financial sustainability alone is insufficient to ensure a fair and inclusive social security system.
Keywords: *Social Security System; Efficiency; Retirement; INSS; RGPS.*

Date of Submission: 26-11-2024 Date of Acceptance: 06-12-2024

I. Introduction

The 2019 Pension Reform introduced significant changes to Brazil's social security system, aiming to balance public finances and ensure long-term sustainability. Among the main changes is the requirement of a minimum retirement age, along with new transition rules and adjustments to the criteria for calculating benefits. These modifications respond to the context of increased life expectancy and an aging population, factors that put pressure on the social security system and demand continuous adaptations.

The debate surrounding the reform reflects not only the need for fiscal adjustments but also the urgency of promoting greater efficiency in the management of the National Institute of Social Security (INSS). The imposition of a minimum retirement age (65 for men and 62 for women), along with the revision of contribution rates and contribution time, demonstrates an attempt to curb growing deficits. However, such measures raise questions about their economic and social impacts, particularly on the most vulnerable populations.

This study aims to analyze the changes in retirement age introduced by the 2019 Pension Reform, assessing its efficiency in the INSS and its contribution to the sustainability of the social security system. To achieve this goal, the research is guided by three specific objectives: to identify the main changes in retirement rules, to evaluate their economic and social impacts on the beneficiary population, and to analyze the implications of the new rules on long-term financial sustainability.

The relevance of this study lies in the need to understand how these changes affect the population and the financial structure of the social security system. The extension of working time can have significant repercussions on workers' lives, both economically and in terms of social well-being. Furthermore, the new pension configuration poses a challenge for public administration, which must adapt to ensure efficiency and continuity in serving insured individuals.

The theoretical and practical contribution of this work consists of providing a critical analysis of the effects of the reform and offering insights for the development of new social security policies. Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the reform can facilitate the identification of opportunities for improvement and threats that may compromise the system's sustainability. The research also seeks to contribute to improving public management and the debate around future pension reforms.

The SWOT analysis applied to the Pension Reform identifies key strengths, such as the attempt to correct historical distortions and ensure the system's sustainability; weaknesses, such as the insufficient approach to regional inequalities and resistance from specific worker categories; opportunities, such as the potential to modernize social security management and encourage formalization in the labor market; and threats, such as economic and political instability, which may affect the continuity of changes.

This research gains even greater relevance when considering that the effectiveness of reforms depends on the adaptability of workers and public management. Regional and sectoral inequalities, as well as labor market informality, represent additional challenges for the social security system to achieve the expected balance. Thus, the study aims to evaluate not only the legal and operational aspects of the reform but also its social and economic impact on the Brazilian population.

Therefore, understanding the impacts of the 2019 Pension Reform is essential to assess the effectiveness of the adopted public policies and to project the future of Brazil's social security system. By providing a critical analysis based on data and evidence, this work seeks to contribute to the public and academic debate on balancing financial efficiency and social justice in social security.

II. Pension System

The Pension System aims primarily to provide social protection to individuals, ensuring means of subsistence in situations where work is not feasible, such as illness, disability, or old age. According to Souza et al. [33], this system is sustained by mandatory contributions from participants, whose role is vital for maintaining and distributing pension benefits, thereby enabling beneficiaries to receive financial support during various life stages.

As Leite [21] states, social security is classified as a public service organized as a social insurance scheme designed to protect workers from risks established by law. This protection is achieved through contributions from beneficiaries, employers, and the State, offering benefits that replace income when it cannot be obtained through regular work, highlighting the social and economic function of the pension system.

According to Martinez [25], social security serves to provide the necessary resources for citizens' sustenance during adverse situations. This mechanism of social protection operates through compulsory contributions from all individuals, distributing benefits to those unable to secure them independently. The author emphasizes that the system covers a broad spectrum, from maternity to old age, underscoring the wide range of coverage offered by social security.

The 1988 Federal Constitution enshrines social security as a fundamental right of all Brazilians, integrating it into the set of social rights guaranteed by the State. Article 6 lists social security alongside rights such as education and health, emphasizing its essential role in promoting well-being and protecting human dignity [4]. This inclusion reflects the State's commitment to maintaining a comprehensive and inclusive social security system.

Law No. 8.212/1991 [8] organizes the structure of social security in Brazil, defining its guidelines and the procedures for granting benefits. The National Institute of Social Security (INSS) is responsible for implementing this system, ensuring transparent and efficient processes to serve workers and their dependents [34]. This legislation lays the foundation for a pension system aimed at universality and accessibility.

The Brazilian pension system is divided into two main pillars: the General Social Security System (RGPS), which serves private sector workers, and the Own Social Security System (RPPS), for public servants. Both operate under a pay-as-you-go system, where current contributions fund the benefits of present beneficiaries, characterizing it as a solidarity-based system [36]. This division ensures that various categories of workers have their social security rights guaranteed.

Social security also plays a significant role in promoting social justice by ensuring economic protection for individuals who, for various reasons, cannot support themselves. However, Souza et al. [33] point out that some groups face challenges in accessing benefits, leading to inequalities that require inclusive policies and strategies to better serve these segments. This situation highlights the importance of adjustments to make the system more equitable and accessible to all.

Additionally, there is a context of judicialization of pension benefits in Brazil, where lawsuits often claim essential rights tied to human dignity but may not consider the financial impacts on the pension system. Noronha [29] note that while such judicial decisions are legitimate in defending rights, they can compromise the economic sustainability of the pension system, emphasizing the need to balance social protection and system viability.

To ensure the continuity and sustainability of the pension system amid an aging population, structural policies and reforms are necessary. According to Souza et al. [34], increasing longevity demands the adaptation of pension policies to ensure the system remains viable in the long term, meeting rising demands without depleting resources for future generations.

Thus, Brazil's social security system plays a critical role not only in individual protection for workers but also as an instrument of social cohesion and inequality reduction. By providing economic security during times of vulnerability, the system contributes to social stability and collective well-being, reinforcing the constitutional principles of justice and human dignity [4].

III. Efficiency In The Social Security System

The need for reforming Brazil's pension system is driven by the continuous rise in life expectancy and the decline in birth rates, which strain the financial balance and sustainability of the system. This scenario underscores the importance of raising the minimum retirement age, a common practice among countries striving to ensure the longevity of their pension schemes, even amidst economic and demographic fluctuations [27]. One mechanism introduced to reduce the deficit was the "fator previdenciário" (pension factor), which, while generating savings for public finances, was insufficient to balance the revenues and expenses of the General Social Security System (RGPS). Despite its implementation, the number of benefits issued continued to grow, keeping the system in a deficit [22].

The unsustainability of the RGPS is also reflected in the pressure from labor organizations that challenge the method introduced in 1999. These entities' dissatisfaction highlights the difficulty of reaching a consensus on structural measures aimed at achieving financial balance without compromising social protection [22]. The pension reform, approved through Constitutional Amendment No. 20/98 [5], sought to contain the growing deficit but failed to halt its trajectory. Projections suggest that the deficit could reach 14% of GDP by 2030, necessitating additional measures such as creating a unified regime for public and private sectors with contribution rates proportional to beneficiaries' profiles [30].

According to Afonso [2] and Lima [22], the pension system also faces challenges regarding equity, as workers with varying profiles differing in market entry age, gender, and contribution period are impacted differently. This disparity underscores the need for a model that more equitably addresses the specificities of each group, thereby reducing intra and intergenerational inequalities. For the pension system to remain sustainable, both workers and employers must actively and innovatively contribute to economic and social development. This involvement highlights their shared responsibility in pursuing a more balanced and dynamic pension model capable of addressing contemporary socioeconomic challenges [24].

Despite pension reforms and the redistributive role of the system, its sustainability remains compromised due to the growing demand for benefits, a direct result of population aging. This scenario calls for long-term strategies to ensure that the pension system continues to reduce poverty and promote social justice [24]. Brazilian social security plays a vital role as the country's primary income redistribution policy, enhancing workers' quality of life and contributing to local economies. However, recent reforms, aimed at addressing market demands, have faced criticism, particularly from those who view them as a threat to social security and justice [23].

Criticism of pension reform highlights concerns about the reduction of labor and social security rights, directly affecting the financial security of retired workers. Luiz [23] argues that Brazil's pension system is central to promoting social justice and combating poverty functions jeopardized by austerity-driven reforms. In addition to the challenges of an aging population, Brazil must also address the impact of informality and unemployment on the pension system. These factors weaken the system's ability to collect revenue in a stable and sufficient manner, further emphasizing the urgency for structural and inclusive measures to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of the pension regime in the long term [27].

IV. Pension Reform [Characteristics, Importance, Central Aspects]

The reform of pension systems has been a global trend, and many countries have opted to introduce automatic adjustment mechanisms to ensure the sustainability of these regimes. According to Meneu et al. [22], such mechanisms consist of regulations that automatically adjust benefit parameters in response to demographic indicators, especially life expectancy, with the aim of maintaining solvency without the need for new legislative reforms.

For the actuarial sustainability of pension systems, a central issue is fairness in contributions and benefits. According to Afonso and Freire [1] and Landes [20], an actuarially fair value occurs when expected contributions over a person's active life are equivalent to the expected benefits in retirement, promoting long-term balance for the system.

The calculation of balanced pension contribution rates, as presented by Giambiagi and Afonso [16], was pioneering in Brazil by proposing contribution percentages that align the flow of contributions with that of benefits. These authors estimated that rates of 25% for men and 27% for women would be sufficient to ensure the system's sustainability, as these percentages were lower than those in effect at the time.

Another adjustment mechanism implemented in Brazil was the progressive 85/95 rule, introduced by Law No. 13,183/2015 [9]. As discussed by Campos and Souza [11], this rule allows workers to choose this option if the sum of their age and contribution time is sufficient for retirement, establishing a formula that progressively increases until reaching values of 90 and 100 by 2026.

Pension reforms are also related to the New Fiscal Regime established by the Proposed Constitutional Amendment (Proposta de Emenda Constitucional, PEC) No. 95/2016 [10], as pointed out by Dieese [13]. This PEC aims to control public spending, but raises concerns about its impact on social investments, as it uncouples a significant portion of resources that were previously allocated to these areas.

Furthermore, the De-linking of Union Revenues (Desvinculação das Receitas da União, DRU) [6] was increased from 20% to 30%, as reported by Dieese and ANFIP [14]. This change allows the government to use a larger share of linked revenues for other purposes, impacting resources allocated to social security, which could weaken Pension and Social Assistance.

The transition from defined benefit systems to defined contribution systems is complex and involves substantial fiscal challenges. Pierson [31] highlights that this change requires governments to bear high transition costs, as they must continue paying benefits to current retirees while implementing individual accounts, creating political and financial difficulties.

With the advancement of automation and technological integration in industries, which began in the 1970s and 1980s, there was a significant increase in connectivity and efficiency in production processes, according to FIESP [15]. This transformation also influences the pension system, as higher productivity and changes in the labor market require adjustments to sustain pension financing.

The 2019 pension reform proposal, promoted by the Bolsonaro-Guedes government, aims to alter the rules for retirement based on contribution time, establishing a progressive minimum retirement age starting in 2024, based on life expectancy, according to Dieese [13]. This model tends to overlook regional and socio-economic differences, which may penalize more vulnerable groups.

Finally, the reform also jeopardizes Social Security and Social Assistance, as it imposes new minimum age criteria, particularly affecting rural workers and women, as highlighted by Antunes [2]. Labor market inequality and the specificities of professions with high physical wear should be considered for a fairer reform.

V. Age Changes In RGPS

Constitutional Amendment No. 103/2019 [7] introduced substantial changes to Brazil's retirement rules, marking an attempt to structurally reorganize the country's pension system. Signed into law during the Bolsonaro administration, this reform established a minimum retirement age for the General Social Security System (Regime Geral de Previdência Social, RGPS) and modified benefit calculation rules, significantly impacting retirement amounts Brasil,[7]. Simultaneously, Fraga Neto [11] highlights that the expansion of public policies, including social security, was carried out irresponsibly from a fiscal perspective, prioritizing social needs while neglecting the State's capacity to bear the resulting financial burdens. This approach exacerbated economic stagnation and deepened social inequalities.

Under the new rules, the minimum retirement age in the RGPS was set at 62 years for women and 65 years for men, requiring 40 years of contributions to receive full benefits. This measure aims to standardize retirement criteria and serves as a disincentive for workers earning above the minimum wage to contribute further Brasil,[7]. The reform proposal from the previous administration, led by Michel Temer, had already signaled the need to harmonize rules between the RGPS and the Public Social Security Systems (Regimes Próprios de Previdência Social, RPPS), particularly regarding contribution time and minimum retirement age. This alignment sought to ensure the pension system's sustainability in a context of increasing life expectancy and an aging Brazilian population [29].

Moreover, the reform's impact extends beyond retirees, influencing healthcare system financing. Raising the retirement age could increase public health spending to maintain the elderly population's quality of life as they remain active longer. Research indicates that retirement directly affects seniors' health, particularly in mobility and well-being, highlighting the need to consider these factors in pension reforms [22]. However, implementing these changes poses challenges. The absence of a uniform discount rate for different ages and contribution periods, combined with technical issues related to mortality tables, creates uncertainties for beneficiaries and may undermine the effectiveness of the 2019 reform [24].

The government argues that the reform is essential for the pension system's sustainability and balance, advocating for greater labor rights flexibility and raising the minimum retirement age. The growth of informal employment and rising unemployment directly impact social security contributions, emphasizing the need for reforms that align with labor market transformations [16]. Similarly, literature on social security policies suggests that the system must evolve to meet the elderly population's needs. However, reforming the healthcare system is equally necessary, as retirement's impact on seniors' health directly influences mobility and quality-of-life indicators, which are critical for managing healthcare costs [22].

The 2019 reform also sought to reduce the constitutional rigidity of social security norms to facilitate future adjustments. Tiered contribution rates and lower benefit replacement rates were introduced to mitigate the financial strain on the system and ensure its long-term viability Brasil, [7]. Broadly, changes in pension policies reflect efforts to provide equitable access to benefits and ensure system sustainability, particularly given the increased longevity of Brazil's population. The RGPS, as a contributory and mandatory affiliation system, was restructured to ensure that longer contribution periods and minimum age requirements support the pension system in the future [5].

VI. Methodology

This study follows the classification proposed by Kruger [18] and adopts an explanatory-descriptive approach of an applied nature, focusing on investigating and describing the implications of the pension reform for beneficiaries of the General Social Security System (RGPS). The main methodological aspects are detailed below: the research is explanatory-descriptive, aiming not only to describe the changes resulting from the pension reform but also to explain how these changes impact National Institute of Social Security (Instituto Nacional do Seguro Social, INSS) beneficiaries linked to the RGPS.

The study employs a qualitative approach, emphasizing the interpretation and analysis of bibliographic and documentary data, without concern for numerical measurement but rather for understanding the impacts of the bill and legislative changes. The following methodological strategies were used: bibliographic research based on the consultation of books, academic articles, theses, and dissertations, as well as other relevant publications on pension reform and related topics.

The target population of this study comprises INSS beneficiaries who are part of the RGPS system. Given the scope of the research, all beneficiaries covered by the pension reform were considered, without distinguishing between categories such as urban workers, rural workers, or self-employed individuals. No sample cut was made, as the study has an exploratory character and seeks to understand the general effects of the reform.

Documentary research involves analyzing official documents, such as the pension reform bill and other relevant legislative documents. Secondary data collection pertains to the use of data already available from public sources, such as documents from the INSS and the bill processed in the National Congress.

The data analysis followed the content analysis technique proposed by Bardin [3], enabling the categorization and interpretation of the collected information, identifying the main themes and patterns present in the documents and bibliographic data analyzed on the subject. The research was conducted with a cross-sectional time frame, focusing on the year 2024, immediately after the implementation of the pension reform. This time frame was chosen to capture the most recent and significant impacts of the changes in retirement and benefit rules.

VII. Results And Discussions

The analysis of the main changes introduced by the reform points to an attempt to balance equity and sustainability within the system. The implementation of a minimum retirement age of 62 for women and 65 for men, along with the increase in the minimum contribution time, reflects the need to adjust the system to the increase in life expectancy. However, as noted by Afonso [2] and Lima [22], these changes disproportionately affect different profiles of workers. Those who entered the job market earlier and with lower qualifications are, in most cases, less able to meet the established requirements. In this context, it can be said that these factors put pressure on the balance of the RGPS system, as it operates on a model in which current contributions finance the benefits of insured individuals, a model that directly depends on a balance between revenue and expenses, highlighting the need for well-planned initiatives to achieve the objective.

Despite the reforms implemented, such as the pension factor and Constitutional Amendment No. 103/2019 [7], the results have been insufficient to contain the increase in the deficit, which is projected to reach 14% of GDP by 2030, with an estimated savings of approximately R$ 800 billion for the Union's coffers over 10 years, as observed by Noronha [29] and Santos [32]. This underscores the need for more comprehensive measures for the pension system. In other words, the system is unable to support its current burden and is heading towards a decline in its objectives, thereby emphasizing the crucial importance of implementing effective and transformative measures to cover the deficit.

From a social perspective, the Pension Reform highlights the system's role as a tool for protection and income redistribution. However, it also exposes the weaknesses of its implementation in a country with pronounced regional inequalities. Studies such as those by Souza et al. [33] and Luiz [23] indicate that while the reform may help reduce the pension deficit, its effects on informal and low-income workers, particularly in regions with lower life expectancy, are concerning. This reflects the reform's limitations in fully addressing the principle of social justice enshrined in the Federal Constitution of 1988 [4].

In this context, the redistributive role of social security is essential for promoting social justice and reducing poverty in a country marked by structural inequalities. Addressing this historical challenge, or at least attempting to balance the pension system, requires implementing appropriate measures and formulating effective guidelines. These include creating a unified regime, adopting proportional contribution rates, and developing inclusion strategies for informal workers. Such actions are crucial to ensuring that the system continues to fulfill its role in reducing inequalities, promoting economic security, and reinforcing constitutional principles of justice and human dignity. Informality and unemployment, as highlighted by Modesto [27], remain structural challenges that weaken the system's revenue capacity and stability.

In terms of efficiency, it is evident that the pension system lacks mechanisms that adequately account for the diversity of the Brazilian labor market. As noted by Afonso [2] and Lima [22], workers with varying profiles, including differences in gender, age of labor market entry, and contribution time, face disparities in accessing benefits. This underscores the need for greater flexibility and innovation in pension policies to ensure that the system can address both social demands and economic challenges.

To ensure its long-term viability, it is imperative to develop new strategies, including formalizing the labor market, reducing unemployment, and adapting the system to the demands of a transforming society [21]. Aligning financial sustainability with the promotion of social justice will make it possible to uphold the constitutional commitment to human dignity and the protection of workers [4].

The 2019 Pension Reform, implemented through Constitutional Amendment No. 103/2019 [7], brought profound changes to Brazil's social security system, aiming to address the growing fiscal deficit and ensure long-term financial sustainability. These changes were driven by factors such as population aging, increased life expectancy, and a shrinking contributor base, which threatened the system's viability in the face of the country's economic and demographic realities.

One of the key pillars of the reform was the introduction of a minimum retirement age, set at 65 for men and 62 for women, along with an increase in the minimum contribution period. These changes delay the entry of new beneficiaries into the system, thereby reducing financial pressure on the social security fund. This adjustment is particularly critical in a context where the elderly population is growing faster than the working-age population, directly impacting the ratio between contributors and beneficiaries.

Another significant aspect was the modification of benefit calculations. Under the new rules, the salary average used to determine retirement benefits was reduced, contributing to a lower overall payout by the system. While this measure helped balance public accounts, it also drew criticism due to its negative impact on retirees' purchasing power, especially those with lower salaries.

The reform also sought greater equity by harmonizing the rules between the general regime and the special regimes for public servants and politicians. Previously, these groups enjoyed more favorable benefits, leading to significant inequalities within the pension system. By establishing more uniform criteria, the reform not only reduced privileges but also increased revenue, improving the social security fund's cash flow.

However, the long-term sustainability of the system still faces considerable challenges. Brazil's demographic transition, marked by an aging population and a shrinking contributor base, continues to strain the system. Although the new rules reduce immediate deficits, their long-term effectiveness will depend on complementary policies that promote formal employment, expand the contributor base, and stimulate economic growth.

Another relevant challenge is the social impact of these changes. Transition rules were established to protect those closer to retirement, but not all groups were equally considered. Informal and low-income workers, who face greater difficulty meeting the new requirements, are particularly affected, exacerbating existing structural inequalities.

Beyond fiscal benefits, the 2019 reform also had positive effects on investor confidence. By signaling a commitment to fiscal adjustment, the government improved the perception of the country's economic solvency. However, true pension sustainability will depend on consistent economic growth and additional reforms to address structural labor market issues.

The Pension Reform represented a significant step toward ensuring the viability of Brazil's pension system. Despite the progress, challenges persist, requiring continuous adjustments and effective public policies to address economic and demographic changes. Only through integrated actions will it be possible to ensure social protection and financial sustainability in the long term.

VIII. SWOT Analysis [Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, And Threats]

The SWOT matrix is a widely used strategic tool for identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in various contexts, making it crucial for analyzing complex proposals such as pension system reforms. In the case of the 2019 RGPS reform, one of the main strengths identified was financial sustainability, the central goal of the proposed changes. According to Pirson and Silva [31] "financial sustainability is essential to ensure the longevity of pension systems, especially in countries undergoing significant demographic changes, such as Brazil." In this sense, the SWOT matrix highlights how changes to the minimum retirement age aimed to ensure a balance between revenue and expenditures in the pension system.

Another key aspect, considered a strength in the SWOT analysis of the reform, was the reduction of the pension deficit. The introduction of stricter criteria, such as requiring a minimum retirement age and gradually increasing the contribution period, aimed to alleviate financial pressures on the INSS. According to data presented by Oliveira et al. [30], "reducing the pension deficit is an essential measure to stabilize public accounts and preserve the government's investment capacity." From this perspective, the SWOT matrix emphasizes not only the short-term benefits but also the potential positive impacts on the national economy in the long term.

Despite the intended improvements, the negative impact on vulnerable groups, such as informal workers and those with low incomes, is evident. The complexity of the rules, combined with regional inequalities, makes the system less accessible to those with lower levels of education or who live in areas with reduced life expectancy.

Moreover, the reduction of workers' rights undermines trust in the system, potentially discouraging future contributions. These weaknesses highlight the need for simpler rules and inclusive strategies to mitigate social and regional disparities.

The pension reform presents opportunities to strengthen pension education, fostering greater public awareness of rights and responsibilities. Formalization of the labor market, incentivized by increased contribution requirements, can expand the revenue base and reduce informality. Complementary reforms and the promotion of social equity could further consolidate the system's sustainability, enabling it to perform its redistributive role more effectively. Seizing these opportunities is crucial to transforming the system into a fairer and more efficient mechanism.

Population aging remains one of the greatest challenges for Brazil's pension system, increasing pressure on available resources. Insufficient economic growth limits the system's ability to collect revenue, exacerbating financial issues. Social discontent, fueled by perceptions of lost rights and persistent inequalities, threatens the legitimacy of reforms. Additionally, ongoing financial imbalances could undermine the progress made, emphasizing the need for continuous measures to balance social and economic demands.

By crossing the factors identified in the SWOT analysis, it becomes evident that the strengths of the reform, such as financial sustainability and the reduction of the pension deficit, can be leveraged to neutralize threats like population aging and insufficient economic growth. Similarly, opportunities such as labor formalization and improved pension education can help address internal weaknesses, such as regional inequality and the complexity of the rules.

On the other hand, weaknesses like the impact on vulnerable groups can be mitigated through inclusive policies and social programs. Strengthening pension education efforts, combined with awareness campaigns, can transform these weaknesses into opportunities for inclusion and planning, fostering greater balance and trust in the system.

The analysis also reveals that external threats, such as social discontent, can be addressed through greater transparency and dialogue. The implementation of clear and accessible rules, alongside specific incentives for the most affected groups, reduces resistance to changes and strengthens public acceptance of the reform.

Table 1 – SWOT Analysis

Strengths: 1. Financial sustainability 2. Reduction of the pension deficit 3. Gradual transition rules 4. Financial autonomy	**Weaknesses**: 1. Impact on vulnerable groups 2. Regional inequality 3. Complexity in the rules 4. Reduction of rights received by workers
Opportunities: 1. Improvement in pension education 2. Greater formalization of work 3. Complementary reforms 4. Social equity	**Threats**: 1. Population aging 2. Insufficient economic growth 3. Social discontent 4. Financial imbalance

A positive aspect was the introduction of gradual transition rules. These measures were designed to ensure that workers close to retirement had sufficient time to adapt to the changes. Nevertheless, the various transition modalities made the system more complex and harder to understand, creating uncertainty for workers about their rights and retirement timelines. This complexity highlights the need for improvements in communication and pension education.

The implementation of pension education programs emerges as an opportunity to mitigate this challenge. Informative campaigns can raise workers' awareness of the new rules, facilitating financial and retirement planning. Simplifying the understanding of regulations not only promotes greater transparency but also reduces the impact of social discontent, a recurring threat in structural reforms like this.

Another positive point is that the reform created room for greater labor formalization. The increase in contribution time as a criterion for retirement may incentivize the regularization of employment relationships, boosting pension revenue. This opportunity is particularly relevant for more vulnerable regions where informality still prevails. Labor formalization also contributes to reducing regional inequalities, extending social protection to a larger number of workers.

Despite the progress, the sustainability of the system still faces the challenge of population aging. With an increasing proportion of elderly people, the financial balance of the system will remain under pressure. In this context, the reform has strengthened the structural foundation, but future adjustments will be inevitable. Complementary measures, such as encouraging private pensions and implementing labor market inclusion policies, can ease this pressure by diversifying retirees' income sources and reducing exclusive dependence on the public system.

The opportunities presented by the reform, such as improved pension education and greater labor formalization, can mitigate some weaknesses but also face significant threats. A better understanding of the pension system by the population can help reduce negative impacts on vulnerable groups and minimize social discontent. However, population aging and insufficient economic growth represent barriers that limit the government's ability to turn these opportunities into tangible benefits. Without effective actions to promote labor market formalization and encourage social equity, financial imbalances may persist, undermining the expected advancements.

Moreover, the strengths and opportunities of the reform need to be strategically aligned to address threats. For instance, strengthening pension education can be a way to tackle social discontent, as a more informed population is better equipped to understand the importance of the proposed changes. Similarly, pursuing complementary reforms, such as improving the social assistance system and implementing employment-focused public policies, can help address population aging, reducing the pressure on the pension system.

Ultimately, the success of the reform depends on how its strengths can be used to address weaknesses and how opportunities can neutralize threats. While financial sustainability and system autonomy are essential, their effectiveness relies on the government's ability to implement policies that reduce regional and social inequalities. Simultaneously, it is crucial to capitalize on opportunities like labor formalization to create a more robust and balanced economic environment. Without this alignment, threats may compromise the reform's positive impact, jeopardizing its long-term objectives.

IX. Conclusion

This research analyzed the changes in the minimum retirement age in the National Institute of Social Security (INSS) in 2019, addressing its impacts on pension dynamics and socioeconomic factors. The study identified that the changes implemented by the Pension Reform represented a response to the growing fiscal pressures on Brazil's pension system, aiming to balance public accounts and ensure the system's long-term sustainability. Furthermore, the results showed that the change in the minimum retirement age posed challenges for certain segments of the population, particularly low-income workers and those in more physically demanding professions.

From a theoretical and practical standpoint, the study contributed to a deeper understanding of the normative evolution of pensions in Brazil, while highlighting the impact of these changes on different social groups. The analysis of the data and the literature reviewed enabled a critical reflection on the inequalities still present in the system and the ongoing demands for adjustments to ensure greater equity and efficiency. Thus, the study reinforces the relevance of debates around more inclusive and sustainable public pension policies.

However, it is acknowledged that this research has inherent limitations. As it primarily relies on secondary data and existing literature, the findings reflect established perspectives in the field, without incorporating primary empirical analysis or more recent data that could enrich the discussion. Additionally, the analysis focused on a specific period and therefore does not fully encompass the long-term effects of the changes implemented.

These limitations point to the need for future investigations that incorporate mixed methodologies, such as quantitative and qualitative research with beneficiaries of the system, to better understand the practical impacts of changes in the minimum age. Comparative studies with other countries that have carried out similar pension reforms could also provide valuable insights for the improvement of Brazil's system.

Finally, this work reaffirms the importance of pension policies that are aligned with the population's needs and the nation's economic challenges. While the change in the minimum age was essential for ensuring the sustainability of the INSS, its implementation must be accompanied by measures that minimize negative social impacts, ensuring that the right to retirement is exercised in a fair and accessible manner.

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