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Understanding ageism in the workplace

An ageing society and workforce present both challenges and opportunities. The presence of multiple generations in the workplace can lead to age-related tensions, with some workers considered 'too young' and others 'too old'. How different age groups view and behave toward each other can have important consequences for workplace relationships, attitudes and performance, as well as for the wellbeing of employees. In this research study, we have examined predictors and consequences of ageism aimed at both younger and older workers. The results from a range of qualitative and quantitative studies, including a representative sample of one thousand Portuguese workers, show that ageism can have important, mostly negative, consequences for those targeted, as well as for endorsers of ageism. Based on our findings, we make recommendations for actions that can be taken to reduce bidirectional ageism in the workplace.

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Preface

The extension of life expectancy, combined with the decline in fertility rates observed throughout Europe, is causing structural changes in the age composition of populations. The steep ageing of the population in Portugal is a testament to this profound change, a phenomenon which will only become more pronounced in the future. Forecasts from the National Institute of Statistics indicate that, by 2050, over a third of the Portuguese population will be over 65.

An ageing population reflects social gains, resulting from progress achieved in population health and living conditions, but it also brings with it challenges, which are especially pronounced in Portugal, one of the European countries with the highest percentage of older people. This scenario will bring social, political and economic consequences.

This is no exception in the context of the labour market, and is reflected in the coexistence of younger and older workers in the same workplaces, where up to four generations may work together at any given time. The presence of several generations within the same workplace may prove very enriching to organizations, but it can also trigger tensions and prejudice based solely on age, with some workers being deemed 'too young' or 'too old' for certain roles. The perception of how different age groups see themselves and interact between them may evolve into stereotypes that create social tensions or perceived threats and, therefore, into discriminatory behaviours in both directions, thus outlining a bidirectional ageism scenario with potentially difficult work dynamics.

Therefore, it is crucial to understand, in a profound and structured manner, how younger and older workers see each other, and how this affects their interaction and interpellation in a work context. This is particularly important when the present research shows that this prejudice may have a direct impact on workers' health, exacerbating chronic or mental illnesses, creating more insecurity and affecting people's quality of life.

Goncalo Saraiva Matias
President of the Board of Directors
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Chapter 1
Challenges of an Ageing Population and Workforce

The 21st century has been marked by extraordinary technological advancements that are leading to profound changes in many areas of life. Consequences of this technological progress include a steep increase in life expectancy and a decline in fertility rates, which together are causing rapid shifts in the age composition of the world's population. According to the World Social Report of the United Nations (2023), which identified an ageing population as the most pressing global issue, the number of people aged 65 or older worldwide will double between 2021 and 2050. Europe and Northern America are among the regions where population ageing is most advanced. The challenges of an ageing population are of particular concern for Portugal, which is one of the countries with the largest share of older people. The proportion of people aged 65 and over was above the EU average, with 22.6% in 2021, and it is predicted that by 2050 one third of the population (34.5%) in Portugal will be aged 65 or over.

An ageing population has wide-ranging implications for society, affecting the social, political and economic spheres. These issues become especially difficult and complex to address in countries with higher economic or health demands from older people, or nations that lack the capacity to respond to changing needs and expectations. A key economic implication of an ageing population is the strain it poses on social security and pension systems, which is why many

OECD countries have changed their policies regarding early retirement and are attempting to increase labour participation among older workers (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2002). This can result in younger workers perceiving fewer job opportunities due to competition from more experienced older workers, in spite of research showing that older workers participation in the workforce can increase overall employment levels (e.g., Gutman & Drexler, 2015). It is also possible, however, that policy-makers will take steps to encourage the hiring of younger, possibly cheaper, workers, in order to address public concerns regarding youth unemployment. Indeed, a study with representative data from countries in the European region showed that the pre-retirement age group (50–64 years of age) was the most worried that employers might show a preference for employees in their 20s when it comes to hiring (Abrams et al., 2011). Hence, changes in the workforce age composition may create perceptions of challenging workplace dynamics, especially among younger and older workers.

These social challenges are not only a result of objective changes in the workplace and in employment opportunities, but also stem from subjective perceptions fuelled by stereotypes, attitudes, and personal and group interests. Yet, an ageing population can also present various opportunities for societies, such as economic growth and job creation focused on products and services tailored

to the needs and preferences of seniors (known as silver economy), as well as the transfer of knowledge, skills and experience between different age groups in the workplace (e.g., CIPD, 2015). Ageism serves as a barrier to capitalizing on these changes and adapting society to a new demographic reality, despite the fact that age discrimination against any age is legally prohibited in Europe (via the Directive 2000/78— General framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation) and in Portugal (article 59 in the Constitution and article 24 in the Portuguese Work Code). Not surprisingly, it has been suggested that the future of Portugal hinges on a fundamental ideological shift in the way that ageing and older people are perceived (Marques, 2011).

Given that modern workplaces are often multi-generational (North & Fiske, 2016), it is crucial to better understand the bidirectional dynamics of ageism and how it affects the way in which younger and older people interact and work together. Although the social psychological literature has provided important insights into ageist perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours, the lion's share of research is unidirectional, focussing exclusively on how older people are perceived. In fact, people can be judged as 'too young' or 'too old' in specific areas of life and in terms of performing specific work tasks — a reality which, although more recently addressed (e.g., de la Fuente-Núñez et al., 2021; WHO, 2021), had been largely neglected in past research, leading to a blind spot when it came to theory and empirical evidence regarding ageism towards younger workers (King & Bryant, 2017; Posthuma & Campion, 2009). Acknowledging the bidirectional nature of age biases — i.e., the fact that age biases can be directed at both younger and older people — is an important first step to better understanding the social issues and challenges posed by an ageing population, and is key to promoting social inclusion, societal cohesion and empathy, as well as understanding towards people of all ages.

The aim of the current research is to address the lack of research on age biases towards younger people in the workplace, while at the same time considering age biases directed at older workers, including in the Portuguese context. Next, we will provide an overview of key concepts and theories that scientifically underlie the knowledge in this area before introducing the specific aims of our project, age@work.

1.1. What is ageism?

Age, like gender and ethnicity, is a social category that is usually readily identifiable given its association with specific physical characteristics and features. While ageing itself is a biological process, there is no intrinsic meaning attached to the biological process of ageing — what it means to be 'young' or 'old' is socially constructed and defined by the respective societal and cultural context (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Categorizing a person into a social group triggers a set of culture-specific social heuristics: mental shortcuts that enable people to navigate complex (social) situations by making quick judgments or decisions about a person (Tversky & Kahneman, 1974). Age categorization is, thus, the process of classifying people as belonging to a certain age group and, by implication, not to other age groups. When people categorize one another into broad age categories such as 'young' and 'old', they also tend to make implicit inferences about abilities, competences and skills.

These social judgments are heavily informed by stereotypes, which are generalized beliefs about the social category the person belongs to, which might be true but quite often are not (e.g., Gardner, 1993). For instance, seeing a person with wrinkles and grey hair may lead to assumptions of frailty and patronizing behaviour towards this person. This type of social bias towards older people is commonly referred to as 'ageism' — a term that was first introduced by gerontologist and psychiatrist Robert Butler in 1969 and which has since been widely used to refer to prejudice and discrimination against older people. Butler emphasized that ageism is a form of bigotry on a par with sexism and racism:

Ageism can be seen as a process of systematic stereotyping and discrimination against people because they are old, just as racism and sexism accomplish this for color and gender. Old people are categorized as senile, rigid in thought and manner, old-fashioned in morality and skills... Ageism allows the younger generations to see older people as different from themselves, thus they subtly cease to identify their elders as human beings. (1975, p. 12)

Ever since the term 'ageism' was coined, researchers have further developed the conceptualization of this phenomenon. Most contemporary definitions acknowledge the tripartite concept of attitudes from social psychology in which ageism is understood to involve an affective (prejudice), cognitive (stereotypes), and behavioural component (discrimination; e.g., Levy & Banaji, 2002). Moreover, it is now also widely acknowledged that ageism can include positive stereotypes and positive discrimination. For example, the 'doddering but dear stereotype' includes both negative and positive beliefs about older people being not so competent,

but nice and friendly. This can be expressed in a benevolent type of ageism in the form of patronizing behaviours which may not be readily recognized as discriminatory in a negative sense, but are similarly degrading (e.g., 'baby talk'; Cuddy & Fiske, 2002). It is also noteworthy that ageism is not always explicit in its manifestation, but can be subtle and at times difficult to detect because of its widespread acceptance. For instance, assumptions about a decline in cognitive abilities with ageing are often taken at face value and reinforced in society in the form of language, literature, humour, and mass media. These automatic and unconscious stereotypes and prejudices are widespread and have been referred to as *implicit ageism* (e.g., Levy & Banaji, 2002). Whether implicit or explicit, ageism can influence behaviour, decisions and interactions with older people in ways that can be perceived as unfair and derogatory.

It is also important to distinguish the different levels through which ageism can be expressed in society. Ageism at the micro-level involves age-biased attitudes that are displayed by individuals. At the meso-level, ageism refers to groups, organizations and other social entities (e.g., in the workplace) which put older people at a disadvantage through their policies and practices. The macro-level relates to cultural or societal values as a whole which entrench age-based discrimination, as in the case of political regulations (Ayalon & Tesch-Römer, 2018). Ageism is thus a complex phenomenon which was best captured by the comprehensive definition provided by Iversen and colleagues (2009):

Ageism is defined as negative or positive stereotypes, prejudice and/ or discrimination against (or to the advantage of) elderly people on the basis of their chronological age or on the basis of a perception

of them as being 'old' or 'elderly'. Ageism can be implicit or explicit and can be expressed on a micro-, meso- or macro-level (p. 15).

Even though the definition presented above includes the key elements of ageism, it still does not include ageism directed at younger people. Ageism can be conceived as bidirectional or a two-way street, with younger people having negative attitudes towards older people, but also older people having negative attitudes towards younger people. This is because, compared to middle-aged adults, both younger and older people are commonly perceived as having lower social status in terms of power, wealth, respect, influence, and prestige in society (Garstka, et al., 2004; Palmore, 1999), therefore becoming common targets of age discrimination by the respective outgroups (i.e., groups that a person does not belong to — in this case, other age groups). Even though Palmore introduced the idea of ageism against younger people almost 25 years ago, very little research has been dedicated to what some now refer to as 'youngism' (e.g., Francioli & North, 2021). In this project, we adopt a bidirectional ageism perspective by disaggregating ageism into 'oldism' and 'youngism', and focus on the social psychological processes of ageism in the workplace, including in the Portuguese context. For the purpose of this project, we propose a conceptualization of ageism that builds upon Iversen et al.'s (2009) definition, extending it to explicitly include the bidirectional aspect of ageism. This definition is also broadly aligned with the conceptualization of ageism by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2021):

Ageism is defined as negative or positive stereotypes, prejudice and/ or discrimination against (or to the advantage of) younger or older people on the basis of categorizing them as young or old. Individuals display age-biased attitudes in subtle and/or blatant ways.

Inputs from research on ageism

Despite research efforts, ageism is still far less researched than many other types of discrimination, such as sexism and racism (Nelson, 2002). Age categorization is at the core of age-based discrimination because it may restrict people's choices and actions based on ageist assumptions, for example when individuals see themselves or others as 'too young' or 'too old' to pursue particular activities or roles. When people apply ageist stereotypes to themselves, they are often unaware that they are doing so (Levy & Banaji, 2002), making it particularly challenging to change ageist beliefs.

The experience of ageism is a major social issue given that negative discrimination based on age is experienced by more people than either sexism or ethnic/racial discrimination. Data from the European Social Survey (ESS) collected in 2008 showed that, on average, about 25% of respondents across all age groups and all 28 countries reported having experienced blatant forms of discrimination by having been insulted, abused or denied services as a result of their age (Abrams et al., 2011). An even larger proportion (39%) reported having experienced subtle forms of discrimination in the form of lack of respect (e.g., by being ignored or patronized). More recent data from the Eurobarometer (European Commission, 2023) supports these findings, with 45% of all respondents reporting widespread discrimination in their country on the basis of age. Furthermore, around one in five respondents reported personally feeling

discriminated against or experiencing harassment, with age being one of the most frequently mentioned reasons for such treatment.

These trends are also reflected in the Portuguese data from the ESS, although the percentages are somewhat lower, and older people (80+) score the highest on reported age discrimination. Yet over 60% of all Portuguese respondents, regardless of their age, agree that age discrimination is a serious issue in Portugal. In fact, Portugal ranks fourth among all 28 ESS countries in terms of ageism being seen as an important social problem (Lima et al., 2010). At the same time, Portugal also ranks second among the countries with the most negative views towards the young (people in their 20s), and fifth among the countries with the most negative views towards the old (people over 70).

These numbers are troubling when considering the wide-ranging impact that age discrimination can have at the individual level. For targets of age discrimination, ageism is the behavioural denial of a benefit or right based on the classification of a person as a member of an age group, which triggers perceptions of injustice (Nelson, 2002). Moreover, the experience of discrimination is both a social rejection of targeted individuals and beyond their control, which are the two psychosocial stressors that have been found to be associated with the largest increase in stress hormones and require the longest recovery time (Dickerson & Kemeny, 2004). Stress hormones, such as cortisol, are related to psychological, physiological, and physical health functioning and can increase the risk of negative health outcomes when individuals are exposed to them repeatedly (McEwen, 1998), which is especially the case with subtle forms of (age) discrimination, which are pervasive in society and often go unchallenged (Williams, 2020).

Meta-analytic evidence — i.e., an analysis that statistically combines the results of reliable evidence from a large number of studies addressing the same issue — corroborates that when negative ageing perceptions are implicit (or explicit), they can harm older individuals' cognitive and physical functioning (Lamont et al., 2015) and health (e.g., Levy, 2009). When internalized by the target, negative stereotypes can also cause extra stress responses (such as increased heart rate, blood pressure and skin conductance). It happens, for instance, when people are asked to complete tasks that are stereotypically challenging to someone of 'their age' (Levy & Banaji, 2002). Moreover, even the threat of stereotypes, raised by explicitly comparing an older person with younger people, can be sufficient to reduce mathematical and cognitive performance by as much as 50 per cent (Abrams et al., 2008). This is especially concerning in light of public opinion regarding older people's ability to perform in a supervisory role. Findings from the ESS surveys showed that individuals of all ages regard an older person over the statutory retirement age as always less acceptable as a boss than a younger person in their 30s (Abrams et al., 2011), which is of particular concern if retirement age increases, as is expected in many jurisdictions.

When it comes to youngism, there is a dearth of research regarding the consequences of ageism for younger people and the limited body of evidence points to weak and inconsistent effects (de la Fuente-Núñez et al., 2021). For instance, a seminal social psychological study showed that age discrimination was not negatively associated with younger adults' subjective wellbeing (Garstka et al., 2004). Conversely, another study using representative data suggests that perceived discrimination is harmful to the subjective wellbeing of individuals

of all ages, but especially middle-aged people. This is counterintuitive but has been explained by the fact that members of traditionally discriminated groups (such as younger and older individuals) develop self-protective strategies that somewhat mitigate the effect of perceived discrimination (Hnilica, 2011).

It has also been suggested that the impact of ageism on younger people might not manifest itself in general health and wellbeing outcomes because younger people's low status group membership is, unlike older people's status, not permanent (Garstka, et al., 2004). Studies focussing on the work context reveal more insights into the possible negative impact of ageism on younger people. Ryan and colleagues (2015) showed that younger workers who were self-conscious about being stereotyped reported more negative mood and less satisfaction with their older co-workers. Other studies suggest that perceiving ageism at work negatively affects younger workers' commitment to the organization (Rabl & Triana, 2013; Snape & Redman, 2003). This suggests that younger workers might not fulfil their full potential at work because of age-based biases, which can lead to job dissatisfaction and eventually a feedback loop in which declining satisfaction at work amplifies work-life issues. Given the projected changes in the workforce composition due to an ageing population, these are important findings that should be followed up in future research.

At the organizational level, and for enactors of ageism (i.e., those holding ageist beliefs) who are in positions of power, age-related biases can be expressed through human resources management practices and decisions (Cappelli & Novelli, 2013). These can impact targeted individuals in terms of their career development, such

as performance evaluation, promotion and training, as well as hiring and firing. This can result in perceptions of injustice (Stone-Romero & Stone, 2005) regarding distributive justice (the outcomes received), procedural justice (the processes that were followed), or interactional justice (the perceived quality of interpersonal treatment; Colquitt, 2001; Cropanzano et al., 2001) in the eyes of those who are discriminated against. Perceptions of injustice can, in turn, lead to negative reactions directed at the organization, at line managers, or peers (Stone-Romero & Stone, 2005) with implications for organizational productivity. Kunze and colleagues (2013) argue that losses in organizational performance could be prevented if managers held more positive age stereotypes and promoted age diversity-friendly HR policies. Even for those not in positions of power, ageism can be expressed by creating a negative work environment, such as a reluctance to work with older or younger workers in a team — again, with detrimental consequences for the organization's cohesion and, consequently, its overall performance. Justice perceptions and their effect on employee attitudes and motivations are an additional reason to ensure that policies in the workplace are not regarded as age-discriminatory, and that steps are taken to ensure that older, as well as younger workers, do not feel stereotyped and discriminated against on the basis of age.

At the societal level, it is important to note that any form of discrimination is costly for human development and has social and economic consequences. Although there is very little research about the actual economic costs of ageism, a recent paper estimated that the one-year cost of ageism is $63 billion for all persons aged 60 years or older in the United States, because it aggravates some

of the most costly health conditions (e.g., cardiovascular disease, treatment of smoking and mental disorders; Levy et al., 2020). No comparable estimates are available for the economic costs of ageism against younger people. Yet there are worrying statistics regarding the rise of mental health issues in younger people (Twenge et al., 2019), especially for individuals transitioning from student life to full-time employment and who may struggle with employment opportunities (Ames et al., 2023; Auerbach et al., 2016). Over the course of a lifetime, an individual's mental health issues can amount to staggering healthcare and possibly social welfare costs. And the costs related to the health effects of discrimination do not take into account the potential costs for organizations in terms of productivity loss and potential spillover effects which create a negative work environment for all.

These are just a few of many possible examples that illustrate the potentially profound impacts of ageism against both older and younger workers at different levels. Hence, identifying ways to tackle ageism is paramount for creating better workplace conditions for people of all ages.

What role do age stereotypes play in ageism?

Because ageism is rooted in what people believe about certain age groups, stereotypes are particularly important in order to understand the mechanisms that lead to age discrimination. Stereotypes are socially-shared beliefs about the characteristics of the members of a social group, which are learned via socialization processes and automatically activated in situations where the attributes of the social group are salient. They essentialize, maintain, accentuate and justify the differentiation between social categories. Stereotypes do not have to be negative to be discriminatory. Even apparently positive stereotypes can serve to justify the exclusion or oppression of certain groups in society.

The social psychological literature on age stereotyping distinguishes between three different kinds of stereotypes: (1) descriptive stereotypes, (2) metastereotypes, and (3) prescriptive stereotypes (Finkelstein et al., 2015). Descriptive stereotypes have been researched the most and describe what people think members of a group are like. For example, older people may be generally seen as wise and knowledgeable, while younger people may be characterized as inexperienced and immature. Metastereotypes are attributed intergroup beliefs, i.e., beliefs regarding how one's social group is viewed by other groups (Vorauer et al., 1998). Metastereotypes are, thus, complex cognitive representations about social groups as they can be attributed to the ingroup (i.e., the group one belongs to), or the outgroup (i.e., other groups one does not belong to), and the target can also be either the ingroup or the outgroup, allowing for different combinations (Judd et al., 2005). For instance, a younger person may believe that older people (the outgroup) see younger people (the ingroup) as inexperienced and immature. This would be an example of outgroup-attributed metastereotypical beliefs. However, a younger person may also believe that younger people (the ingroup) see themselves (their own group) as inexperienced and immature, which would be an example of ingroup-attributed metastereotypical beliefs. Outgroup-attributed beliefs have been researched the most in the literature with reference to ethnic groups (e.g., Vorauer et al., 1998; Vorauer & Sakamoto, 2008).

Metastereotypes are important because individuals may infer from them whether they are liked by the outgroup and whether they are likely to be targets of discrimination. Research on meta-cognition and intergroup relations has shown that individuals' negative metastereotypes may elicit heightened perceptions of discrimination (Frey & Tropp, 2006; Vorauer et al., 1998), inhibit intergroup contact by increasing anxiety about interactions with outgroup members (e.g., in simulated contact situations; Finchilescu, 2010) and increase potential for miscommunication and tension (Vorauer & Sakamoto, 2008). However, metastereotypes are also complex concepts due to the different possible combinations of ingroup/outgroup beliefs and ingroup/outgroup target (who thinks what about whom?) and the additional issue of how accurate these beliefs are, which can also have implications for intergroup relations (Kenny & DePaulo, 1993).

Finally, prescriptive stereotypes are beliefs about how people should behave because of their group membership. For instance, prescriptive stereotypes about older people are that they should not behave as if they were young (North & Fiske, 2013). Prescriptive stereotypes are especially powerful in intergroup relations because they refer to how people 'should be', therefore involving one group exerting social control over another, which has been mostly studied in regard to gender relations (e.g., Rudman & Glick, 2010). Prescriptive stereotypes are particularly detrimental because they imply not only being different, but being in violation of expectations. This can create social pressure and expectations for individuals to conform to these stereotypes with the potential for discriminatory reactions for those who do not conform. Prescriptive stereotypes can also contribute

to the maintenance of social hierarchies and inequalities, as they are used to justify unequal treatment and differential expectations for different groups (e.g., Correll & Ridgeway, 2006; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Rudman et al., 2012). Thus, they can predict prejudice/discrimination in instances where descriptive stereotypes cannot, and have the potential to create more differences between groups than descriptive stereotypes (Gil, 2004; North & Fiske, 2013; Rudman et al., 2012). However, this kind of stereotype has been researched the least in the ageism literature.

Research on age stereotyping has mostly focused on examining descriptive stereotypes and usually builds upon Fiske and colleagues' well-supported Stereotype Content Model (SCM) (Fiske et al., 2002), which incorporates the possibility of both positive and negative stereotypes about social groups in society. The SCM originally proposed two underlying dimensions that organize the stereotypes associated with any social group in a society. One dimension is competence, the degree to which a group is characterised as intelligent and capable. The other dimension is warmth, the degree to which a group is regarded as friendly and likeable. Whether a social group scores highly along the warmth and/or competence dimensions depends on so-called socio-structural variables: social groups which are seen as having high social status are usually assessed as highly competent (e.g., rich people), while those that are seen as posing little threat or competition are assessed as highly warm (e.g., housewives). Research has found that older people tend to be seen as non-threatening and of low social status, leading to them being assessed as nice, but not so competent (Cuddy et al., 2005).

Fiske and colleagues also propose in their model that stereotyping can underpin ageist prejudice, thereby representing an emotional reaction to the cognitive process of categorization and evaluation. For instance, research in social psychology has revealed the existence of a form of 'benevolent' prejudice toward older individuals across different societies, which manifests as feelings of pity and stem from the ambivalent stereotyping that older people are friendly but not so competent (e.g., Abrams et al., 2009; Cuddy et al., 2005). Interestingly, Lima and colleagues (2010) found that, in Portugal, younger people, much like older ones, are also generally viewed more as 'nice' than competent, which should theoretically result in similar benevolent prejudice as observed toward older people. Nevertheless, perceptions within the workplace might differ.

Most importantly, research using the SCM framework has shown that stereotypes and prejudices can motivate specific kinds of discriminatory behaviour and actions towards specific social groups (Cuddy et al., 2007). More concretely, the ambivalent combination of positive and negative stereotypes along the competence and warmth dimensions yields specific emotions towards the social groups in question, i.e., envy (if the group is considered highly competent but low in warmth) and pity (if the group is deemed not competent, but high in warmth), which in turn can motivate helpful and also harmful behaviours toward the group. Envied groups elicit behavioural tendencies of approach (e.g., expressing the desire to associate with them), but also the desire to actively harm them, while pitied groups elicit the desire to help and protect, while passively harming them via social exclusion.

Existing research in this area has mostly focused on applying the stereotype content dimensions of warmth and competence to beliefs about older or younger people in general, without reference to the work context (e.g., Cuddy et al., 2005; Francioli & North, 2021). More recently, another stereotypical dimension was proposed, focusing on morality (Ellemers et al., 2014), and referring to evaluations of honesty and trustworthiness. Although morality judgments based on age have not been explored in the work context, research on younger social activists has shown that they are seen as warm for being younger, and competent for being activists, but are seen as less moral/trustworthy than older activists (Farinha & Rosa, 2022).

1.2. The need for additional research

Given the ageing of the world's population and the tendency in many countries to postpone retirement, there is an urgent need to better understand the role of ageism and intergenerational relations in the work domain. Most ageism research focuses on discrimination against older workers, despite the fact that ageism can cut both ways and individuals can be judged not only as 'too old', but also as 'too young'. Even though there is a steadily growing body of research on attitudes towards younger people, no previous research has examined the content and role of prescriptive stereotypes towards younger people, and younger workers more specifically.

Prescriptive stereotypes in the workplace have long been researched with regard to gender and race/ethnicity (e.g., Berdahl & Min, 2012; Burgess & Borgida, 1999; Gill, 2004; Heilman, 2001; Rudman & Glick,

2002), and only more recently in regard to age (North & Fiske, 2013a) or the intersection of age and gender (Koenig, 2018), yet without focussing on the work context. Even though ageism shares similar intergroup processes with sexism and racism, it is very distinct from both. First, the highly continuous nature of age renders it very subjective and dependent on social construction processes when it comes to age boundaries of young and old. Second, these age boundaries are permeable and change over the life course, meaning that most individuals have the experience of belonging to both younger and older age groups at some point in their life. Third, there are usually strong social norms against expressing prejudice directly (for example, by showing outright hostility towards a particular group); however, these seem to be less powerful in the case of age. This means that, in certain situations, or when thinking of particular contexts, people generally seem to be less cautious about expressing age prejudice explicitly (Nelson, 2002). However, as described earlier, discrimination can occur even when blatant prejudice does not exist, because it might be expressed in subtle and more ambivalent ways, as is the case with prescriptive age stereotypes. Hence, understanding how prescriptive stereotypes are specifically expressed towards different age groups, and especially in the workplace, is of utmost importance.

There have been important studies published on ageism with a focus on the Portuguese context, albeit mostly about ageism towards older people (Lima et al., 2010). There is a dearth of (inter)national research regarding ageism towards the young, with most studies using younger people as a comparison group (and often regarding perceptions applicable only to older people), instead of devoting attention

to youngism in its own right (de la Fuente-Núñez et al., 2021). Moreover, the field of youngism is a-theoretical, providing very limited understanding about this phenomenon. Much research on ageism is also correlational and subject to limitations about cause-and-effect inferences.

Given that age is a social construction, the issue of ageism is also highly contextual and dependent on cultural beliefs and norms. Yet most research in social psychology, including research on ageism, is conducted in Anglo-Saxon cultures, often without considering that theories developed and evidence produced might be culture-bound (Henrich et al., 2010). Portugal provides a distinctive context as it ranks among the countries in the European region where older and younger people are more likely to be met with negative feelings and where ageism is disproportionately considered to be a serious issue in society (Lima et al., 2010). At the same time, it is among the countries in Europe with the highest rate of an ageing population (United Nations, 2023), the highest employment rate among those aged 65 and over (European Commission, Eurostat, 2020), yet also among the more fragile nations with regard to socio-economic indicators, such as economic growth, rates of unemployment and debt (INE, 2022).

In sum, one of the main contributions of the age@work project is to address these knowledge gaps and to provide much-needed insight into the issue of ageism for both enactors and targets, as well as the antecedents and consequences of ageism by using a multi-method approach. A major implication of this project is the groundwork it lays for tackling age discrimination and increasing

the social inclusion of both younger and older workers in order to reduce the costs of ageism to society.

1.3. Summary

This first chapter introduced the phenomenon of ageism by answering the following questions: What is ageism and what do we know about it? Why is it important to study ageism, including stereotypes targeting younger and older people?

When people categorize one another into age groups such as 'young' and 'old', they make implicit inferences about abilities, competences and skills. These are heavily informed by stereotypes, defined as generalized beliefs about the social category a person belongs to. Ageism refers to the systematic stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination against people because of their age. Ageism can encompass both positive and negative stereotypes and discrimination, and can be explicit or implicit in its manifestations. Ageism can be expressed at the individual, organizational or societal level, and can be directed at both younger and older individuals.

Ageism is a major social issue given that negative discrimination based on age is experienced by more people than either sexism or racism. We know that the impact that age discrimination can have on older individuals is wide-ranging. It can trigger perceptions of injustice and it is an experience of social rejection that is beyond one's control, that can negatively affect cognitive and physical functioning and health. When internalized, negative stereotypes can cause stress, and even the threat of stereotypes can be sufficient to significantly reduce cognitive performance.

There is less evidence regarding youngism, and the evidence available is sometimes inconsistent. Some research has shown that age discrimination does not negatively impact younger adults' subjective wellbeing. Other research suggests that age discrimination is harmful to the subjective wellbeing of individuals of all ages. Studies focussing on the work context further stress the possible negative impact of youngism. For example, perceiving ageism at work negatively affects younger workers' commitment to the organization.

At the organizational level, and for those holding ageist beliefs who are in positions of power, ageism can be expressed through human resource management practices and decisions, which in turn can lead to perceptions of injustice and negative reactions. Even for those not in positions of power, ageism can be expressed by creating a negative work environment, such as a reluctance to work with older or younger workers in a team. At the societal level, age discrimination can be manifested through formal laws and informal culture. It is important to note that any form of discrimination is costly for human development and has social and economic consequences.

As ageism is rooted in what people believe about certain age groups, it is important to understand stereotypes as mechanisms that lead to age-based discrimination. Both negative and positive stereotypes can be discriminatory and used to justify the exclusion or oppression of certain groups in society. The social psychological literature distinguishes between three types of stereotypes: descriptive stereotypes (what people think members of a group are like), metastereotypes (beliefs regarding how one's social group is viewed by its own as well as other groups), and prescriptive stereotypes (beliefs about how members of a specific group should behave/be).

Because of their 'mandatory' nature, prescriptive stereotypes are especially powerful in intergroup relations, as they involve one group exerting social control over another. They are particularly detrimental because they imply not only being different, but violating expectations. Prescriptive stereotypes can also predict prejudice and discrimination in instances where descriptive stereotypes cannot.

Despite similarities with sexism and racism, ageism has been far less studied, with most of ageism research focusing on discrimination against older workers. When it comes to ageism towards younger people (i.e., youngism), there is a dearth of research, and the evidence to date has yet to show consistent and significant effects. In terms of ageist stereotypes, prescriptive stereotypes have received the least research attention. Rather, most research on age stereotyping has focused on descriptive stereotypes, has been related to the well-supported Stereotype Content Model (SCM), has neglected the work context, and has been conducted in Anglo-Saxon cultures and may be culture-bound. Thus, the age@work project — and the present book — aim to address these knowledge gaps. Specifically, the project has (1) investigated prescriptive age stereotypes that younger and older workers encounter in the workplace in Portugal; (2) developed and empirically validated a scale that measures prescriptive age stereotypes towards younger workers and aimed at assessing its psychometric properties; (3) measured the prevalence and predictors of ageist beliefs against younger and older workers in the Portuguese workforce; (4) examined consequences of prescriptive age stereotypes towards younger and older employees; and (5) investigated organizational justice perceptions related to age discrimination and stereotyping, as well as their effects.

In Chapter 2, we will focus on the workplace as a context for ageism against both younger and older workers, and will review important findings. Chapters 3 and 4 provide an overview of the research studies and methodologies undertaken within this project. While Chapter 3 focuses on the development and testing of a scale to measure prescriptive stereotypes against younger workers, Chapter 4 examines three studies used to investigate the causes and consequences of ageist stereotypes targeting both younger and older workers. Chapter 5 looks at prescriptive stereotypes from the perspective of endorsers and presents findings regarding their predictors and consequences. Chapter 6 looks at prescriptive stereotypes from the perspective of targets and presents findings regarding the effects of feeling stereotyped and discriminated against on the basis of age. Chapter 7 reviews key insights obtained from the project, identifies important avenues for future research, and recommends ways in which the findings can be put into practice at the individual, organizational and societal levels, in order to create more equitable and age-inclusive workplaces.

Chapter 2
What Do We Know About Workplace Ageism?

The ageing of the world's population, and the consequent postponement of retirement in many jurisdictions, has increased the likelihood of younger and older workers interacting at work. Up to four generations may coexist in contemporary organizations, which highlights the increasing importance of understanding ageism (Nelson, 2019; World Health Organization, 2021) and intergenerational relations in organizations (North & Fiske, 2016). However, as with ageism research in general, workplace ageism research has predominantly focused on older workers (Perry & Parlamis, 2005; Posthuma & Campion, 2009; Truxillo et al., 2015), in spite of recent research showing that ageism can also target younger people (also referred to as *youngism*, Francioli & North, 2021), including in the workplace domain (see reviews by de la Fuente-Núñez et al., 2021; Schmitz et al., 2024). It has even been suggested that age bias against younger people manifests itself especially in the workplace (de la Fuente-Núñez et al., 2021), for example in the form of bullying and harassment (Kellner & Waterhouse, 2011). There is evidence that the experience of age discrimination among younger workers is highly prevalent, with one in three younger workers reporting age discrimination (Loretto & Duncan, 2000).

Interestingly, younger and older workers also share some common challenges: they enjoy fewer resources and exercise less influence than middle-aged workers (North & Fiske, 2012). Thus, ageism operates dynamically across the working lifespan (Marchiondo et al., 2016), with both older and younger workers belonging to socially disadvantaged age groups. In contrast, middle-aged workers constitute the 'idealized standard against which other age groups are judged' (Finkelstein, 2013, p. 21). Not surprisingly, past research has identified a U-shaped pattern of association between employees' age and perceived age discrimination (Duncan & Loretto, 2004), with younger and older workers experiencing more discrimination than middle-aged workers (Marchiondo et al., 2016). Given this bidirectional nature of workplace ageism, it is crucial to understand and address ageism directed against groups at both ends of the age continuum.

In this chapter, we introduce the main conceptual framework used to study workplace ageism in the age@work project. We present state-of-the-art theories and research on both ageism towards older workers, also referred to as workplace 'oldism'[2], and ageism towards younger workers, or workplace 'youngism'. Thus, we provide the theoretical and empirical foundation for the empirical studies presented in Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6, with a particular focus on ageist stereotypes, especially prescriptive stereotypes that have received much less research attention to date.

2.1. Workplace ageism and the role of age stereotypes

According to the tripartite model of attitudes, which has been widely adopted in conceptualizing workplace ageism (e.g., Finkelstein et al., 2018), ageism can be defined by three components: cognitive, affective and behavioural. An example of the cognitive component of ageism is if someone believes that older workers are resistant to change; an example of the affective dimension is if someone feels contempt during conversations with older work colleagues; and an example of the behavioural dimension is if someone avoids working with older colleagues. All three components or dimensions of ageism can have a positive or a negative valence.

Because our thoughts, feelings and actions influence each other, the relation between stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination is multidirectional.

Figure 2.1 Multidirectional relationships between stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination

Behaviour
(Discrimination)

Thoughts
(Stereotypes)

Feelings
(Prejudice)
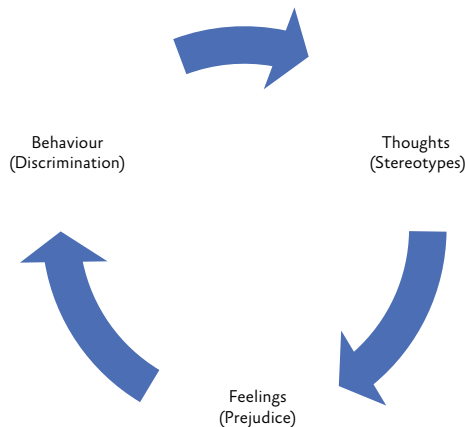
An advantage of the tripartite model of attitudes is that it breaks down ageism into its constituting parts, which allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon and to develop targeted interventions. Understanding stereotypes is especially important in this context, as it provides insight into the cognitive sources of biases that can be tackled via education and awareness-raising programs.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, three distinct types of stereotypes have been identified in the literature: descriptive stereotypes, metastereotypes and prescriptive stereotypes. An example of a descriptive age stereotype regarding younger workers specifically is that they are commonly seen as entitled and lacking a strong work ethic (Raymer et al., 2017). An example of an age metastereotype regarding older workers is when older workers think that younger workers believe older workers are less physically fit (Finkelstein et al., 2013). A prescriptive age stereotype in regard to older workers could be the expectation that they should retire when they reach retirement age to make way for the succession of younger workers in the organizations (North & Fiske, 2012). Even though most people would usually associate the term stereotypes with negative traits and characteristics of a group, they are often ambivalent, containing both positive and negative attributes (Operario & Fiske, 2010). For example, older workers might be stereotyped as experienced but slow when executing certain tasks.

The special case of prescriptive age stereotypes

Ageism research within the work domain has mainly focused on descriptive stereotypes. Metastereotypes have also received research attention, but prescriptive stereotypes have been largely neglected. To date, North and Fiske (2013a) are the only scholars to have investigated prescriptive age stereotypes, and have done so with regard to older people in general. They found, for example, that younger people think older people should not try to make themselves look younger than their actual chronological age. An important shortcoming of this research in light of the current project is that the prescriptive age stereotypes that were identified for older people in general (e.g., older people should not dance in a nightclub) might not apply to specific domains, such as the workplace. To the best of our knowledge, the only study which has applied old-age-prescriptive stereotypes to the workplace found that the specific age of the target (middle-aged or older) did not impact perceptions of the target's characteristics (e.g., warmth and competence; Hanrahan et al., 2023).

Research in the work context involving prescriptive stereotypes for other social groups, such as gender or race (e.g., Heilman, 2001; Berdahl & Min, 2012), has shown their important role in better understanding discrimination and intergroup relations. For example, East Asians who showed counter stereotypical dominant behaviour at work, and thereby violated a prescriptive racial stereotype, were subjected to more racial harassment than East Asians who were not dominant (Berdahl & Min, 2012). With regard to gender, even when a woman's achievement-oriented/agentic competence is acknowledged, her evaluation and career progression is negatively affected if she violates gender prescriptions (Heilman, 2001).

These examples show why it is important to understand prescriptive stereotypes. In contrast to mere norms or expectations — typically shared by everyone in a given society — prescriptive stereotypes usually involve one group disproportionately targeting another as a means of exercising social control (North and Fiske, 2013). Violating prescriptive stereotypes may result in backlash or penalties for the stereotype violator (e.g., not being hired) (Rudman et al., 2012). Thus, prescriptive stereotypes can predict prejudice/discrimination even when descriptive stereotypes cannot (Gill, 2004). Prescriptive stereotypes also put pressure on the target group to act in certain ways (thus avoiding violating stereotypes or hiding non-conforming behaviour to avoid penalties), which perpetuates these same stereotypes and stereotypical behaviours (Rudman et al., 2012). Not only do prescriptive stereotypes have important behavioural consequences, they also yield far greater between-group differences in endorsement than descriptive stereotypes (North & Fiske, 2013; Rudman et al., 2012). Hence, prescriptive stereotypes in the workplace deserve further research, especially when it comes to the study of older and younger workers as targets (e.g., Finkelstein, 2015).

In the following section, we analyse key empirical studies on ageism and its consequences and relate them to the concepts introduced thus far.

2.2. Key insights from empirical studies on workplace ageism

Several reviews and meta-analyses (i.e., systematic ways of organizing and summarizing findings from the available research on a given issue) about workplace ageism have been conducted within the organizational behaviour and organizational psychology literature (e.g., Bae & Choi, 2022; Bal et al., 2011; de la Fuente-Núñez et al., 2021; Finkelstein et al., 2015; Ng & Feldman, 2012; Perry & Parlamis, 2006; Posthuma & Campion, 2009; Truxillo et al., 2015), most of which focuses on ageism towards older workers (for an exception, see de la Fuente-Núñez et al., 2021). Here we outline some key findings that are particularly relevant to the issues regarding workplace ageism investigated in this project. We have divided this overview into two sections: one regarding ageism towards older workers (or workplace oldism), and another regarding ageism towards younger workers (or workplace youngism).

With regard to ageism towards older workers, we first review the content of stereotypes directed towards this group. We then review findings regarding effects of ageism on HR and personnel decisions, and consequences to the targets and enactors of workplace oldism. The consequences considered include job satisfaction, organizational commitment, employee engagement, counterproductive and harmful behaviours, and health-related outcomes. We then shift the attention to ageism towards younger workers, a far less studied topic. We start by providing an overview of how workplace youngism has been studied thus far. Then we review the content of stereotypes directed towards younger workers, present empirical findings

regarding the effects of youngism on HR and personnel decisions, and consequences for both targets and enactors of workplace youngism.

Ageism towards older workers

Stereotypes about older workers

Reviews and meta-analyses over the last 20 years have examined the most common stereotypes relating to older workers and have identified several general themes (Truxillo et al., 2015). In the following section, we present the main stereotypes describing older workers, and whenever possible indicate their valence (positive or negative).

Descriptive stereotypes, which refer to how people allegedly 'are' (e.g., North & Fiske, 2013), have been the most researched in studies about old age stereotypes. According to Posthuma and Campion's (2009) review, negative descriptive stereotypes about older workers fall into the following categories:

- Poor performance: older workers have lower ability, are less motivated, and are less productive than younger workers;

- Lower ability to learn: older workers are less able to learn and therefore have less potential for development;

- Resistance to change: older workers are harder to train, less adaptable, less flexible, and more resistant to change. As a result, older workers will provide a lower return on investments such as training;

- Shorter tenure: older workers will provide fewer years in which the employer can reap the benefits of training investments;

- More costly: older workers are more costly because they have higher wages, use their benefits more frequently, and are closer to retirement.

Ng and Feldman (2012) identified some additional negative descriptors of older workers, which were not included in Posthuma and Campion's (2009) review: less trusting, less healthy and more vulnerable to work-family imbalance.

With regard to positive descriptive stereotypes, Posthuma and Campion's (2009) review also identified a category of positive stereotypes towards older workers: 'more dependable', according to which older workers are seen as more stable, dependable, honest, trustworthy, loyal, committed to the job, and less likely to miss work or leave a job after a short while. Further information regarding positive characteristics of older workers is given by Bal et al.'s (2011) study, in which older workers were evaluated more favourably than younger workers in terms of their reliability. Older persons were also rated more highly than younger persons on integrity (Rosen & Jerdee, 1976a).

Because a stereotype is a generalization, it is not an accurate description for every individual member of a particular group. The accuracy of a stereotype has to do with whether there are real differences between groups (on average) on a particular characteristic (Truxillo et al., 2015). With regard to the poor performance stereotype, there is little evidence that job performance declines as employees get older (Posthuma & Campion, 2009). In fact, performance often improves with age, and when declines are found, they tend to be small (e.g., Cuddy & Fiske, 2002; Prenda & Stahl, 2001). In addition, the age of the employee is less important to job performance than individual skills and health, with much greater differences in job performance found within age groups than between age groups (e.g., Chasteen et al., 2002). Regarding the shorter tenure stereotype, older workers usually do not provide lower returns on investments, such as training, because older workers are less likely to quit, and the payback from investment in training tends to be realized in the short term (e.g., Hedge et al., 2006). In a similar vein, the Ng and Feldman (2012) meta-analysis, which included 418 empirical studies and investigated common old age stereotypes (less motivated, less willing to participate in training and career development, more resistant to change, less trusting, less healthy, and more vulnerable to work-family imbalance), showed that stereotypes held about older workers are generally not consistent with the cumulative research evidence. A notable exception was that older workers were indeed found to be less willing to participate in training and career development activities or do not appreciate task variety, but even that has been challenged in more recent studies (e.g., Sousa et al., 2019; Marques et al., 2023).

Another potential mismatch concerns the way in which older workers think they are seen by others (i.e., metastereotypes, Finkelstein et al., 2015) and the way they are actually stereotyped by others. Studies have shown that older workers' metastereotypes are often more negative than the actual prevailing stereotypes about them (Finkelstein et al., 2013). In other words, older workers might overestimate the extent to which they are seen by others in a negative light, for example as grumpy, boring, conservative and stubborn.

Accordingly, Finkelstein and colleagues (2020) developed and validated measures of older workers' metastereotypes, one assessing positive older age metastereotypes (experienced, knowledgeable, mature, responsible/conscientious) and another assessing negative older age metastereotypes (technophobic, slow, out-of-touch, and narrow-minded).

A final type of stereotype focuses on how older workers *should* behave, which may conflict with how they actually behave. Referred to as prescriptive age stereotypes, North and Fiske (2013a) are the only authors to date to have investigated them, but with regard to older people in general. In their research, which was not specifically focused on the workplace, they found that prescriptive expectations regarding older people fall into three distinct categories: succession-based, consumption-based and identity-based prescriptions. Of the three, only the succession-based stereotypes apply directly to the work context, which is why we consider them here more at length. These stereotypes derive from expectations surrounding enviable resources and societal positions, and perceptions that opportunities for younger people depend on older people stepping aside — primarily in employment (where retirement is seen as freeing jobs for younger people). Hence, succession stereotypes capture expectations that older workers should step back to give opportunities to younger workers. On the other hand, cross-national comparisons (Berkman et al., 2015) have actually shown that higher employment rates of older individuals and later retirement ages are positively related to higher employment rates of younger individuals.

Age stereotypes are key to better understanding biased decision-making and behaviour in organizations. In the following section, we present research evidence showing the implications of stereotyping on HR and personnel decisions in the workplace.

Implications of workplace oldism on HR and personnel decisions

Ageism against older workers has been extensively studied in the context of HR and personnel decisions. For example, Rosen and Jerdee (1976a) showed that respondents evaluated older workers more poorly, compared to younger ones, with regard to on-the-job performance, potential for development, as well as certain interpersonal skills, such as vitality and propensity for risk-taking. In a follow-up study, Rosen and Jerdee (1976b) investigated the effects of these age stereotypes on managerial decision-making using a scenario study. Results showed that job-related negative stereotypes of older workers were related positively to bias against older employees in personnel decisions.

Regarding training decisions, Fleischmann and Koster (2018), also using a scenario study, found that employers were less likely to offer training opportunities to older employees and that this effect was most pronounced the older the target employees were. Bal et al.'s (2011) meta-analysis of field and laboratory studies, which examined the effect of employees' age on a number of evaluative workplace outcomes, also suggests that older employees are disadvantaged when it comes to job progression, selection, general evaluations and perceived interpersonal skills.

Recruitment and selection have been an important area of study in the context of HR decisions. In a simulated hiring situation, Ahmed and colleagues (2012) found that a fictitious 31-year-old

applicant received over three times more responses from employers than a fictitious 46-year-old applicant. Abrams and colleagues (2016) experimentally tested preferences for stereotypically older or younger candidates for a job and found that 80% of participants preferred to hire the younger candidate, 15% selected the older candidate and 5% were unsure. In a second study, which controlled for the potentially-confounding effect of duration of the position (short-term vs long-term position), the strong preference for a stereotypically younger age profile was maintained.

Research has also examined age discrimination in the context of job interviews. Bennington (2001) interviewed 186 people who had applied for jobs in the previous six months and, despite the fact that 44% of respondents remembered being asked their age in their interviews, only 12% believed that their age worked against them in the selection process. The authors argued that it was possible that the job applicants were somewhat naïve to the potential of age discrimination and that 'From the applicants' perspective, questions about age appear to be quite commonplace and most accept this as "part of life", thus colluding to allow discrimination to continue' (p. 131). This study suggests low levels of awareness regarding workplace ageism (e.g., Age Concern, 2008), even among the targets of discrimination.

Drydakis and colleagues (2018) addressed personnel decisions in the context of intersectionality, which is the convergence of different group memberships in a given person, for example, by being older and belonging to an ethnic minority. They experimentally examined whether older people have worse access to vacancies (i.e., invitations to interviews) in the UK labour market than their younger counterparts, and whether ethnicity could moderate the relationship between age and labour market outcomes (i.e., wages). Results showed that older applicants, regardless of ethnicity, had less access to interviews and to higher paid vacancies than younger applicants. Regarding the interactions between applicant age and ethnicity, older Black applicants faced a 9.4% lower chance of receiving an invitation to an interview than older White applicants. Moreover, the positions that older Black applicants were invited to interview for offered 5.8% lower wages than the positions that older White applicants were invited to interview for.

Consequences for targets of workplace oldism

Any form of perceived discrimination is stressful and detrimental to the wellbeing of individuals (e.g., Jones et al., 2016; Pascoe & Richman, 2009) and the same applies to workplace oldism.

Hassell and Perrewé (1993) showed that older workers' perceptions of age discrimination were associated with lower self-esteem, lower perceived personal control, and lower job satisfaction. Snape and Redman (2003) found that perceived age discrimination was associated with lower levels of organizational affective commitment. However, those who felt that they had experienced age discrimination because they were considered too old had higher levels of continuance commitment, defined as loyalty to an organization, because the costs of leaving are perceived as too high. Thus, discrimination appears to result in older workers feeling less affectively committed to the organization, yet also feeling 'locked in', perhaps due to perceived disadvantages in the labour market. Results also indicated that perceived discrimination led to an

increased intention to retire for those closer to eligibility for early retirement. In investigating understudied psychosocial factors that may buffer or hinder job satisfaction, commitment and engagement, consistent with the findings of Hassell and Perrewé (1993) and Snape and Redman (2003), Macdonald and Levy (2016) showed that age discrimination at work was negatively related to job satisfaction and job commitment.

Regarding health outcomes of ageism against older workers, Marchiondo and colleagues (2019) investigated employees' trajectories of perceived workplace age discrimination for almost four thousand older workers. Using three waves of data from the Health and Retirement Study, they found that perceived workplace age discrimination tended to increase with age. Increases in perceived age discrimination were in turn related to increases in older employees' depressive symptoms and decreases in their job satisfaction and overall self-rated health.

Consequences for enactors of workplace oldism

Consequences for enactors (e.g., Paleari et al., 2019) of workplace oldism have to date been far less studied than consequences for targets of workplace oldism. Some research suggests that, similar to what has been found for enactors of racism (e.g., Bowser & Hunt, 1981; Richeson & Shelton, 2003; Spanierman & Heppner, 2004), negative consequences may also exist for enactors of age discrimination. For example, King and Bryant (2017) found that across different generations of workers, workplace ageism related negatively to cooperative contact (e.g., mentoring) and job satisfaction, providing indirect evidence of the negative consequences that may result from

age-related prejudices. More directly, Paleari and colleagues (2019) found that the more individuals displayed oldism (and youngism), the more they experienced anxiety towards the other age group, and felt that their interactions with the other age group were more negative. They also identified less strongly with the organization and enacted more counterproductive and harmful behaviours, such as insulting someone about their job performance, towards colleagues of all ages. In a second, longitudinal study, the authors showed that these negative consequences persisted over a three-month period, and that holding ageist beliefs also negatively impacted vitality at work, a sub-dimension of thriving.

In the following section, we shift our attention to ageism towards younger workers, reviewing key empirical findings in this understudied field.

Ageism towards younger workers

The ageing population in many countries and the consequent changes in the workforce composition have not only impacted older workers, but also increased pressure on younger workers. The ingroup bias (i.e., the tendency to benefit those that belong to one's group) found by Forte and Hansvick (1999) for work-related perceptions about older workers by older employers is an example of how the 'greying' working population might translate into a potential disadvantage for younger workers. De la Fuente-Núñez and colleagues (2021) extensively reviewed how ageism can also affect younger people, including in the work domain. The increasing recognition of the importance of this topic was also reflected in the Global Report

on Ageism (WHO, 2021), which dedicated a chapter to reviewing the scale, impact and determinants of ageism, specifically against younger people.

Despite that, legislation usually protects older workers against discrimination. A prominent example is the Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 ('ADEA' or 'Act') in the USA, which is a federal law that prohibits age discrimination against employees who are 40 years of age or older (for summaries of workplace age discrimination laws across the globe see http://www.agediscrimination.info/international). As a consequence of the pressure that ageism has put on younger workers, issues of 'reverse age discrimination' (e.g., Cullen, 2003; Lacy, 2005) have been reported in the USA. In these legal actions, younger employees claim that their employer treated older employees better, which calls into question the traditional interpretation of the 'ADEA'.

In their review of research on workplace youngism, conducted within this project, Schmitz and colleagues (2023) conclude that in the vast majority of ageism research including younger workers (88%), younger workers served merely as a comparison group for studying ageism towards the old. This means that much of our knowledge regarding workplace youngism has been gained by examining it through an oldism lens, i.e. by using older worker stereotypes as a reference (e.g., McCann & Keaton, 2013; Rosen & Jerdee, 1976a; Weiss & Maurer, 2004; see also Schmitz et al., 2023). For instance, in Rosen and Jerdee's (1976a) classic study on age discrimination, six scenarios were created describing incidents which reflected older workers stereotypes (resistance to change, lack of creativity, cautiousness and slowness of judgment, lower physical ability, lack of interest in technological

change, untrainability) and were used to compare personnel decisions (e.g., promotion decisions) regarding younger and older targets. This study was replicated by Weiss and Maurer (2004) using the same scenarios. McCann and Keaton (2013) developed the Worker Perception of Stereotypes (WPS) survey, informed by Posthuma and Campion's (2009) review of older workers' age stereotypes, to compare perceptions regarding younger and older workers. Yet, studying younger workers in terms of attributes associated with older workers may provide limited insight into the specific type of ageism that younger workers encounter, and should therefore be complemented by research that specifically focuses on younger workers.

Stereotypes about younger workers

The few studies on younger workers' stereotypes have focused mainly on descriptive stereotypes (e.g., Francioli & North, 2021; Raymer et al., 2017; Van Rossem, 2019;) and metastereotypes (e.g., Finkelstein et al., 2013; Finkelstein et al., 2020). We review these below and, whenever possible, distinguish positively- from negatively-valenced stereotypes. Then we examine the prescriptive stereotypes towards younger workers identified within this project and not addressed in prior research.

In terms of negative descriptive stereotypes, younger workers are regarded as inexperienced, in high need of support, seeking the most work-life balance, not etiquette-savvy, and uncommitted to the company (Van Rossem, 2019). Francioli and North (2021) identified descriptive stereotypes that generally apply to younger people, of which some are also relevant for the work context: entitled,

argumentative and inexperienced. Raymer and colleagues (2017) organized beliefs about younger professionals into the following four themes: (1) too casual and lack basic communication etiquette, (2) feel entitled and have unrealistic expectations, (3) have poor work ethics and fail to take initiative, and (4) are self-centred and disrespectful of their elders. Positive descriptive stereotypes for younger workers that have been identified in research include: goal-oriented, technologically savvy, innovative (Van Rossem, 2019), and eager, bright and tech-savvy (Francioli & North, 2021).

Regarding metastereotypes, Finkelstein and colleagues (2013) identified the following negative stereotypes that younger workers believe older and middle-aged workers hold about them: arrogant, tardy/not punctual, inexperienced, lazy/unmotivated, ambitious, immature, unreliable, extrovert, irresponsible, naïve, selfish, self-conscious and uncommitted. Similar findings emerged in the studies by Kovacs and colleagues (2013) and Rožman and colleagues (2016). Finkelstein and colleagues (2020) validated two subscales of younger workers' metastereotypes, one assessing negative young age metastereotypes with four items, i.e. inexperienced, lazy/unmotivated, immature and unreliable, and the other assessing positive young age meta-stereotypes with the four items, i.e., energetic/enthusiastic, ambitious, innovative/creative and tech-savvy. Interestingly, Finkelstein and colleagues (2013) found that younger workers' metastereotypes were on average more negative than those of older workers, leading the authors to suggest that younger workers may be particularly harmed by overestimating the extent to which they are stereotyped as, for example, lazy and irresponsible. On the other hand, younger workers also believe that older workers view them positively in some domains, for example, as tech-savvy. Moreover, younger workers also believe that middle-aged workers hold positive stereotypes about them in relation to their energy and enthusiasm (Finkelstein et al., 2013).

While there is a growing body of research on younger workers' descriptive stereotypes and their metastereotypes, there is still a large gap when it comes to research addressing younger workers prescriptive age stereotypes (e.g., de la Fuente-Núñez et al., 2021; Truxillo et al., 2015). Therefore, within the scope of this project and as detailed below, Schmitz and colleagues (2023) developed a scale of prescriptive age stereotypes towards younger workers, the WAYS-Workplace Ambivalent Youngism Scale. See Chapters 3, 5 and 6 below for further detail regarding WAYS, and the effects of endorsing and feeling targeted by the WAYS prescriptive stereotypes.

Implications of workplace youngism on HR and personnel decisions

According to recent research, 28% of younger employees indicated experiencing age discrimination (Raymer et al., 2017). It has been suggested that in particular those aged 30 and below report age discrimination during all phases of their employment, from recruitment to promotion and lay-off (Snape & Redman, 2003). Younger workers tend to be relatively underpaid (e.g., Wood et al., 2008) and report not feeling sufficiently valued. They also report receiving belittling comments, being perceived as less competent because they look young, and receiving fewer development opportunities (Raymer et al., 2017).

Duncan and Loretto (2004) explored experiences and perceptions of age discrimination among 180 employees across age categories and by gender. In terms of age discrimination, the results indicated that more than two thirds (70%) of those who indicated experiencing age discrimination reported experiencing 'negative treatment because of younger age'. Only 30 percent reported experiencing 'negative treatment because of older age'. The most common types of negative treatment because of younger age reported by participants were related to 'Pay and/or benefits' (21%); 'Negative attitudes' (18%); 'Too young for promotion' (16%); 'Job deployment restricted' (12%); 'Youthful appearance' (4%).

Workplace ageism studies have looked into the dyadic relationships between younger supervisors and older subordinates (Y-O dyads), also known as status-incongruent supervisory relationships, in which a supervisor is younger than their subordinate. Collins and colleagues (2009) examined the effect of subordinate expectations of supervisor leadership effectiveness and performance. The findings suggested that older workers expected less from their younger supervisors than younger workers did, and in turn older workers rated their younger supervisors' leadership effectiveness and performance lower than younger workers rated their younger supervisors. In addition, older workers expected less from their younger supervisors than younger workers with older supervisors or older workers with older supervisors. Older workers also rated their younger supervisors' leadership behaviour lower than younger workers with older supervisors or older workers with older supervisors. In a study examining 'anti-stereotypical' Y-O dyads, Van Der Heijden (2016) found that directional age difference (i.e., how much younger the supervisor is than

the subordinate) related to lower supervisor ratings of occupational expertise from their subordinates. This negative effect of status-incongruence was reinforced by a longer duration of the dyadic relationship between employee and supervisor.

Consequences for targets of workplace youngism

With regard to the consequences of workplace youngism, the little research that exists suggests that ageism against younger workers can have serious implications. Younger workers' perceived age discrimination was found to negatively affect job satisfaction and employee work engagement (Jelenko, 2020), and to increase the work-life interference (Rabl & Kühlmann, 2009), therefore reducing work-life balance. Snape and Redman (2003) also found that perceived age discrimination (in terms of being considered either too young or too old) has negative consequences in terms of affective commitment to the organization.

Bertolino and colleagues (2013) experimentally investigated how older and younger workers are perceived in terms of the Big Five personality traits and task and contextual performance. Results indicated that older workers were rated more highly on conscientiousness (i.e., tendency to be organized, responsible, and hardworking) and agreeableness (i.e., tendency to behave in a cooperative, selfless manner) than younger workers. In turn, younger workers were rated more highly on neuroticism (i.e., the display of chronic levels of emotional instability and proneness to psychological distress) than older workers. While differences were non-significant for task performance, older workers were rated more highly than younger workers both in terms of organizational citizenship behaviour directed

toward peers and organizational citizenship behaviour directed toward the organization.

Erber and Long (2006) experimentally tested if younger and older employees who forget to perform tasks or who accomplish them too slowly are judged similarly. Results showed that in the case of older targets, forgetting to perform a task or accomplishing it too slowly was attributed to poor memory ability and mental difficulty. In the case of younger targets, however, it was attributed to lack of effort and attention. Observers also demonstrated more anger and less sympathy when younger versus older targets performed poorly. Finally, there was a tendency for participants to rate older employees more highly, and to be more likely to recommend older employees for a promotion and a raise.

Consequences for enactors of workplace youngism

In this section, we shift our attention to effects on enactors of ageism towards younger workers. However, to the best of our knowledge, to date, this understudied area has only been explored by Paleari and colleagues. As noted above, the negative consequences of age discrimination against younger or older workers were not only found in relation to the targets, but also in relation to the enactors. More specifically, Paleari and colleagues (2019) found that the more employees endorsed youngism (or oldism), the more they experienced negative interactions with younger workers over time. This negatively affected behaviours toward all co-workers and, albeit less significantly, their vitality at work and organizational identification. Employees who held ageist attitudes also displayed more counterproductive work behaviours, such as complaining. Thus, initial evidence suggests

that ageism can have detrimental outcomes for workers endorsing both oldism and youngism, as well as for the organization as a whole and for targets of ageism.

Bidirectional ageism: a summary about age stereotypes towards younger and older workers

Table 2.1 shows the different types of age stereotypes (e.g., descriptive stereotypes, metastereotypes and prescriptive stereotypes) towards both older and younger workers, while also indicating their valence.

Table 2.1 Summary of different types of stereotypes regarding older and younger workers

Type of stereotype	Older workers		Younger workers	
	Stereotype valence			
	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive
Descriptive age stereotypes (e.g., Posthuma & Campion, 2009; Bal et al., 2011; Rosen & Jerdee, 1976a; Ng & Feldman, 2012; Van Rossem, 2019; Francioli & North, 2021; Raymer et al., 2017).	• poor performance • lower ability • resistance to change • shorter tenure • more costly • less motivated • less willing to participate in training and career development • less trusting • less healthy • more vulnerable to work-family imbalance	• more dependable • reliable • display more integrity	• inexperienced • in high need of support • not etiquette-savvy • seeking more work-life balance • not committed to the company • entitled • argumentative • poor work ethics • fail to take initiative • self-centred • disrespectful of their elders	• goal-oriented • tech-savvy • innovative • eager • bright
Age metastereotypes (e.g., Finkelstein et al., 2013; Finkelstein et al., 2020; Kovacs et al., 2013 and Rožman et al., 2016).	• grumpy • boring • conservative • stubborn • technophobic • slow • out of touch • narrow minded	• experienced • knowledgeable • mature • responsible/conscientious	• arrogant • tardy/not punctual • inexperienced • lazy/unmotivated • immature • unreliable • irresponsible • naïve • selfish • not committed • self-conscious	• tech-savvy • hardworking • energetic/enthusiastic • ambitious • extrovert • nimble
Prescriptive age stereotypes (North & Fiske, 2013a, Schmitz et al., 2023).	• succession-based stereotypes[3]		• humility-deference and loyalty-belonging stereotypes[4]	• vitality-innovation stereotypes

This review of older and younger workers' stereotypes clearly indicates that studies on descriptive stereotypes in the workplace are more numerous, whereas age metastereotypes have only recently started receiving research attention, and research regarding prescriptive age stereotypes is still limited and nascent. When it comes to descriptive stereotypes and metastereotypes, we can in some cases see a direct contrast between the stereotypes directed towards older versus younger workers. For example, experienced vs. inexperienced, resistant to change/conservative vs. innovative, mature vs. immature, slow vs. energetic/enthusiastic, responsible/conscientious vs. irresponsible, more vulnerable to work-family imbalance vs. seeking the most work-life balance. This contrast in stereotypes regarding older versus younger workers is usually reflected in the positive versus negative valence attributed to the stereotypes by the authors. For example, while slow (for older workers) is considered negative, energetic/enthusiastic (for younger worker) is deemed positive. Interestingly, however, the stereotypes more vulnerable to work-family imbalance (older workers) and seeking more work-life balance (younger workers) were both categorized as negative in the literature.

Overall, older and younger workers appear to be mostly targeted with negative stereotypes, yet positive stereotypes seem to be slightly more frequent in relation to younger workers, indicating a higher ambivalence in the stereotypes associated with this age group.

2.3. Summary

In the face of an ageing population and with up to four generations coexisting in many contemporary organizations, understanding workplace ageism has become increasingly important. In this chapter, we introduced conceptual approaches to studying workplace ageism and presented key insights from empirical studies regarding ageism against both older and younger workers. As with ageism in general, workplace ageism research has predominantly focused on the former, in spite of proven negative impacts of workplace youngism for individuals and organizations.

Because they capture beliefs regarding social categories of people, stereotypes are an important mechanism that leads to age discrimination. Stereotypes can be positive or negative, and can be descriptive (e.g., how older workers *are*), prescriptive (e.g., how older workers *should be*), or metastereotypes (e.g., how older workers think they are stereotyped *by others*). Although stereotypes can impact both the stereotype holder and its target, in terms of behaviour and wellbeing, prescriptive age stereotypes have been the least researched, especially in relation to younger workers. Interestingly, although older and younger workers are mostly targeted with negative stereotypes, positive stereotypes appear to be more frequently associated with younger workers.

Ageism has been shown to affect HR and personnel decisions for both older and younger workers. Oldism research has shown that older workers, compared to younger ones, are less well-evaluated in terms of performance, development potential and interpersonal skills, such as vitality and risk-taking. Older applicants are provided less access to interviews and to higher paid vacancies than younger applicants, and older workers are offered fewer training opportunities. In terms of workplace youngism, more than a quarter of younger employees report age discrimination at all stages of their employment, from

recruitment to promotion and lay-off. Younger workers also tend to be relatively underpaid and report feeling undervalued, receiving belittling comments, being perceived as less competent, and also receiving fewer development opportunities.

Negative consequences for targets of workplace oldism are well-established, and include psychological reactions (e.g., lower self-esteem, lower perceived personal control), organizational attitudes (e.g., lower job satisfaction and organizational commitment, and higher intentions to retire), and wellbeing (e.g., depressive symptoms, lower overall self-rated health, stress and anxiety). The little research that exists on workplace youngism suggests that it can also have serious consequences. Perceived age discrimination was found to reduce job satisfaction, work engagement, and organizational commitment among younger workers, while increasing work-life interference and balance.

There is a dearth of research regarding consequences for enactors of workplace ageism, whether targeting older or younger individuals. However, research has indicated that workers with ageist attitudes and beliefs experience less positive workplace interactions with colleagues, and especially with the group of colleagues that the ageism is directed at. In addition, their vitality at work, an important aspect of wellbeing, and organizational identification both seem to be reduced, and their counterproductive work behaviours, such as complaining, seem to increase.

Finally, in Chapter 2 we identified three important research gaps in the field of workplace ageism: research considering prescriptive age stereotypes, which can predict prejudice/discrimination even when descriptive stereotypes do not, research on the consequences for enactors of workplace ageism, and research on workplace youngism in general.

Chapter 3

Measuring Prescriptive Age-Related Stereotypes Towards Younger Workers

3.1. Introduction to scale development studies

A major objective of this research was to investigate the prevalence, antecedents and consequences of prescriptive age stereotypes towards both younger and older workers, as an important and under-researched aspect of ageism. When it comes to older workers, there is already a scale that measures prescriptive stereotypes regarding older individuals in general that lead to inter-generational tensions: North and Fiske's (2013a) Succession, Identity and Consumption (SIC) Scale. Although SIC does not specifically focus on the workplace, we were able to use the succession dimension, which includes several items relating to the workplace, to measure prescriptive age stereotypes regarding older workers within this project. However, when it comes to prescriptive age stereotypes towards younger workers (or even towards younger individuals, in general), no previous form of measurement existed. Therefore, we developed and tested the Workplace Ambivalent Youngism Scale within this project, so that the prevalence, antecedents and consequences of prescriptive age stereotypes towards younger workers could also be measured.

In this chapter, we therefore introduce the first empirical part of the research project: three studies which were conducted to develop and validate a scale that assesses prescriptive age stereotypes towards younger workers. These included a multi-part study to generate scale items (Study 1), a study to explore the scale's factor structure (Study 2), and a study to confirm the scale's factor structure and examine its association with other related constructs (Study 3). All three studies are based on different samples. We focused primarily on younger workers, to complement previous work focusing on older workers, and collected the data from both U.S. and Portuguese contexts. Following best practices to address potential ethical issues, all of the studies were approved by the Ethics Committee on Human Persons Participation in Behavioural Sciences Research of the Universidade Católica Portuguesa.

Our main objectives in this chapter are:

1) to identify prescriptive age stereotypes that younger and older workers encounter in the workplace in Portugal;

2) to develop and empirically validate a scale that measures prescriptive age stereotypes towards younger workers by assessing its psychometric properties.

Before outlining designs, samples and analyses of the three studies undertaken, we will review the importance of researching workplace youngism, and identify several gaps in research on the stereotyping of younger workers. Common approaches to conducting research in this area are also reviewed, to provide context for our own investigations. Readers less interested in or familiar with research methodology may prefer to skip straight to the findings of our studies, in Chapter 5 (effects on and consequences for holders of ageist stereotypes) and Chapter 6 (effects on and consequences for targets of ageist stereotypes).

Why research prescriptive age stereotypes against younger workers?

Given that modern workplaces are often multi-generational (North & Fiske, 2016), it is crucial to better understand how younger and older workers see each other, and how this affects how they experience work and how they interact. However, as noted in Chapters 1 and 2, workplace ageism research has predominantly focused on older workers (Perry & Parlamis, 2006; Posthuma & Campion, 2009). Ageism targeting younger people (also referred to as youngism, Francioli & North, 2021) has received far less research attention, in spite of the fact that on average, across all countries, a higher percentage of younger adults compared to older adults reported experiencing lack of respect or poor treatment because of their age (Abrams et al., 2011). To fully understand workplace ageism, more research about workplace youngism is needed (e.g., de la Fuente-Núñez et al., 2021; Truxillo et al., 2015).

Because ageism is a result of beliefs regarding certain age groups, stereotypes are particularly important in order to understand mechanisms that lead to age discrimination. Stereotypes refer to generalized beliefs about social categories that people belong to, with common categories including gender, race and age. Stereotypes can be descriptive, prescriptive or metastereotypes, each of which functions differently. Descriptive stereotypes refer to beliefs about the characteristics a group of people; for example, 'younger workers are less loyal'. Meta-stereotypes refer to what a person believes *that other people believe* about the characteristics of a particular social group; for example, 'other age groups believe that older workers are less creative'. Finally, prescriptive stereotypes refer to beliefs regarding how a category of people, such as younger workers, *should* behave; for example, 'younger workers should show respect for older workers' (for a more comprehensive overview, see Chapters 1 and 2).

Research on prescriptive stereotypes is very limited (e.g., Fiske et al., 1991; Gil, 2004) and has focused mainly on race or gender in the work context (e.g., Berdahl & Min, 2012; Heilman, 2001). North and Fiske (2013b) are the only scholars to investigate prescriptive age stereotypes, albeit with a focus on older people and not specifically targeting the workplace. Hence, prescriptive age stereotypes in the workplace deserve further study, especially when it comes to younger workers (e.g., Finkelstein et al., 2015; Truxillo et al., 2015).

Furthermore, there has also been a strong tendency, described in more detail below, to investigate ageism using quantitative rather than qualitative methods. Although both have advantages and disadvantages, in this research we try to take a balanced approach, as is appropriate when it comes to tackling previously unexplored

questions. Finally, this project seeks to address some additional gaps in the research , including national culture and effects on holders of stereotypes, which will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Approaches to studying ageism

How has ageism been studied? What have been the preferred study designs and means of analysis? And what noteworthy gaps can be identified in the approaches taken? As with all phenomena, ageism has been studied in different ways, but it is possible to identify some trends, which provide context and opportunities for further research.

Scientific investigations of ageism can differ in several important ways:

1) Measurement of age. Chronological age can be measured as a continuous variable, or by assigning people to age categories, with cutoff points defining, for example, younger versus middle-aged versus older workers. In the first case, a wide range of different cutoffs has been used, with some studies considering younger workers to be those under 50 (e.g., de la Fuente-Núñez et al., 2021), while others set far lower thresholds (e.g., Schmitz et al., 2023). Age can also be measured subjectively, for example by asking participants how old they feel, or what age group they identify with (e.g., Stephan et al., 2015).

2) Domain. Ageism has been investigated in a variety of domains, including healthcare, the workplace, and more generally in society (e.g., WHO, 2021). Particularly in the case of younger workers, research in the workplace remains limited.

3) National culture. Ageism can be investigated in different populations, with research often focusing on a particular culture, for example perceived age discrimination among Japanese older workers (e.g., Harada et al., 2019).

4) Data collection. To investigate ageism, various approaches to data collection can be adopted. Qualitative data can be collected via interviews, focus groups, observation and open-ended questions (e.g., Flick, 2018). Quantitative data is usually collected via in-person or online questionnaires, from archival data (e.g., publicly available databases such as the European Social Survey; Abrams et al., 2011), using experimental methodologies in the laboratory, or by using online or written prompts (e.g., Nichols, 2023).

5) Data analysis. A number of analytic techniques can be used to analyse data regarding ageism, with the most common approaches including a variety of quantitative statistical techniques used to test hypotheses. These include regression analyses, analyses of variance (typically used for experimental data), and factor analytic techniques (typically used for scale development and testing), all of which are used in the current research. For qualitative data, more inductive and interpretive techniques are often used, to generate testable theory, learn from specific case studies, and examine complex processes over time.

6) Qualitative and quantitative reviews of previous research. As knowledge in a particular area accumulates, articles that review the existing literature, theories and empirical studies become an important source of insight. Review articles can be

more qualitative (for example, stating that research in a particular area is inconclusive and merits further investigation) or more quantitative (for example, enumerating how many articles use a particular method, or can be found in a database using specified keywords), often combining both. While systematic reviews are more rigorous in their selection of sources, scoping reviews that cast a wider net are often preferred in less researched domains. Meta-analytic techniques can also be considered as a quantitative review. They are employed to aggregate data from multiple studies — from dozens up to hundreds — to investigate whether relationships are statistically significant within the entire data set and under which conditions.

Common approaches to youngism research

Scoping reviews are aimed at identifying gaps in the existing research literature, and thus may describe in more detail the findings and range of research in particular areas of study, thereby providing a mechanism for summarizing and disseminating research findings to policy makers, practitioners and consumers (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). The potential contribution of scoping reviews is particularly salient when considering that, in emerging areas of evidence, there is a diversity of study methodologies and the trajectory of published articles of some content areas makes it difficult to ascertain the extent of the landscape (Colquhoun et al., 2014). Thus, scoping reviews can be particularly important in areas that are less explored, as is the case with research on workplace youngism, and where, as a result, systematic literature reviews have not yet been conducted.

Workplace youngism scoping review

A review of the literature regarding ageism against younger workers was carried out within the scope of this project, combining qualitative and quantitative methods. It was used to identify research gaps and also to help in preparing materials, such as the inclusion of realistic scenarios for data collection. Rather than a systematic literature review, which sets stringent requirements for selecting articles to include and is therefore more suitable for more 'mature' research areas, we conducted a scoping review. Scoping reviews require fewer data sources and are more flexible when it comes to including works from a variety of sources, rather than only including works that are, for example, peer-reviewed. As such, they are considered a preliminary assessment of the literature on a topic and are helpful to map out the state-of-the-art on under-researched topics.

The questions addressed in this scoping review include identifying the main methodologies, theories and ageism dimensions used in previous studies to investigate workplace youngism; the age categories and terminology most often used to define younger workers; and the main antecedents and consequences of workplace youngism. Unlike a recent review by de la Fuente-Núñez and colleagues (2021), the current scoping review focused exclusively on workplace youngism. While in de la Fuente-Núñez et al.'s (2021) study the target age groups studied ranged between 0 and 49 years, the current scoping review included only works focused on younger workers specifically. The most frequent lower age limit for younger workers was 18 years old, and the most frequent upper age limit for younger workers was 34 years old.

Empirical studies published after 1969, in English and in peer-reviewed articles, which examined workplace youngism, were considered eligible for inclusion in the review. Databases searched included: Web of Science, Scopus, and EBSCO host. The main terms (and close spelling or word variations of) used in the search related to ageism (ageism, age discrimination, age stereotypes, age prejudice, age bias, or age attitudes), the work context (work, workplace, human resources, employment, organization), and generations (young, Millennials, Generation Y, Generation Z). Titles and abstracts were screened first, followed by a full text screening of selected studies by two independent reviewers.

After removing duplicates, 356 records were identified. Of these, 124 full text articles met the criteria for eligibility and 32 additional records were identified through references. After excluding 48 full text articles that did not meet the inclusion criteria (see above), the final corpus used for the review included 108 articles, encompassing 143 studies, which were further analysed.

The results show that most empirical studies used a quantitative research design (n = 109 studies), with experiments being the most frequently used methodology (n = 70), followed by cross-sectional studies (n = 35). Qualitative (n = 21) and mixed methods approaches (n = 11) were used much less frequently (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1 Study design for the 143 studies included in the scoping review of Schmitz and colleagues (2023) on workplace youngism

		Number of studies (k=143)	%
Study design	*Quantitative*	*109*	*76.30*
	Experimental	70	
	Cross-sectional	35	
	Longitudinal	4	
	Qualitative	*21*	*14.70*
	Mixed-methods	*11*	*7.70*
	Other	2	1.40

Even though the selected studies originated from 21 countries, in terms of national culture, 38 percent of studies were conducted in the U.S. The UK (12.5%) and Germany (9.5 %) were the other two countries where the research was most frequently conducted. Other countries in which studies were conducted included Australia (5.4%), Italy (4.2%) and Taiwan (3.6%), with about one percent of the studies conducted in Portugal (1.2%).

Furthermore, the results also revealed that:

- The most common age categories used to define younger workers were: '35 years or lower', '30 to 18', '34 to 18', and '34 years or lower';

- The most common terminology used to describe younger workers was 'young' or 'younger' (90.7%), rather than 'millennials' or 'generation Y' (3.70%);

- Only three publications used specific terminology, such as 'youngism', to refer to ageism against younger people/workers;

- In terms of ageism dimensions, most of the studies included focused on the cognitive (stereotypes: 70.30%) and on the behavioural dimensions (discrimination: 66.70%), rather than on the affective component of ageism (prejudice: 19.80%);

- In terms of theoretical background, the majority of the studies included were theoretically grounded (62%). The following theoretical frameworks were most commonly cited: social identity approach (social identity and self-categorization theories, n = 18), stereotype content model (n = 9), social role and role congruity theories (n = 5), dual process theory (including the implicit ageism framework, n = 5), attribution theory (n = 4), and similarity-attraction paradigm (n = 3);

- The majority of the studies included investigated antecedents of workplace youngism (53.20%) rather than consequences (14.40%); some of the main antecedents identified refer to the organizational context (stable and dynamic), organizational sector, national culture, job/work context (younger-type job or older-type job), job/occupation, salience of appearance for the job, subordinate-supervisor directional age difference, participant gender, age group and chronological age. Finally, some of the main consequences identified refer to affective commitment, continuance commitment, intergroup contact quality with younger co-workers, organizational identification, job satisfaction, turnover intentions, work engagement, and positive and negative emotions;

- A total of 41% of the included studies used hypothetical scenarios or simulations with fictitious targets;

- Around 2/3 of the studies focused on the hiring process (and, thus, had the hypothetical job applicant as the target of interest), with the remaining 1/3 having hypothetical workers as the targets of interest;

- More than 88% of the studies focused both on workplace youngism and oldism;

- While 64% of the studies examined how youngism was expressed, 27% examined how youngism was experienced, and less than 2% of the studies directly investigated the prevalence of youngism;

- Only two validated scales were used to assess workplace ageism: Workplace Age Discrimination Scale (WADS, Marchiondo et al., 2015), and the Daily Experiences of Meta-Stereotypes (Finkelstein et al., 2020).

Methodology overview

The Workplace Ambivalent Youngism Scale (WAYS) development and validation

An important goal of this research project was the development and testing of a scale to measure prescriptive age stereotypes towards younger workers, using a cultural decentred approach[1]. Following best practices, several studies were conducted to develop and test the scale. In Study 1, common prescriptive stereotypes against

younger workers were identified using qualitative research methods, translated into scale items, validated by experts, and organized under broad dimensions. In Study 2, an exploratory factor analysis was conducted to reduce the item pool and statistically identify underlying dimensions of the WAYS scale. Study 3 consisted of a confirmatory factor analysis to statistically confirm the WAYS dimensions as well as test theory-driven expectations about how the developed scale may relate to other related constructs.

The final scale has 25 items and eight first-order factors, subsumed under three second-order factors: Humility-Deference, Loyalty-Belonging, and Vitality-Innovation (for a visual representation of the scale's structure, see Figure 3.1). The scale shows ambivalent expectations regarding younger workers, who are, on the one hand, supposed to accept their lower social status (Humility-Deference dimension) and commitment to the organization (Loyalty-Belonging) and, on the other hand, they are expected to show competence attributes usually associated with higher status groups (Vitality-Innovation). Therefore, the scale was named the Workplace Ambivalent Youngism Scale (WAYS).

Figure 3.1 WAYS first and second order factors
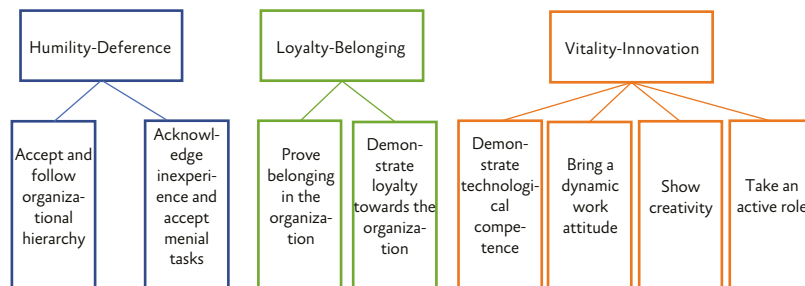
Qualitative studies: Item generation — Study 1

In Study 1, prescriptive age stereotypes towards younger workers were identified using a qualitative survey. In order to generate preliminary scale items, participants answered two open-ended questions regarding age-based expectations: 'Please take a moment to bring to mind what you think are common age-based expectations that exist in the workplace about younger workers'; and 'In general, what are younger workers supposed to do? How are they supposed to behave?'. Responses were collected from two culturally diverse samples (Portugal and the U.S.), thereby maximizing item appropriateness across different cultural contexts.

The overall sample included 154 participants from the U.S. (N=69) and Portugal (N=85). About half of the sample was female (51%) and showed an age range from 19 to 71, with an average age of 42. Participants were recruited from Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) for the U.S. sample and the Online Research Panel at Universidade Católica Portuguesa for the Portuguese sample, respectively. All participants had previous work experience at the time the data was collected. The U.S. participants were all living in the U.S. and were primarily White/European American (87%), with the remainder Black/African American, Latino/Hispanic American or 'other'/mixed. Participants were each paid 1.5 U.S. dollars for participating in the survey. The Portuguese participants were all living in Portugal and 89 percent were born in Portugal, with the remaining 11 percent born in Brazil, Mozambique, France, Switzerland, or another country. Portuguese participants were each paid 2.5 euros for taking part in the survey.

The U.S. data was collected first and subjected to a thematic analysis (TA) (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A six-phase analytic process (Terry et al., 2017) was followed, using the qualitative research software Taguette (https://www.taguette.org/). TA was chosen based on its flexibility for identifying patterns of meaning in qualitative data, i.e., thematic patterns in terms of the prescriptive age-related stereotypes associated with younger workers. Themes covering age-related stereotypes associated with younger workers were created from clustering together similar information which captures shared meaning. The data was analysed using both data-driven/inductive approaches, allowing new categories and interpretations to emerge without a priori hypotheses, as well as theory-driven/deductive approaches, using stereotypes previously identified in the literature to guide analysis that supported existing theory and previous findings. Finally, the data was analysed in terms of both the explicit meaning of the message (i.e., semantic coding) and its implicit meaning (i.e., latent coding). Data was coded by two independent coders, with any disagreements being resolved by a third coder. In total, 276 text segments were coded, with a level of agreement of 90%.

The following nine themes were identified, each relating to a different prescriptive stereotype towards younger workers, specifying how they should behave or not behave in the workplace.

1) *Respect older workers*: Show deference toward older workers;

2) *Accept and follow organizational hierarchy*: Show respect for, accept direction from, and not challenge organizational authority or hierarchy;

3) *Acknowledge inexperience and accept menial tasks*: Acknowledge inexperience, accept lower-status tasks and lower rewards, and help others when requested;

4) *Prove belonging within the organization*: Demonstrate trustworthiness and make an effort to be socialized into the organization;

5) *Demonstrate loyalty towards the organization*: Identify with the organization, and demonstrate long-term commitment to its goals;

6) *Demonstrate technological competence*: Being competent and comfortable using and promoting newer technologies;

7) *Bring a dynamic work-attitude*: Bring enthusiasm, physical vigour and energy;

8) *Show creativity*: Challenge traditional approaches and think critically, creatively and without preconceptions;

9) *Take an active role*: Be proactive and autonomously address work-related tasks and obstacles.

In a subsequent step, data from the Portuguese sample was analysed using a deductive approach based on the nine themes identified in the U.S. data, while allowing for the identification of culture-specific themes. This final phase of the process resulted in the coding of 376 text segments, with 87% of initial agreement between the two coders. All nine themes identified in the U.S. sample were also identified in the Portuguese data and no prevalent Portuguese-specific theme emerged from the data.

In an additional step, the nine themes identified in both the U.S. and Portuguese datasets were organized into three broader types of prescriptive stereotypes. The first type was named *Humility-Deference*, and related to mandatory expectations of not challenging the natural social order in the workplace. This type included the themes Respect older workers, Accept and follow organizational hierarchy, and Acknowledge inexperience and accept menial tasks. The second type of prescriptive stereotype was named *Loyalty-Belonging*, and related to expectations of proving to be trustworthy, making an effort to be socialized into the organization, and showing long-term commitment to organizational goals. This type included the themes Demonstrate loyalty towards the organization and Prove belonging within the organization. The third dimension, *Vitality-Innovation*, related to desirable attributes that younger workers are expected to bring to the workplace, and included the themes Bring a dynamic work-attitude, Take an active role, Demonstrate technological competence, and Show creativity.

It is interesting to note that the three broad types of prescriptive stereotypes identified tap into people's ambivalent expectations about younger workers. On the one hand, the expectations tapping into Humility-Deference and Loyalty-Belonging signify that younger workers are expected to respect hierarchy and accept menial tasks and lower social status. On the other hand, younger workers are also expected to demonstrate attitudes and behaviours usually associated with higher status groups, such as proactivity and creativity, as represented by the dimension Vitality-Innovation. Hence, the scale was labelled Workplace Ambivalent Youngism Scale (WAYS).

Next, the research team generated a total of 48 potential items for the nine themes. This initial item pool was submitted to an international panel[2] of four experts with expertise in areas relating to diversity and inclusion, stereotyping and discrimination. Feedback was provided by the expert panel regarding the clarity and appropriateness of the survey instructions, preambles and specific items. In addition, to verify the face validity of the items, experts were asked to which of the nine themes they would assign the 48 items. The feedback received was incorporated into the final version of the scale, resulting in the addition of items and a final pool of 60 items.

Quantitative studies: Scale testing and refinement

Exploratory factor analysis — Study 2

Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) is a technique used to identify the relations among a large number of variables. EFA is commonly used in developing a scale, when it is not known from past research what common factors underlie the measured variables. For example, an EFA on 20 variables that are considered possible scale items could identify an underlying structure of four factors. The factors identified would consist of items that clearly relate to that factor, and not to the other factors. Typically, items that do not belong to any of the factors or that belong to more than one of the factors are removed. The goal of EFA is to reduce a large number of measurable items to a smaller number of clearly interpretable factors, which can aid in measuring and interpreting data.

In the current research, the goal of the EFA was to investigate whether a structure emerged from the items measuring prescriptive age stereotypes towards younger workers, which could be clearly interpreted in terms of specific factors/dimensions. This structure could empirically support the themes and broader types of stereotypes as identified in the item generation stage, or suggest alternative factor structures. Thus, EFA was used in Study 2 to explore the factor structure of the 60-item pool, once again using samples from two different cultures (U.S. and Portuguese) with the goal of developing a measure that is applicable across different cultural contexts.

The final sample included 788 participants from the U.S. and Portugal, recruited from Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) and Prolific (https://prolific.co/), respectively. All participants had previous working experience and were living in the U.S. or in Portugal at the time data was collected. The 403 U.S. participants were 44 percent women, primarily White/European American, with an age range of 21 to 77, and an average age of 42 years. Participants were each paid 2.00 U.S. dollars. The 385 Portuguese participants were 46 percent women, 96 percent were born in Portugal, with an age range of 19 to 71 years and an average age of 29 years. Portuguese participants were each paid 1.88 pounds sterling.

Prescriptive stereotypes towards younger workers were measured using the final pool of 60 items developed in Study 1. Participants were asked to indicate to what extent they agreed with the statements presented (e.g., 'Younger workers, especially, should show respect toward older colleagues'), from 1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree. The survey was first developed in English and then translated into Portuguese using the Committee approach with a group of bilingual researchers (Furukawa et al., 2014).

Exploratory factor analysis can use different statistical methods to find the best-fitting solution and to allow, or not, the identified factors to correlate. In our EFA, Principal Component Analysis (PCA) with Varimax rotation was used to examine the factor structure. Varimax rotation was chosen because of its properties in simplifying factor structure and aiding interpretability (Abdi, 2003). As 18 items either substantially loaded on more than one factor or only weakly loaded on any of the factors, these items were discarded from further analysis. Eight interpretable factors, which together explained 72 percent of the variance, emerged from a subsequent PCA with Varimax rotation of the remaining 42 items. The eight factors corresponded to the initially proposed themes, with the exception of Factor 3. The results showed that Factor 3 combines the themes 'Respect older workers' and 'Accept and follow organizational hierarchy', and was, therefore, labelled 'Accept and respect the hierarchy'. We further excluded 16 items because of content redundancy, lack of clarity, or relatively weak loadings on any of the factors. The final measure, presented in Table 3.2, consisted of 26 items and eight factors. The factor loadings indicate how strongly each item relates with its associated factor, with higher numbers indicating stronger relations to the factor. The reliability for each of the three overarching themes (i.e., the extent to which the items substantially inter-relate) was determined with Cronbach's alpha scores, which were all above the usual .70 cut-off: Humility-Deference (α = .74), Loyalty-Belonging (α = .85) and Vitality-Innovation (α = .92).

Table 3.2 Results of the Principal Component Analysis

Ageism Against Younger Workers item	Factor loading							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Factor 1: Taking an active role								
Should actively look for ways to improve	.73							
Should find ways to overcome obstacles	.73							
Should show and take initiative	.72							
Should seek and ask for training	.69							
Factor 2: Technological competence								
Should know how to use new technologies		.82						
Should be good with the latest technologies		.80						
Should learn new technologies quickly and easily		.79						
Factor 3: Accept and respect the hierarchy								
Should not question the organizational status quo			.86					
Should not challenge the organisation's hierarchical order			.85					
Should not question directions from superiors			.84					
Should not question older colleagues			.71					
Factor 4: Loyalty towards the organization								
Should be loyal to the organization				.82				
Should not see their job as just a stepping-stone to other opportunities				.76				
Should show long-term support for their organization				.73				
Factor 5: Prove belonging in organisation								
Should make efforts to be socialized into the organization					.79			
Should strive to fit in the organization					.77			
Should prove they can be trusted to follow formal and informal rules					.65			
Factor 6: Creativity								
Should be creative and bring new perspectives						.78		
Should be inventive						.72		
Should be open to new things and ideas						.65		
Factor 7: Acknowledge inexperience and accept menial tasks								
Should not assume that they know everything about how to do their job							.81	

Ageism Against Younger Workers item	Factor loading							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Should ask questions instead of assuming they know everything							.76	
Should not think that they are too good to do menial tasks							.76	
Factor 8: Dynamic work-attitude								
Should recover quickly from periods of intense work								.80
Should have stamina and not tire easily								.71
Should be able to execute tasks more quickly								.70

Note. N_{Total} = 788. The 26-item solution is shown. Only factor loadings above .40 were included for better readability of the table.

Thus, clear dimensions of prescriptive age stereotypes against younger workers items were identified in the EFA. In order to have confidence in the validity of the scale and the factor-structure identified, we conducted further psychometric tests in additional samples.

Confirmatory factor analysis — Study 3

In Study 3, we conducted a Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to test the hypothesized measurement model, i.e., a model that is based on prior theory and empirical findings. More specifically, we tested the model fit of a factor structure with eight factors as identified in the exploratory factor analysis, as well as three higher order dimensions as theorized. In addition, we also examined whether the WAYS dimensions relate in expected ways to similar constructs. In this way, the nomological network of WAYS can be better understood.

In Study 3, 584 participants with previous work experience were recruited from the U.S. and Portugal to participate in an online survey. The 299 U.S. participants were 39 percent women, primarily White/ European American (82%), and ranged in age from 20 to 79 years, with an average age of 41. U.S. participants were recruited from MTurk, and each paid 2.50 U.S. dollars. The 285 Portuguese participants were 38 percent women, 98 percent born in Portugal, and ranged in age from 19 to 60 years, with an average age of 27. Portuguese participants were recruited from Prolific, and each paid 2.50 pounds sterling. For the Portuguese sample, all measures were translated into Portuguese using the Committee approach (Furukawa et al., 2014).

Prescriptive stereotypes towards younger workers were measured using the 26-item preliminary version of the WAYS scale that emerged from the previous (EFA) study. Participants were asked to indicate to what extent they agreed with the statements presented (e.g., 'Younger workers, especially, should not expect quick raises or promotions'), from 1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree.

A CFA was performed using MPlus (Muthén & Muthén, 2017) and Maximum Likelihood Method with robust standard errors and χ2 (MLM). Following the recommendations of Brown (2015), we also evaluated model fit by investigating potential areas of strain

in the model. Specifically, modification indices suggested a high correlation between the errors of two items. For that reason, and after a qualitative analysis of the respective items indicated content overlap, we decided to drop the item with the lowest loading of the two ('Younger workers especially, should not question older colleagues'). The new 25-item eight-factor model (Model 1) showed satisfactory fit indices according to standard guidelines (RMSEA = 0.058; CFI = 0.93; TLI = 0.92; SRMR = 0.057). All the items loaded significantly and positively on the proposed factor (standardized coefficients ranged from .63 to .93). The eight factors revealed very good reliability, with Cronbach's alphas between .79 and .90, indicating that within each theme the items were closely related.

Given that our previous studies suggested that prescriptive stereotypes towards younger workers might be presented in three overarching categories, we also tested our theoretical model of three higher order factors and eight subfactors and found that it fit the data equally well (RMSEA = 0.062; CFI = 0.91; TLI = 0.90; SRMR = 0.073). The eight first-order factors all loaded significantly and positively on the proposed second-order factor (standardized coefficients ranged from .51 to .94) and the three second-order factors revealed good reliability: Cronbach's alpha was .78 for Humility-Deference, .85 for Loyalty-Belonging and .90 for Vitality-Innovation. Thus, we retained this model, with three second-order factors and eight first-order factors, as our final factor solution.

Convergent and discriminant validity

The next step in the scale validation was to relate the three second-order factors of WAYS to other scales measuring similar constructs.

This was done in order to confirm positive and relatively high relationships with measures assessing similar constructs, referred to as convergent validity, while also showing that WAYS has relatively low relationships with conceptually different constructs, referred to as discriminant validity. We found that WAYS was, as expected, positively related to other age stereotype measures, as well as to other kinds of prejudices (racism and sexism) and to attitudes regarding hierarchy, employee motivation and workplace participation.

We expected that some constructs would correlate in the same manner with all three WAYS dimensions, but that in some cases constructs would relate differently to the three WAYS dimensions.

Relation of WAYS to other youngism-related constructs

WAYS was related to the resourceful and ungrateful facets of youngism, and to attitudes regarding employee motivation.

Youngism. We measured youngism with the 20-item scale from Francioli and North (2021), which assesses two facets of descriptive age stereotypes towards younger people: the resourceful (e.g., eager) and ungrateful (e.g., entitled) facets. Participants were asked to indicate on a six-point Likert scale to what extent they agreed that 'today's younger adults are…' followed by a series of adjectives. The Cronbach's alpha for the resourceful facet was .87 and for the ungrateful facet .91.

The resourceful facet of the youngism measure was expected to correlate significantly and more highly with the Vitality-Innovation dimension than with the two other dimensions of WAYS, given that both the Vitality-Innovation dimension of WAYS and the resourceful

facet of youngism either refer to younger workers as eager and tech-savvy, or to expectations that younger workers should be eager and tech-savvy. The results were supportive, showing that the resourceful facet of youngism correlated more highly with the Vitality-Innovation dimension ($r = .34$, $p < .001$), and less strongly, though still significantly, with the Loyalty-Belonging dimension ($r = .16$, $p < .001$) and with the Humility-Deference dimension ($r = -.08$, $p = .041$).

Because the ungrateful facet of the same youngism measure included items that measured a lack of respect from younger workers (such as entitled, condescending, argumentative and unseasoned), it was expected to correlate most highly with the Humility-Deference dimension of WAYS. As expected, the ungrateful facet of youngism correlated most highly with the Humility-Deference dimension ($r = .37$, $p < .001$). However, the ungrateful facet of youngism also correlated significantly with both the Loyalty-Belonging dimension ($r = .26$, $p < .001$) and Vitality-Innovation dimension ($r = .29$, $p < .001$) of WAYS.

Attitudes towards employee motivation. We used the four Theory Y managerial attitudes items from Kopelman, Prottas, and Falk (2010), from 1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree. A sample item is 'Employees possess imagination and creativity' ($\alpha = .77$). Because Y managerial attitudes include believing that employees (in general) are capable of initiative, creativity and challenging the status quo, they were expected to correlate significantly and most highly with the Vitality-Innovation dimension. This turned out to be the case: Y managerial attitudes correlated highly with the Vitality-Innovation dimension ($r = .26$, $p < .001$), less strongly with the Loyalty-Belonging dimension ($r = .12$, $p = .003$), and not significantly with the Humility-Deference dimension ($r = -.04$).

Relation of WAYS to other types of prejudice

We expected that other types of prejudice, namely racism, sexism and oldism, would correlate moderately to weakly with the negatively valenced Humility-Deference and Loyalty-Belonging dimensions because they pick up on a general bias towards social minority groups. However, the positively valenced Vitality-Innovation dimension should not be correlated with other types of prejudices.

'Oldism'. We measured oldism with the 20-item Succession, Identity and Consumption scale (SIC) from North and Fiske (2013a), assessing prescriptive age stereotypes towards older people, from 1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree. A sample item is 'Older people are often too much of a burden on families' ($\alpha = .88$). Surprisingly oldism correlated significantly, but negatively with the Loyalty-Belonging dimension ($r = -.19$, $p < .001$) and the Vitality-Innovation dimension ($r = -.10$, $p = .012$), but did not correlate with the Humility-Deference dimension ($r = -.04$). This suggests that youngism is psychologically different from oldism and that bias towards one lower-status age group is not necessarily associated with bias towards another lower-status age group.

Sexism. We measured sexism with the 12-item shortened version of the Ambivalent Sexism Inventory (Glick & Fiske, 1996; Rollero et al., 2014) that includes hostile and benevolent sexism, from 1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree. A sample item of hostile sexism is 'Women seek to gain power by getting control over men'

(α = .92), and a sample item of benevolent sexism is 'Many women have a quality of purity that few men possess' (α = .80). The Cronbach's alpha for the full scale was .88. As expected, sexism correlated significantly and moderately with the Humility-Deference dimension (r = .25, p < .001), the Loyalty-Belonging dimension (r = .28, p < .001) as well as the Vitality-Innovation dimension (r = .19, p < .001).

Racism. We measured racism with the five-item colour-blindness scale from Rosenthal and Levy (2012), from 1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree. A sample item is 'Ethnic and cultural group categories are not very important for understanding or making decisions about people' (α = .91). As expected, colour-blindness correlated significantly and weakly with the Humility-Deference dimension (r = .10, p = .014) and the Loyalty-Belonging dimension (r = .12, p = .003), and did not correlate significantly with the Vitality-Innovation dimension (r = .02).

Relation of WAYS to norms regarding attitudes towards workplace obligations and hierarchy

We expected that attitudes regarding acceptance of hierarchical structuring in society (social dominance orientation; SDO) would correlate most strongly with the Humility-Deference dimension of WAYS. Moreover, attitudes toward work obligations were expected to correlate most strongly with the Loyalty-Belonging dimension of WAYS.

Social Dominance Orientation (SDO). We measured SDO with eight items from Ho and colleagues (2012). A sample item is 'An ideal society requires some groups to be on top and others to be on the bottom'

(α = .90). Participants responded to a six-point Likert-type scale that ranged from 1 (Strongly oppose) to 6 (Strongly favour). As expected, SDO correlated most strongly with the Humility-Deference dimension (r = .20, p < .001), less strongly but still significantly with the Loyalty-Belonging dimension (r = .11, p = .011), and not at all with Vitality-Innovation dimension (r = -.04).

Work obligations. We measured attitudes towards work obligations with 12 items from Sagie and Weisberg (1996), from 1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree. The items correspond to the 'obligations' dimension of work norms towards the employer and co-workers. Participants were asked to indicate to what extent they agreed that 'employees, in general, should demonstrate the following'. A sample item is 'Loyalty to the employer' (α = .90). As expected, work obligations correlated most highly with the Loyalty-Belonging dimension (r = .63, p < .001). They also correlated with the Vitality-Innovation (r = .47, p < .001) and the Humility-deference dimensions (r = .33, p < .001).

3.2 Summary

In this chapter, we first outlined common approaches to studying ageism towards younger people/workers and then described the studies conducted to develop and test a scale for prescriptive stereotypes toward younger workers.

Some conclusions can be drawn from previous research on ageism towards younger people/workers that have guided our research project.

Measurement of age: there are still no 'universal' cutoffs for different age groups. For example, while la Fuente-Núñez and colleagues (2021) have included studies where people under the age of 50 were the target population, Schmitz and colleagues (2023) results show that the most frequent lower age limit used for younger workers was 18 years old and the most frequent upper age limit for younger workers was 34 years old. The fact that there is no consensus on the cutoffs for different age groups renders comparisons and generalisations difficult, as different studies might not be considering the exact same age limits for the same age group.

National culture: most of the studies were conducted in North America and Europe. These results echo a concern that has been expressed previously: ageism has been mainly studied in Western cultures, especially the U.S., the UK, and Australia (Unite et al., 2014), with cross-cultural approaches being largely absent (e.g., North & Fiske, 2012). The fact that cross-cultural research has been neglected when studying ageism makes it difficult to evaluate how ageism is both experienced and conveyed in different cultures across the world.

Data collection and analysis: as is often the case when studying sociopsychological phenomena, the literature reviews relating to ageism against younger people show that quantitative methods have been preferred over qualitative ones, with experimental approaches being the most frequent, in particular scenario/vignette studies. The fact that most ageism studies use quantitative methodologies, in particular experimental designs, although very helpful in establishing causality, may limit the deeper understanding of ageism that result from qualitative investigations.

Measures of workplace youngism: even though studies about workplace youngism have mostly focused on the cognitive dimension of ageism, so far there are no studies using prescriptive age stereotypes towards younger workers. When it comes to assessing workplace youngism, only one scale with specific items for younger workers has been identified in the literature, namely assessing metastereotypes of both younger and older workers (Finkelstein et al., 2020).

Generalization: Finally, fewer than 2% of the studies directly investigated the prevalence of youngism by using representative samples.

Taken together, the empirical studies of the current project were designed to address these limitations. In our first three studies, we advance the understanding of prescriptive age stereotypes against younger workers by developing and testing a measure of prescriptive age stereotypes towards younger workers. To our knowledge, WAYS is the first scale to do so. The scale reflects the ambivalent expectations directed towards younger workers, in terms of being sometimes expected to show low status behaviour (for example, younger workers should not question directions from superiors), and at other times to show more agentic and assertive behaviours that are usually expected from higher status groups (for example, younger workers should show and take initiative). Thus, prescriptive stereotypes against younger workers are not necessarily, and not uniformly, negative in their consequences.

The scale consists of eight first-order factors, subsumed under three second-order dimensions: Humility-Deference, Loyalty-Belonging, and Vitality-Innovation. The Humility-Deference dimension includes

the Accept and respect the hierarchy and Acknowledge inexperience and accept menial tasks factors. The Loyalty-Belonging dimension includes the Prove belonging within organization and Loyalty towards the organization factors. The Vitality-Innovation dimension includes the Taking an active role, Technological competence, Dynamic work attitude, and Creativity factors.

The three dimensions of WAYS were expected to correlate with related constructs, while still showing discriminant validity. As expected, the three dimensions varied in their correlations with related constructs. For example, of the three dimensions, Humility-Deference related most strongly to social dominance orientation (SDO) and the ungrateful facet of youngism descriptive stereotypes. Loyalty-Belonging related most strongly to work obligations, and Vitality-Innovation related most strongly to the resourceful facet of youngism and attitudes towards employee motivation.

In terms of practical implications, WAYS can be used to assess the extent of prescriptive stereotypes against younger workers in organizations, and in other contexts, for example a specific industry. If high levels are found of a dimension that predicts workplace age discrimination and negative employee outcomes (i.e., Humility-Deference), steps can be taken to make sure that policies are in place to prevent the workplace age discrimination that it is likely to lead to. Organizations can also launch internal training programmes based on WAYS, using the scale to first make an initial assessment of the presence of stereotyping and then use the results and situations reported by the employees to promote discussion, learning, and change.

With a validated measure for prescriptive stereotypes against younger workers, the project could now examine the antecedents and consequences of prescriptive stereotypes against younger workers and, using existing measures, against older workers. This was undertaken in the three studies that followed.

Chapter 4

Investigating Stereotypes Against Both Younger And Older Workers in the Portuguese Workplace — Methodological Approaches

The *older staff member was preparing a spreadsheet when the younger staff member asked them to step aside so she could finish the project faster. She said, 'Let a younger person handle this, grandma!'*

The younger workers were always assigned the annoying tasks. Washing dishes, sweeping, mopping, taking out the trash. Basically, anything the manager didn't want to deal with he would assign to them and not the older workers.

Excerpts from responses to open-ended questions regarding age-based expectations

4.1. Introduction

Keeping in mind that the main research goal of this project is to assess prescriptive age stereotypes in Portuguese organizations and the work context, and to examine how they can affect younger and older workers, in this chapter we introduce the second part of the research project undertaken, in which the WAYS scale and other measures were used to investigate stereotypes against both younger and older workers, with a particular focus on the Portuguese context. Thus, this chapter includes the details of a second set of three studies conducted, to investigate the effects of prescriptive stereotypes against both

younger and older workers. The study designs include a representative sample, a longitudinal questionnaire and an experimental design. This will allow us, in later chapters, to analyse the research results by target (older vs. younger workers), role (stereotype holder vs. target), and different types of causes (e.g., educational level) and effects (e.g., workplace citizenship behaviours).

More concretely, this second set of studies now aims:

1) to investigate the prevalence of ageist beliefs against younger and older workers in the Portuguese workforce;

2) to examine consequences of prescriptive age stereotypes towards younger and older employees; and

3) to examine organizational justice perceptions related to age discrimination and stereotyping, as well as their effects.

To address these objectives, the three studies conducted used a variety of methodologies and focused on both older and younger workers. In these, the workplace reactions of both stereotype holders and stereotype targets were investigated. The studies were mostly conducted in Portugal — a less studied context, in spite of being among the European countries where ageism was considered

to be most serious in its effects (Lima et al., 2010). Following best practices, all of the studies were approved by an Ethics Committee on Human Persons Participation in Behavioural Sciences Research at the Universidade Católica Portuguesa.

Readers less interested in or familiar with research methodology may prefer to skip straight to the findings of our studies, in Chapter 5 (effects on and consequences for holders of ageist stereotypes) and Chapter 6 (effects on and consequences for targets of ageist stereotypes). Consistent with our focus on bidirectional ageism, we investigate stereotypes targeting both younger and older workers, while highlighting knowledge gains in areas that were previously less investigated.

Studies developed within the research project to investigate workplace age stereotypes

Building on the three studies to develop the WAYS measure, reviewed in Chapter 3, this research project included three additional studies — a representative sample study, a correlational study and an experimental study — to investigate the antecedents and consequences of prescriptive age stereotypes against younger and older workers.

Representative sample study: how pervasive is ageism? — Study 4

There is considerable evidence pointing to the fact that workers feel discriminated against based on their age (e.g., Duncan & Loretto, 2004; Marchiondo et al.,2016), but how prevalent is workplace ageism in Portugal? To what extent do younger and older workers endorse prescriptive age stereotypes, and which groups are more likely to do so? Which groups report being discriminated against, and how does this relate to attitudes and behaviours? Study 4 was conducted to address these questions, with a specific focus on the Portuguese context.

Study 4, the representative sample study, was a 'prevalence study', a research design often used to examine the proportion of a population in which a particular condition, belief or attitude is present at a given time. Prevalence is most often measured in questionnaire studies, using cross-sectional designs in which the data is collected at a single point in time. In order to make statements about the frequency of something in the general population, prevalence studies try to use samples that mirror the general population on identified key characteristics, such as age, gender, level of education, or geographic region. Therefore, when reporting prevalence studies, precise and clear descriptions of the target population and the study population are essential, as well as discussions about any factors that may have caused a bias in the selection of candidates, or in their reporting of information regarding the studied phenomenon. Prevalence studies usually require larger and more carefully selected samples to ensure that the findings are representative of the population but, as a result, their findings can be more confidently generalized to the population of interest.

In this project, the main goal of the representative sample study was to investigate the pervasiveness of ageist beliefs among Portuguese workers, as well as the prevalence of being discriminated against in the workplace based on one's age. More concretely, this study was intended to capture bidirectional ageism — i.e., ageist beliefs towards

both younger and older workers — and potential intergenerational tensions, as well experiences of age-based discrimination of both younger and older workers. Furthermore, we were also interested in measuring characteristics that might be associated with ageist beliefs, such as the frequency and the quality of intergroup contact (in our case, intergenerational contact), organizational citizenship behaviours towards co-workers, and intergroup conflict; and behaviours and attitudes associated with being discriminated against, such as performance quality and job satisfaction.

Methodology

An online survey was conducted with a representative sample of 1,002 Portuguese workers stratified by age (that ranged between 18 and 69 years old, with an average age of 40), gender and geographic location (for details, see Tables 4.1 and 4.2). The calculations for the stratification of the data along each of the domains of interest (i.e., ensuring the same proportion as in the population by age, gender, and geographic location) were based on the 2011 Portuguese census data, as the final data from the 2021 census was not yet available.

Table 4.1 **Representative sample study participants by region, gender and age**

		NORTH	CENTRE	LISBON	South (Alentejo and Algarve)	Islands (Azores and Madeira)
Women	18 to 29 years old	44	25	33	13	7
	30 to 39 years old	48	28	39	15	7
	40 to 49 years old	49	28	35	14	7
	50 to 59 years old	44	27	32	13	5
	Total	**185**	**108**	**139**	**55**	**26**
Men	18 to 29 years old	44	25	33	13	7
	30 to 39 years old	45	26	37	14	7
	40 to 49 years old	45	27	32	14	6
	50 to 59 years old	40	25	28	13	5
	Total	**175**	**104**	**129**	**55**	**26**
Grand total		**360**	**212**	**268**	**110**	**52**

Table 4.2 Representative sample study participants by demographic characteristics

	N	%
Gender		
Male	487	48.60
Female	513	51.20
Other	2	0.20
Education		
Lower than high school	94	9.40
High school (or lower than a Bachelor)	419	41.80
Undergraduate degree	303	30.20
Graduate degree	186	18.60
Nationality		
Portuguese	941	93.90
Other	35	3.50
Dual	26	2.60
Employment status		
Full-time paid work	895	89.30
Part-time paid work	107	10.70
Organization type		
Private firm	584	58.30
State-owned enterprise	53	5.30
Central or local government	82	8.20
Other public sector (such as education and health)	146	14.60
NGO (Non-Governmental Organization)	15	1.50
Self-employed	88	8.80
Other	68	6.80
Managerial position		
Yes, formally	174	17.40
Yes, informally	233	23.30
No	595	59.40

Procedure and measures

Participants were recruited through the Online Study Panel (PEO) of the Universidade Católica Portuguesa. The PEO panel consists of Portuguese participants with diverse characteristics, and can be used for representative studies in Portugal along different criteria. The data on its over 20 thousand registered participants, between the ages of 17 and 82 years, is of high quality and kept up to date. For participation in studies, participants receive points equivalent to 10–15€ for each hour spent.

Participants were invited to complete an online survey, 'part of a larger project about your perceptions regarding your workplace, and regarding how people behave in the workplace'. They responded to the following measures.

Demographic data

Participants responded to questions regarding age, gender, education, geographic location, nationality, place of birth, full-time vs. part-time employment, professional experience, organizational tenure, hierarchical level, organization size and industry, organization type, political orientation and socio-economic status. Participants also indicated their subjective age identification: self-categorization as a younger, middle-aged or older worker.

Holding prescriptive age stereotypes

Participants were asked the extent to which they endorsed age stereotypes toward younger workers and older workers. In addition,

they were asked about workplace attitudes, behaviours, and beliefs that could relate to or result from age stereotypes.

The Workplace Ambivalent Youngism Scale (WAYS) developed within this project was used to measure prescriptive stereotypes against younger workers. The 25-item WAYS measures expectations of what younger workers should and should not do, across three overarching dimensions (Humility-Deference, Loyalty-Belonging and Vitality-Innovation) and eight subdimensions. Prescriptive stereotypes regarding older people were measured using the succession dimension of North and Fiske's (2013) Succession, Identity and Consumption scale (SIC), which includes workplace as well as more general items. The SIC focuses on beliefs regarding what older people should and should not do in order to avoid intergenerational tension. The succession dimension measures beliefs that older people should hand over material and symbolic resources to younger generations, rather than hold on to them.

In addition, participants indicated their level of agreement with descriptive stereotypes towards older workers. Using Rego et al.'s (2017) scale, they indicated agreement with beliefs about what an older worker usually is (or is not), or does (or does not do). They also responded to a single item from Jutz and colleagues (2017), asking about the contribution of older workers to the national economy, to measure conflict with and exclusion of older workers.

As this research is also interested in relating the holding of ageist stereotypes to other attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours, participants were also asked specific questions relating to their workplace interactions, especially with different groups, including different age groups. Workplace intergenerational contact was measured with one question regarding the frequency of contact with different generations (adapted from the European Social Survey (ESS, 2020), and another regarding the quality of that contact (developed by the research team). Organizational citizenship behaviours towards coworkers refer to behaviours displayed by employees that go beyond the formal job description, such as offering to help coworkers complete their tasks. These were measured with the scale developed by Lee and Allen (2002). Whether participants supported age-inclusive HR practices, that promote the growth and contribution of employees irrespective of their age, was measured with a scale adapted from Boehm and colleagues (2013). Finally, conflict within the work group (i.e., disagreement or confrontation between two or more members of a group, in terms of feeling that the group members have incompatible and discrepant views) was measured using the relationship conflict dimension of Jehn's (1995) intragroup conflict scale.

Prevalence of experiencing age-based discrimination, in terms of feeling treated differently in the workplace due to one's age, was measured using the Workplace Ageism Discrimination Scale (WADS; Marchiondo et al., 2016).

This research is also interested in the consequences of experiencing age discrimination. Therefore, a number of workplace outcomes that could be impacted by experiences of age discrimination were also measured, including important beliefs, attitudes and intentions. In order to reduce the length of the survey, wherever possible, validated single-item measures were used, rather than validated lengthier scales. Participants' evaluation of their performance was

measured using the item proposed by Vest and colleagues (1994). The participants' degree of satisfaction with their job was also assessed using one item (Scarpello & Campbell, 1983). Whether participants intend to continue working in the current organization was measured using the item proposed by Parasuraman (1982). Participants perceptions in terms of their work stability were measured using the item proposed by Vala and colleagues (2017). Participants assessment of their job as stressful was also measured using one item (Jutz et al., 2017). Finally, participants evaluation of their physical and mental health was measured using two items, one for each health dimension, adapted from the work of Vala and colleagues (2017).

<u>Analytical approach</u>

The data from the representative sample study was subjected to mean comparisons (One-way ANOVAs), correlational analysis (Bivariate Pearson correlations), and predictive analysis (linear regressions). Results and detailed analyses are provided in Chapters 5 and 6.

Relationship between ageist stereotyping in the workplace and other work-related variables — Studies 5(a) and (b)

The main goal of Study 5(a) and Study 5(b) was to identify the effects of prescriptive age stereotypes on work-related outcomes for both older and younger workers, respectively.

Methodology

Both studies consisted of online surveys. Study 5(a), focusing on older workers, consisted of a cross-sectional design in which data was collected at a single point in time. Study 5(b), focusing on younger workers, consisted of a time-lagged design with two waves of data collection.

The Study 5(a) online survey was administered to 150 Portuguese older workers, 70.70 percent of whom were women, and whose age ranged from 50 to 67 years old, with an average age of 56. Among participants, 96 percent had Portuguese nationality, with 2.7 percent having Brazilian nationality, and the remaining 0.7 percent having French nationality. Participants were each paid 3.50 euros for taking part in the survey.

The Study 5(b) online survey was administered to 362 Portuguese youngers workers, 51.66 percent of whom were women, and whose age ranged from 19 to 30 years old, with an average age of 25. Among participants, 98.34 percent had Portuguese nationality, with the remaining 1.66 percent having Brazilian nationality. Participants were each paid 3.90 euros for taking part in the survey.

Procedure and measures

Both younger participants (Study 5(b)) and older participants (Study 5(a)) were invited to complete an online survey that was 'part of a broader project and aims to understand the experiences of younger/older workers in the workplace and the consequences of such experiences'. Younger workers were informed that the study consisted of two surveys with a one-week lag in between. Thus, while older participants responded to all the measures in one survey, younger participants responded to some measures in wave 1 and to other measures in wave 2. As detailed below, some measures were

exclusively presented to one age group. However, unless otherwise mentioned, the measure was administered in both surveys and to both age groups.

Perceived age-based stereotypes and discrimination

Perceived prescriptive stereotypes towards younger workers were only responded to in the younger-worker survey, and were measured using the 25-items WAYS developed in this project. WAYS consists of eight subdimensions, organized under three overarching dimensions (Humility-Deference, Loyalty-Belonging and Vitality-Innovation), and measures expectations and beliefs about how younger worker should/should not behave. Items were adapted to the target perspective and included 'Should not question the organizational status quo' (Humility-Deference), 'Should not see their job as just a stepping-stone to other opportunities' (Loyalty-Belonging), and 'Should actively look for ways to improve' (Vitality-Innovation). In each case, participants indicated the extent to which they believed that a majority in their workplace endorsed these stereotypes, from 1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree.

Perceived prescriptive stereotypes towards older people were only responded to in the older-worker survey, and were measured using the eight-item succession dimension of the Succession, Identity and Consumption scale (SIC; North & Fiske, 2013). The SIC focuses on beliefs regarding what older people should and should not do in order to avoid intergenerational tension. The Succession dimension measures beliefs that older people should hand over material and symbolic resources to younger generations, rather than hold on to them. Items were adapted to the target perspective and included

'Younger people are usually more productive than older people at their jobs'. In each case, participants indicated the extent to which they believed that a majority in their workplace endorsed the succession stereotype, from 1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree.

Potential consequences of being targeted with ageism

In this study, being the target of age-based stereotypes and discrimination was associated with work-related attitudes, employee wellbeing, and workplace behaviours.

Work-related attitudes were measured in terms of organizational justice perceptions, self-efficacy evaluations, organizational commitment, and whether the workplace is viewed as threatening or challenging. Participants' perceptions about being generally treated (un)fairly in the workplace context were measured with the overall justice scale (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009). Participants' perceptions regarding the fairness of outcomes received were measured with the distributive justice scale (Colquitt, 2001). Perceptions regarding the fairness of processes used in making decisions, including whether affected parties are given opportunities to provide input, were measured with the procedural justice scale (Colquitt, 2001). Participants' perceptions regarding their ability to skilfully perform tasks in the workplace were measured with the Psychological Empowerment in the Workplace — Competence Subscale (Spreitzer, 1995). Interpretation of the work-related situation as being threatening or challenging was measured with scales from Skinner and Brewer (2002, for the threat items) and from Berjot and Girault-Lidvan (2009, for the challenge items). Emotional attachment of employees to the organization was measured with the Affective

Commitment scale (Meyer et al., 1993). Participants' commitment to and involvement in the job, in terms of energy and enthusiasm, was measured with the Work Engagement scale (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004).

Wellbeing was measured in terms of both how stressful one's job is experienced, and how one's physical and mental health are subjectively assessed. Participants' assessment of their job as stressful was measured with the single item proposed by Jutz and colleagues (2017). Participants assessment of their physical and mental health was measured with one item for physical health and one item for mental health (Vala et al., 2017).

Work behaviours were measured in terms of self-reported in-role performance, extra-role performance, and absenteeism, as well as turnover intentions. Perceptions of fulfilling the tasks, outcomes and goals that are part of the job profile were measured with William and Anderson's (1991) Job Performance scale. Participants engagement in extra-role behaviours that go beyond the formal job description and are directed toward individuals, such as offering to help coworkers complete their tasks, were measured with Lee and Allen's (2002) OCB-I scale. The number of full and partial days of work missed in the previous 28 days due to mental and physical issues was measured using one item measuring self-reported absenteeism from Kessler and colleagues (2003). Participants' intentions to seek alternative employment and not continue working in the current job and organization were measured using the turnover intention scale from Rusbult and colleagues (1988).

The data from Studies 5 (a) and (b) was subjected to correlational analysis (Bivariate Pearson correlations). For more details, see Chapter 6.

Experimental study: How do people respond to violations of age-related prescriptive stereotypes? — Study 6

Study 6 was an experiment, a study design in which one or more treatments or manipulations are introduced for some of the study participants, and the effects observed. Experiments are well suited to showing causality — the effect of a variable of interest on other variables — because they include control, manipulation, and random assignment. In a properly designed experiment, participants respond to a controlled situation that is not influenced by outside factors. The manipulation involves purposefully changing something between different conditions, so its effects can be isolated. Random assignment refers to the fact that participants are assigned randomly to one of the conditions in the experiment, which helps to ensure that the groups are similar prior to the manipulation. For these reasons, stronger inferences regarding the effects of one variable on another can be drawn from experiments, which can complement conclusions that can be drawn from data collected in less-controlled, more realistic field settings.

The main goal of the experimental study was to investigate the effects of age-stereotype violations on work-related outcomes. The written vignette which participants responded to consisted of a workplace situation in which, in some conditions and not others,

a worker violated prescriptive age stereotypes. The age of the worker varied depending on the condition. Participants read one version of the situation and responded with their organizational justice perceptions, acceptance of a negative outcome for the worker, evaluations of the worker, and retributive intentions toward the organization. Thus, the effect of the two manipulations (younger/middle-aged/older worker, and stereotype violation/adherence) on the outcomes of interest could be clearly identified.

Like any methodology, experimental designs have both advantages and disadvantages. The controlled situations in which the effects of a treatment can be clearly isolated and measured often lack the realism of actual situations. Therefore, caution should be applied when generalizing the results of a controlled experiment to other situations. This is certainly the case in vignette studies, where participants respond to a 'paper-and-pencil' written scenario, which they are typically asked to imagine themselves experiencing or observing. It therefore becomes important to follow best practices to make the scenario realistic and engaging for participants, so that the observed findings are more likely to also be found in real workplace situations. In the current research, steps were taken to ensure that the vignette scenario responded to was realistic, engaging, and properly understood by participants. Further details of the study design, including the details of the scenario, are provided below.

Methodology

Procedure and measures

The sample included 213 participants from the U.S., recruited from Amazon Mechanical Turk (MTurk) and paid 1.50 U.S. dollars for participation in the study. All participants had previous working experience at the time data was collected. Forty percent of the participants were women, and their age ranged from 23 to 72 years old, with an average age of 39. Participants resided in the U.S. and were primarily White/European American (79%), with the remainder Black/African American, Latino/Hispanic American, or other/mixed.

Study 6 was a 3 x 2 between-subjects design using Experimental Vignette Methodology (EVM; Aguinis & Bradley, 2014). Participants were randomly assigned to one of six experimental conditions: younger/middle-aged/older workers crossed with stereotype adherence/violation.

The scenario was designed using prescriptive stereotypes against younger workers that were identified in developing the WAYS scale. Specifically, in the scenario, the behaviour of target individual John was manipulated in the following way. In the stereotype adherence condition, John was described as following the hierarchy, not challenging directions from a superior, and not questioning the usual way of doing things, consistent with what our research has shown is expected of younger workers. In the stereotype violation condition, John was described as not following the hierarchy, as challenging directions from a superior, and as questioning the usual way of doing

things, thereby violating expectations of younger workers. Note that the stereotype adhered to or violated is always a prescriptive stereotype relating to younger workers, regardless of the target's age (see below).

Regardless of whether John adhered to or violated prescriptive age stereotypes for younger workers, John's outcome was always negative: a poor evaluation from his supervisor, who said that he had not acted professionally and had not performed at a high level in recent weeks. John was also presented as a younger (24), middle-aged (42), or older (62) worker, so that it could be seen whether younger workers would be treated differently from middle-aged or older workers when it came to violating prescriptive stereotypes for younger workers. In order to reinforce the manipulation of age, each condition included a photograph of the male individual. In the younger worker condition, the original photo of a younger man was included, but in the other two conditions the picture had been artificially aged so that participants were presented with the picture of a middle-aged and older face in those respective conditions.

Thus, the six conditions were as follows, in terms of John's age and behaviour:

- Condition 1: Younger worker adheres to stereotype related to younger workers;

- Condition 2: Younger worker violates stereotype related to younger workers;

- Condition 3: Middle-aged worker adheres to stereotype related to younger workers;

- Condition 4: Middle-aged worker violates stereotype related to younger workers;

- Condition 5: Older worker adheres to stereotype related to younger workers;

- Condition 6: Older worker violates stereotype related to younger workers.

Participants were then invited to complete an online survey 'part of a project about perceptions towards different age groups in the workplace'. Each participant was randomly allocated to one of the six conditions above.

Manipulation checks

Participants were asked John's age to verify if they accurately recollect it. They were also asked about John's age category to see if they also accurately categorize John as a younger, middle-aged or older worker. Finally, participants were asked to indicate whether John adhered to or violated an age-related stereotype against younger workers to confirm if they accurately recollected whether John had questioned and challenged orders from the supervisor or not in the scenario. Participants who failed one or more manipulation checks were eliminated from the analysis.

Demographic data

Participants provided the following demographic data. They were asked about their gender (whether they identify as male, female or other), their birth year, their highest education degree from 'lower than high school' to 'graduate degree', if they categorized themselves

as a younger, middle-aged or older workers. They were also asked about the number of years or months of work experience they had overall, and the number of years or months they had been working at their current organization. In addition, they were asked if they worked in central or local government, other public sector, a state-owned enterprise, a private firm, were self-employed, or other. They were further asked whether they held management, leadership, or coordination functions. Participants were also asked how they define themselves in terms of ethnicity, and their political beliefs from left/liberal to right/conservative both on issues of the economy (e.g., social welfare, government spending, tax cuts) and on social issues (e.g., immigration, same-sex marriage, abortion).

Potential consequences of violating/adhering to prescriptive age-related stereotypes

Having read the scenario, and having been asked to imagine that John was a colleague, participants answered questions regarding their fairness perceptions regarding how John was treated, their acceptance of the negative outcome John received, their willingness to take retributive action in response to the situation described, and their evaluation of John's performance. More concretely, perceptions regarding John being generally treated (un)fairly in the workplace context were measured with the overall justice scale (Ambrose & Schminke, 2009), perceptions regarding the fairness of outcomes received by John were measured with the distributive justice scale (Colquitt, 2001), support for the outcome received by John was measured with the decision acceptance scale from Greenberg (1994), willingness to adopt behaviours that signal disagreement or disapproval of the decision made with regard to John, such

as writing a letter to complain about how John was treated, was measured with a retributive reactions scale adapted from Jones and Skarlicki (2005), perceptions of John as being friendly (warm), confident (competent) and trustworthy (moral) — key dimensions of social evaluations — were measured using the items proposed by Francioli and North (2021) and derived from the stereotype content model.

Age-based stereotypes

In addition, participants' endorsement of prescriptive stereotypes towards younger workers, in terms of how younger workers should or should not behave, was measured using the WAYS scale developed in this project.

Analytical approach

Finally, the data from the experimental study was subjected to mean comparisons (One-way Anovas, and Manovas for multiple dependent variables), linear regressions, as well as two-way and three-way moderation analyses. The moderation analyses tested the interaction between (not) endorsing the prescriptive stereotypes towards younger workers and the effect of the manipulations (i.e., target age and target behaviour) on the outcomes of interest. Results and detailed analyses are provided in Chapter 5.

4.2. Summary

Our focus in this chapter was to describe the designs, samples and analyses of three additional studies aimed at investigating correlates, antecedents and consequences of prescriptive age stereotypes toward younger and older workers. The studies used the WAYS scale developed within this project, thereby building on the studies described in Chapter 3, which detailed the scale development process. Our studies addressed some of the gaps in the literature, including the need to include more non-North American samples, investigate the effects of stereotypes on both targets and holders of stereotypes, examine both antecedents and consequences of stereotypes, and extend research on the under-researched area of prescriptive age stereotypes, especially regarding younger workers.

Study 4 was a 'prevalence study', with a representative sample of 1,002 Portuguese workers, stratified by age, gender and geographic location. A representative sample was used in order to enable statements about the frequency of particular phenomena in the Portuguese population. The main goal of the representative sample study was to investigate the pervasiveness of ageist beliefs among Portuguese workers, as well as the prevalence of being discriminated against in the workplace based on one's age. The study focused on ageist beliefs towards both younger and older workers, experiences of age-based discrimination in both groups, and other beliefs, behaviours and attitudes that might be associated with ageist beliefs.

Study 5 consisted of two online questionnaire studies, to further explore effects of prescriptive age stereotypes on work-related outcomes for both older and younger workers, respectively. One hundred and fifty Portuguese older workers participated in Study 5(a), a cross-sectional survey in which online data was collected at a single point in time. Study 5(b) focused on 362 Portuguese younger workers, also using a survey methodology but with two waves of online data collection. The study associated ageist beliefs towards both younger and older workers with perceived age-based discrimination and important workplace outcomes, including fairness perceptions, organizational commitment and engagement, mental and physical wellbeing, self-reported in-role and extra-role performance, and absenteeism.

Study 6 was an experiment in which participants responded to an online written scenario in which the age of an (fictional) employee and how they behaved was manipulated. Specifically, the employee was shown to be either younger, middle-aged or older, and behaved in a way that either adhered to or violated prescriptive stereotypes regarding younger workers (i.e., that they should respect and not challenge superiors). The effect of age and stereotype adherence/violation on a variety of outcomes could then be observed. An experimental design was used in order to show causality in a controlled situation that is not influenced by outside factors, and to thereby complement the findings from the representative sample study and the online questionnaire studies.

Having now described the samples, procedures and analytic approaches taken in all of the project studies, the following two chapters will review some of the most important findings.

Chapter 5
Ageism at Work from the Perspective of Holders

A younger employee in their twenties made a general comment directed to the older employees that they felt they were given special treatment because of their age and were allowed to get out of doing certain tasks at work. This younger employee said, 'If they cannot perform the tasks, then they just need to retire and let younger people take the jobs'.

The above testimony by a participant in our research shows the perspective of a worker who expresses ageist attitudes. In this chapter, we focus on this type of situation, trying to better understand what predicts ageist attitudes and what the consequences of endorsing them may be.

We investigate two research questions focused on stereotype holders, leaving our investigation of the effects on stereotyped targets to the following empirical chapter. First, who are the holders of ageist attitudes? What are the demographic characteristics that make it more likely for a worker to endorse age stereotypes? We also investigate the effect of organizational characteristics, professional experience and managerial roles. Second, how does endorsing age stereotypes relate to workplace perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours, as well as individual wellbeing? We consider each of these, first for holders of stereotypes against younger workers, and then for holders of stereotypes against older workers.

To address these research questions, a prevalence survey and an experimental study were conducted. The prevalence study was conducted with a representative sample of 1,002 Portuguese workers. The sample was stratified by age, gender and geographic location, so that it mirrored the Portuguese population with regard to these characteristics. The use of a representative sample provides greater confidence in generalizing the results to the general population. The experimental study was also conducted online, with 213 participants from the U.S., who responded to a workplace scenario in which target age and target stereotype violation were manipulated. Thus, participants responded to an identical situation in which only the variables of interest were varied across conditions. Unlike surveys, the control exercised in the experimental study enables cause-and-effect relationships to be established, between manipulated stimuli and observed effects.

Regardless of the study methodology, it is worth noting that, in discussing the results, we indicate as (statistically) significant those results that we would expect to observe in the entire population with 95 percent or greater confidence. Less frequently, we refer to an observed result as marginally significant when there is only 90 percent confidence that it would be observed in the actual population. For more details regarding the samples and methodologies of both studies, see Chapter 4.

This chapter is organized as follows. First, we will briefly review prior findings regarding predictors and consequences of holding stereotypes, mostly from non-age related domains. Next, we present findings for holders of ageist stereotypes against older workers (representative survey study), and then findings for holders of ageist stereotypes against younger workers (representative survey study, experimental study) using the WAYS measure developed within this project (Schmitz et al., 2023).

5.1. Predictors and consequences of stereotype endorsement

Human beings are driven by three main social motives: striving for mastery, seeking connectedness, and valuing 'me' and 'mine' (Smith & Mackie, 2007). Thus, it is only human to show some degree of preference towards people we perceive as belonging to our social groups, addressing motives for both social connection and possessive mine/our feelings toward groups (e.g., Pierce & Jussila, 2010), and age-based groups are no exception. Nevertheless, for this tendency to result in derogatory treatment of those outside our groups (outgroups), more conditions are needed. This derogatory treatment of others can assume the form of discrimination — the unfair or prejudicial treatment of people and groups based on characteristics such as race, gender, age or sexual orientation (APA, 2022).

A scoping review of ageism against older workers (Harris et al., 2018) revealed that 18 out of the 43 papers included described negative intentions towards older workers, in terms of recruitment/ hiring, retirement, training, general treatment, and retention.

However, research has shown that discrimination is not equally endorsed by all of the groups. More concretely, Sachdev and Bourhis (1991), found that, compared to subordinate groups and low-status groups, dominant groups and high-status groups were much more discriminatory and less parity-oriented. They also found that subordinate low status minorities did not discriminate and even displayed out-group favouritism. The results also seem to indicate that group power (vs. group status) is more predictive of actual discriminatory behaviour.

Social psychologists have identified both internal/individual and situational/contextual factors associated with negative attitudes and behaviours toward outgroups. Thus, we relate stereotype holding to individual demographic characteristics as well as to contextual organizational characteristics. In addition, we investigate the effect of stereotype holding on important workplace perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours as well as mental and physical health. For each of the above, we provide evidence relating to both oldism and, when available, to youngism.

Demographic and contextual predictors of ageist stereotype endorsement

Attitudes towards other groups, including the holding of stereotypes, may relate to sociodemographic characteristics, such as age, gender, education or socio-economic status. Although little is known about the specifics of ageism compared to other 'isms', research findings about prejudice in general, as well as about age prejudice in particular, as summarized the Global Report on Ageism (WHO, 2021), can

provide relevant insights. Being the most studied 'ism', racism offers important cues into sociodemographic characteristics of prejudice holders. For instance, Choi and colleagues (2017) used data from the American General Social Survey (Smith et al., 2012) and showed that stereotyping and prejudice towards African-Americans manifested itself differently depending on the respondents' sociodemographic characteristics. They analysed ethnicity, gender, age and socio-economic status (education and income) and found that being White, older, male and less educated related positively to endorsing racial prejudice.

Generally, a person's age might be an important predictor of ageism given that age categorization is an automatic process that can trigger outgroup biases in the sense of implicit inferences, such as whether a person is seen as likeable and/or competent. A recent study in Portugal (van Humbolt et al., 2023) offered important insights regarding the effects of age on perception of older workers' adaptability and effectiveness. Younger workers (compared to older and middle-aged workers) considered older workers to be less adaptable, whereas older workers saw themselves as more effective than any other age group perceived them to be. No other differences were found based on gender or education level. An association between being a younger worker and showing ageism towards older workers is also well supported by a recent meta-analysis (Bae & Choi, 2023). When it comes to ageism towards older individuals, there is evidence showing that it is not only more prevalent among younger people, but also — as found by Choi and colleagues (2017) for racial prejudice — among males and lower educated individuals (Officer et al., 2020; WHO, 2021).

Recent data from Portugal regarding prejudice towards LGBT minorities (Ferros & Pereira, 2021) supports these findings by showing more prejudice from men than from women. On the other hand, the findings regarding age and gender as determinants of the endorsement of ageism against younger people are inconsistent (WHO, 2021). Therefore, we have included gender and socio-economic status in our studies, both in terms of level of education and income. Research on cultural prejudice also shows that some cultural contexts facilitate prejudice more strongly than others, yet little is known about regional differences in prejudice in Portugal.

Political orientation can also contribute to prejudice. Recent data from Portugal (Ferros & Pereira, 2021) showed statistically significant differences for diverse political orientations, with more right-wing participants showing higher levels of sexual prejudice. Relevant to our study, the authors attributed this relation with right-wing orientation to support for tradition and for maintaining traditional roles. As this may also be the case for traditional age roles (i.e., what is appropriate for a younger or an older person), political orientation may be related to endorsement of ageism.

Whether employees hold ageist stereotypes might also be predicted by the professional context in which they work. For example, ageist stereotypes might be more common in some industries (e.g., high tech versus more traditional) or geographic locations (e.g., rural versus urban). Firm characteristics such as size or organizational culture might also lead to greater division between and stereotyping of different groups, including by gender or age. In addition, greater work experience and/or having managerial status might also influence how individuals evaluate and respond to disadvantaged groups,

such as older or younger employees. Therefore, these aspects of an individual's work context should also be considered as possible predictors of ageist attitudes.

Workplace consequences of ageist stereotype endorsement

In addition to predicting endorsement of ageist stereotypes, this project also seeks to identify consequences to the stereotype holder. Workplace outcomes may include relationships within and between different groups, attitudes toward the job and the organization, as well as in-role and extra-role performance. Given that outgroup biases can generate anxiety and stress, as well as negative emotional states (e.g., anger and resentment), and result in reduced social support, personal outcomes to stereotype holders may include effects on mental and physical health. Research relating to these is briefly presented below.

Relationship within and between groups

The relationship between intergroup contact and levels of prejudice has been the subject of a large body of research in social psychology (and other social sciences) since the seminal work of Allport in 1954. The contact hypothesis postulates that, under appropriate conditions, contact between (minority and majority) groups reduces prejudice. In order to effectively reduce prejudice, contact should happen between groups assigned equal status in the encounter, sharing a common goal and working cooperatively towards that common goal, and such contact should also receive institutional support. Given increasingly age-diverse workplaces, the potential role of intergenerational contact merits further exploration.

In terms of intergenerational contact and conflict, some indirect evidence of the negative consequences of holding age-related prejudice is provided by the work of King and Bryant (2017). The authors found that positive contact with older workers increased with age and with perceptions of a more positive workplace intergenerational climate, including in terms of less intergenerational tension (as measured by the SIC scale; North & Fiske, 2013), more intergenerational contact, and fewer generational stereotypes. Additional evidence is provided by Paleari and colleagues (2019), who found that ageism is negatively related to the quality of intergroup contact, such that the more the participants displayed oldism, the more they reported their interactions with older coworkers as negative. This relationship endured over a three-month period, indicating that the perceived quality of intergroup contact is a consequence (and not only an antecedent) of ageism. They also found that endorsing youngism was associated with experiencing more anxiety towards younger workers, decreased quality of intergroup contact, more negative interactions with younger coworkers, and more counterproductive behaviours toward all coworkers.

Having employees from different generations working together can increase the likelihood of conflict and exclusion (e.g., Jehn et al., 1995), both of which can impact productivity and turnover. When lacking solidarity, employees have been shown to behave harmfully towards the organization as a whole (e.g., Lee & Allen, 2002). However, age-inclusive HR practices aimed at improving the skills, motivation and opportunities to contribute by employees of all ages (e.g., Boehm et al., 2013) can be put in place. Boehm and colleagues (2013) found that age-inclusive HR practices contributed to an organizational age-

diversity climate, which, in turn, positively related to organizational performance and negatively related to turnover intentions across 93 (German) companies. Similarly, Kunze and colleagues (2013) found that having top managers low in negative age stereotypes and having high diversity-friendly HR policies can prevent a negative relation between age diversity and organizational performance, as both factors reduce age-discrimination climates.

Prejudice between groups can adopt different forms, depending on how outgroups are stereotyped. For instance, people at work can be paternalized if they are seen as sociable but not competent (e.g., the new girl in the office). On the other hand, they can be envied if they are perceived as competent but not warm (e.g., that 'shark' of a colleague who quickly moved to an executive position). Warmth and competence (Fiske et al., 2002) are, thus, crucial ways in which stereotypes shape perceptions. Age is an important cue in that regard: both younger and older people tend to be seen as high in warmth but low in competence, which can translate into both older and younger workers being seen as less capable/competent at their jobs. More recently, another stereotypical dimension was proposed, focusing on morality (Ellemers et al., 2014), with research on activists showing that those who are younger are seen as warm for being young, and competent for being activists, but are seen as less moral/ trustworthy than older people (Farinha & Rosa, 2022).

Satisfaction and performance-related variables

Job satisfaction has been associated with employee motivation and positive attitudes toward both the organization and the job. This 'pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences' (Locke, 1976, p. 1304) has been among the most widely investigated topics in industrial/organizational psychology (e.g., Judge & Church, 2000). King and Bryant (2017) found that workplace ageism was related to job satisfaction, such that perceiving a more positive workplace intergenerational climate related to greater job satisfaction. A recent study by Firzly and colleagues (2021) focusing on perceptions of oldism holders, which tend to be younger workers, found that high quality intergenerational contact and greater empathy towards older people increased job satisfaction.

It can easily be imagined that holding (negative) stereotypes and prejudiced attitudes towards a certain group will lead to enacting more negative behaviours and/or less positive behaviours towards those groups. In the organizational context, positive and negative behaviours displayed towards coworkers and/or the organization have been studied in the form of organizational citizenship behaviours (OCBs), including interpersonal organizational citizenship behaviours (OCB-Is). OCBs refer to positive behaviours that go 'above and beyond' one's formal job description and are generally beneficial. Paleari and colleagues (2019) showed that holding ageist views indirectly related to the display of counterproductive work behaviours (CWBs), such as arguing with coworkers or insulting them, which can be seen as opposite to OCB-Is. More concretely, oldism worsened the quality of contact with older workers, and youngism worsened the quality of contact with younger workers, in both cases increasing CWBs towards *all* coworkers, irrespective of their age. Although displaying harmful behaviours is not exactly the same as not displaying helpful behaviours, research has shown that OCBs and CWBs are often inversely related, including under situations of work stress

(Dalal, 2005). It is therefore reasonable to expect that the more a person displays CWBs, the less likely they may be to display OCBs.

Less positive behaviours toward coworkers of different age cohorts and reduced job satisfaction, identified above as consequences of holding ageist beliefs, may also lead to reduced in-role performance, in terms of accomplishing one's core work responsibilities. This could be the result of the negative effect of reduced job satisfaction on motivation, as well as negative relations with coworkers adversely affecting performance, given the need in many work roles to cooperate and communicate effectively with colleagues, regardless of their age.

Health and wellbeing consequences of ageist stereotype endorsement

Wellbeing is a multifaceted concept that includes at least two dimensions: psychological and physical wellbeing (e.g., Grant et al., 2007). While the former broadly refers to 'subjective experience and functioning', the latter broadly refers to 'bodily health and functioning' (Grant et al., 2007, p. 53). Wellbeing also includes positive versus negative affect, as well as positive attitudes towards work (Cooper & Leiter, 2017). Paleari and colleagues (2019) found that holding oldist attitudes related to both greater anxiety towards older workers and — as a result of the worsened quality of intergroup contact — reduced vitality at work, which is a subdimension of thriving and personal wellbeing at work. Liebermann and colleagues (2013) showed that holding oldist stereotypes can even negatively impact the health of younger workers working in age-diverse teams,

both in terms of general health status, and the number of days in which workers reported physical and psychological impairments. The results showed a U-shaped relationship between age diversity and health, with younger and older workers showing poorer health than middle-aged workers.

Thus, initial evidence suggests sociodemographic factors are likely to predict ageist stereotype endorsement, which in turn can have detrimental outcomes for workers endorsing both oldism and/or youngism, as well as for the organization as a whole. Understanding the workplace in terms of both impacts on the workers and workers' impact on the workplace has a long tradition in organizational psychology, management, organizational behaviour and related disciplines (Cunha et al., 2007). By investigating variables that have been found relevant to understanding such contexts, we extend an already well-established body of research. By investigating additional variables that have received less research attention to date, we also advance the understanding of workplace dynamics, and how it may be affected by ageism.

5.2. Empirical findings regarding targets of age stereotypes

Given the importance of considering the effects on holders of age stereotypes against both older and younger workers, we investigated both. The project results are first presented with regard to older worker stereotypes, followed by younger worker stereotypes. Within each, results are presented regarding correlates of holding age-related stereotypes both in terms of antecedents/predictors and consequences/outcomes.

Holders of age stereotypes against older workers — Representative sample study

Structure and overall endorsement of the measures used

We start this section on holders of prescriptive and descriptive stereotypes against older workers by analysing different stereotypes and attitudes and their overall endorsement. We include several well-established measures that tap into both positive and negative stereotypes regarding older workers: the succession dimension of the Succession, Identity and Consumption scale (SIC; North & Fiske, 2013); a scale measuring four negative attitudes towards older workers (Rego et al., 2017); a scale measuring generosity and social capital of older workers (Rego et al., 2017); and, finally, a scale measuring inclusion of older workers (Jutz et al., 2017). We relate these four measures to individual variables, such as demographic characteristics and wellbeing measures of stereotype holders, and organizational variables, such as their workplace role and behaviours. Each of these four ageism measures is briefly described below.

Prescriptive stereotype regarding succession (SIC; North & Fiske, 2013)

North and Fiske (2013) introduced a scale to measure prescriptive age stereotypes against older people: the Succession, Identity and Consumption scale (SIC). The scale measures should-based prescriptive beliefs regarding older people and ways in which older people are expected to relinquish *enviable* resources to younger people, such as desirable jobs and political power. These beliefs can lead to intergenerational tensions and hostile ageism, especially in situations characterized by an ageing population. North and Fiske (2018) found that the three SIC dimensions were more likely to be endorsed by younger age groups, and that they related to less desire to interact with older people and lower evaluations of their warmth.

The succession dimension of SIC measures beliefs that older people should hand over material and symbolic resources to younger generations, rather than hold on to them. The identity dimension measures beliefs that older people should avoid behaving like younger people, for example by using social media or going to places frequented by younger people, such as clubs. The consumption dimension measures beliefs that older people should consume fewer resources than they do, for example in terms of healthcare and family resources. Given our focus on workplace ageism, we only investigated the succession dimension, as this is the dimension that presents items most strongly — though not exclusively — related to the workplace.

The results of the prevalence study conducted with a representative sample of Portuguese workers (for details, see Chapter 4) show that the succession dimension was evaluated with an average of M = 3.71 and a standard deviation of SD = 1, on a six-point scale where 1 = strongly disagree and 6 = strongly agree. This shows that the belief that older workers should make way for younger workers and hand material and other resources over to younger workers was endorsed at a moderate level.

Negative attitudes toward older workers (Rego et al., 2017)

Rego and colleagues (2017) examined negative descriptive stereotypes towards older workers in four dimensions, using a scale developed

to measure managers' attitudes toward older workers. Each dimension measures descriptive beliefs about what an older worker usually is (or is not) or does (or does not do). The four types of negative attitudes were identified and validated in samples of Portuguese and Brazilian managers, and were found in both countries to predict discrimination against older workers when hiring and selecting for training opportunities.

The four types of negative attitudes relate to older workers' adaptability, value (of their competencies) to organizations, organizational conscientiousness, and performance. Adaptability is the belief that older workers are unwilling to adapt to new situations or engage in training, and are resistant to change and not creative or innovative. Value to organizations refers to the belief that older workers' experience, characteristics, technological skills and reasoning ability are not valued by organizations. Organizational conscientiousness refers to the belief that older workers are not loyal, are not willing to make sacrifices or take responsibilities for the organization, and are more frequently absent. The performance dimension represents the belief that older workers are less productive and have poor quality work performance. In our analyses, the four beliefs are sometimes combined into a single measure, while at other times we report results for each of the four beliefs. A fifth belief identified by Rego and colleagues (2017), relating to older workers' generosity and social capital, is also considered in our study but as a separate dimension, as it is a positive belief, and therefore not suitable to be combined with the four negative beliefs.

Overall, negative attitudes towards older workers were not strongly endorsed by Portuguese workers. On a six-point scale where 1 =

strongly disagree and 6 = strongly agree, the negative attitudes towards older workers were evaluated with an average of M = 2.52 and a standard deviation of SD = .79.

Interestingly, the four types of negative attitudes towards older workers are not equally endorsed. The most endorsed attitude related to older workers was (lack of) adaptability, with an average of M = 3.50, and a standard deviation of SD = 1.08. Beliefs regarding older workers not being valued by their organizations because of their skills, experience and abilities, and beliefs regarding older workers' lack of conscientiousness were less endorsed, with averages of M = 2.24 (SD = 1.02) and M = 2.23 (SD = .90), respectively. Finally, beliefs regarding older workers performing poorly and being less productive were the least endorsed, with an average evaluation of M = 2.10, and a standard deviation of SD = .99.

Positive attitudes toward older workers (Rego et al., 2017)

Of the five types of attitudes identified by Rego and colleagues (2017), generosity and social capital is the only positive type, and therefore considered here separately. Generosity refers to the belief that older workers help and cooperate with others, form lasting relationships, and wish to contribute to society. Rego and colleagues (2017) found, using a vignette study, that managers with stronger beliefs regarding the generosity and social capital of older workers were more likely to say that they would hire an older worker over a younger worker with the same education.

In our Portuguese sample, positive attitudes regarding older workers' generosity and social capital were endorsed at a moderate level —

and, notably, more strongly than any of the four negative attitude types also identified by Rego and colleagues (2017) — with an average evaluation of M = 3.82 and a standard deviation of SD = .99.

Inclusion of older workers in the workforce

An ageing population and a reduction of the labour force due to a decrease in birth rates in many societies have focused increased attention on the role and contribution of older workers. While some see the participation of older workers as essential to the economy, others see the participation of older workers as overall negative, insofar as it reduces opportunities for younger generations. Attitudes regarding the inclusion of older workers were measured using a single item asking whether it was good for the Portuguese economy that people aged 60 and over be employed in the workforce. This general and positively framed item was taken from the International Social Survey Programme (Jutz et al., 2017), where it was one of the measures used to assess conflict and social exclusion of older workers.

Attitudes toward the inclusion of older workers were endorsed at a moderate level. Using a six-point scale where 1 = strongly disagree and 6 = strongly agree, it was evaluated with an average of M = 3.70 and a standard deviation of SD = 1.45.

Thus, we can see that, on average, negative age stereotypes and attitudes against older workers are not strongly endorsed by the Portuguese population, with an overall average of only M = 2.52. The more general succession stereotypes were endorsed at a moderate level (with an average of M= 3.71). The two positive measures, attitudes towards older workers' generosity and social capital and older workers' inclusion in the workforce were also endorsed at moderate levels, M = 3.82 and M = 3.70, respectively. It is important to note, however, that the low endorsement of the negative age stereotypes and attitudes against older workers might have resulted in part from the explicit nature of the measures. That is, the fact that few participants directly endorsed blatant negative statements regarding older workers may have been influenced by a social desirability bias. More implicit and subtle measures of negative attitudes towards older workers might have seen higher levels of endorsement, a possibility that should be investigated in future research.

For a comparison between the endorsement of all the measures used to assess attitudes towards older workers, see Figure 5.1 below.

Figure 5.1 General endorsement of succession dimension of SIC, negative attitudes towards older workers, positive attitudes towards older workers (generosity) and attitudes towards the inclusion of older workers

Who is more likely to be ageist towards older workers? Socio-demographic predictors

Age, gender, level of education, geographic region, socio-economic status and political orientation were explored as possible predictors of attitudes towards older workers.

Age

Given the focus on age in this research, this factor was measured in different ways. First, chronological age was measured by asking participants their year of birth. Second, participant age was also operationalized via three age categories: younger, middle-aged and older. Consistent with the prevailing age boundaries frequently utilized in the literature (see Chapter 4), workers between 18 and 35 were considered younger, between 36 and 50 middle-aged, and older workers were those 51 and above. In addition to measuring age objectively, we also measured age subjectively by asking participants how they saw themselves on a seven-point scale from 1 = younger worker to 4 = middle-aged worker and 7 = older worker. The two objective measures of age had a correlation of $r = .94$, $p < .001$. Subjective age correlated both with our categorical measure of age ($r = .70$, $p <.001$) and with chronological age ($r = .76$, $p < .001$). For ease of interpretation, we operationalized age in our analyses using the three age categories.

The results show that age is an important predictor of attitudes towards older workers. As can be seen in Figure 5.2 below, negative stereotypes and attitudes regarding older workers were more strongly endorsed by younger age groups, while more positive stereotypes and attitudes were more strongly endorsed by older age groups.

Negative attitudes and prescriptive stereotypes toward older workers were more strongly endorsed by the younger age groups. The succession dimension was most strongly endorsed by younger workers (18–35: M = 3.99), followed by middle-aged workers (36–50: M = 3.63), and least by older workers (51-65: M = 3.35). Similarly, overall negative attitudes toward older workers (i.e., an average of the four types of negative attitudes) was also most strongly endorsed by younger workers (M = 2.63), followed by middle-aged workers (M = 2.50), and least by older workers (M = 2.35; F = 9.24, p < .001). When considering the negative attitudes towards older workers separately, the results tended to present the same pattern. Attitudes in terms of older workers' lack of adaptability (F = 20.75, p < .001),

lack of conscientiousness (F = 7.22, p < .001), and lack of performance (F = 11.01, p < .001) were more endorsed by younger and middle-aged workers than by older workers. There were no significant differences in the endorsement of attitudes in terms of older workers' lack of value.

In contrast, positive attitudes toward older workers in terms of generosity were more strongly endorsed by older workers (M = 4.26), followed by middle-aged workers (M = 3.84), and least by younger workers (M = 3.56). Similarly, beliefs that older workers should be included in the workforce were also most strongly endorsed by older workers (M = 4.16), followed by middle-aged workers (M = 3.62), and least by younger workers (M = 3.52; F = 13.98, p < .001).

The results show that age is an important predictor of attitudes towards older workers, with older workers more likely to endorse positive stereotypes and attitudes towards their own age group, while middle-aged, and especially younger workers, endorsed more negative stereotypes and attitudes towards older workers. The differences between age groups are especially pronounced in terms of perceptions of older workers' generosity and social capital (F = 37.50, p < .001) and the succession prescriptive stereotype (F = 32.72, p < .001).

Figure 5.2 Endorsement of succession dimension of SIC, negative attitudes towards older workers, older workers' generosity and the inclusion of older workers, by age group
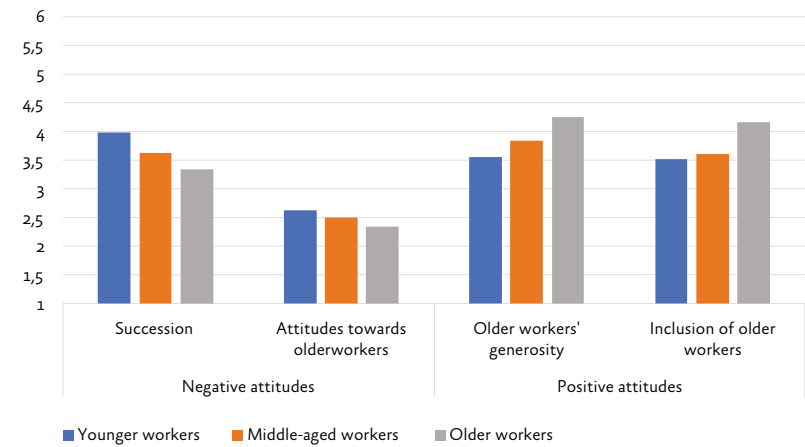
### Gender

Gender (Male, Female, Other) was also investigated as a possible predictor of attitudes towards older workers. As only two participants identified as 'Other', here we present the results for those who identified as 'Male' and 'Female'. Male participants were more likely than female participants to hold negative attitudes toward older workers (M = 2.73 versus M = 2.57, p = .001). This was also the case when considering negative attitudes towards older workers separately, except for the endorsement of attitudes in terms of older workers' lack of value for the organization, which was equally endorsed by both genders. No differences were observed between genders in their endorsement of the succession stereotype.

Sex was also investigated (Male, Female). While gender refers to 'socially constructed roles and relationships, personality traits, attitudes, behaviours, values, relative power and influence that society ascribes to the two sexes on a differential basis' (UNESCO, 2022), sex refers to 'biological characteristics that distinguish women and men' (UNESCO, 2022). There were no significant differences between sexes in terms of the endorsement of stereotypes and negative attitudes towards older workers. With regard to positive attitudes, men were slightly more likely than women to describe older workers as high in generosity and social capital (M = 3.88 versus M = 3.77, p = .044).

In sum, when sex was considered instead of self-identified gender, the results were overall very similar. Yet, when considering dimensions of negative attitudes towards older workers separately, the results revealed that men tended to evaluate older workers less positively than women (lack of adaptability: F = 14.01, p < .001; lack of value: F = 4.02, p = .045; lack of conscientiousness: F = 12.83, p < .001; and lack of performance: F = 10.56, p = .001).

Education level

Participants indicated one of four levels of education: 1) secondary school not completed, 2) secondary school, 3) bachelor's or undergraduate degree, and 4) graduate degree.

The only attitude predicted by level of education was positive beliefs regarding older workers' generosity and social capital (β = .07, p = .021), which were more positive the lower the educational level. Individuals with a graduate (PhD or Master) or undergraduate degree were less likely to see older workers as high in generosity and social capital, with

averages of M = 3.60 and M = 3.73, respectively. People with secondary education and people who had less than secondary education were more likely to see older workers as high in generosity and social capital, with averages of M = 3.93 and M = 4.05, respectively. See also Figure 5.3 below.

Figure 5.3 Endorsement of succession dimension of SIC, negative attitudes towards older workers, older workers' generosity, and the inclusion of older workers, by education level
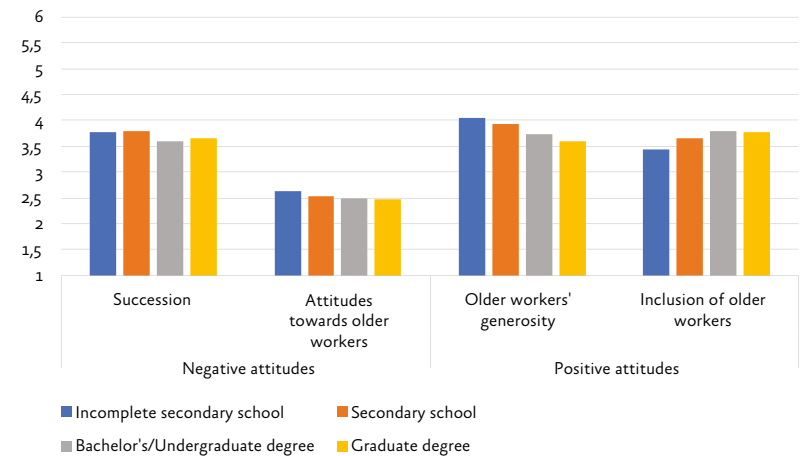
Social and economic status

Another possible predictor of stereotypes and attitudes toward older workers that we investigated was social and economic status (SES), self-reported on a scale from 1 = current income allows to live comfortably (high SES) to 4 = extremely difficult to live on current income (low SES). Higher SES predicted stronger beliefs that older

workers should be included in the workforce (F = 4.80, p = .03). This suggests that individuals with lower SES may regard older workers as direct competition for scarce jobs at lower pay levels. No relationship was found between SES and the succession stereotype, overall negative attitudes toward older workers nor its different dimensions, or positive beliefs regarding older workers' generosity and social capital (see Figure 5.4).

Figure 5.4 Endorsement of succession dimension of SIC, negative attitudes towards older workers, older workers' generosity and the inclusion of older workers, by social and economic status
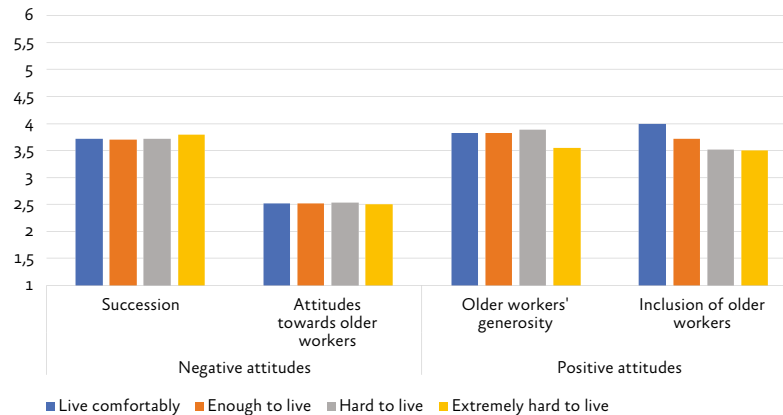
Political orientation

The effect of political orientation on stereotypes and attitudes towards older workers was investigated for both economic issues and social issues. Examples of economic issues provided in the survey included social welfare, government spending and tax cuts. Examples of social issues provided included immigration, same-sex marriage and abortion. For both aspects of political orientation, respondents indicated their political orientation on a scale from 1 = left/liberal to 7 = right/conservative.

The only statistically significant relationship was a positive one between political orientation in terms of social issues and perceptions of older workers' generosity and social capital (r = .16, p < .001). This indicates that reporting more liberal views on social issues was associated with more positive beliefs regarding the generosity and social capital of older workers. No relationship was found between social or economic political orientation and the succession stereotype, negative attitudes toward older workers — both the overall attitude and the separate dimensions, or inclusion of older workers in the workforce.

Geographic location

In the representative survey study, the effect of location on endorsing the stereotyping of older workers was investigated in terms of both geographic regions and size of the town or city worked in. Survey participants were located in one of the five major Portuguese regions: North, Centre, Lisbon Metropolitan Area (LMA), South, and the Islands (Madeira and Azores archipelagos). In terms of the size of the town or city, participants indicated whether the organization they worked for was located in a village (*aldeia*), a town or small city (*vila*), a city, or a suburb of a large city (*cidade*).

Though the results show no effect of the size of town or city on endorsement of any of the four measures used to assess attitudes towards older workers, that was not the case when considering

geographical location. As shown in Figure 5.5 below, geographical location was related to the extent to which respondents believed that older workers should be included in the workforce (F = 5.43, p < .001). Including older workers in the workforce was more strongly endorsed in the LMA region (M = 3.98), and the South region (M = 3.86). In contrast, including older workers in the workforce was least endorsed in the Islands (M = 3.15). The North (M = 3.60) and Centre (M = 3.56) fell in the middle.

Figure 5.5 Endorsement of succession dimension of SIC, negative attitudes towards older workers, older workers' generosity and the inclusion of older workers, by geographical region
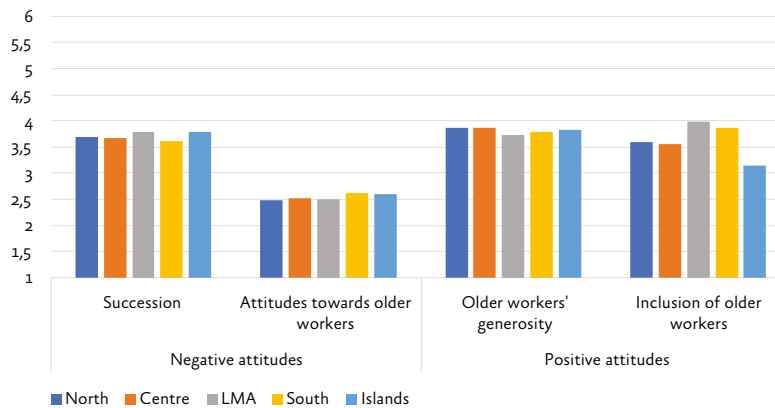
Organizational context and role predictors

The work context and the role a person occupies may also influence their tendency to stereotype older workers and hold biased attitudes. We therefore investigated the relationship between our four measures assessing attitudes towards older workers and several organization-level variables. Specifically, we looked at whether ageist attitudes are predicted by professional experience, having a management role, and organizational size, type and culture.

Management role and professional experience

First, we investigated whether having a formal managerial role (versus not having a managerial role) related to the attitudes and stereotypes towards older workers. With regard to older workers being included in the workforce, managers were more likely than non-managers to say that they should be (M=3.95 versus M=3.63; F = 3.16, p = 0.43). Managers were also more likely than non-managers to endorse positive attitude regarding older workers' generosity and social capital (M = 3.98 versus M = 3.75; F = 4.05, p = .018; see Figure 5.6 below).

Figure 5.6 Endorsement of succession dimension of SIC, negative attitudes towards older workers, older workers' generosity and the inclusion of older workers, by management role
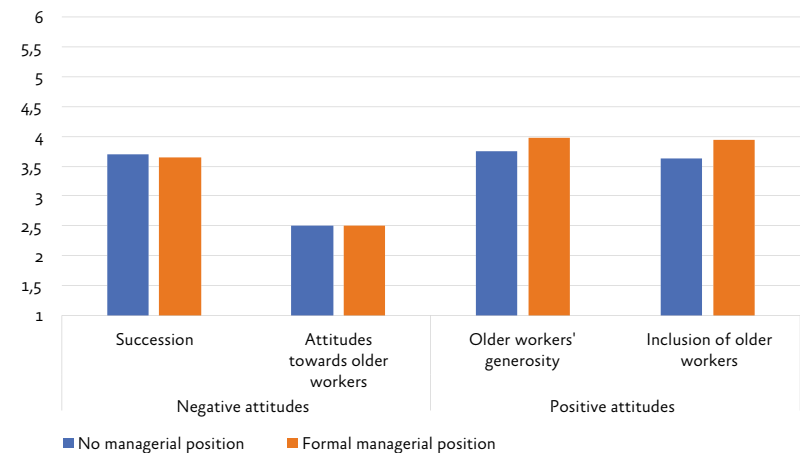
Professional experience (in years) was related to all attitudinal measures, with greater professional experience positively predicting endorsement of the inclusion of older workers into the workforce (β = .09, p = .006), as well as perceptions of older workers' generosity (β = .27, p < .001), and negatively predicting both the succession dimension of SIC (β = -.21, p < .001) and negative attitudes towards older workers (β = -.12, p < .001). Except for attitudes in terms of older workers' lack of value, the separate dimensions of attitudes toward older workers were also negatively predicted by professional experience. However, because this tends to be a result of age rather than professional experience (because greater age tends to result in greater professional experience), additional analyses were conducted controlling for age.

When age was controlled for, the relationship between professional experience and the succession dimension of SIC, negative attitudes towards older workers, and the inclusion of older workers in the workforce ceased to be significant. This would suggest that these attitudes were affected by age rather than by professional experience. However, the relationship between professional experience and positive attitude regarding older workers' generosity was significant and positive (β = .14, p = .041), even when age was controlled for. This suggests that over and above age, working for longer leads employees to see and appreciate more the generosity and social capital of older workers.

Organizational characteristics

We also investigated the relationships between ageist attitudes and several organizational characteristics: size of organization, type of organization, and organizational culture.

There was no statistically significant relationship between any of the four ageism measures and organization size, measured as 1 = less than 10 workers, 2 = 11-50, 3 = 51-250, and 4 = more than 250.

Organization type was measured by asking participants whether they worked in state and local government, other public administration, other state enterprise, private enterprise, NGO, were self-employed, or other. The only significant relationship was found with regard to the succession dimension of SIC (F = 2.33, p = .030), with those working in public administration endorsing it less (M = 3.47) than those working in private enterprises (M = 3.77). Participants working in the remaining types of organizations did not significantly differ in their endorsement of the succession dimension (central government with an average of M = 3.73 vs. state enterprise with M = 3.59 vs. NGO with M = 4.05 vs. self-employed with M = 3.82 vs. other with M = 3.62). No relationship was found between organization types and negative attitudes towards older workers, beliefs regarding older workers' generosity and social capital, and inclusion of older workers in the workforce.

Ageism towards older workers was also related to organizational culture, which was measured with two items: traditional vs. modern (1 = traditional, 6 = modern), and rigid vs. flexible (1 = rigid, 6 = flexible). The two items were combined into a single organizational culture measure. The only significant relationship found was between organizational culture and beliefs regarding older workers' generosity and social capital (β = .07, p = .021): working in more modern and flexible organizations related positively to endorsing beliefs regarding generosity and social capital of older workers. Organizational culture did not relate significantly to the succession

dimension of SIC, negative attitudes towards older workers — both overall attitudes and attitudes considered separately, or beliefs that older workers should be included in the workforce.

How does holding oldist stereotypes relate to workplace outcomes and individual wellbeing?

In addition to investigating antecedents of attitudes towards older workers, we also investigated consequences.

In order to do so, we will relate the four measures used to assess ageism towards older workers (i.e., the succession dimension of SIC, negative attitudes towards older workers, older workers' generosity, and the inclusion of older workers) to variables measuring the type of relationship between different age groups, such as intergroup attitudes and behaviours, variables associated with the organization itself, such as job attitudes and performance, as well as variables associated with the individuals themselves, such as stress and wellbeing.

Workplace-related outcomes

Relationships were also explored between endorsing stereotypes toward older workers and several age-group-related variables, including intergenerational contact, perceived intragroup conflict, and endorsement of age-inclusive HR practices.

Intergenerational contact

Workplace contact among and within generations was assessed in terms of both frequency (how much time was spent working with colleagues aged 55 and older) and quality (how positive was the experience, from 1 = very negative to 6 = very positive). That is, for younger, middle-aged and older workers, we ask them about their contact with older workers.

Overall, frequency of contact was not significantly associated with any of the attitudes towards older workers. When the results were looked at by age group, there was still no relation between contact frequency with older workers and the succession dimension of SIC, negative attitudes towards older workers — both overall attitude and attitudes considered separately — or beliefs regarding older worker inclusion in the workforce. However, for older workers (but not for younger or middle-aged), more frequent contact with older workers did relate positively to perceived generosity of older workers (r = 16, p = .018). Thus, frequency of contact alone seems to have little direct effect on ageism towards older workers.

However, significant relationships were found between the *quality* of contact with older workers and stereotypes towards older workers. Higher quality of contact related negatively to both the succession dimension of SIC (r = -.18, p < .001) and overall negative attitudes toward older workers (r = -.24, p < .001): the more quality contact respondents reported, the lower their negative attitudes. This was also the case when considering specific dimensions of the negative attitudes measure towards older workers: higher quality of contact related negatively to attitudes in terms of older workers' lack of adaptability (r = -.18, p < .001), older workers' lack of value (r = -.15, p < .001), older workers' lack of conscientiousness (r = -.23, p < .001), and older workers' lack of performance (r = -.22, p < .001). Higher quality of contact with older workers also related positively to positive attitudes towards older workers: beliefs regarding inclusion

of older workers in the workforce (r = .14, p < .001) and regarding older workers' generosity and social capital (r = .26, p < .001).

This means that, in general, people who reported higher quality workplace contact with older workers more strongly endorsed positive attitudes (i.e., inclusion of older workers in the workforce and perception of older worker's generosity) and less strongly endorsed negative attitudes (succession stereotypes and overall negative attitudes towards older workers).

Perceived intragroup conflict

Intragroup conflict measures perceptions of how much conflict one perceives among the people one works with (1 = none to 6 = a lot). The conflict need not involve the person evaluating it, it can be any type of relational conflict, and it is not limited to age-related topics and attitudes. The results for intragroup conflict revealed an opposite pattern to that described above for quality of contact with older workers. A positive relationship was found between perceived intragroup conflict and negative attitudes: succession (r = .08, p = .015) and negative attitudes towards older workers (r = .11, p < .001). The same pattern of results could be found when considering dimensions of negative attitudes towards older workers separately: perceived intragroup conflict related positively to attitudes in terms of older workers' lack of adaptability (r = .07, p = .034), older workers' lack of value (r = .07, p = .030), older workers' lack of conscientiousness (r = .15, p < .001), and older workers' lack of performance (r = .08, p = .013). A negative relationship was found between perceived intragroup conflict and positive beliefs: inclusion of older workers

in the workforce (r = -.09, p = .004) and older workers' generosity and social capital (r = -.07, p < .024).

Endorsement of age-inclusive HR practices

Age-inclusive HR practices promote treating all employees in the same way, irrespective of their age. Participants were asked to indicate if it was important (1 = not important to 6 = very important) that organizations provided, for example, 'Equal opportunities to be promoted, transferred and to advance in the career, regardless of age'. Endorsing age-inclusive HR practices was not significantly related to the succession dimension of SIC nor to beliefs regarding older workers' generosity and social capital. However, people who more strongly support equal HR treatment and policies for all generations were less likely to have negative attitudes towards older workers (r = -.29, p < .001), and more likely to believe that older workers should be included in the workforce (r = .16, p < .001). A negative relationship between age-inclusive HR practices and ageist attitudes was also found when considering the separate dimensions of negative attitudes towards older workers, with correlations of r = -.07, p = .022 for older workers' lack of adaptability, of r = -.31, p < .001 for older workers' lack of value, of r = -.26, p < .001 for older workers' lack of conscientiousness, and of r = -.29, p < .001 for older workers' lack of performance.

Organization-directed variables

We will now investigate relationships between ageist attitudes and several important organizational outcomes: job satisfaction,

intention to remain in the position, organizational citizenship behaviours, and self-rated overall performance.

<u>Job satisfaction</u>

Job satisfaction (1 = extremely unsatisfied to 6 = extremely satisfied) positively related to positive attitudes towards older workers. Specifically, job satisfaction was predicted by beliefs regarding inclusion of older workers in the workforce (r = .08, p = .018) and older workers' generosity and social capital (r = .11, p < .001). No significant relation was found between job satisfaction and either the succession stereotype or negative attitudes towards older workers.

<u>Intention to remain in the organization</u>

The survey asked respondents how long they would choose to remain in their organization, if it was up to them, from 1 = one year or less, to 4= the rest of my career or until retirement. Remain intentions related negatively to ageist attitudes towards older workers: the succession dimension of SIC (r = -.10, p < .001) and general negative attitudes towards older workers (r = -.09, p = .007). Remain intentions also related negatively to most dimensions of the negative age attitude measures when considered separately: r = -.08, p = .013 for older workers' lack of adaptability, r = -.10, p = .002 for older workers' lack of conscientiousness, and r = -.09, p = .006 for older workers' lack of performance. Finally, remain intentions also related positively to beliefs regarding older workers' generosity and social capital (r =. 13, p < .001), but were not significantly related to beliefs regarding inclusion of older workers in the workforce. Thus, employee

intentions to remain in their organization would seem to be affected by negative attitudes (negatively), and positive attitudes (positively).

<u>Performance</u>

Extra-role performance

Self-reported citizenship behaviours toward colleagues (OCB-Is) were used to measure extra-role performance. OCB-Is related negatively to overall negative attitudes toward older workers (r = -.14, p < .001), as well as most of its dimensions when considered separately (r = -.12, p < .001 for older workers' lack of value, r = -.14, p < .001 for older workers' lack of conscientiousness, and r = -.16, p < .001 for older workers' lack of performance). It also positively related to beliefs regarding older workers' generosity and social capital (r = .13, p < .001). No significant relationship was found between citizenship behaviours and either the succession dimension of SIC or beliefs regarding inclusion of older workers in the workforce.

<u>In-role performance</u>

With regard to self-reported overall in-role performance (1 = insufficient to 6 = extraordinary), no statistically significant relationship was found with any of the four measures used to assess stereotypes towards older workers.

<u>Health and wellbeing outcomes</u>

Health outcomes comprised mental and physical health, as well as work-related stress levels. Mental and physical health were measured by asking respondents to evaluate both their mental

and physical health, in general, on a scale from 1 = very poor to 6 = excellent. Work-related stress was measured by asking participants if they considered their work stressful, on a scale from 1 = never to 6 = always.

The results revealed that, while mental health significantly related to the four measures assessing ageist attitudes towards older workers, physical health related significantly only to the inclusion of older workers in the workforce, and stress did not relate significantly to any of the ageism measures. More specifically, mental health related positively to the two positive beliefs regarding older workers: beliefs regarding including older workers in the workforce ($r = .14$, $p < .001$) and regarding older workers' generosity and social capital ($r = .10$, $p = .002$). In addition, mental health related negatively to the two negative attitudes towards older people: the succession dimension of SIC ($r = -.10$, $p = .002$) and overall negative attitudes towards older workers ($r = -.10$, $p = .002$). When considering the negative attitude dimensions separately, a similar pattern emerged: mental health related negatively to older workers' lack of adaptability ($r = -.09$, $p = .003$), older workers' lack of conscientiousness ($r = -.08$, $p = .009$), and older workers' lack of performance ($r = -.09$, $p = .003$).

Self-evaluation of physical health only related — positively — to beliefs regarding the inclusion of older workers in the workforce ($r = .09$, $p = .004$). No relationship was observed between self-evaluated physical health and beliefs regarding older workers' generosity and social capital, the succession dimension of SIC, or negative attitudes toward older workers, both when considering the overall measure and the separate attitudinal dimensions.

Holders of age stereotypes against younger workers — Representative sample study

Regarding effects of holding ageist stereotypes against younger workers, two sections of findings are presented here. In this first section, we examine the results of the study with a Portuguese representative sample, as was done above for effects of holding age stereotypes against older workers. That is, we investigate the relation between holding ageist stereotypes and sociodemographic factors, workplace outcomes (including relations between groups, organization-directed outcomes), and individual wellbeing. Then, in the following section, we present results of an experiment in which age and stereotype evaluation are manipulated, to see how responses to stereotype violation are influenced by more versus less strongly endorsing an ageist stereotype against younger workers.

WAYS structure and overall endorsement

Before relating the WAYS measure of prescriptive stereotypes against younger workers to demographic characteristics, workplace role and professional context, and personal wellbeing, we analyse the WAYS structure and overall endorsement of its dimensions.

The WAYS measure of prescriptive stereotypes against younger workers, developed within this project, has three overarching dimensions: Humility-Deference, Loyalty-Belonging and Vitality-Innovation. Humility-Deference refers to expectations of not challenging the natural social order in the workplace. Loyalty-Belonging refers to expectations of showing trustworthiness, making an effort to be socialized into the organization, and demonstrating

long-term commitment. The third dimension, Vitality-Innovation, refers to expectations regarding a dynamic work-attitude, proactivity, creativity, and technological competence. Thus, these dimensions reflect ambivalent expectations regarding younger workers, by expecting them to accept their lower status and, at the same time, show proactivity and challenge the status quo.

In the prevalence study conducted with a representative sample of 1,002 Portuguese workers (for details, see Chapter 4), WAYS was generally endorsed. This should not be surprising given that the scale was developed using Portuguese and U.S. samples. Using a six-point scale where 1 = strongly disagree and 6 = strongly agree, the WAYS dimensions were evaluated with an average of M = 4.44, with a standard deviation of SD = .66. Moreover, 68 percent of the population had overall evaluations between 3.78 and 5.10, and only 16 percent had evaluations below 3.78, which is still greater than the halfway point on the scale. Thus, we can see that prescriptive age stereotypes against younger workers are substantially endorsed among the Portuguese population on average.

However, there are important differences among the three dimensions regarding how strongly they are endorsed. Loyalty-Belonging stereotypes were the most strongly endorsed, with an average evaluation of M = 4.82, and a standard deviation of SD = .89. Prescriptive stereotypes regarding Vitality-Innovation were less strongly endorsed, with an average evaluation of M = 4.52, and a standard deviation of SD = .74. Humility-Deference stereotypes were the least strongly endorsed, with an average evaluation of M = 3.98, and a standard deviation of SD = .91 (see Figure 5.7 below).

The differences between average scores for the three dimensions are statistically significant.

Figure 5.7 General endorsement of WAYS dimensions
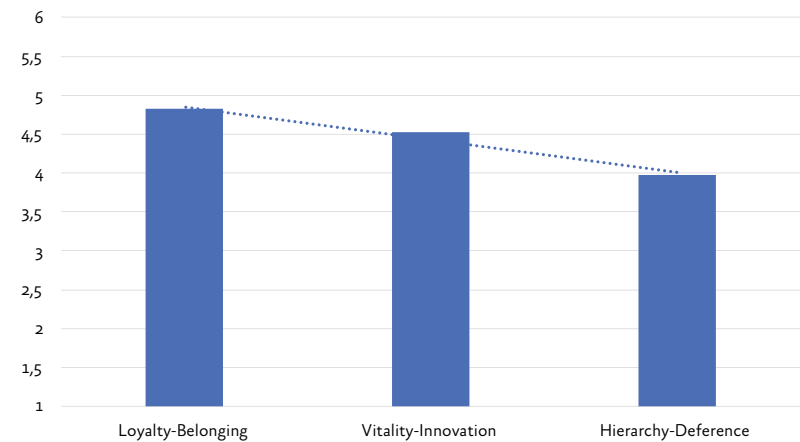
It is also important to note the relationships among the three WAYS dimensions. The results show them to be strongly correlated, such that strong endorsement of one of the overarching dimensions predicts strong endorsement of the other two. This provides further evidence for the endorsement of ambivalent expectations towards younger workers, whereby positive and negative expectations can be simultaneously endorsed. Most strongly related were Loyalty-Belonging and Vitality-Innovation, with a correlation of r = .60, p < .001. Least strongly related were Vitality-Innovation and Humility-Deference, with a correlation of r = .26, p < .001. Loyalty-Belonging and Humility-Deference had a correlation of r = .36, p < .001.

It may also be interesting to look within the WAYS overall dimensions, to see whether there are important differences among the subdimensions comprising each one (see Figure 5.8). The eight subdimensions and their relation to the three overarching dimensions are as follows.

Figure 5.8 WAYS dimensions and subdimensions
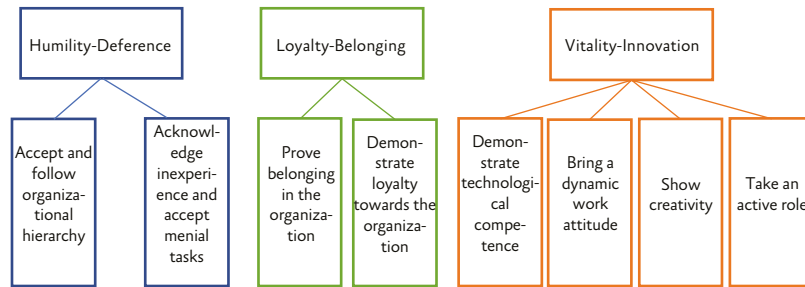
If we look at Table 5.1 below, we see some interesting differences in the extent to which particular subdimensions of the three overarching WAYS dimensions are endorsed. For example, whereas the subdimensions of Loyalty-Belonging are both moderately endorsed (with an average of M = 4.73 for Loyalty and an average of M = 4.90 for Belonging, which are not significantly different), greater differences are seen among the subdimensions of Humility-Deference, in particular, and Vitality-Innovation. With regard to the former, we can see that the Hierarchy subdimension is evaluated at an average of only M = 2.89 (out of 6). This indicates that expectations for

younger workers not to challenge the hierarchy may be less strongly and/or less generally endorsed within the population, a possibility that we explore further below with regard to age, region and other predictors. With regard to Vitality-Innovation, we can see that the subdimensions vary significantly in the extent to which they are endorsed, from an average of M = 3.40, for dynamic work attitude, to an average of M = 5.24 for taking an active role. Thus, although we shall focus on the effects of the three overall dimensions, it is important to acknowledge that differences do exist among the component subdimensions of each, which may result in differences in explanatory power.

Table 5.1 Endorsement of WAYS subdimensions

Overarching dimension	Subdimension	M	SD
Humility-Deference (HD)	Hierarchy	2.89	1.28
	Inexperience	5.07	1.02
Loyalty-Belonging (LB)	Loyalty	4.73	0.99
	Belonging	4.90	0.96
Vitality-Innovation (VI)	Technology	4.64	0.97
	Dynamic	3.40	1.19
	Creative	4.56	0.93
	Active	5.24	0.79

Who endorses prescriptive stereotypes regarding younger workers?

In exploring predictors of prescriptive stereotyping against younger workers, we relate WAYS dimensions to sociodemographic predictors, workplace characteristics and role predictors, as well as to workplace-related outcomes, and individual wellbeing.

Socio-demographic predictors

The same demographic characteristics explored earlier (i.e., age, gender, level of education, geographic region, socio-economic status and political orientation) were examined as possible predictors of the endorsement of younger worker prescriptive stereotypes (i.e., WAYS).

Age

Age was measured by participant year of birth, subjective age, and age categories. As the results did not differ significantly according to the age measure used, and for ease of interpretation, we operationalize age in most of the following analyses using the same three age categories as mentioned previously: younger (18–35), middle-aged (36–50), and older workers (51–65).

Because the focus of this research is age, in an initial phase, we also investigated the impact of subjective age. Interestingly, how respondents saw themselves in terms of being younger, middle-aged or older worker — subjective age — only correlated with our categorical measure of age (younger, middle-aged, older) at r = .70. This may be the result of at least two things. First, participants may see themselves as younger or older than their chronological age; for example, a 60-year-old may see themselves as younger (e.g., 55) or older (e.g., 65) than their chronological age, perhaps as a result of their health, attitudes, behaviour or stage of life. Second, participants may identify with their chronological age, but vary in the age ranges which they assign to younger, middle-aged, and older age categories. For example, a 30-year-old may see themselves

as 30, but consider this age as identifying a middle-aged rather than a younger worker, as we have categorized it. Thus, although we focus on the three age categories in our analysis, it is important to bear in mind that, in some cases, workers may see themselves and others in different age categories than we have placed them.

Our results show that age is an important determinant of whether a person endorses the prescriptive age stereotypes regarding younger workers that we measured through WAYS. As can be seen in Figure 5.9 below, all three dimensions are least endorsed by younger respondents (18–35: with an average of M = 3.91 for the HD dimension, M = 4.69 for LB, and M = 4.41 for VI), followed by middle-aged (36–50: M = 4.03 for HD, M = 4.86 for LB, and M = 4.51 for VI), and most endorsed by older (51 and above: M = 4.04 for HD, M = 4.99 for LB, and M = 4.74 for VI). These differences are greatest in the dimensions of Loyalty-Belonging (F = 8.77, p < .001), and, especially, Vitality Innovation (F = 14.22, p < .001), where the relationship between greater age and extent to which the stereotype dimension is endorsed is strong and highly statistically significant. When it comes to Humility-Deference, differences can still be seen but they are less strong (F = 2.33, p = .098), with the older two age groups having almost equal endorsement, which is higher than for younger participants.

Thus, we can conclude that an important predictor of prescriptive stereotypes against younger workers is age, with older workers more likely to endorse both positive and negative prescriptive stereotypes than younger workers, and middle-aged workers falling in the middle. This relationship between greater age and greater stereotype endorsement is strongest for Vitality-Innovation, less strong but still highly significant for Loyalty-Belonging, and least strong and only marginally significant for Humility-Deference.

Figure 5.9 Endorsement of WAYS dimensions by age group
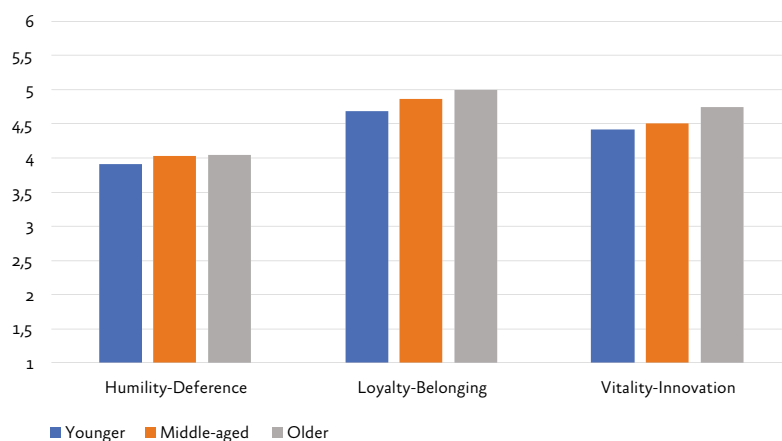
Gender

Gender (Male, Female, Other) was also investigated as a possible predictor of endorsing prescriptive age stereotypes against younger workers. However, the results show no relationship between gender and endorsing any of the WAYS dimensions. As with gender, sex was not related to endorsement of any of the WAYS dimensions.
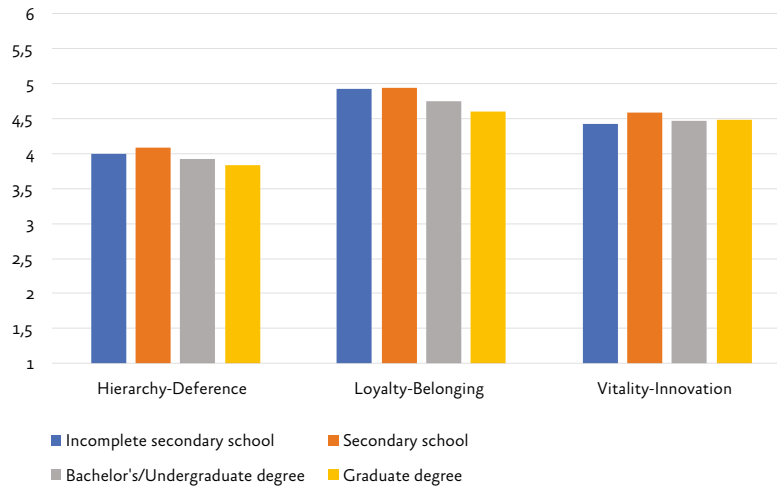
Education level

Participants' education level (from 1 = secondary school not completed, 2 = secondary school, 3 = bachelor's or undergraduate degree, to 4 = graduate degree) was related to their endorsement of stereotypes towards younger workers.

As shown in Figure 5.10 below, the effects of education were strongest in the case of the Loyalty-Belonging dimension, less strong

but still highly significant in the Humility-Deference dimension, and non-significant in the Vitality-Innovation dimension. Interestingly, the relationship between level of education and endorsing WAYS is not straightforward in terms of greater (or lesser) education always having similar effects. Instead, it was found that people with secondary education were more likely to endorse overall prescriptive age stereotypes against younger workers (M = 4.54) than their peers with either more education, in terms of a bachelor's degree (M = 4.38) or a master's/PhD degree (M = 4.30), or less education, in terms of not having completed secondary education (M = 4.45). In the case of Humility-Deference, where differences among education levels were statistically significant (F = 3.79, p = .01), people with only primary education were more likely to endorse the stereotypes, with an average of M = 4.00 than people with university degrees, whether undergraduate, with an average of M = 3.83, or master's, with an average of M = 3.98 though never as much as people with secondary education, with an average of M = 4.08.

Similarly, there were statistically significant differences among education levels when it came to the Loyalty-Belonging dimension (F = 7.55, p < .01), where people with primary and secondary education were more likely to endorse the stereotypes, with averages of M = 4.93 and M = 4.94, respectively, than people with university degrees, whether undergraduate, with an average of M = 4.75, or master's, with an average of M = 4.60.

Figure 5.10 Endorsement of WAYS dimensions by education levels

Legend:
- Incomplete secondary school
- Secondary school
- Bachelor's/Undergraduate degree
- Graduate degree
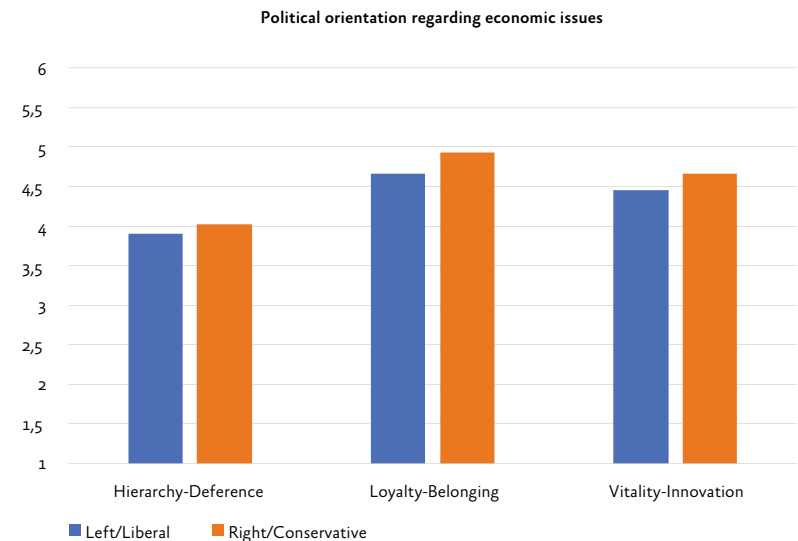
Social and economic status

Social economic status (SES) was also investigated as a possible predictor of endorsing prescriptive age stereotypes against younger workers, from 1 = current income allows you to live comfortably, to 4 = extremely difficult to live on current income. However, the results show no relationship between SES and endorsing any of the WAYS dimensions.

Political orientation

The effect of political orientation on endorsing prescriptive stereotypes against younger workers was investigated for both economic (e.g., social welfare, government spending, and tax cuts) and social issues (e.g., immigration, same-sex marriage, and abortion). Participants were asked to indicate their political orientations, from 1 = left to 7 = right.

As shown in Figure 5.11 below, both aspects of political orientation related significantly to endorsing prescriptive stereotypes against younger workers. The more right/conservative a person's political orientation, the more likely they were to endorse all three WAYS dimensions. This result is stronger for social issues, where conservative opinions on issues such as immigration, abortion and same-sex marriage were strongly related to WAYS stereotyping, with correlations between $r = .12$, $p = <.001$, when considering the Humility-Deference dimension and $r = .20$, $p < .001$, when considering the Loyalty-Belonging dimension. Correlations between WAYS and opinions on economic issues were between $r = .08$, $p = .03$, when considering the Humility-Deference dimension, and $r = .16$, $p < .001$, when considering the Loyalty-Belonging dimension.

Figure 5.11 Endorsement of WAYS dimensions by political orientation

Political orientation regarding economic issues

Legend:
- Left/Liberal
- Right/Conservative

Political orientation regarding social issues

Belonging, with the Lisbon Metropolitan Area region endorsing these stereotypes the least with an average of M = 4.68, SD = 0.80 vs. the North region, with an average of M = 4.83, SD = 0.87 vs. the Centre region, with an average of M = 4.93, SD = 0.86 vs. the South region, with an average of M = 4.86, SD = 0.80 vs. the Islands region, with an average of M = 4.85, SD = .93.

Figure 5.12 Endorsement of WAYS dimensions by geographical region

Workplace context and role predictors

In order to see whether professional experience, role and context influenced endorsing prescriptive stereotypes against younger workers, we also related WAYS to management role, professional experience, and organizational size, type and culture.

Geographic location

The last socio-demographic variable considered when analysing possible predictors of endorsing stereotypes against younger workers was location. Location was measured in terms of both geographic region (North, Centre, Lisbon Metropolitan Area, South, and the Islands) and size of the town or city (village (*aldeia*), town or small city (*vila*), city or suburb of a large city (*cidade*)).

The results show no effect of the size of town or city on endorsement of the WAYS dimensions. However, as shown in Figure 5.12 below, endorsement of some prescriptive age stereotypes against younger workers was influenced by geographic region. Although the differences regarding the Humility-Deference and the Vitality-Innovation dimensions were not statistically significant, there were significant differences among regions with regard to the Loyalty-

Management role and professional experience

We investigated whether having a formal managerial role versus not having a managerial role influenced endorsement of prescriptive age

stereotypes toward younger workers. Only in the case of the Vitality-Innovation dimension was a difference observed (F = 4.49, p = .006): managers, with an average of M = 4.67, were more likely than regular employees, with an average of M = 4.49, to say that younger workers, more than other ages, should show technological competence, creativity, energy and resilience. No significant difference was observed between managers and non-managers with regard to endorsing the Humility-Deference or Loyalty-Belonging dimensions (see Figure 5.13 below).

Figure 5.13 Endorsement of WAYS dimensions by management role
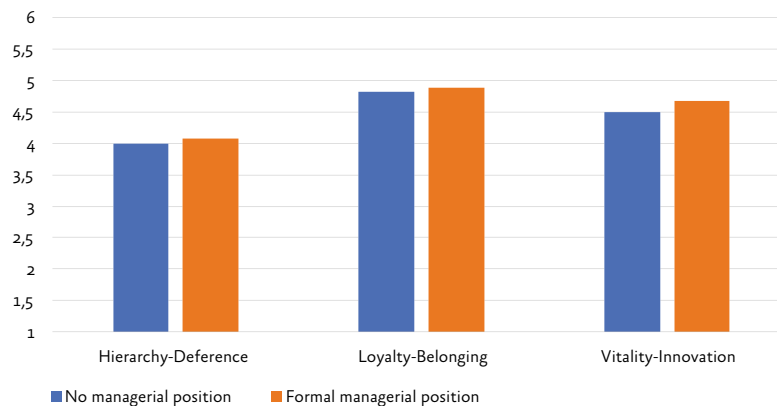
Professional experience (in years) was related to all three WAYS dimensions, with greater professional experience positively predicting endorsement of Humility-Deference (β = .09, p = .006), and especially of Loyalty-Belonging (β = .14, p < .001) and Vitality-Innovation stereotypes (β = .17, p < .001). When age was controlled for, these relationships maintained their significance in the case of the Humility-Deference and the Loyalty-Belonging dimensions, yet ceased to be

significant in the case of Vitality-Innovation. This suggests that the effects observed for greater professional experience on Vitality-Innovation endorsement were a result of greater age, rather than greater professional experience.

Organizational characteristics

We also investigated whether holding prescriptive stereotypes against younger workers related to several organizational characteristics, including size, type and culture.

Participants in the representative study indicated the size of the organization they work for: 1 = less than 10 people, 2 = 10-50, 3=50-250, and 4 = more than 250. However, no relationship was found between organization size and any of the WAYS dimensions.

Participants also indicated the type of organization they worked for, from the following categories: state and local government, other public administration, other state enterprise, private enterprise, NGO, self-employed, and other. No relationship was found between organization type and any of the WAYS dimensions.

Two aspects of organizational culture were investigated as possible antecedents to endorsing prescriptive age stereotypes against younger workers and combined in a single organizational culture variable. First, participants were asked how traditional (1 = very traditional) versus how modern (6 = very modern) was the organization. Second, they were asked how rigid (1 = very rigid) versus how flexible (6 = very flexible) was the organization. Organizational culture significantly predicts the endorsement of the Vitality-Innovation (β = .06, p = .043), and especially the Loyalty-Belonging (β = .10, p = .001) dimensions

of WAYS, such that a more modern and flexible culture is related to greater endorsement. No significant effects on the Humility-Deference dimension were observed (see Figure 5.14 below).

Figure 5.14 Endorsement of WAYS dimensions by organizational culture
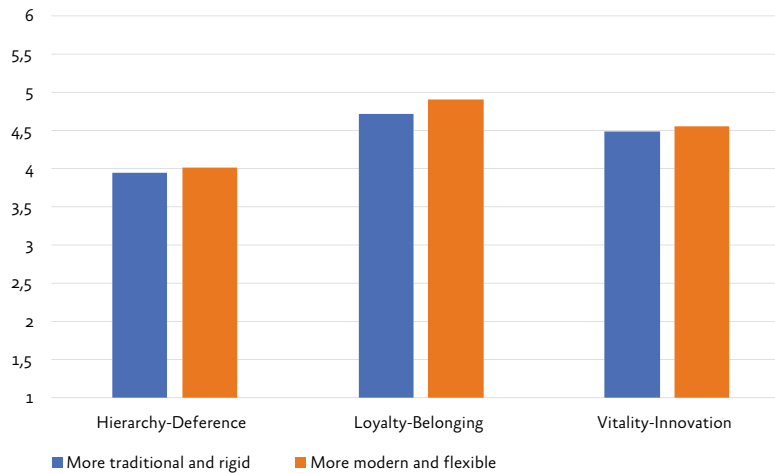
Workplace-related outcomes

Endorsing prescriptive stereotypes against younger workers, as measured by WAYS, was related to perceptions regarding relationships between different age-groups, organization-directed outcomes, including job satisfaction and performance, as well as individual mental and physical health.

Relationship between different age groups

Effects of WAYS on relationships in the workplace between different groups were investigated in terms of quantity and quality of contact between generations, endorsement of age-inclusive HR practices, perceptions of workplace relational conflict, and beliefs regarding social exclusion of older workers.

Intergenerational contact

Workplace contact with younger workers was looked at in terms of both frequency (e.g., in the last month, how much time was spent working with colleagues aged 35 years or younger) and quality (e.g., in the past month, how was your experience working with colleagues aged 35 years or younger). That is, we asked younger, middle-aged and older workers about their contact with younger workers.

No relationship was observed between the frequency of contact with younger workers and any of the WAYS dimensions. However, frequency of contact with younger workers was significantly and positively related to the perceived quality of contact. In turn, the quality of contact with younger workers related positively to both the Loyalty-Belonging, with a correlation of $r = .15$, $p < .001$, and Vitality-Innovation dimensions, with a correlation of $r = .11$, $p < .001$, but not to Humility-Deference.

Perceived intragroup conflict

We also explored the consequences of holding stereotypes towards younger workers on perceptions of intragroup conflict (i.e., perceptions regarding how much conflict there is among people that

one works with). Our results showed a negative relationship between perceived intragroup conflict and the Humility-Deference dimension of WAYS, with a correlation of r = -.06, p = .042. This suggests that less workplace intragroup conflict is perceived by those who have stronger expectations that younger workers should respect the hierarchy, remain humble, and show respect for older colleagues. There was no significant relationship with Loyalty-Belonging or Vitality-Innovation.

Endorsement of age-inclusive HR practices

Age-inclusive HR practices are those which treat all employees the same, for example in terms of training and promotion, irrespective of age. Endorsing age-inclusive HR practices related positively to all three dimensions of WAYS, though more strongly to Loyalty-Belonging, with a correlation of r = .20, p < .001, and Vitality-Innovation, with a correlation of r = .16, p < .001, than to Humility-Deference, with a correlation of r = .11, p < .001. Thus, workers who more strongly endorse youngist stereotypes, especially Loyalty-Belonging and Vitality-Innovation, also seem to be those that more strongly support equal HR treatment and policies for all generations. Interestingly, this suggests that individuals who endorse the less negative/more positive WAYS stereotype do not see the expectations as conflicting with equal HR treatment and policies.

Inclusion of older workers in the workforce

Inclusion of older workers in the workforce measured agreement with the idea that having people over 60 years old employed is good for the national economy, on a scale from 1 = completely disagree to 6 = completely agree. The question does not address a particular working context or the benefits for the individuals of different ages, but rather the benefit for the national economy. Our results showed a significant relationship between social inclusion of older workers and the three WAYS dimensions. A strong positive relationship was found with Vitality-Innovation, with a correlation of r = .13, p < .001, and positive but less strong relationship with Loyalty-Belonging, with a correlation of r = .07, p = .041. A negative relationship was found with Humility-Deference, with a correlation of r = -.08, p = .010. This suggests that those who have stronger expectations about how younger workers should behave in the workplace in terms of Vitality-Innovation and Loyalty-Belonging agree more with the idea that having people over 60 employed is beneficial for the economy. Those with stronger expectations about how younger workers should behave in the workplace in terms of Humility-Deference tend to agree less with this idea.

Organization-directed variables

Endorsing prescriptive stereotypes against younger workers, as measured by WAYS, was investigated in relation to several organization-directed variables: job satisfaction and intention to remain in the position, as well as self-rated organizational citizenship behaviours and self-rated overall performance.

Job satisfaction

Endorsing all three WAYS stereotypes related positively and significantly to greater job satisfaction. This was most strongly the case for Loyalty-Belonging, with a correlation of r = .16, p < .001, and Vitality-Innovation dimensions, with a correlation of r = .17, p < .001, and less strongly for Humility-Deference, with a correlation of r

= .07, p = .038. This suggests that workers of all ages that accepted prescriptive stereotypes directed at younger workers, both positive and negative, reported greater job satisfaction than workers that did not endorse such stereotypes. This suggests that opposing youngist stereotypes, which may be present in many workplaces, leads to greater dissatisfaction with the job.

Intention to remain in the organization

The intention to remain in the current organization was measured by asking participants how long they would choose to remain in their organization (from 1 = one year or less, to 4= the rest of my career or until retirement). Intentions to remain in organization were strongly related to endorsing the Loyalty-Belonging and Vitality-Innovation dimensions of WAYS, with correlations of r = .15, p < .001 and r = .14, p < .001, respectively. The relationship with Humility-Deference was weaker and non-significant.

Performance

Extra-role performance

When it comes to self-reported citizenship behaviours (OCB-Is), in terms of voluntarily helping colleagues, there was a strong positive relationship with the Loyalty-Belonging and Vitality-dimensions of WAYS, with correlations of r = .30, p < .001 and r = .26, p < .001, respectively. As with job satisfaction and intentions to remain in the organization, the relationship with Humility-Deference was significant, yet less strong, with a correlation of r = .08, p = .012. This shows that endorsing prescriptive stereotypes regarding younger workers related positively to 'going above and beyond the call of duty'.

In-role performance

When it comes to overall self-rated performance, a similar pattern to OCBs was observed: better performance was reported by those endorsing Loyalty-Belonging and Vitality Innovation stereotypes, with correlations of r = .12, p < .001 and r = .19, p < .001, respectively. No significant relationship was observed with Humility-Deference.

It is important to note that, when it comes to both types of performance, it is likely that the observed correlation between endorsing WAYS and performance is a result of the former influencing the latter. The reason is that WAYS endorsement is likely to be more stable, as an enduring attitude, than performance rating, which is likely to vary more over time. It is also possible, however, that the observed relationship between WAYS and performance results from higher performing individuals having more stringent expectations regarding younger workers. Or it could be both. The way in which data was gathered for the representative sample study (in a survey, at one time point) is only able to establish significant relationships, rather than direction of causality.

Health and wellbeing outcomes

Finally, we explored the consequences of endorsing stereotypes towards younger workers on individual wellbeing, in terms of both mental health (self-evaluated from 1 = very poor to 6 = excellent), physical health (self-evaluated from 1 = very poor to 6 = excellent), and work-related stress (from 1 = work is never stressful to 6 = work is always stressful).

Before relating mental and physical health to WAYS, it is interesting to note that in terms of mental health a strong relationship was observed with age (F = 18.80, p < .001). In particular, younger workers had the lowest evaluations of their mental health (with an average of M = 4.09), followed by middle-aged workers (M = 4.35), with older workers giving the highest evaluations of their mental health (M = 4.68) (see Figure 5.15 below). However, when it comes to differences between age groups with regard to how they assess their physical health overall, the differences were less strong, though still statistically significant (F = 3.26, p = .039). Interestingly, older workers had the highest rating of overall physical health (with an average of M = 4.43), followed by younger workers (M = 4.24), and middle-aged workers (M = 4.21), showing its subjective nature.

Figure 5.15 Perceived mental and physical health by age groups
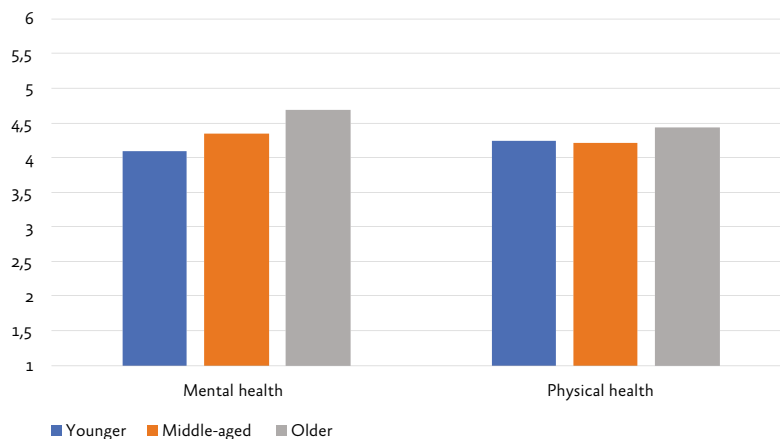
When it comes to relating WAYS stereotype endorsement to mental health and physical health, a similar pattern as the one found for in-role and extra-role performance is observed. Self-evaluations of mental health related positively to endorsement of Loyalty-Belonging and Vitality-Innovation dimensions of WAYS, with correlations of r = .16, p < .001 and r = .19, p < .001, respectively. That was also the case for physical health, with correlations of r = .07, p = .026 and r = .16, p < .001. Although unexpected, these findings remained highly significant even when age was controlled for, except in the case of the relation between Loyalty-Belonging endorsement and physical health, which became marginally significant. No relationship with either mental or physical health and Humility-Deference was observed. Interestingly, the relationships between stress and the three WAYS dimensions were not strong enough to reach statistical significance.

What are the workplace consequences of holding youngist stereotypes? — Experimental Study

An online experimental study (N = 213 U.S. workers) was conducted to investigate the effect of holding a prescriptive age stereotype against younger workers on reactions to the violation of that stereotype. An experimental methodology is well-suited to testing cause-and-effect relationships between constructs, as participants are presented with situations in which only the variables of interest have been varied across conditions. This allows the effect of the variables of interest, namely target age and stereotype violation, to be clearly shown, in our case for participants both low and high in stereotype endorsement. Important workplace outcomes are investigated, including judgments regarding the target, judgments regarding

stereotype violation, fairness evaluation regarding how the target is treated, and judgments about their work performance.

Participants read a scenario in which a fictional worker, John, was asked by his superior to conduct a task in a certain way. A 3 x 2 experimental design was used in which target age and target behaviour were both manipulated. To manipulate target age, one third of participants were told that John was younger (24), one third that he was middle-aged (42), and one third that he was older (62). To manipulate target behaviour, one half of participants were presented with a behaviour in which John violated a prescriptive age stereotype for younger workers, and one half were presented with a behaviour in which John adhered to the prescriptive age stereotype for younger workers. Participants were randomly assigned to one of these six conditions, such as, for instance, 'Younger worker/ stereotype violation' or 'Older worker/stereotype adherence'. In all conditions, and regardless of target age or behaviour, John received a negative assessment from his manager: poor performance evaluation and no bonus.

The stereotype that was manipulated related to one of the three WAYS dimensions: Humility-Deference. The Humility-Deference prescriptive stereotype is the expectation that younger workers in particular should be humble, accept their lower status, and not challenge the organizational hierarchy. In the stereotype adherence condition of the experiment, participants were told that John accepted and followed his superior's orders. In the stereotype violation condition, participants were told that John challenged and did not follow his superior's orders. Before reading the scenario, participants completed the WAYS measure and provided demographic information.

After reading the scenario, participants evaluated John (in terms of warmth, competence, morality and performance), and reacted to the negative outcomes John received, in terms of fairness perceptions, decision acceptance and retributive intentions.

Results of the experiment are organized as follows. First, we present the direct and combined effects of stereotype holding, target age, and target behaviour on judgments of warmth, competence, and morality. Next, we look at the effects of these variables on perceptions of fairness regarding how John was treated. Finally, we look at whether participants accept John's boss's decision (to evaluate him poorly and to withhold a bonus), how they would react to the decision, and how they would evaluate John's performance in the scenario.

For each of these outcomes, we first look at direct effects of holding/ not holding the Humility-Deference prescriptive stereotype (i.e., stereotype endorsement), of target age (i.e., John is younger, middle-aged, or older), and of John's violation/ adherence to the Humility-Deference stereotype (i.e., target behaviour). Then we look at how stereotype endorsement, target age, and target behaviour interact with each other to predict each outcome. When the interaction between all three variables is statistically significant, we provide the details of the three-way interaction. When no three-way interaction is found, we present results of any significant two-way interaction.

Effects on morality, competence and warmth judgments

The Stereotype Content Model (SCM; Fiske et al., 2002) proposes warmth and competence as two fundamental dimensions of social

evaluations. Additionally, morality was proposed by Ellemers and colleagues (2014) as a third dimension. These dimensions were measured by asking the participants how friendly (warm), confident (competent) and trustworthy (moral) John was, from 1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree. Research has shown that these dimensions influence affective reactions to individuals and groups. The effects of prescriptive stereotype endorsement, target age and target behaviour on each of these will be considered in turn, on morality, then competence, and finally warmth.

Morality

Effects of Humility-Deference stereotype on evaluations of morality

Endorsement of the Humility-Deference stereotype directly affected morality judgments regarding the target. Thus, in the overall sample (i.e., when all conditions were considered), participant endorsement of Humility-Deference influenced their morality judgments regarding the target, John. Specifically, higher stereotype endorsers evaluated the targets as less moral (B = -.21, p = .002)

Effects of target age on evaluations of morality

Whether John was described as younger, middle-aged, or older directly affected how moral he was seen to be (F = 5.48, p = .005). Specifically, older targets were regarded as significantly more moral (M = 4.43 on a scale of 6) than younger targets (M = 3.85). When John was specified as middle-aged (42), the evaluations fell in between (M = 4.12), and were statistically not significantly different from younger or older workers' (see Figure 5.16).

Figure 5.16 Evaluations of morality according to target age
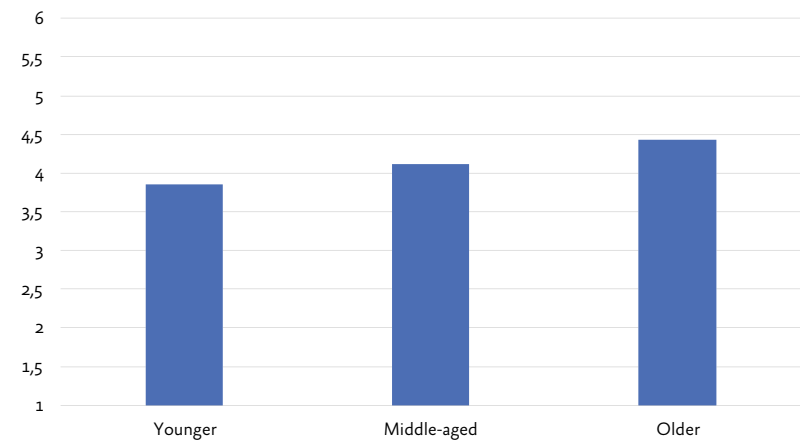
We also looked at whether evaluations of target morality were influenced not only by target age, but also by the age of the person evaluating. As shown in Figure 5.17, the older the participants, the more they differentiated between the three age groups in terms of morality evaluations (b = .03, p = .008). While younger workers hardly distinguished between age groups, middle-aged and, in particular, older participants distinguished between age groups in terms of their morality. For example, older participants evaluated older targets as most moral (M = 4.73), younger targets as least moral (M = 3.60), and middle-aged targets in between (M = 4.16).

Figure 5.17 Evaluations of morality according to target age and participant age

Younger participants · Middle-aged participants · Older participants

■ Younger target ■ Middle-aged target ■ Older target
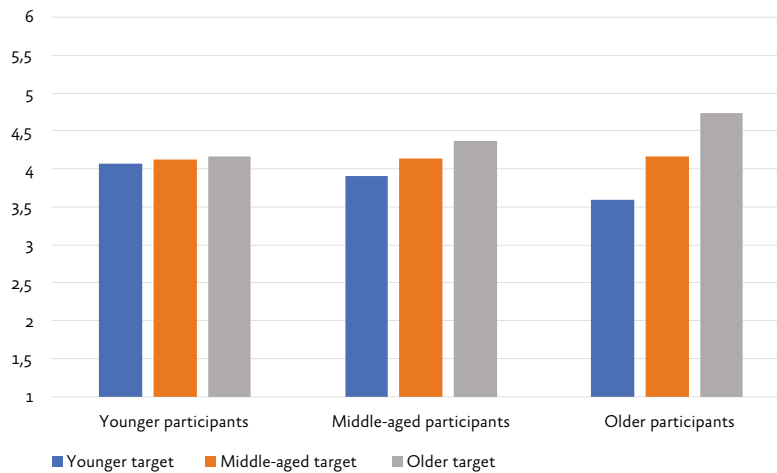
Effects of target behaviour on evaluations of morality

John's behaviour, in terms of whether he adhered to or violated the Humility-Deference stereotype, also directly affected how moral he was seen to be. When John violated the Humility-Deference stereotype, by challenging and not following his boss's orders, he was rated as less moral (M = 3.50) than when he accepted and followed the orders (M = 4.73).

Interactive effects of stereotype endorsement, target age, and target behaviour on morality

Violating the Humility-Deference stereotype negatively affected evaluations of morality for all target age groups. Figure 5.18 shows that the negative effect of stereotype violation on morality judgments

was not significantly different across the three age groups. However, the negative effect of stereotype violation on morality judgments becomes stronger for younger (versus middle-aged and older) workers, when endorsement of the Humility-Deference stereotype is taken into account. Thus, a significant three-way interaction was found (b = .54, p = .001).

Low and high endorsers of Humility-Deference differed in the extent to which their morality judgments were affected by the combination of target age and behaviour. High endorsers of these stereotypes (i.e., those who believe that younger workers should be humble, accept low status, and not challenge the hierarchy) more significantly reduced morality judgments for younger worker (versus older worker) in the stereotype violation condition, with middle-aged workers falling in between. In contrast, low endorsers of the Humility-Deference dimension (i.e., those who do not believe that younger workers should be humble, accept lower status, and not challenge the hierarchy) were not as affected in their morality judgments by stereotype violation, especially in the case of younger workers. This shows the important effect that WAYS stereotype endorsement has on reactions to stereotype violation by different age groups.

Figure 5.18 Evaluations of morality according to target age, target behaviour, and participant endorsement of WAYS Humility-Deference

Younger ■ Middle-aged ■ Older
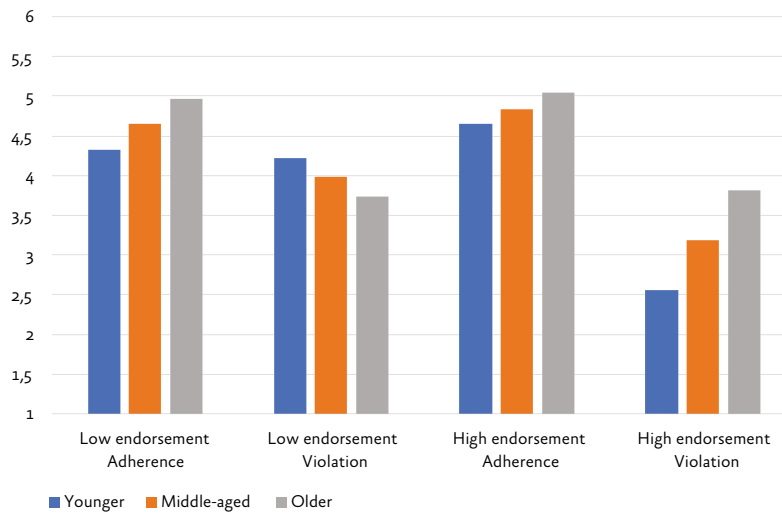
Competence

Effects of Humility-Deference stereotype on evaluations of competence

Endorsement of the Humility-Deference stereotype directly affected competence judgments regarding the target, John. Specifically, the overall results (i.e., when all age groups and behaviours are included) show that higher endorsers of the Humility-Deference prescriptive stereotype for younger workers evaluated the target as more competent (B = .20, p = .003).

Effects of target age on evaluations of competence

Whether John was described as younger, middle-aged, or older did not directly affect how competent he was seen to be. This did not differ between participant age groups.

Effects of target behaviour on evaluations of competence

As shown in Figure 5.19, when John violated the Humility-Deference stereotype, by challenging and not following his boss's orders, he was rated as more competent (M = 4.93) than when he accepted and followed the orders (M = 4.04; F = 39.38, p < .001).

Figure 5.19 Evaluations of competence according to target behaviour
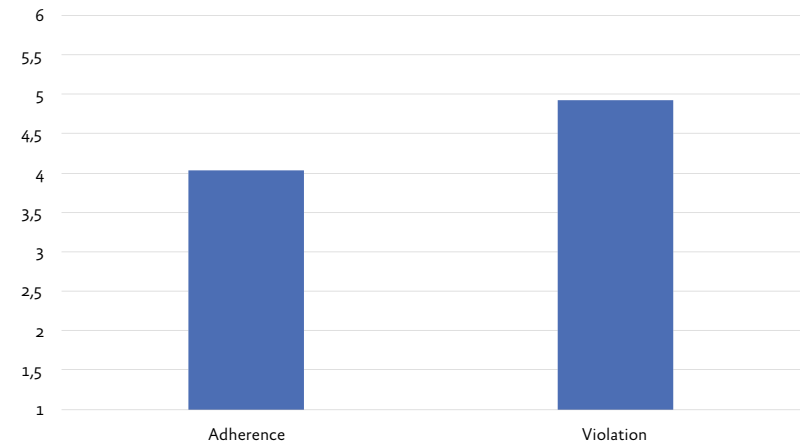
Interactive effects of stereotype endorsement, target age, and target behaviour on competence

As shown in Figure 5.20, the positive effect on judgments of competence of violating the Humility-Deference stereotype was not significantly different across age groups, nor did it differ between low and high endorsers of the stereotype.

Figure 5.20 Evaluations of competence according to target age, target behaviour, and participants endorsement of WAYS Humility-Deference
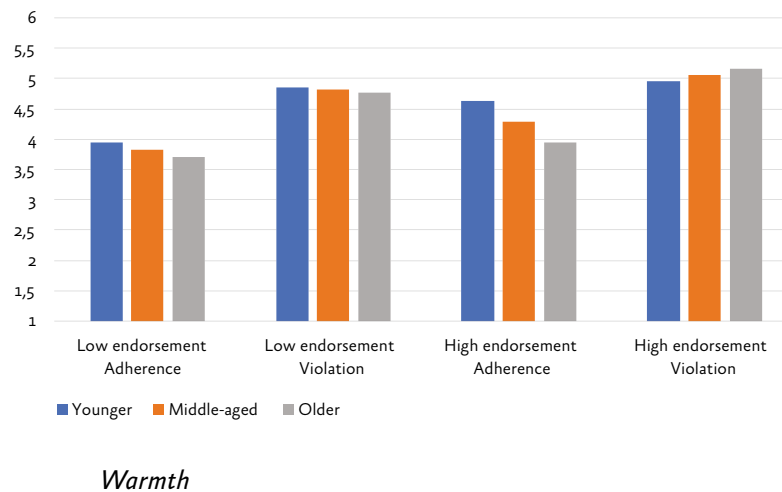
Warmth

Effects of Humility-Deference stereotype on evaluations of warmth

Endorsement of the Humility-Deference stereotype directly affected warmth judgments regarding the target, John. Specifically, higher endorsers of the Humility-Deference prescriptive stereotype for younger workers evaluated the target as less warm (B = -.23, p < .001).

Effects of target age on evaluations of warmth

Whether John was described as younger, middle-aged, or older did not directly affect how warm he was seen to be. This did not differ between participant age groups.

Effects of target behaviour on evaluations of warmth

When John violated the Humility-Deference stereotype, he was rated as less warm (M = 3.00) than when he accepted and followed the orders (M = 4.38).

Interactive effects of stereotype endorsement, target age, and target behaviour on warmth

Violating the Humility-Deference stereotype negatively affected evaluations of warmth for all target age groups. Figure 5.21 shows that the negative effect of stereotype violation on warmth judgments was not significantly different across the three age groups. However, the negative effect of stereotype violation on warmth judgments becomes stronger for younger (versus middle-aged and older) workers, when endorsement of the Humility-Deference stereotype is taken into account (b = .55, p = .001). As with morality, low and high endorsers of Humility-Deference differed in the extent to which their warmth judgments were affected by the combination of target age and behaviour. High versus low endorsers of the stereotype more significantly reduced warmth judgments for younger worker in the stereotype violation condition, with middle-aged workers falling in between. In contrast, low endorsers of the Humility-Deference stereotype were not as affected in their warmth judgments by stereotype violation, especially in the case of younger workers.

This result shows, again, the important effect that WAYS stereotype endorsement has on evaluations of warmth in reaction to stereotype violation by different age groups.

Evaluations of warmth according to target age, target behaviour, and participant endorsement of WAYS Humility-Deference
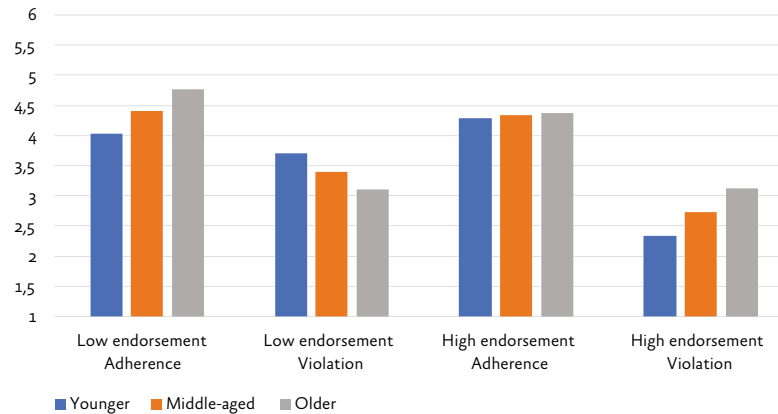
Effects on fairness perceptions and decision acceptance

We also investigated how fair it was regarded that the worker, John, had received a negative outcome and under what circumstances. The negative outcome in all cases was that John received a poor evaluation and, as a result, did not receive a bonus.

Participants were asked to evaluate the fairness of John's treatment in that scenario and in terms of the outcome he received. They evaluated what happened in terms of two types of fairness: overall justice and distributive justice. Overall justice refers to how fairly, overall, the target was treated by their organization. It was measured by asking the participants if John was treated well by his organization, if John could count on his organization to be fair, and if John's treatment was fair (1 = strongly disagree, 6 = totally agree). Distributive justice refers, specifically, to how equitable and merited the outcome was. It was measured by asking the participants if the outcome John received reflected his effort, was appropriate, reflected his contribution to the organization, and was justified (1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree). In addition, participants indicated the extent to which they would accept and support the decision made with regard to John's performance, from 1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree. The results for these outcomes are considered together below, as the pattern of results is similar across the fairness evaluations and decision acceptance.

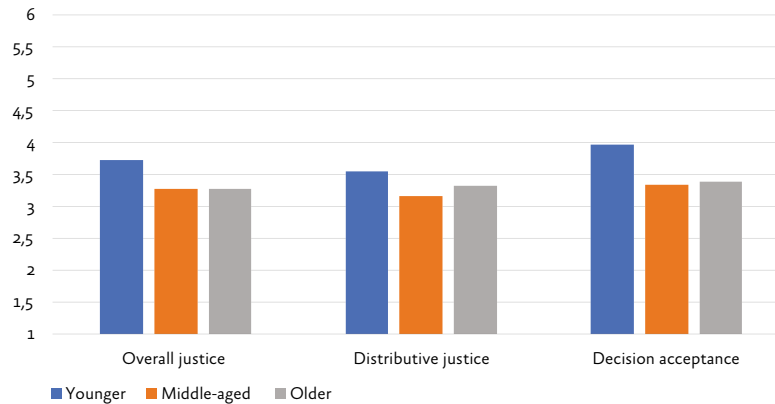*Effects of Humility-Deference stereotype on fairness evaluations and decision acceptance*

Endorsement of the Humility-Deference stereotype directly affected fairness evaluations and decision acceptance. Higher versus lower endorsers of the Humility-Deference stereotype viewed John's negative treatment by the organization as higher in overall justice (B = .28, p < .001) and the negative outcome John received as more distributively just (B = .28, p < .001). In addition, higher endorsers supported and accepted the negative decision regarding John more than lower endorsers of Humility-Deference did (B = .31, p <. 001).

Effects of target age on fairness evaluations and decision acceptance

Whether John was described as younger, middle-aged or older did not directly affect evaluations of overall justice or distributive justice.

The effect of target age was marginally significant for decision acceptance (F = 2.63, p = .062) (see Figure 5.22).
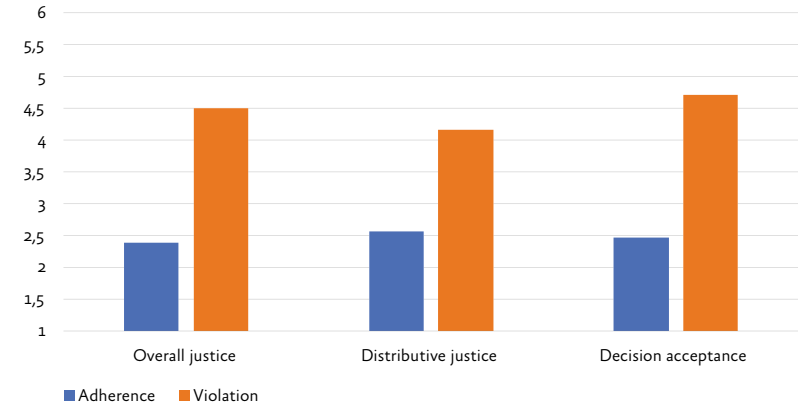
Figure 5.22 Evaluations of overall justice, distributive justice, and decision acceptance according to target age

Effects of target behaviour on fairness evaluations and decision acceptance

Whether the target adhered to or violated the Humility-Deference stereotype directly affected fairness evaluations and decision acceptance. When the target violates the stereotype, the organization is seen as having acted more fairly (M = 4.50 versus M = 2.39, F = 133.39, p < .001), the negative outcome for John is regarded as fairer (M = 4.16 versus M = 2.56; F = 67.52, p < .001), and the decision is accepted and more supported (M = 4.71 versus M = 2.46; F = 132.59, p < .001) than when the target adheres to the stereotype (see Figure 5.23).

Figure 5.23 Evaluations of overall justice, distributive justice, and decision acceptance according to target behaviour


Interactive effects of stereotype endorsement, target age, and target behaviour on fairness evaluations and decision acceptance

The three-way interaction among target age, target behaviour and endorsement of Humility-Deference stereotype was not statistically significant. Therefore, the two-way interactions among the three variables were explored to see whether the effects of one were moderated by either of the other two variables.

Significant interactions were found between Humility-Deference stereotype endorsement and target age. As shown in Figure 5.24, low stereotype endorsers were not significantly influenced by target age when evaluating overall justice, distributive justice, or decision acceptance. In contrast, high endorsers of the stereotype evaluated overall justice (M = 4.38), distributive justice (M = 4.15), and decision

acceptance as far higher (M = 4.66) when John was presented as a younger, versus middle-aged, or especially older worker. This result also shows the important effect that WAYS stereotype endorsement has on decision acceptance and evaluations of fairness when workers of different age groups received a negative outcome from their organization.

Figure 5.24 Evaluations of overall justice, distributive justice, and decision acceptance according to target age and participant endorsement of WAYS Humility-Deference
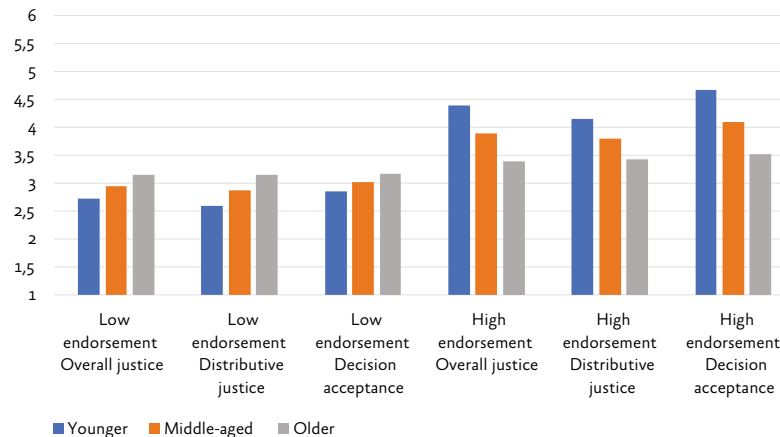
Effects on target performance evaluation and retributive intentions toward organization

Participants were also asked to evaluate John's performance and to indicate whether they would support actions against the organization, as retribution for John's treatment. For performance, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which John's performance in the scenario could be considered positive, from 1 = very negative to 6 = very positive. For retributive actions against the organization, respondents were asked to imagine themselves as John's coworker and to indicate, from 1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree, the extent to which they would support actions against the organization (for example, writing a complaint letter) and against John's supervisor (for example, that he be reprimanded for how he treated John). The results for target performance evaluation and retributive intentions toward the organization and supervisor are considered together below, as the pattern of results is similar.
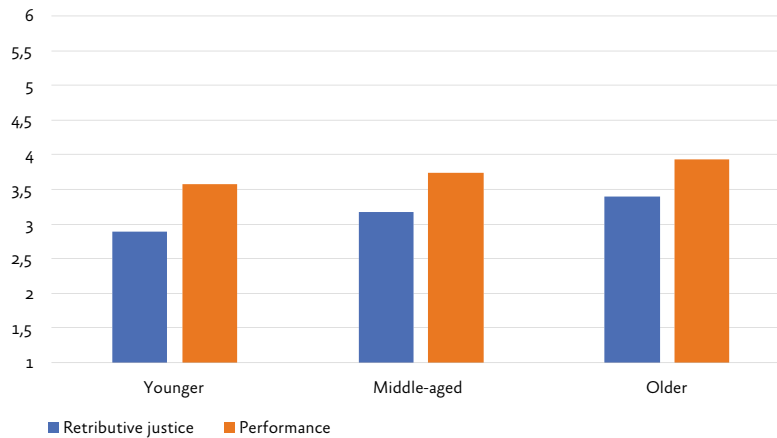
Effects of Humility-Deference stereotype on performance evaluation and retributive intentions

Endorsement of the Humility-Deference stereotype directly affected target performance evaluation and retributive intentions. High endorsers of the Humility-Deference stereotype evaluated John's performance less highly than low endorsers of the stereotype did (B = -.21, p = .002). High stereotype endorsers also indicated less strong support for actions against the organization and John's manager than low stereotype endorsers did (B = -.30, p < .001).

Effects of target age on performance evaluation and retributive intentions

Whether John was described as younger, middle-aged, or older did not directly affect how John's performance was evaluated or the extent to which participants supported actions against John's organization or supervisor (see Figure 5.25).
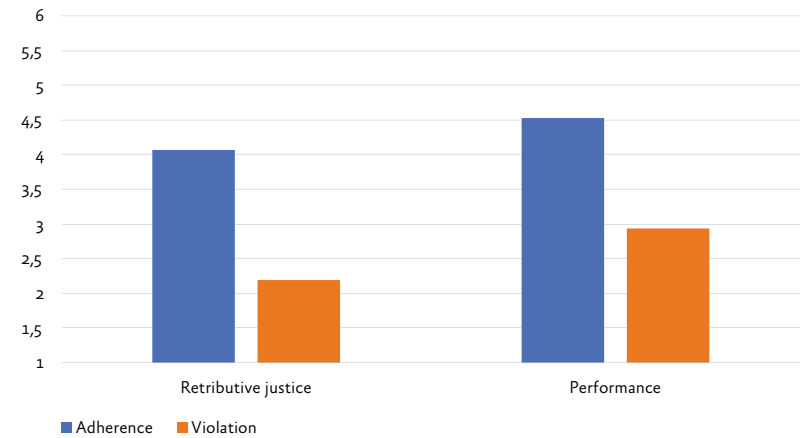
Figure 5.25 Evaluations of retributive justice and performance according to target age

Effects of target behaviour on performance evaluation and retributive intentions

**Figure 5.26** Evaluations of retributive justice and performance according to target behaviour

Interactive effects of stereotype endorsement, target age, and target behaviour on retributive justice and performance evaluations

Whether the target adhered to or violated the Humility-Deference stereotype directly affected target performance evaluation and retributive intentions. John's performance was rated as more positive when he adhered to the Humility-Deference stereotype (M = 4.52) than when he violated the stereotype (M = 2.94). Retributive intentions, in terms of support for actions against John's organization and supervisor were higher when John adhered to the Humility-Deference stereotype (M = 4.07) than when he violated the stereotype (M = 2.19) (see Figure 5.26).

The three-way interaction predicting retributive intentions among target age, target behaviour and endorsement of Humility-Deference stereotype was not statistically significant. Therefore, the two-way interactions among the three variables were explored to see whether the effects of one on retributive intentions were moderated by either of the other two variables.

A significant interaction was found between Humility-Deference stereotype endorsement and target age in predicting retributive intentions (b = .38, p = .009). As shown in Figure 5.27, low Humility-Deference stereotype endorsers were not significantly influenced by target age when indicating whether they would support action against John's organization or manager. In contrast, high Humility-

Deference endorsers of the stereotype had far higher retributive intentions (i.e., they would support action against John's organization and manager) when the target was middle-aged, or especially older, versus when the target was younger. As expected, Humility-Deference stereotype endorsement related positively to more support for middle-aged and older workers who challenged authority, versus younger workers who challenged authority, as only in the latter case would the behaviour be seen as violating a prescriptive age stereotype. This shows that WAYS stereotype endorsement can impact support for actions against an organization when workers of different age groups received a negative outcome from their manager.

Figure 5.27 **Evaluations of retributive justice according to target age and participant endorsement of WAYS Humility-Deference**
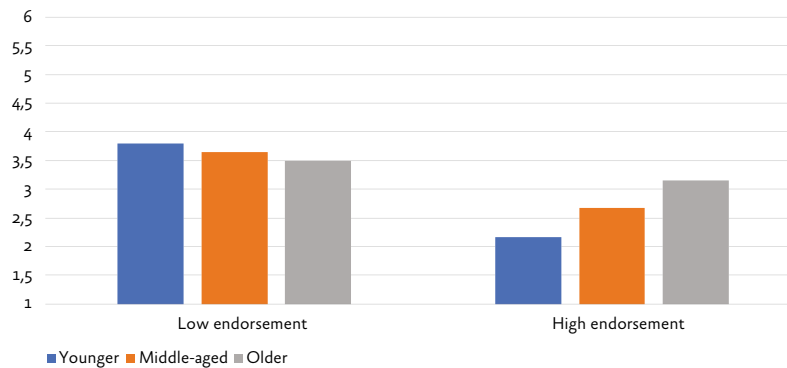

A significant three-way interaction between target age, target behaviour, and endorsement of Humility-Deference stereotypes predicted how John's performance was evaluated. For both high and low stereotype endorsers, John's performance was rated lower when he violated the Humility-Deference stereotype (b = .38, p = .048).

However, the extent to which John's performance evaluations were negatively affected by stereotype violation for different age groups depended on the level of stereotype endorsement.

High endorsers of the stereotype (i.e., those who believe that younger workers should be humble, accept low status, and not challenge the hierarchy) more significantly reduced performance evaluations for stereotype violation, and this was especially the case for younger workers (versus older workers), with middle-aged workers falling in between. In contrast, low endorsers of the Humility-Deference stereotype (i.e., those who do not believe that younger workers should be humble, accept low status, and not challenge the hierarchy) were not as affected in their performance evaluations by stereotype violation, and tended to more strongly reduce performance evaluations for middle-aged and especially older workers, in response to violating the Humility-Deference stereotype. This shows the important effect that WAYS stereotype endorsement has on performance evaluations of different age groups, even in the case of identical behaviour (see Figure 5.28).

Figure 5.28 Evaluations of target performance according to target age, target behaviour, and participant endorsement of WAYS Humility-Deference
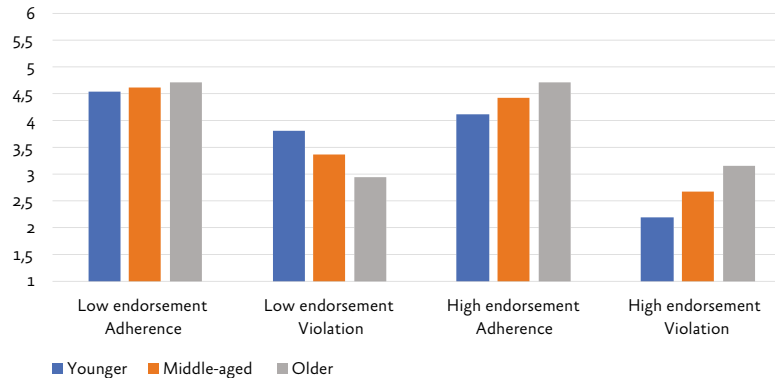
5.3. Summary

In Chapter 5, we presented findings of two studies. In the first study — a prevalence study with a representative sample of 1,002 Portuguese workers — predictors and consequences of ageism against both older and younger workers were investigated. In the second study — an online experiment in which participants responded to a workplace scenario — the causal effects of target age and stereotype violation were examined, while also taking into account the effects of participants' endorsement of a youngist stereotype (namely, the Humility-Deference dimension of WAYS). As expected, the findings of the first study show that ageism towards older and younger workers is predicted by both individual socio-demographic variables and organizational contextual variables. The results of both studies also show important consequences of holding ageist beliefs for individual workers, for their workplace attitudes and reactions, and for their organizations. These are summarized below.

Representative sample — Predictors and consequences of ageism towards older workers

A representative sample of Portuguese workers reported ageist attitudes towards older workers, as measured by the succession belief (i.e., that older workers should make room for younger workers), general negative attitudes towards older workers, perceptions of older workers' generosity, and beliefs about the inclusion of older workers in the workforce. While succession beliefs, beliefs regarding older workers' generosity, and beliefs regarding inclusion of older workers in the economy were all endorsed at a moderate level by the Portuguese population, general negative attitudes towards older workers were less strongly endorsed. The negative attitudes measured related to older worker adaptability, value of contribution, conscientiousness, and performance.

Endorsing ageist beliefs towards older workers was predicted by several individual socio-demographic variables.

- Age was an important predictor, with succession beliefs and overall negative attitudes towards older workers being less endorsed as respondent age increased. Positively valenced beliefs regarding the inclusion of older workers in the workforce and older workers' generosity and social capital were more endorsed as age increased.

- Overall, negative attitudes towards older workers were more likely to be endorsed by men.

- Positive attitudes regarding older workers' generosity and social capital was less strong among those with a university degree.

- Individuals with higher socio-economic status were more likely to agree that older workers should be included in the workforce.

- More left/liberal views on social issues were related to stronger positive beliefs regarding older workers' generosity and social capital.

- Beliefs regarding the inclusion of older workers in the workforce — but not other age-related beliefs — varied between the various regions of Portugal, with the Lisbon Metropolitan Area and the South regions more likely to endorse inclusion than the Islands.

Several organization-related variables also related to endorsing positive and negative stereotypes towards older workers.

- People in a managerial position were more likely to agree that older workers should be included in the workforce and to endorse positive beliefs regarding older workers' generosity and social capital.

- Once age was taken into account, professional experience only predicted positive beliefs regarding older workers' generosity and social capital.

- Size of the organization had no significant effect on endorsement of any of the measures used to assess ageism towards older workers.

- Positive beliefs regarding older workers' generosity and social capital were more strongly endorsed by workers in modern and flexible (versus traditional and rigid) organizations.

- The only significant relationship between organization type and ageism towards older workers was that succession beliefs were less endorsed by workers in public administration than by those in private enterprises.

Endorsement of ageism towards older workers was also related to several important workplace outcomes, including the relationship between different age groups, job satisfaction, and performance, as well as individual wellbeing.

- While frequency of contact with older workers did not relate to ageism, people who reported higher quality workplace contact with older workers more strongly endorsed the inclusion of older workers into the workforce and were more likely to believe in older workers' generosity. At the same time, they endorsed succession beliefs and overall negative attitudes towards older workers less strongly.

- Higher endorsement of age-inclusive HR-practices related to stronger support for older worker participation in the workforce and lower scores on negative attitudes towards older workers.

- Positive beliefs about older workers, in terms of their inclusion in the workforce and their generosity and social capital, predicted greater job satisfaction.

- Respondents' intentions to remain in their current organization were negatively predicted by negative beliefs and attitudes (succession beliefs and overall negative attitudes toward older workers), and positively predicted by positive beliefs regarding older workers' generosity and social capital.

- Self-rated overall performance was not predicted by any of the ageism measures. Self-reported OCB-Is were predicted by overall negative attitudes towards older workers and one positive belief (regarding older workers' generosity and social capital).

Finally, we can see that individual wellbeing was significantly related to endorsing ageism towards older workers.

- Greater endorsement of the succession belief and of negative attitudes towards older workers related to poorer mental health.

- Greater endorsement of positive beliefs about older workers' generosity and social capital related to better mental health.

- Greater endorsement of the inclusion of older workers in the workforce related to better mental and physical health.

Representative sample — Predictors and consequences of youngist stereotype endorsement

Prescriptive stereotypes against younger workers, as measured by the three dimensions of the WAYS scale, were endorsed at moderate-to-high levels by a representative Portuguese sample. Loyalty-Belonging was most strongly endorsed, followed by Vitality-Innovation, and Humility-Deference was the least endorsed.

Endorsing prescriptive stereotypes against younger workers was predicted by several socio-demographic variables.

- WAYS stereotypes were most endorsed by older workers, and least endorsed by younger workers.

- University educated workers endorsed WAYS stereotypes less than workers with secondary education or less.

- More right/conservative views regarding economic and especially social issues predicted endorsement of all three WAYS dimensions.

- Neither sex, gender nor socio-economic status predicted stereotype endorsement towards younger workers.

- Differences between regions were small and only significant for Loyalty-Belonging, which was most endorsed in the Centre, least in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area, and at intermediate and approximately equal levels in the North, the South, and the Islands.

Whether workers in Portugal endorsed prescriptive stereotypes against younger workers was also predicted by organizational context.

- Having a managerial position was associated with a higher endorsement of the Vitality-Innovation stereotype.

- Greater professional experience was related to greater endorsement of all three WAYS dimensions but did not predict the endorsement of the Vitality-Innovation stereotype once age was controlled for.

- Neither size of the organization nor the sector it operated in had any effect on endorsing WAYS stereotypes.

- Individuals that worked for organizations with a culture that they regarded as more flexible (versus rigid) and more modern (versus traditional) were more likely to endorse Loyalty-Belonging and Vitality-Innovation stereotypes regarding younger workers.

Endorsing prescriptive stereotypes against younger workers was also related to several workplace consequences, as well as individual wellbeing.

- Workers that endorsed the Loyalty-Belonging and Vitality-Innovation dimensions of WAYS reported higher quality contact with younger workers.

- Endorsing age-inclusive HR-practices was predicted by higher scores on all three WAYS dimensions.

- Workers with high endorsement of the Humility-Deference dimension were less likely to perceive interpersonal conflict in their workplace.

- Job satisfaction, intention to remain in the organization, self-reported citizenship behaviours toward colleagues, and self-reported performance were all higher for workers that endorsed the Loyalty-Belonging and Vitality-Innovation dimensions of WAYS.

- Self-reported mental and physical health were higher for workers that endorsed the Loyalty-Belonging and Vitality-Innovation dimensions of WAYS.

Experimental study — Effects of stereotype endorsement, target age, and stereotype violation

An experimental study was conducted to further examine the role of endorsing youngist stereotypes in the context of responding to the violation of a youngist stereotype for which a target worker is punished. Consequences were assessed in terms of how the target worker is perceived (competence, morality and warmth, and performance evaluation) and whether the punitive consequences are considered fair (in terms of overall justice perception, distributive justice, punitive decision acceptance and retributive intentions). As the experimental study was designed to examine cause and effect relations, the target workers age (younger/middle-aged/older) and behaviour (stereotype adherence/violation) in the scenario were manipulated. The stereotype that was adhered to or violated was Humility-Deference, capturing expectations that younger workers should respect the hierarchy and show humility. Participants indicated their endorsement of the Humility-Deference stereotype and then responded to the scenario in which a worker either adhered to or violated the Humility-Deference stereotype.

The results largely confirmed expectations regarding how different variables — who acted (in terms of target age), how they acted (in terms of target behaviour), and who judged the target behaviour (in terms of stereotype endorsement) — would affect the outcomes of interest directly and indirectly. These included how participants viewed the target (John), evaluated his performance, accepted and regarded as fair the negative outcome John received, and whether they expressed retributive intentions toward John's manager.

Direct effects of target age and target behaviour

- Older targets were regarded as significantly more moral than younger targets. This was especially the case for older participants. Competence and warmth were not affected.

- Target age did not directly affect evaluations of overall or distributive fairness, retributive intentions toward the organization, or target performance evaluation.

- The target was rated as less moral, less warm, and more competent when he violated the Humility-Deference stereotype than when he followed it.

- When the target violated the Humility-Deference stereotype, the negative outcome received was regarded as more acceptable and fairer, and John's performance was rated less highly.

Direct effects of WAYS stereotype endorsement

- Higher stereotype endorsers evaluated the targets as less moral and more competent. Warmth judgments were not affected.

- Higher stereotype endorsers viewed John's negative treatment as fairer and accepted the negative decision more strongly than lower endorsers of Humility-Deference.

- Higher stereotype endorsers gave John's performance a lower score and indicated less strong support for actions against John's organization and manager.

Interactive effects of target age, target behaviour, and WAYS stereotype endorsement

- High endorsers (versus low endorsers) of the Humility-Deference stereotype tended to punish older workers less than younger workers for stereotype violation. This was shown in terms of judgments of morality and warmth, performance evaluation, and acceptance of punishment as fair.

These results show the important effects that WAYS stereotype endorsement has on important workplace outcomes, including person judgments and acceptance of organizational decisions in response to age-based stereotype violation.

Chapter 6
Ageism at Work from the Perspective of Targets

When it was time to announce who would take over the position, I was called into the office and told another worker got the job. When I asked why, I was told that he was older and would be more likely to be respected by employees and management alike because of his age.

The testimony above from a research participant highlights the perspective of a younger worker who feels targeted by ageism. In this chapter, we focus on the targets of ageism and address two research questions. First, what characteristics predispose an individual to feel targeted by ageist stereotypes and/or discrimination? We consider possible effects of age, gender, education, geographic region, and size of hometown, as well as socio-economic status. We also investigate the effect of organizational characteristics, professional experience, and managerial role on being targeted with ageist attitudes and stereotypes. Second, how does being targeted with ageist attitudes and stereotypes relate to workplace perceptions, attitudes, and behaviours, as well as individual wellbeing?

To address these research questions, two online studies were conducted. The first was an online survey conducted with the same representative sample of 1,002 Portuguese workers that was used to look at predictors and consequences of holding ageist beliefs in Chapter 5. The sample was stratified by age, gender, and geographic location, so that the proportions for each mirrored the Portuguese population. The second study consisted of two surveys. The first focused on older workers and was conducted with 150 Portuguese adults aged 50 to 67 years old. This survey included a single data collection time-point and investigated effects and consequences of experiencing an ageist prescriptive stereotype targeting older workers. The second survey focused on younger workers and was conducted with 362 Portuguese workers aged between 19 and 30 years old. This included a data collection with two time-points and investigated predictors and effects of experiencing WAYS prescriptive stereotypes regarding younger workers.

It is worth noting that, in discussing the results, we indicate as (statistically) significant those results that would be expected to be observed in the entire population with 95 percent or greater confidence. Less frequently, we refer to an observed result as marginally significant when there is only 90 percent confidence that it would be observed in the actual population. For more details regarding the samples and methodologies of both studies, see Chapter 4.

First, we will present a brief overview of some prior findings regarding predictors and consequences of being targeted with ageist stereotypes, some from non-age domains. Next, we present findings related to the older workers survey, and then findings regarding the younger worker survey.

6.1. Predictors and consequences of being targeted with ageism

Research from different domains shows negative effects of being targeted with discrimination, defined as unfair or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, on the grounds of group membership to a particular ethnicity, gender, age or sexual orientation (APA, 2022). Ageism is a prevalent form of discrimination that can affect different age groups and take varied forms. Data from the European Social Survey (ESS; Abrams et al., 2011) showed that about 25% of respondents across all age groups and all 28 countries reported having experienced blatant forms of age-related discrimination (e.g., having been abused or denied services). The percentage is even higher (39%) when subtle forms of age-related discrimination are considered (e.g., being ignored or patronized), especially for younger workers. The workplace is not an exception in this regard, with pernicious effects of being targeted with discrimination found throughout the entire work life cycle (WHO, 2021). However, and in spite of evidence that both younger and older workers experience high levels of age discrimination (e.g., Bratt et al., 2018; 2020; Marchiondo et al.,2016), in a recent scoping review on ageism against general younger populations conducted by de la Fuente-Núñez and colleagues (2021), only 5% of the studies included (N = 263) focused on the consequences of youngism.

It is important to note that being discriminated against might not affect all people/groups in the same way. Research has shown, for example, that the meaning and consequences of perceived discrimination can depend on whether the social position of one's group is advantaged or disadvantaged (Schmitt & Branscombe, 2002). Disadvantaged refers to 'individuals, families, or communities deprived of equal access to society's resources, especially the necessities of life or the advantages of education and employment' (APA, 2024). For members of privileged groups, attributions to prejudice tend to be more limited, temporary, and localized. For members of disadvantaged groups, attributions to prejudice are likely to be internal, stable, uncontrollable, and convey widespread exclusion and devaluation of one's group. Consequences can thus be more far-reaching, including in terms of the harmful impact on their psychological wellbeing (Schmitt & Branscombe, 2002). When it comes to age-related discrimination, both younger and older workers are disadvantaged groups that are likely to experience more impact from age-based discrimination than middle-aged workers.

Demographic and contextual predictors of being targeted with ageism

The fact that older workers are discriminated against because of their age is well-established in the research. For example, 18 out of 43 papers included in Harris and colleagues' (2018) scoping review of ageism toward older workers described negative intentions towards older workers, in terms of recruitment/hiring, retirement, training, general treatment, and retention. These negative intentions would translate, for example, into situations where the older the applicant, the lower the intentions to hire him/her, and where access to training opportunities was more limited for older workers. Being targeted with ageism might also be associated with individual characteristics other than age, including gender, education, professional experience

and role, and social and economic status, as well as with characteristics of the organization and work context.

Other demographic factors may intersect with age, leading to a heightened vulnerability of being targeted with discrimination. This has been referred to as the double or multiple jeopardy hypothesis and was introduced within the intersectionality framework in feminist studies, in order to explain the unique experiences of Black women because of different overlapping social identities (Bowleg, 2008; King, 1988). Research examining combinations of demographic factors on perceived ageism is still very scarce. However, a recent study corroborates the multiple jeopardy idea in relation to perceiving discrimination in general (based on an overall score of perceived ageism, sexism and racism): older men and women reported the lowest rates of general discrimination, while ethnic minorities, and especially ethnic minority women, showed the highest rates of perceived general discrimination (Vauclair & Rudnev, 2023). Interestingly, Duncan and Loretto (2004) showed that men reported greater age discrimination than women in the 35–44 age group, whereas women over 45 reported more age discrimination than men. Research on gendered ageism, in terms of the aforementioned double jeopardy leading to increased vulnerability, has also shown a faster decline in the status of older women compared to older men (e.g., Barrett & Naiman-Sessions, 2016).

Rippon and colleagues (2014) found that perceived age discrimination was associated with older age, higher education, lower levels of household wealth and being retired or not in employment. Andreoletti and Lachman (2004) further found that being subjected to stereotypical information about memory and age negatively impact memory performance of younger populations with lower education. Hence, examining demographic factors associated with perceived ageism, against both younger and older workers, may provide important insights regarding who is most vulnerable to being targeted.

Whether workers are targeted with ageist stereotypes might also be associated with their professional context. It may be the case, for example, that ageism against older workers is more prevalent in industries with younger and more educated workforces, such as the high-tech industry. In contrast, in industries with older and less educated workforces, such as manufacturing or agriculture, ageism against younger workers might be more prevalent. In addition, firms that have more traditional versus modern cultures may more strongly endorse expectations that younger workers respect hierarchy (the Humility-Deference stereotype) and less strongly endorse expectations that older workers step back and hand over roles (the succession stereotype). It is also possible that regions with less diversity in their workforce, not only in terms of age but also in terms of ethnicity, will also differ in their treatment of minority or disadvantaged groups in the workforce. These are examples of how aspects of the work context may influence the presence of ageism and reactions to it in the workplace, and they should therefore be investigated.

Workplace consequences of being targeted with ageism

In terms of ageism, its negative outcomes in the workplace have been well documented (Lagacé et al., 2019). More concretely, being

targeted with workplace ageism might impact attitudes toward the job and the organization, as well as in-role and extra-role performance. Research relating to these is briefly examined below.

Satisfaction and performance-related variables

Ageism has been discussed as a major obstacle to the full utilization and retention of older workers (e.g., Ghosheh et al., 2006; Shore & Goldberg, 2004). Harris and colleagues (2018) found that ageism against older workers can erode their self-confidence and willingness to pursue employment opportunities as a result of internalized ageism. In a similar vein, the WHO (2021) also points to the fact that those being targeted with ageism might retire prematurely. This is especially important when considering that (high performing) individuals who voluntarily leave an organization represent a loss and a significant cost to the organization (Dalton et al., 1981).

Yet, the impact of age-related discrimination is felt not only by older workers, but also by younger workers. In fact, as pointed out by de la Fuente-Núñez and colleagues (2021), age bias against younger people manifests itself especially in the workplace. Younger workers report not feeling valued, receiving belittling comments, being generally perceived as incompetent, and receiving fewer development opportunities (Raymer et al., 2017), as well as receiving lower payments and having access to fewer benefits (WHO, 2021). And these impacts seem to particularly affect those aged 30 and below, as they report transversal workplace age-related discrimination, from the recruitment process, through promotions, to the lay-off process (Snape & Redman, 2003). Moreover, it has also been shown that perceived youngism negatively impacts job satisfaction

and work engagement (Jelenko, 2020), satisfaction with coworkers, and affective organizational commitment (de la Fuente-Núñez et al., 2021; Rabl & Triana, 2013; Snape & Redman, 2003), and contributes to the disruption of the work-life balance (Rabl & Kühlmann, 2009). These examples suggest that younger workers might also not achieve their full potential at work because of age-based biases.

Research on stereotype threat, the belief that one may be targeted with demeaning stereotypes, provides further evidence regarding the detrimental impact of being targeted with '-isms'. The work of Lamont and colleagues (2015), for example, showed that, just as for gender and ethnicity, age-based stereotype threat can lead to negative consequences, namely for older workers who see their (memory and cognitive) performance compromised as a result of feeling threatened by age-related stereotypes. Negative ageing perceptions (both implicit and explicit) can harm not only older individuals' cognitive and physical functioning (Lamont et al., 2015), but also their health (e.g., Levy, 2009). Von Hippel and colleagues (2013) found that, for older workers, feelings of stereotype threat related to poorer mental health, as well as more negative job attitudes, which in turn related to intentions to resign and possibly retire.

Finally, it is also worth mentioning the work on stereotype boost (e.g., Shih et al., 2012), which provides a more nuanced perspective on the effects of stereotypes, namely that being targeted with positive stereotypes can, in some circumstances, actually result in a boost in performance. This happens when the activation of an identity associated with positive stereotypes leads to confidence and expectations of success, which, in turn, would facilitate actual performance (e.g., Baumeister et al., 1985). This idea is also in line

with research suggesting that stressful events can be appraised as challenges, rather than threats (e.g., Skinner & Brewer, 2002). Similarly, in their scoping review, de la Fuente-Núñez and colleagues (2021) found that, when under the control of powerful others, being subjected to negative age-relevant stereotypes can also positively impact younger workers' performance. Thus, according to WHO's report (2021), the impact of ageism on performance seems to be inconsistent and is not clearly understood, thus meriting further investigation.

Such a perspective should be taken with caution, however, given the evidence that even positive stereotypes can lead to negative outcomes (e.g., Czopp et al., 2015). While negative stereotypes can lead to decreased performance as a result of a fear of confirming the stereotype, in line with stereotype threat research, positive stereotypes can lead to decreased performance as a result of a fear of not living up to the expectation created by the positive stereotype (e.g., Cheryan & Bodenhausen, 2000; Czopp et al., 2015). For example, Cheryan and Bodenhausen (2000) found that when the group membership (i.e., being Asian-American) associated with the positively stereotyped domain (i.e., math-related abilities) was salient, participants experienced significantly impaired math-related performance. This suggests that positive stereotypes — at least when public expectations of success are salient — might also adversely affect performance in the stereotyped domain, as a result of the considerable burden they might place on group members.

Lagacé and colleagues (2019) found not only that workplace ageism significantly lowers feelings of work satisfaction, but also that a healthy intergenerational workplace climate directly impacts older workers' level of satisfaction. It therefore becomes important to also examine how workplace conflict and contact among age groups and organizational age-inclusive HR policies are related to perceptions of and reactions to ageism.

Health and wellbeing consequences of being targeted with ageism

There is evidence that people's health and wellbeing, not to mention their human rights, can be severely impacted when experiencing ageism (WHO, 2021). Negative personal outcomes may include effects on mental and physical health. Research relating to these is briefly overviewed below.

As stated by APA (2022), discrimination is a public health issue, as research has found that perceived discrimination can lead to a myriad of stress-related emotional, physical, and behavioural changes. Stress-related emotional responses (e.g., distress, sadness and anger) can lead to both an increase in health-harmful behaviours (such as the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other substances) and a decrease in health-promoting activities, such as sleep and physical activity. Furthermore, discrimination can be damaging even if one has not been overtly targeted with bias: simply being a member of a group that is often discriminated against, such as an ethnic minority, can be stressful, with anticipation of discrimination contributing to chronic stress.

More concretely, and in the case of older people, evidence shows that experiences of ageism are related to poorer physical and mental health, increased social isolation and loneliness, greater financial insecurity,

decreased quality of life and even premature death (WHO, 2021). Along the same lines, Ayalon and colleagues' (2019) work showed that ageism against older adults is related to higher levels of stress, anxiety and depression, as well as lower life satisfaction. More evidence is provided by the systematic review conducted by Kang and Kim (2022): in all papers included in the analysis (N = 13), psychological wellbeing related negatively to ageism; and in the studies that included life satisfaction (N = 5), increased ageism was associated with lower life satisfaction. In a study of 2,035 U.S. adults aged 50 to 80 years, Allen and colleagues (2022) found that everyday ageism was associated with several indicators of poor physical and mental health, including chronic health conditions and depressive symptoms. Findings from Chang and colleagues' (2020) systematic review further revealed the far-reaching impact of ageism among older adults. Ageism led to significantly worse health outcomes in 95.5% of the studies and 74.0% of the ageism-health associations examined. Ageism effects were reported in all 45 countries and 11 health domains studied, with their prevalence increasing over the 25-year study period.

While the evidence is quite conclusive that ageism is harmful to older people's wellbeing, evidence of the impact of ageism on younger people is much scarcer and has produced inconsistent findings (WHO, 2021). In their scoping review on ageism against younger populations, de la Fuente-Núñez and colleagues (2021) found that the relation between ageism and wellbeing was not clear: while one study showed that discrimination does not harm wellbeing, other studies revealed that it does negatively impact subjective wellbeing, and is especially harmful to those who could be categorized as middle-aged. Furthermore, while the authors found that 'isolated' discrimination

was not associated with mental health challenges for younger individuals, facing multiple '-isms' (based on age, skin colour, ethnicity, and class) was associated with a higher incidence of common mental disorders. This is also corroborated by a recent cross-national study with data from the European region showing that perceiving multiple forms of discrimination is related to worse subjective health outcomes (Vauclair & Rudnev, 2023).

6.2. Empirical findings regarding targets of age stereotypes

Targets of age stereotypes — Representative sample study

The Workplace Age Discrimination Scale (WADS)

In the representative sample study of 1,002 Portuguese workers (see Chapter 4 for further details of the sample), participants completed the Workplace Age Discrimination Scale (WADS, Marchiondo et al., 2016). WADS (Marchiondo et al., 2016) is composed of nine items that measure one's personal experiences of age discrimination in the workplace (see Chapter 4 for further details). As WADS asks workers of any age about their experiences of age-based discrimination, it can be applied across age groups, thus allowing perceptions of age-based discrimination to be compared across age groups. Given that our focus in this study is on better understanding how experiencing age-based discrimination affects important

workplace outcomes, in many of the findings presented below we combine responses from workers across the age spectrum.

In general, Portuguese workers do not feel very discriminated against in the workplace because of their age. Using a six-point scale where 1 = strongly disagree and 6 = strongly agree, WADS was evaluated with an average of M = 2.20, substantially below the midpoint on the scale, and a standard deviation of SD = 1.09.

Who experiences age-based discrimination?

To explore predictors of being targeted with ageism, we relate WADS to a range of individual-related, organization-related, and context-related variables.

Socio-demographic predictors

The demographic characteristics that we examined as possible predictors of being targeted with ageism include age, gender, level of education, geographic region, socio-economic status, and political orientation.

Age

As previously stated, age was measured in three different ways. Chronological age was measured by asking participants for their year of birth. Age was also operationalized in categories — younger (18–35), middle-aged (36–50), and older (51 and above) — and measured subjectively by asking participants if they saw themselves as 1 = younger worker to 4 = middle-aged worker to 7 = older worker. For

ease of interpretation, and as the results were similar across measures, in our analysis we operationalize age using the three age categories.

Our results show that age is an important determinant of whether workers perceive being discriminated against due to their age. As can be seen in Figure 6.1 below, younger workers reported the highest levels of perceived discrimination (M = 2.45), followed by middle-aged (M = 2.05), and older workers (M = 1.99). This relationship between lower age and the extent to which one feels discriminated against because of one's age is strong and highly statistically significant (F = 19.14, p < .001). Interestingly, the two older age groups report almost equal levels of perceived discrimination, which are significantly lower than the ones reported by younger participants. Thus, even though all age groups report low levels of perceived age-related discrimination, younger participants feel more discriminated against than middle-aged and older participants do.

Some caution should be taken when interpreting these results. The low levels of reported discrimination, which are inconsistent with some previous findings (e.g., ESS; Abrams et al., 2011), might have resulted in part from the blatant forms of discriminatory behaviour that participants were asked about. Higher levels might have been reported if participants had been asked about more subtle forms of discrimination. In addition, future research should investigate whether there are differences between age groups in the tendency to report experienced age discrimination, blatant or subtle, as an additional factor that could influence the results we obtained.

Figure 6.1 Perceived age-based discrimination by age group

(F = 7.25, p = .03), with higher perceived discrimination reported with decreasing SES (see Figure 6.2).

Figure 6.2 Perceived age-based discrimination by social and economic status
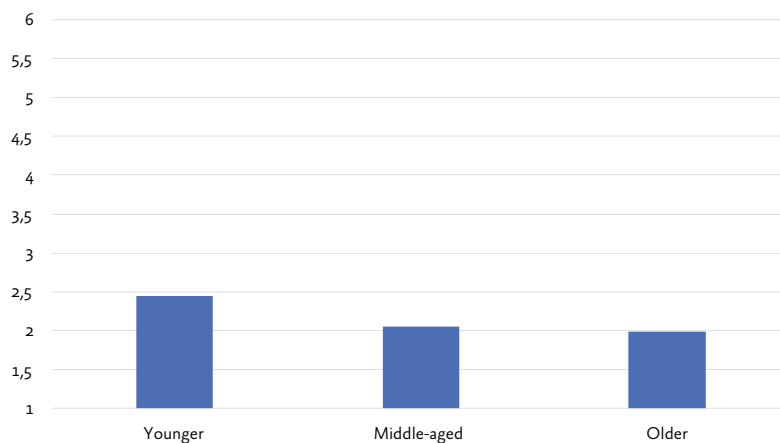
Gender

No significant relationship was observed between either gender (Male, Female, Other) or sex and perceived age-related discrimination in the workplace.
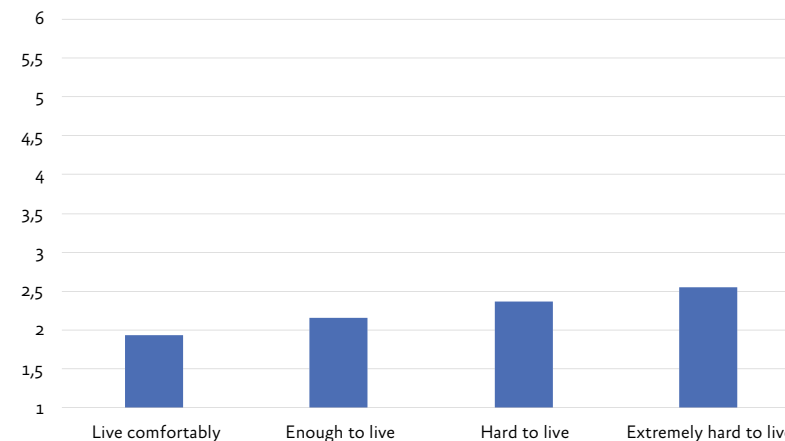
Education level

No significant relationship was observed between level of education and perceived age-related discrimination in the workplace.

Social and economic status

Social and economic status (SES) was self-reported on a scale from 1 = current income allows to live comfortably to 4 = extremely difficult to live on current income. The results showed a significant relationship

Geographic location

Location was measured in terms of both geographic region (North, Centre, Lisbon Metropolitan Area, South, and the Islands) and size of the town or city one worked in (a village (*aldeia*), a town or small city (*vila*), a city, or a suburb of a large city (*cidade*)). No significant relationship was observed between perceived age-based discrimination and either the size of town or city or geographical region.

Organizational context and role predictors

To investigate whether perceived age-based discrimination is predicted by professional experience, role and context, we relate WADS to management responsibilities, professional and organizational tenure, and organizational size, type and culture.

Management role and professional experience

We investigated the potential effect of having a managerial role on perceived age-related discrimination. However, no statistically significant differences were observed.

Professional experience was related to perceived age-related discrimination, with greater professional experience negatively predicting age-based discrimination (β = -.18, p < .001). However, when age was controlled for, the relationship ceased to be significant.

Organizational characteristics

We investigated whether perceived age-related discrimination related to several organizational characteristics, including size (1 = less than 10 people, 2 = 10-50, 3 = 50-250, and 4 = more than 250), type (state and local government, other public administration, other state enterprise, private enterprise, NGO, self-employed, and other), and culture (1 = traditional to 6 = modern and 1 = rigid to 6 = flexible).

There was no statistically significant relationship between organization size or organization type and perceived age-related discrimination. However, there was a significant relationship between organizational culture and age-based discrimination (β = -.18, p < .001), such that working in more modern and flexible organizations was related to lower reporting of age-related discrimination.

How does being targeted with age-based discrimination relate to workplace outcomes and individual wellbeing?

Here, we report relationships between WADS age-based discrimination and variables measuring the types of relationship between different age-groups, such as intergroup attitudes and behaviours, variables associated with the organization itself, such as job attitudes and performance, as well as variables associated with individual wellbeing, such as stress and mental and physical health.

Workplace-related outcomes

Relationship between different age groups

First, we investigated the impact of being targeted with age-related discrimination on the relationship between different age groups in terms of intergroup attitudes and behaviours, measured as quantity and quality of contact among generations, perceived intragroup conflict, and endorsement of age-inclusive HR practices.

Intergenerational contact

We investigated workplace contact among and within generations, assessing both its frequency (how much time was spent working with colleagues aged 55 and older) and quality (from1 = working with colleagues aged 55 and older was very negative to 6 = working with colleagues aged 55 and older was very positive).

When it comes to contact with *older workers*, results revealed that only the relationship between quality of contact with older workers and perceived age-related discrimination was statistically significant, with a negative correlation of r = -.22, p < .001. This means that those who reported experiencing positive contact with older workers also reported lower perceived age-related discrimination.

When it comes to contact with *younger workers*, results revealed that, again, only the relationship between the quality of contact with younger workers and perceived age-related discrimination was statistically significant, with a negative correlation of r = -.23, p < .001.

This means that, for both older and younger workers, positive contact is associated with less perceived discrimination.

Perceived intragroup conflict

A positive relationship was observed between perceived intragroup conflict, (i.e., perceptions of how much conflict there is among people that one works with), and WADS, r = .32, p < .0015. Thus, it appears that feeling discriminated against because of one's age is positively related to perceiving more intragroup conflict.

Endorsement of age-inclusive HR practices

Endorsing age-inclusive HR practices, i.e., practices that promote treating all employees in the same way irrespective of their age (from 1 = not important to 6 = very important), related negatively to WADS, r = -.08, p = .009. Interestingly, this shows that workers who most strongly feel discriminated against because of their age are less supportive of equal HR treatment and policies for all generations,

perhaps because HR policies promoting equal treatment across age groups might be seen as benefitting other age groups and further disadvantaging one's own.

Organization-directed variables

We now relate perceived age-based discrimination to job satisfaction and intention to remain in the position, as well as organizational citizenship behaviours and overall perceived performance.

Job satisfaction

Job satisfaction (1 = extremely unsatisfied to 6 = extremely satisfied) was found to relate significantly and negatively to perceived age-based discrimination, r = -.24, p<= .001. This suggests that greater perceived age-related discrimination may negatively affect job satisfaction.

Intention to remain in the organization

Participants were asked how long they would choose to remain in their organization (from 1 = one year or less, to 4 = the rest of my career or until retirement). Intention to remain in the organization related negatively to perceived age-based discrimination, r = -.23, p < .0011. This suggests that those who reported greater perceived age-related discrimination would be more likely to choose to leave their current organization.

Performance

Performance was measured in terms of both self-reported in-role performance (i.e., the required duties in a position) and self-reported

extra-role performance (i.e., voluntary additional behaviours intended to benefit the organization).

Extra-role performance

Self-reported extra-role performance was measured via interpersonal organizational citizenship behaviours (OCB-Is), defined as voluntary behaviours to support and help workplace colleagues. OCB-Is did not significantly relate to perceived age-based discrimination.

In-role performance

Self-reported overall in-role performance (1 = insufficient to 6 = extraordinary) related negatively to perceived age-based discrimination, of r = -.08, p = .009. This suggests that workers who feel more strongly discriminated against because of their age might be less likely to fulfil the required duties in their position.

Health and wellbeing outcomes

Lastly, we explored the consequences of perceived age-related discrimination for health outcomes, in terms of both mental health (self-evaluated from 1 = very poor to 6 = excellent), physical health (self-evaluated from 1 = very poor to 6 = excellent), and work-related stress (from 1 = work is never stressful to 6 = work is always stressful).

Both self-evaluations of mental health (r = -.28, p < .001) and physical health (r = -.22, p < .001) related negatively to perceived age-based discrimination. Work-related stress related positively to perceived age-based discrimination (r = .15, p < .001). These results suggest that perceiving greater age-related discrimination may affect individual wellbeing, in terms of greater stress, poorer mental health, and poorer physical health.

Targets of age stereotypes — Older workers study

In the older workers' questionnaire, we investigated more closely the effect for older workers of feeling targeted with a prescriptive age-based stereotype. Specifically, older workers were asked the extent to which they believed a majority in their workplace endorsed succession beliefs about older people, as measured with the succession dimension of the SIC scale (North & Fiske, 2013). The succession prescriptive stereotype captures beliefs that older individuals should step back and make way for younger individuals. Although the SIC scale is not specifically focused on workplace prescriptive stereotypes, the succession dimension includes mostly workplace-related items, such as older workers should give up workplace roles for younger generations. The succession prescriptive stereotype may therefore be especially salient and important in contexts where workers of different ages compete for roles and rewards, and where older workers are often seen as monopolizing desirable opportunities.

In total, 150 Portuguese working adults, aged 50 to 67 years old, responded to an online questionnaire, in which they indicated the extent to which the succession dimension of the SIC prescriptive stereotypes against older individuals was endorsed in their workplace. Participants were asked whether the majority of people in their workplace endorsed the succession dimension, from 1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree. Thus, the results of this study, focusing on effects of meta-perceptions about prescriptive stereotypes

regarding older workers, complement findings earlier in the chapter regarding effects on older workers of feeling discriminated against as a result of their age, which can result from prescriptive stereotypes or from other causes.

The effect of the succession stereotype on several types of outcomes was investigated, including organization-related attitudes, task-related attitudes, self-evaluated in-role and extra-role performance, and physical and mental health. We refer to beliefs regarding the extent to which a majority of people in one's workplace endorse succession stereotypes towards older workers (namely, that they should make way for younger workers) as 'workplace succession beliefs'. Significant associations at the .05 level (i.e., 95 percent confidence that the observed differences reflect an underlying actual difference in the population) are reported for each outcome. In addition, given the fact that the relatively small sample size would have reduced statistical power, marginally significant associations at the .10 level are also reported.

Fairness perceptions, affective commitment, and exit intentions regarding the organization

The relationships between workplace succession beliefs and justice perceptions (overall, distributive and procedural), affective organizational commitment, and exit intentions were investigated.

While overall justice perceptions refer to the overall fairness of the organizations, distributive justice refers to the fairness of workplace outcomes, and procedural justice to the fairness of the procedures used to make decisions. Workplace succession

beliefs only related at a marginally significant level to perceptions of overall organizational fairness. Older workers who believed that a majority in their workplace endorsed the succession beliefs regarding older workers perceived their organization as less fair overall (r = -.14, p = .09), albeit at a marginally significant level. However, perceptions of distributive justice and procedural justice were not significantly related to workplace succession beliefs.

Affective organizational commitment refers to how attached somebody is to their organization in terms of personal identification, emotional attachment, and feeling part of the organization. Workplace succession beliefs related strongly and negatively to affective organizational commitment: older workers who believed that workplace succession beliefs were high in their organization reported lower levels of affective commitment toward their organization (r = -.24, p = .003).

Exit intentions related to workplace succession beliefs at a marginally significant level. Older workers with high workplace succession beliefs were more likely to report plans to leave their organization in the short-term (r = .14, p = .10).

Employee engagement, self-efficacy, threat appraisal, and challenge appraisal evaluations

Participants were asked how enthusiastic and motivated they felt about their jobs, how capable they felt in the workplace about achieving their goals, and how they interpreted and responded to challenging situations.

Employee engagement refers to the extent to which individuals feel enthusiastic, energized, and absorbed in their work. Workplace succession beliefs related significantly to employee engagement. Older workers who believed succession beliefs were endorsed in their workplace reported lower levels of engagement (r = -.17, p = .03).

Self-efficacy, which refers to an individual's belief that they have the capabilities to reach their goals, related significantly to workplace succession beliefs. Older workers who thought succession beliefs were endorsed in their workplace were less likely to believe they had the capabilities to achieve their goals (r = -.28, p < .001).

Research has shown that individuals vary in how they interpret difficult situations. Individuals high in challenge appraisal interpret difficulties and failures as opportunities to learn and succeed. Individuals high in threat appraisal interpret difficult situations as causing harm and loss and leading to feelings of fear and anxiety. Workplace succession beliefs did not significantly relate to either challenge appraisals or threat appraisals. For more details, see Chapter 4.

In-role performance, extra-role performance, and absenteeism

We also investigated whether workplace succession beliefs related to employee performance and absenteeism. Two aspects of employee performance were investigated: in-role performance and organizational citizenship behaviours toward colleagues (OCB-Is). While in-role performance refers to completing designated and required tasks, OCBs are discretionary extra-role behaviours that are voluntarily undertaken to benefit the organization, one's manager or, as in this case, colleagues. OCB-Is include helping, sharing with, and filling in for colleagues.

Workplace succession beliefs related significantly to in-role performance, extra-role performance, and absenteeism. Individuals who reported high workplace succession beliefs (that a majority in their workplace believe older workers should step back to make room for younger workers) reported lower performance in terms of executing required tasks and responsibilities (r = -.29, p < .001) and lower extra-role performance in terms of OCB-Is (r = -.22, p = .007). Workplace succession beliefs related positively to self-reported absenteeism (r = .21, p = .009).

Stress, mental health and physical health

We also investigated the relationship between workplace succession beliefs and several aspects of employee wellbeing. No significant relationships were found between workplace succession beliefs and either stress, mental health, or physical health. That is, regardless of whether older workers believe that succession stereotypes are prevalent in their workplace, no differences in these wellbeing outcomes were reported.

Targets of age stereotypes — Younger workers study

In the younger workers' study, we more closely investigated the effect for younger workers of feeling targeted with a prescriptive age-based stereotype. Specifically, younger workers were asked the extent to which they believed a majority in their workplace endorsed the WAYS prescriptive stereotypes relating to younger workers.

In total, 362 Portuguese working adults aged between 19 and 30 years old responded to two online questionnaires. The first questionnaire

collected demographic information, and asked the extent to which participants believed the WAYS prescriptive stereotypes against younger workers were endorsed in their workplace. In the second questionnaire, presented two to three weeks later, respondents provided organization-related attitudes, task-related attitudes, self-evaluated in-role and extra-role performance, and self-evaluated physical and mental health. Beliefs regarding workplace WAYS endorsement were collected separately from the workplace outcomes to reduce concerns regarding common-method variance (Podsakoff et al., 2003), and in order to allow stronger statements to be made regarding the effect of the former (workplace WAYS beliefs) on the latter (workplace outcomes). Given that WAYS is newly developed, it is crucial to rigorously demonstrate that it has an influence on important workplace outcomes.

The Workplace Ambivalent Youngism Scale (WAYS), developed within this project, consists of three overarching dimensions: Humility-Deference, Loyalty-Belonging and Vitality-Innovation. Humility-Deference refers to the belief that younger workers should be humble, accept hierarchy, and not challenge established ways of doing things. Loyalty-Belonging refers to the belief that younger workers should be socialized into the organization, accept formal and informal organizational rules, and demonstrate loyalty and support for the organization. Vitality-Innovation refers to the belief that younger workers should be creative, technologically savvy, and have high levels of energy and resilience.

Participants were asked the extent to which they believed the majority of people in their workplace endorsed the three WAYS prescriptive stereotypes toward younger workers, from 1 = strongly disagree

to 6 = strongly agree. An employee's higher scores on 'workplace WAYS beliefs' (e.g., 'workplace Humility-Deference beliefs') indicate a stronger meta-perception that in their workplace the WAYS prescriptive stereotype is endorsed by a majority of employees. Thus, this study can demonstrate the consequences of younger workers feeling that youngist prescriptive stereotypes targeting their age group are endorsed in their workplace. The focus on younger workers experiencing prescriptive stereotypes complements findings earlier in the chapter regarding effects on younger workers of feeling discriminated against because of age, which can result from prescriptive stereotypes or from other causes.

As in the previous study focusing on older workers, significant associations at the .05 level (i.e., providing 95 percent confidence that the observed differences reflect an underlying actual difference in the population), and at the .10 level (90 percent confidence) are reported.

Fairness perceptions, affective commitment, and exit intentions regarding the organization

The relationships between WAYS stereotypes (measured at Time 1) and justice perceptions, affective organizational commitment, and exit intentions (all measured at Time 2) were investigated.

Workplace Humility-Deference beliefs related significantly to perceptions of overall fairness, distributive (outcome) fairness, and procedural (procedures) fairness. Younger workers who believed that a majority in their workplace endorsed the Humility-Deference stereotype perceived less overall justice (r = -.20, p < .001), less

distributive justice (r = -.19, p < .001), and less procedural justice (r = -.19, p < .001), than those who did not believe a majority in their workplace endorsed Humility-Deference. However, workplace Vitality-Innovation beliefs only significantly related to distributive justice, such that younger workers who believed the stereotype was strongly endorsed in their workplace perceived the outcomes they received as less fair (r = -.11, p = .043). Workplace Loyalty-Belonging beliefs did not relate significantly to overall justice, distributive justice, or procedural justice. Thus, working in a workplace where younger workers believe a majority of employees endorse the Vitality-Innovation stereotype, and especially the Humility-Deference stereotype, are significantly associated with lower perceptions of workplace fairness, which have been shown to be an important source of employee motivation.

Affective organizational commitment was significantly related to workplace Humility-Deference beliefs. Younger workers who believed that a majority in their workplace endorsed the Humility-Deference stereotype reported significantly less affective commitment to their organization (r = -.18, p < .001). Neither workplace Loyalty-Belonging beliefs nor workplace Vitality-Innovation beliefs predicted affective organizational commitment.

Exit intentions related significantly to workplace beliefs regarding two out of the three WAYS dimensions. Exit intentions related positively to workplace Humility-Deference beliefs (r = .23, p < .001) and Loyalty-Belonging beliefs (r = .17, p = .001). However, when it came to Vitality-Innovation beliefs, the relationship was not statistically significant. Thus, when younger employees perceive greater endorsement in their workplace in terms of the Humility-Deference and the Loyalty-

Belonging WAYS prescriptive stereotypes, they indicate stronger intentions to leave their current organization, regardless of whether the stereotype is more negative (i.e., Humility-Deference, which implies lower status) or less negative (i.e., Loyalty-Belonging).

Employee engagement, self-efficacy, threat appraisal, and challenge appraisal

Younger worker beliefs regarding WAYS stereotype endorsement in their workplace (measured at Time 1) were also related to how motivated and engaged they felt about their work, how capable they felt in the workplace, and the extent to which they cognitively appraised difficult situations as threats or challenges (all measured at Time 2).

Of the three WAYS dimensions, only workplace Humility-Deference beliefs significantly predicted employee engagement. Younger workers who believed Humility-Deference stereotypes were highly prevalent in their workplace reported significantly lower levels of employee engagement (r = -.19, p < .001). That is, when younger workers feel stronger expectations in their organization to stay humble, accept hierarchy, and not challenge the usual way of doing things, they report being less energized, less enthusiastic, and less motivated in their work. Neither workplace beliefs regarding Loyalty-Belonging nor Vitality-Innovation predicted employee engagement.

Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief that they have the abilities required to reach their goals. Self-efficacy was predicted by beliefs regarding workplace endorsement of two out of the three WAYS dimensions. Beliefs regarding workplace Loyalty-Belonging

and especially workplace Vitality-Innovation significantly predicted participant perceptions of self-efficacy. Younger workers felt more capable of completing their tasks and achieving their goals the more they reported their workplaces as being high in Loyalty-Belonging (r = .12, p = .026) and Vitality Innovation (r = .15, p = .003). Although this finding is somewhat surprising, it underscores the ambivalent nature of prescriptive stereotypes regarding younger workers, which can have positive as well as negative effects on younger workers. When it comes to self-efficacy, the effect of two of the three dimensions appears to be positive, with the effect of Humility-Deference being non-significant.

Challenge appraisal, which refers to the tendency to interpret difficulties and failures as opportunities, related significantly and positively to both workplace Loyalty-Belonging beliefs (r = .19, p < .001) and workplace Vitality-Innovation beliefs (r = .20, p < .001). That is, when younger workers believe that Loyalty-Belonging and Vitality-Innovation stereotypes are endorsed by a majority in their workplace, they are more likely to interpret difficulties as motivating challenges. Interestingly, threat appraisal, which refers to the tendency to interpret difficult situations as causing harm and loss, also related significantly and positively to both workplace Loyalty-Belonging beliefs (r = .12, p = .021) and workplace Vitality-Innovation beliefs (r =.15, p = .005). Thus, the same WAYS stereotypes can lead to both increased threat appraisals, usually leading to negative feelings and responses, and increased challenge appraisals, which usually lead to more positive feelings and responses. Workplace Humility-Deference beliefs did not significantly relate to either challenge appraisals or threat appraisals.

In-role performance, extra-role performance, and absenteeism

We also investigated whether the beliefs of younger employees regarding workplace WAYS endorsement related to employee self-reported in-role performance, extra-role performance, citizenship behaviours, and absenteeism.

Extra-role performance and in-role performance were both predicted by beliefs regarding workplace Loyalty-Belonging endorsement and Vitality-Innovation endorsement. Specifically, higher levels of workplace Loyalty-Belonging beliefs predicted both higher performance (r = .10, p = .05) and more interpersonal citizenship behaviours toward colleagues (OCB-Is) (r = .22, p < .001). Likewise, higher levels of workplace Vitality-Innovation endorsement also predicted both higher performance (r = .15, p = .005) and more OCB-Is (r = .21, p < .001). Workplace Humility-Deference beliefs did not predict either performance or OCB-Is. In sum, for Vitality-Innovation and Loyalty-Belonging, the more younger workers perceived those prescriptive stereotypes at work, the higher their reported performance and citizenship behaviours.

Self-reported absenteeism was not predicted by workplace beliefs regarding any of the WAYS dimensions.

Stress, mental health and physical health

In this research, we also investigated the relation between beliefs regarding WAYS endorsement in the workplace and several aspects of employee wellbeing: stress, mental health and physical health. Stress was predicted by beliefs regarding endorsement of all three WAYS dimensions: Humility-Deference (r = .16, p = .003), Loyalty-

Belonging (r = .11, p = .03), and Vitality-Innovation (r = .16, p =.002). Stress was reported as higher by employees that perceived greater workplace endorsement of any of the WAYS dimensions. Mental health was significantly predicted by workplace beliefs regarding the Humility-Deference dimension (r = -.15, p = .004), and weakly predicted by workplace beliefs regarding the Loyalty-Belonging dimension (r = -.10, p = .063), but not by Vitality-Innovation. In both cases, believing that the WAYS stereotype was endorsed by a majority in their workplace related to lower self-reported mental health. No significant relationships were found between workplace WAYS beliefs in any of the three dimensions and physical health.

6.3. Summary

Representative sample study — Predictors and consequences of being targeted with workplace age-related discrimination

In this research, we distinguished between perceptions relating to being stereotyped on the basis of age, and feelings regarding discrimination on the basis of age, which this and other factors can lead to. Predictors and consequences of feeling discriminated against were investigated in the Portuguese representative sample study, for targets of all ages. Perceptions regarding age stereotypes against one's age group were investigated in two follow-up studies: an older worker study and a younger worker study, both carried out with U.S. samples.

The representative Portuguese sample, including workers of all ages, reported low levels of personally feeling discriminated against on the basis of age. Nonetheless, feeling discriminated against was predicted by several socio-demographic characteristics.

- Younger workers and workers with lower incomes reported higher levels of perceived age-related discrimination.

- Gender, education, political orientation and geographical location did not significantly predict feeling discriminated against on the basis of age.

Whether Portuguese workers feel discriminated against was also predicted by workplace-related variables and organizational characteristics.

- Greater professional experience was related to feeling less discriminated against in terms of workplace ageism, but not once the age of the participants was considered.

- On the other hand, managerial roles negatively predicted feeling more discriminated against only when age was controlled for.

- Neither the size of the organization nor the sector it operated in had any effect on feeling discriminated against.

- However, individuals that worked for organizations with a culture that they regarded as more flexible (versus rigid) and more modern (versus traditional) reported less age-related workplace discrimination.

Feeling discriminated against on the basis of age was also related to workplace attitudes, behaviours, and self-evaluated performance, as well as individual wellbeing.

- Reporting experiencing positive contact with older workers and with younger workers related to lower perceived age-related discrimination, especially for older and younger workers.

- Feeling discriminated against on the basis of age related positively to perceiving more interpersonal conflict in the workplace, especially for younger and older workers.

- Greater perceived age-related discrimination was associated with reporting lower job satisfaction, especially in the case of older workers.

- Greater perceived age-related discrimination was associated with a greater desire to leave the current organization.

- Self-reported extra-role performance measured via interpersonal citizenship behaviours (OCB-Is) was not significantly related to workplace age-related discrimination.

- Lower self-rated in-role performance was related to feeling more targeted with workplace age-related discrimination. Yet, when age was considered, the relationship was only statistically significant for middle-aged workers, for whom worse performance was related to greater perceived age-related discrimination.

- Perceiving age-related discrimination was negatively associated with both self-reported mental health and physical health.

- Reporting greater perceived age-related discrimination was associated with greater stress levels, but only for younger and middle-aged workers.

In summary, workers feeling targeted with workplace age-related discrimination are more likely to be younger and have lower socio-economic status. Feeling targeted with workplace age-related discrimination was associated with a range of negative outcomes, including workplace attitudes, self-rated in-role and extra-role performance, and individual wellbeing.

Findings regarding older workers targeted with age-related stereotypes

In the study carried out with older workers, age-related prescriptive stereotypes against older workers, as measured by the succession dimension of the SIC scale, related to several important workplace attitudes and outcomes.

- Older workers who believed that a majority in their workplace endorsed the succession stereotype perceived their organization as less fair overall, reported lower levels of affective commitment, and were more likely to report plans to leave the organization.

- Older workers who believed that a majority in their workplace endorsed the succession stereotype reported lower levels of employee engagement and lower perceptions of self-efficacy.

- Older workers who believed that a majority in their workplace endorsed the succession stereotype reported lower in-role performance, in terms of executing required tasks

and responsibilities, lower extra-role performance in terms of interpersonal organizational citizenship behaviours (OCB-Is), and higher levels of absenteeism.

- Believing that a majority in their workplace endorsed the succession stereotype did not impact self-reported wellbeing, in terms of stress, mental health or physical health.

In summary, older workers who believed that the succession stereotypes are prevalent in their workplace reported less positive attitudes towards their organization, and lower levels of engagement and self-efficacy. They also reported lower in-role and extra-role performance, and higher levels of absenteeism.

Findings regarding younger workers targeted with age-related stereotypes

In the study of younger workers, we investigated the effects on workplace outcomes of being targeted with age-related prescriptive stereotypes — as measured by the Humility-Deference, Loyalty-Belonging, and Vitality-Innovation dimensions of WAYS.

- Believing that a majority in their workplace endorsed the WAYS stereotypes impacted fairness perceptions, affective commitment, and exit intentions.

- Believing that a majority of employees in one's workplace endorsed the Humility-Deference dimension of WAYS related to significantly lower perceptions of overall workplace fairness, distributive justice, and procedural justice. It also related

to reporting lower affective commitment, and stronger intentions to leave the current organization.

- Believing that a majority of employees in one's workplace endorsed the Vitality-Innovation dimension of WAYS related to significantly lower perceptions of both distributive justice (outcomes) and procedural justice (procedures), as well as stronger intentions to leave the current organization.

- Believing that a majority of employees in one's workplace endorsed the Loyalty-Belonging dimension of WAYS did not impact fairness perceptions, affective commitment, or exit intentions.

Believing that a majority of people in one's workplace endorsed the three WAYS dimensions predicted employee engagement, self-efficacy, threat appraisal, and challenge appraisal evaluations.

- Participants who believed the Humility-Defence stereotypes were endorsed in their workplace reported lower levels of engagement.

- Those who believed that both the Loyalty-Belonging and the Vitality-Innovation stereotypes were endorsed in their workplace reported higher self-efficacy. They also reported increased challenge and threat appraisals.

Believing that a majority of people in one's workplace endorsed the three WAYS dimensions also related to self-evaluated in- and extra-role performance, as well as absenteeism.

- Those who believed that a majority in their workplace endorsed both the Loyalty-Belonging and the Vitality-Innovations stereotypes reported higher in- and extra-role performance.

- However, believing that a majority in their workplace endorsed the Humility-Deference stereotype did not impact evaluations in terms of in-and extra-role performance.

- None of the three WAYS dimensions was related to self-reported absenteeism.

Finally, believing that the WAYS stereotypes are prevalent in the workplace related to self-reported wellbeing.

- Believing that the WAYS stereotypes are prevalent in the workplace was associated with greater self-reported stress.

- Believing that the Humility-Deference and the Loyalty-Belonging stereotypes are prevalent in the workplace both related to poorer mental health.

- There were no significant relationships between any of the three WAYS dimensions and physical health.

In summary, younger workers who believed that the WAYS stereotypes are prevalent in their workplace revealed both positive and negative outcomes, with differences between the three WAYS dimension. Believing that Humility-Deference stereotypes were highly endorsed in the workplace led to more negative attitudes towards the organization, and towards the task, as well as decreased wellbeing. Believing that Loyalty-belonging stereotypes were highly endorsed in the workplace related to both negative psychological outcomes (higher threat appraisals, increased stress and decreased mental health), as well as positive outcomes (higher perceived self-efficacy, challenge appraisals and in- and extra-role performance). This was also the case for believing that Vitality-Innovation stereotypes were highly endorsed in the workplace, which related to lower perceived distributive justice, stronger intentions to leave the current organization, higher threat appraisals, and increased stress, but also to higher perceived self-efficacy, challenge appraisals, and in-role and extra-role performance. Interestingly, while for older workers, feeling that the SIC stereotypes were highly endorsed in their workplace did not affect their wellbeing, younger workers saw their wellbeing decreased when they felt that the WAYS stereotypes were highly endorsed in their workplace.

Chapter 7
Conclusion

An ageing population across many countries, with more generations than ever participating in the workforce, may present challenges in terms of workplace intergroup relations and the inclusion and motivation of workers of all ages. The tendency to categorize and stereotype on the basis of age, as well as gender and other attributes, is a natural human one. Unfortunately, this tendency to identify with similar others as ingroups, and to view different age categories as outgroups, can lead to prejudice (unjustified negative feelings), stereotypes (biased beliefs) and discrimination (unjust negative treatment). These tendencies stem from subjective perceptions that, in the case of age, ignore the fact that an ageing population can also present several opportunities for societies. More concretely, an ageing population can lead to economic growth and job creation centred on products and services aimed at and designed for older people (referred to as the silver economy), as well as transfer of knowledge, skills and experience between different age groups. Thus, it is in the interests of individuals, organizations, and society more broadly to address and reduce workplace ageism. With the generous support of the Francisco Manuel dos Santos Foundation, this project has improved our understanding of the psychological and organizational factors that predict and can result from bidirectional workplace ageism, so that suitable societal policies and workplace interventions can be designed.

Our understanding of ageism, and the legislation and policies designed to combat it, have been incomplete to date, in their almost exclusive focus on older workers. Hence, the bidirectional scope in this project, whereby we focus on ageism towards younger as well as older workers, is an important contribution to the literature. In addition, we acknowledge that negative effects of ageism can harm not only the targets of discrimination, but also the holders of discriminatory attitudes, which is why we investigated both. In addition, both similarities and differences can be expected regarding the predictors and consequences of ageism across different countries. Hence, an additional goal of this project was to apply and develop instruments to capture the Portuguese reality, and the perspectives and experiences of Portuguese workers.

In order to address these objectives, diverse research methodologies were applied. Data was collected from online Portuguese and non-Portuguese panels, from a representative sample of the Portuguese population, and via an experiment aimed at rigorously showing the effects of ageism on workplace outcomes. Qualitative and quantitative approaches were used to analyse the considerable data collected. Relevant literature was consulted and, in the case of ageism against younger workers, summarised. Experts in ageism and related domains within and outside of Portugal were also consulted.

7.1. Key project findings

The results of our multiple studies are detailed in Chapters 2, 3, 5, and 6, with key findings highlighted in the summaries of each chapter. The most important findings and contributions of the project are touched on below.

Although less explored than other types of ageist stereotypes, we set out to show the important effects of differing prescriptive stereotypes regarding how younger and older workers *should* behave. First, in order to bridge an important gap in the literature regarding prescriptive stereotypes toward younger workers, we developed and rigorously tested the Workplace Ambivalent Youngism Scale (WAYS; for details, see Chapter 3). We identified three types of expectations regarding younger workers, namely that they should a) accept hierarchy and their lower status (referred to as Humility-Deference), b) show loyalty and be socialized into their organizations (labelled Loyalty-Belonging), and c) bring energy, innovation, and tech-savviness (named Vitality-Innovation). These expectations are ambivalent in the sense that they sometimes require younger workers to accept and submit, and at other times expect them to stand out, leverage their strengths, and challenge the status quo. WAYS was developed and tested in the U.S. and Portugal, to ensure its suitability for different cultural contexts. For older workers, we were able to use an already-existing prescriptive stereotypes scale by North and Fiske, referred to as the Succession, Identity, and Consumption (SIC) scale, with some items in the succession dimension applicable to the work context.

Second, our research examined endorsers of ageism and focused on what predicts who holds ageist beliefs towards younger and older workers and what the consequences for endorsers are. When it comes to endorsing ageism against older workers in Portugal, an important predictor was age, with younger workers holding more negative beliefs, stereotypes and attitudes. Positive attitudes toward older workers were more common in modern and flexible (versus traditional and rigid) organizations, and in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area and South regions. Beliefs that older workers should step back and hand over to younger workers were stronger in private enterprises than in public administration. In addition, individuals that endorsed ageism toward older workers reported poorer mental health and stronger intentions to leave their organization. High quality interaction with older colleagues in the workplace, and supporting age-inclusive HR practices, both related negatively to ageism against older workers.

Fewer sociodemographic factors predicted the endorsement of ageist stereotypes against younger workers. Within Portugal, all three stereotype dimensions were endorsed at moderate to high levels, though these were found to be greater for older and less educated individuals, and for individuals holding right/conservative views regarding economic and, especially, social issues. Interestingly, endorsing the Loyalty-Belonging and Vitality-Innovation prescriptive stereotypes was related to several positive outcomes, including mental and physical health, job performance and positive workplace attitudes, and higher quality contact with younger workers. Similar positive outcomes were not related to endorsing the Humility-deference stereotypes, which was also found in the experimental study to result in more negative and punitive reactions to a younger worker that violates these stereotypes. In addition, the results of our experimental study clearly

showed that high endorsers of the Humility-Deference stereotype were more likely to negatively evaluate younger workers (more than older workers) who violated the stereotype. As expected, these high stereotype endorsers also showed greater support in terms of fairness perception and decision acceptance for punitive actions taken by the organization in response to stereotype violation by younger workers (versus older workers), because only in the case of younger workers would the behaviour be seen as violating a prescriptive age stereotype. Future research should experimentally investigate whether older workers are similarly penalized when they violate prescriptive stereotypes relating to their age group.

Third, our findings also show that ageism can have important, mostly negative, consequences for targets of ageism. This was clear from results from both our Portuguese representative sample study, which focused specifically on age-based discrimination for all age groups (whether from stereotypes or other causes), as well as from our follow-up studies of older and younger Portuguese workers, focused on prescriptive stereotypes against older and younger workers, respectively. Within the Portuguese representative sample, of all age groups, younger workers felt most discriminated against on the basis of their age, though greater age discrimination was also reported by workers with lower incomes, and by those working in more traditional organizations. Feeling targeted with workplace ageism was also related to a range of negative outcomes for Portuguese workers, including reduced job satisfaction, lower self-evaluated performance, higher intentions to leave the organization, and greater perceived workplace conflict.

In the study focused on Portuguese older workers, when older workers believed that ageism was endorsed in their workplace (in terms of wanting older workers to step back and make way for younger workers), they reported lower organizational commitment, work engagement, and performance, and higher levels of absenteeism. In the study that focused on Portuguese younger workers, the results depended on the specific stereotype that younger workers felt targeted by, with the Humility-Deference stereotype having consistently negative consequences, including lower perceptions of fairness, lower organizational commitment and employee engagement, and stronger desire to leave the organization. In contrast, feeling targeted by the Loyalty-Belonging and Vitality-Innovation stereotypes increased self-efficacy and self-reported performance for younger workers, although it also predicted stress and decreased mental health. These results highlight the ambivalent nature, and consequences, of prescriptive workplace stereotypes regarding younger workers, captured in the WAYS measure.

An unexpected finding with regard to stereotyping of younger workers was the positive relationship found between endorsing Loyalty-Belonging and Humility-Deference stereotypes and several positive workplace outcomes. In our representative sample study (Study 4), these included higher reported quality of contact with younger workers, job satisfaction, intention to remain in the organization, citizenship behaviours toward colleagues, and self-reported performance, as well as self-reported mental health and physical health — these outcomes were all higher for workers that endorsed the Loyalty-Belonging and Vitality-Innovation dimensions of WAYS. To our surprise, these findings show beneficial effects

of endorsing stereotypes toward younger workers, and in particular for Loyalty-Belonging and Vitality-Innovation stereotypes (but not for Humility-Deference). In follow-up analyses, these relationships remained significant even when participant age was controlled for. Future research should be conducted to confirm when and why holding these youngist stereotypes, and in particular Loyalty-Belonging and Vitality-Innovation stereotypes, can have positive workplace consequences.

The relatively low levels of age-based discrimination reported by both younger and older workers proved an interesting finding. As these low levels are inconsistent with some previous findings (e.g., ESS; Abrams et al., 2011b), caution should be taken when interpreting these results. In particular, the low levels of discrimination reported might have been, in part, a result of the blatant forms of discriminatory behaviour that participants were asked about. Higher levels might have been reported by younger and older workers if they had been asked about more subtle forms of discrimination, making the identified effects even more notable. Future research should consider examining both blatant and subtle forms of age discrimination.

This research project shows that feeling discriminated against on the basis of age, even if at relatively low reported levels, and feeling stereotyped on the basis of age have important consequences. These consequences include attitudes toward the organization, employee engagement and responses to work challenges, self-reported performance and behaviours, and personal wellbeing. However, it appears that in the case of older workers the consequences are consistently negative, whereas for younger workers the effects of ageism can be both negative and positive. These differences

in responses to ageism suggest that interventions may need to be specifically tailored to younger and older workers.

7.2. Implications

Our research findings have important implications for individuals, organizations, and society as a whole. Addressing ageism towards both older and younger workers is crucial for promoting equality, fostering inclusive environments, and maximising the potential contributions of individuals across all age groups. Below, we will outline some key implications that can be derived from our findings.

For individuals

The average worker spends about one third of their working days at work. Not surprisingly, positive social relations in the workplace play an important role in enhancing overall wellbeing among employees. Our findings strongly suggest that workplace ageism towards older and younger workers, regardless of whether someone holds ageist beliefs or someone is targeted by them, is related to lower levels of psychological wellbeing. The literature had already established a strong link between perceiving discrimination and diminished wellbeing (Pascoe & Smart Richman, 2009); however, it is surprising that holding ageist biases is also detrimental to the holder's wellbeing. It is possible that an ageist working environment generally increases anxiety and stress due to heightened perceptions of social-evaluative threat, as well as of competition and social isolation. Even though our results were less consistent with regard to effects on physical health, mental

and physical health are commonly regarded as interconnected with a bidirectional relationship. In the long run, low levels of wellbeing and work-related stress in a domain as important as the workplace can affect the immune system (Ayalon et al., 2019), contribute to the development of cardiovascular diseases (Levy et al., 2020), and lead to the adoption of unhealthy lifestyles (such as substance abuse; APA, 2022). This can have far-reaching repercussions with spill-over effects to other life domains, thereby impairing an individual's overall quality of life and potential for growth. Hence, combating ageism in the workplace, for example in the form of diversity training, is not only beneficial for the targets of discrimination, but carries wellbeing benefits for those endorsing ageist beliefs as well.

Organizational practices and policies are key to tackling these challenges. We showed that workers who endorse age-inclusive HR practices also generally reported lower levels of perceived age discrimination. Yet, it is important that age-inclusive HR practices are not interpreted as further supporting stereotypical expectations towards younger workers, as our results suggest — represented by a positive association between endorsing age-inclusive HR practices and endorsing all three prescriptive stereotypes towards younger workers. This is especially relevant regarding the prescriptive stereotype Humility-Deference, which affords younger workers a lower social status, and was found to be negatively related to younger workers' feeling of work engagement in our studies. Interestingly, younger workers who thought that they were expected to perform according to the other two prescriptive stereotypes (being loyal and belonging to the organization and showing Vitality-

Innovation) exhibited ambivalent outcomes in the form of greater self-efficacy and challenge appraisals, but also greater threat appraisals.

For organizations

Organizational success depends on a skilled, motivated and engaged workforce. Recruiting and retaining talented individuals is key, as is the creation of a positive work environment that can contribute to employee job satisfaction, which in turn is likely to manifest itself in greater productivity. Our results clearly suggest that feeling targeted by age discrimination and age-related stereotypes is counterproductive for organizations, as it decreases job satisfaction and intentions to remain in the organization. On the other hand, holding positive beliefs towards older workers was found to be related to greater job satisfaction, providing further evidence that age-inclusive interventions can have positive effects on employees and the organization.

Interestingly, holding prescriptive stereotypes towards younger workers was also related to greater job satisfaction and intention to remain in the organization, especially with regard to Loyalty-Belonging and Vitality-Innovation. It might be that these expectations are generally construed as positive beliefs about younger workers. Even though they may put younger workers under pressure to perform and to accommodate, they are seen as positive contributions for a well-functioning organization. This is also reflected in the link between these prescriptive stereotypes and workplace performance, which is positive for both holders of the stereotype and younger workers as targets. Holding such prescriptive stereotypes

towards younger workers, or experiencing them as a younger worker, is related to greater organizational citizenship behaviour in the form of voluntary behaviours to help and support workplace colleagues, as well as accomplishment of required duties. This raises the question of whether organizations should indeed tackle prescriptive stereotypes toward younger workers or whether they are, in fact, 'a good thing' for organizations. The question taps into an important issue regarding prescriptive stereotypes, i.e., their complex and ambivalent psychological manifestation across ingroups and outgroups. Indeed, when considering the results for younger workers as the target of these prescriptive stereotypes, we can clearly see that the Humility-Deference dimension of expectations is consistently related to negative organization-directed outcomes in the form of exit intentions, lower justice perceptions and less affective organizational commitment. Hence, organizations would be ill-advised to generally foster prescriptive stereotypes towards younger workers and should instead consider implementing diversity training, coupled with action points, to raise awareness about stereotyping and its complex effects on targets, and to communicate that stereotypes overlook the diversity within a group and can lead to biased and unfair judgments.

Moreover, our findings show that age-diversity among workers is not sufficient to break down ageist beliefs and diminish the experiences of ageism. Instead, it is the quality of intergenerational contact, rather than its frequency, that improves intergroup attitudes between younger and older workers, as well as the way they relate to each other. Hence, organizations could actively create opportunities for positive intergenerational contact via cross-generational teambuilding

and other targeted activities. In addition, efforts should be directed at improving the overall organizational environment, because our research consistently shows that perceived intragroup conflict is related to experiencing oldist ageism and endorsing ageist beliefs towards older workers. Therefore, initiatives aimed at cultivating a positive organizational environment can play a crucial rule in mitigating these effects which affect the wellbeing, organizational attitudes, and motivation of older workers in particular.

For societies

Many industrialized societies are faced with an ageing population, and Portugal is no exception. It has been predicted that by 2050 every third person in Portugal will be over the age of 65 (World Social Report of the United Nations, 2023). This significant increase in life expectancy poses an economic challenge due to strains on various aspects of the economy, including increasing costs of healthcare and pension systems. The latter has been addressed by policies aimed at gradually increasing the retirement age from 66 to 68 years by 2050 in Portugal (OECD, 2021). While this might help to mitigate the pension expenditure, labour market dynamics should not be overlooked. On the one hand, when older individuals remain in the workforce for longer, they can be seen as impacting younger generations' job opportunities. These perceptions can kindle bidirectional age biases, directed at older workers in particular. On the other hand, research has shown that greater participation of older workers in the economy does not necessarily reduce opportunities for younger workers, and that countries with delayed

retirement may have lower overall unemployment rates (Berkman et al., 2015; Gutman & Drexler, 2015).

Our findings also show that ageist biases potentially affect everyone negatively in terms of mental health outcomes — no matter whether someone is targeted by ageism or endorses ageist beliefs, or whether the ageism is directed towards older or younger individuals. Given that mental health is intricately linked to job performance (Ipsen et al., 2020; Ford et al., 2011), ageism influences an individual's ability to function effectively and to contribute productively to the workplace. Mental health issues have also been found to contribute to increased absenteeism and presenteeism, as well as diminished creativity, innovation and collaboration within teams (Kelloway, Dimoff, & Gilbert 2023). Thus, ageism not only impacts organizations but is likely to further burden the healthcare system. Individuals with mental health issues are likely to develop psychosomatic conditions, i.e. physical illnesses or symptoms that are exacerbated by psychological factors, such as hypertension and migraines or headaches. This means that there is a potential for the economically-motivated retirement policies to backfire if no social policies are co-developed to mitigate potential labour market dynamics.

The possible costs of ageism are likely to not be negligible. Recent research suggests that the direct costs of ageism might amount to $63 billion for all persons aged 60 years or older in the United States (Levy et al., 2020). Unfortunately, to the best of our knowledge, no estimates are available for Portugal, neither is there research about the costs of ageism directed at younger people. However, there is growing apprehension regarding a mental health crisis

among the younger population (Twenge et al., 2019). This concern is particularly pronounced for individuals transitioning from student life to the workforce, grappling with challenges in securing employment opportunities (Ames et al., 2023; Auerbach et al., 2016). Mental health issues, if their causes and consequences remain unaddressed over an individual's lifetime, could lead to substantial healthcare costs and potentially further strain social welfare resources.

Hence, policymakers should consider an ensemble of initiatives to address ageism towards both older and younger people. An important first step is to enact polices and laws to combat ageism against all age groups, which have been shown to not only reduce other '-isms' (such as racism and sexism) but also reduce ageism itself (WHO, 2021). These initiatives can include various actors besides government, such as stakeholders, non-governmental associations, organizations and academia. Intergenerational initiatives are likely to be the most fruitful, given the importance of quality in intergenerational contact for reducing ageism (Burnes et al., 2019; see also the imAGES programme for an intergenerational intervention example in Portugal, Marques et al., 2014). In addition, events and campaigns to combat ageism may be organized using either traditional media, such as television advertising, billboards, and the press, or new media, such as Facebook and YouTube advertising (WHO, 2021). Policy-makers may collaborate more closely with researchers for policy advice and recommendations (see, for example, Abrams et al., 2011a) and research and knowledge on ageism could be more strategically disseminated among researchers and stakeholders (e.g., Abrams et al., 2011b). These initiatives should acknowledge the fact that ageism is bidirectional and,

therefore, should not focus exclusively on one age group while ignoring the other, as such one-sided attention could further fuel intergenerational tensions.

Moreover, the consequences of perceiving prescriptive age stereotypes are not the same for younger and older workers, as our results have shown. While we found consistently negative consequences of perceiving prescriptive stereotypes about succession for older workers, younger workers' perception of prescriptive age stereotypes were, in fact, sometimes related to positive consequences in terms of task- and performance-related outcomes. At the same time, we found that perceived prescriptive age stereotypes were consistently related to greater work-related stress among younger workers. Hence, perceiving stereotypical expectations may stimulate younger workers to do well at work, especially in the case of positively-valenced stereotypes. However, these expectations might also be appraised as a burden as a result of the potential risk of falling short of expectations, ultimately leading to greater stress. These differential psychological consequences of prescriptive age stereotypes on younger and older workers are important to acknowledge in order to better understand their implications at all levels: for individuals, their organizations and society as a whole.

To conclude, our findings suggest that addressing ageism has the potential to create a society that is more equitable and inclusive. This, in turn, could maximize the contributions of individuals from all age groups, leading to positive outcomes for their health and wellbeing, and ultimately contributing to the overall better functioning of organizations and society.

7.3. Limitations and future directions

This project produced novel insight into the social issue of ageism directed at both older and younger workers in Portugal. Yet, as is the case with all research, it is important to acknowledge that there are limitations which, at the same time, point to avenues for future research. We focus on several of these issues below.

Study design and measurement of prescriptive age stereotypes

A limitation of this research lies in how prescriptive stereotypes toward older workers were measured. While a measure for prescriptive stereotypes against younger workers was developed and tested within this project, no similar steps were taken to develop a scale focusing specifically on older workers. Instead, we decided to use the succession dimension of the Succession, Identity, and Consumption (SIC) scale (North & Fiske, 2014) because one of its subscales relates to the workplace. Although our results show that the succession dimension of SIC captures an important aspect of prescriptive stereotypes towards older workers, it is likely that there are additional workplace prescriptive stereotypes that are not included in such a general measure. Although it was beyond the scope of this project, future research should develop and test a measure of oldist prescriptive stereotypes that is specifically focused on the workplace, and that is validated in different cultural contexts.

It is also important to acknowledge several additional ways in which this project focused more on youngism than ageism. While in both Study 5(a) (older workers) and Study 5(b) (younger workers)

participants were asked about the workplace consequences of feeling targeted with stereotypes regarding their age group, only Study 5(b) (younger workers) included data collection at two points in time. This increased the rigour of this particular study but also the time and cost involved in data collection. Study 6 tested the effects of age-related stereotype violation using an experimental vignette methodology (EVM) for younger workers but not for older workers. Our reason for focusing less on older worker stereotypes was the relative lack of prior research on younger worker stereotypes, as well as the need to further test the newly-developed WAYS scale and confirm its practical utility. Nonetheless, future research should pay more balanced attention to both older and younger workers; that is, longitudinal surveys and experimental designs should be conducted to investigate the effects of prescriptive age stereotypes against older workers, as we have done for younger workers.

The socio-psychological processes of ageism

In this project, we examined a few outcome variables to better understand the socio-psychological consequences of holding ageist beliefs and experiencing ageism. We focused broadly on health and wellbeing outcomes and found consistent patterns that experiencing ageism or holding ageist beliefs is not conducive to mental health. However, we do not know how exactly ageism or ageist beliefs contribute to negative health outcomes. Above, we speculated that holding ageist biases might create an ageist working environment, which generally increases anxiety and stress due to heightened perceptions of social-evaluative threat as well as of competition and social isolation. Future research could establish whether such a psycho-social pathway does indeed apply to age-related biases towards younger and older workers.

In a similar vein, there might be a psycho-social pathway explaining the negative outcomes resulting from more positive stereotypes, such as being vital and innovative, and especially tech-savvy. Even though those seem to be positively valenced stereotypes, the external pressure and own expectation to continually be creative and energetic can lead to stress, an unhealthy work-life balance, and ultimately burnout. There is evidence of stereotype embodiment processes for older people (Levy, 2009), by which individuals internalize the societal stereotypes about their age group, so that they influence their thoughts, behaviours and self-perceptions. In other words, older people themselves can internalize ageist assumptions about their own age group, leading to self-fulfilling prophecies, such that their behaviour aligns with their age-related beliefs, ultimately leading the belief to come true. For instance, a longitudinal study demonstrated that older people with more positive self-perceptions of ageing lived 7.5 years longer than those with less positive self-perceptions after controlling for gender, socio-economic status, functional health, and loneliness (Levy et al., 2002). Moreover, older people who accept negative images of ageing are also more likely to attribute their problems to the ageing process and may fail to seek necessary medical assistance. Future research could examine such processes in both younger and older workers using longitudinal or diary study designs to examine the effects of individuals' perceived expectations and their own self-perceptions about their age group on their work ethic and behaviour, as well as their mood.

In addition, processes involved in disconfirming prescriptive stereotypes about younger workers could also be studied. Previous research has shown that racial minorities who violated a prescriptive racial stereotype were subjected to more racial harassment than other employees, regardless of whether the violated stereotype was positive or negative in valence (Berdahl & Min, 2012). In the context of youngism, it would be important to better understand the processes of prescriptive stereotype violation not only from the perspective of the perceiver's role, but also the actor's role. The fear of not conforming to prescriptive stereotypes, especially positive expectations, might lead to increased norm conformity with consequences to individuals' self-esteem (see also Backlash Theory, Rudman et al., 2012) — a psychological outcome that was not considered in this project.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a concept from critical theory which suggests that individuals hold multiple social identities which interact and shape a person's experiences in ways distinct from other intersecting identities (Crenshaw, 1989). For instance, the experiences of a Black woman may differ from those of a White woman or a Black man, due to the intersection of a racialized identity and gender. In other words, the type of discrimination that a person with intersecting social minority identities experiences is not just an accumulation of the different '-isms', but a very specific type of discrimination directed at an intersecting social identity. For example, research has shown that there does not seem to be an ideal age at work when considering its intersection with gender, because older women

experience more discrimination than older men, but younger and middle-aged men report more discrimination than women of similar age (Duncan, 2004).

When we examined socio-demographic variables as predictors of workplace age discrimination, we found that younger workers and those of lower socio-economic status reported more discrimination than other age groups and those of higher socio-economic status. Other socio-demographic variables did not show significant associations with perceived workplace ageism. The identified age effect corroborates previous research about the importance of considering the experience of younger people when it comes to studying age discrimination (Bratt et al., 2018; 2020). The effect of socio-economic status on perceived ageism points to the possibility that classism, i.e. prejudice towards people with lower social status, intersects in important ways with ageism. To what extent workers of lower socio-economic status are just more sensitive to prejudice and discrimination due to their double disadvantaged social status, or indeed experience unique forms of prejudice and discrimination, is something that future research could look into.

Surprisingly, gender was not a predictor of perceived ageism in our study, thus not providing further evidence regarding a gendered form of ageism (Krekula et al., 2018). However, the results might be masked by more complex interactive effects of socio-demographic predictors on perceived ageism. For instance, a specific type of ageism based on gender may affect older women, but not younger women. When these age-specific gender biases are combined in the analysis, they could cancel each other out. Future research could aim at conducting a more fine-grained analysis of intersectionality and ageism, as well

as consider other important social minority statuses (e.g., ethnicity), and also examine how intersectional discrimination experiences affect individuals in terms of their wellbeing (e.g., see Vauclair & Rudnev, 2023) and work-related outcomes.

Cultural differences

Culture plays a significant role in shaping people's beliefs, attitudes and social norms, and therefore it should also affect how people perceive and interact with different age groups. In this project, we did not aim to uncover potential cultural differences in ageism towards younger and older workers, focusing instead on the Portuguese context and the development of a culturally-decentred measure to assess prescriptive stereotypes towards younger workers. This means that, by including input from two very different cultural groups (Portugal and the U.S.), we maximized the relevance of this measure for different cultural contexts. Nonetheless, it is important to note that while many of the studies were conducted with both Portuguese and U.S. samples, several studies — including the representative sample study (Study 4) — were only conducted with Portuguese samples, and the experimental study was only run with a U.S. sample. Future research should replicate our findings in diverse national samples, to investigate their generalizability across cultures. Using the validated WAYS scale with other cultural samples can provide more insight into the endorsement of prescriptive stereotypes towards younger people in the workplace. However, targeted cross-cultural comparisons on attitudes to age would also be very insightful.

Surprisingly, there is a dearth of research on cross-cultural similarities and differences in ageism (Konradt et al., 2022). Only recently have researchers paid more attention to this question, using different theoretical frameworks and focusing on ageism towards older people. One theoretical approach consists in contrasting Eastern and Western cultures by drawing on their different socio-historical traditions and the extent to which their cultures are individualistic versus collectivistic (Nisbett, 2003; Markus & Kitayama, 2010). It has been argued that collectivism and the Confucian legacy in Eastern cultures, which emphasizes filial piety in the form of respect, obedience, and caretaking of older people, may have produced particularly positive attitudes towards the elderly in the East (see North & Fiske, 2015). However, recent meta-analyses and cross-cultural empirical studies paint a more complex picture, showing that negative attitudes towards older people may depend on the component of ageism that is measured (Vauclair et al., 2016), the level of analysis (individual- vs. societal-level, Zhang et al., 2016) and whether societies have a more or less ageing population (North & Fiske, 2015; Rudnev & Vauclair, 2022).

Prescriptive age stereotypes towards both younger and older people may be a particularly important component of ageism to study, given that culture shapes normative expectations about others. Yet there is a gap in current cross-cultural research exploring prescriptive age stereotypes, making it a very promising avenue for future research (Konradt et al., 2022). Future research could compare the Portuguese context, which is highly collectivistic (Hofstede, 2001) and has an ageing population (World Social Report of the United Nations, 2023), to contexts that are culturally and demographically different, to better

understand contextual effects on age-prescriptive stereotypes towards younger and older individuals.

A useful theoretical framework that could guide cross-cultural research on bidirectional prescriptive age stereotypes is Marcus and Fritzsche's (2016) multilevel framework on culture and ageism in the workplace, which considers the individual, organizational and societal levels of analysis. The culturally-anchored ageism (CAA) model specifies how the strength of social norms (tightness-looseness) and cultural values of individualism-collectivism are expected to influence work outcomes for older workers. We would argue that the model can be easily extended to younger workers as well. Marcus and Fritzsche propose that the worst outcomes, in terms of age discrimination, are to be expected for societies and organizations that show a combination of group-focus (collectivism) and adherence to strict normative codes of conduct (tightness), whereas those that are individualistic and loose should show the least age discrimination. In addition, in organizations and societies that value power distance, i.e. status and power differences (Hofstede, 2001), younger workers may also be especially targeted with the Humility-Deference prescriptive stereotype.

To conclude, given that the study of cultural aspects in ageism towards older people is in its very beginnings, and that it is almost non-existent in terms of ageism towards younger people, we foresee new and important insights coming out of cross-cultural research on bidirectional age stereotypes.

Interventions

Future research may be conducted for the purpose of developing interventions to raise awareness about ageism directed towards younger and older workers. These interventions should address descriptive and prescriptive age stereotypes and their implications for intergenerational relations. A promising method is the Critical Incident Technique (CIT, Flanagan, 1954), which has been widely used in developing materials for intercultural training. The CIT involves collecting and analysing detailed accounts or incidents that are deemed critical for understanding a particular phenomenon, such as the manifestation of ageism. The CIT involves several steps: identifying critical incidents via qualitative research methods, collecting relevant descriptive narratives, categorizing and analysing them to identify common themes or patterns, and developing training materials to enhance participants' intercultural competence.

For the development of anti-ageism training programs, descriptive narratives that exemplify how prescriptive stereotypes manifest themselves in everyday interactions at work may be collected. The critical incidents could be used in case studies, role-playing scenarios, age diverse group discussions or other resources aimed at enhancing individual social competences and awareness about age discrimination at work. Such a theory-driven intervention should be accompanied by a thorough evaluation of the effectiveness of the intervention to reduce intergroup biases and biased self-perceptions. Age diversity workshop interventions that draw on prominent social psychological theoretical frameworks have been identified to be the most effective in terms of positive effects that

are meaningful for organizations (Sinclair et al., 2023). Meta-analytic evidence shows that relatively low-cost, feasible strategies involving awareness-raising and positive intergenerational contact are most effective in combating ageism towards older people (Burnes et al., 2019). In addition, the enactment of polices and laws to combat ageism against all age groups (WHO, 2021), such as the horizontal equal treatment directive, community support and positive action (e.g., AGE, 2023), as well as media campaigns (WHO, 2021), could also be considered. Yet, more research is needed to better understand the bidirectional effects of anti-ageism intervention programs targeting both younger and older people.

Different industry sectors and work settings

Research should also explore differences between organizational settings in terms of how ageism is manifested, experienced, and responded to. Although our findings suggest that having a flexible and modern organizational culture, rather than a traditional and rigid culture, can influence perceived age-related discrimination, it may also be interesting to compare different industry sectors. Not only might the participation of different age groups vary, but the ages associated with being a 'seasoned professional' or a 'rookie' might differ considerably depending on the context. Because these differences might heighten ageism against particular age groups, possibly combined with sexism in industries where women are under-represented, additional organizational characteristics should be explored. It is possible, in fact, that the content of age-related stereotypes may differ, and therefore require tailored interventions to address them. Organizations may also sometimes be under pressure from industry-specific stakeholders to promote age-inclusivity in their workplaces, or even to specifically support one age group in particular, in which case the resulting organizational policies, workplace age-related dynamics, and individual perceptions of fairness merit further examination. Such research will require close collaboration between researchers, industry organizations, and perhaps government oversight bodies, to better understand how ageism is experienced and how it can be combatted in real workplace settings.

New forms of work organization, such as the gig/platform economy, could also influence how ageism is experienced and responded to. Not only are these jobs taken mostly by younger workers, thus extending job precariousness (Rocca et al., 2024), but they also raise the issue of algorithmic management (i.e., middle management being replaced by machine algorithms; Möhlmann et al., 2021). Without professional HR involvement, will the algorithms be age-blind in monitoring and decision-making, or will they affect different age groups differently and perhaps even perpetuate stereotypes? With artificial intelligence (AI) also heralded as a promising solution for labour shortages deriving from an ageing workforce (Hirsch-Kreinsen, 2012; Krzywdzinski, 2022), the question regarding how the use of AI might impact organizational roles and workplace dynamics, including among diverse age groups, becomes increasingly relevant.

7.4. Final remarks

Facing a potential challenge as complex and entrenched as bidirectional ageism in the workplace requires support from across all segments of society. There are important roles to be played

by universities and research institutes, government departments, private organizations, NGOs, and, of course, philanthropic foundations. This ambitious research project was only made possible with the generous support and guidance of the Francisco Manuel dos Santos Foundation. Of course, a great deal remains to be done to better understand and address ageism, both in Portugal and internationally, as well as to further acknowledge and consider the potential opportunities of a greying society. Nonetheless, we hope our findings regarding ageism, including in the Portuguese context, will inspire further investigation, and that the WAYS measure developed within this project will be an important tool in including younger as well as older workers in further efforts. A more inclusive workplace, honouring diversity and bringing out the best in all age groups, indeed in all of its communities, is a goal worth striving for collectively.

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Chapter 1

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Notes

<1 According to the cultural decentred technique, inputs from culturally diverse individuals allow for the scale to be applicable in different cultural contexts by maximizing the appropriateness of item content for the cultural groups involved (Van de Vijver & Leung, 2021). The results are not necessarily universally applicable across cultures, but, because they originated in culturally diverse groups, they offer a more culturally balanced perspective (Rivenburgh & Manusov, 2010).

<2 Although the term 'oldism' is not commonly found in the literature, it has been recently used (e.g., Francioli & North, 2021) in order to clarify the distinction between ageism towards older people and ageism towards younger people (youngism).

<3 For the categorization of the prescriptive expectations towards younger workers into positive/negative, we considered that stereotypes related to lower status acceptance are negative and stereotypes related to showing attributes usually associated with higher status groups are positive.

<4 Although the categories of prescriptive expectations identified by North and Fiske (2013a) — succession-based, consumption-based and identity-based prescriptions — are not specific for the work context, we understand that the succession-based stereotypes are very much applicable to the workplace. For this categorization into positive/negative stereotypes, we considered the expectation that older worders make way to the younger ones is negative.

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