

Ageism toward younger and older workers in Portugal

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Introduction

Increases in life expectancy and a decline in fertility rates in many countries are causing rapid shifts in the age composition of the world's population. According to the World Social Report of the United Nations (2023), the number of people aged 65 or older will double worldwide by 2050. The challenges of an aging population are of particular concern for Portugal, which is among the countries with the largest share of older people. It is predicted that by 2050, more than one third of the Portuguese population will be aged 65 or over, with life expectancy in Portugal reaching 80 years for men and 86 years for women, similar to countries such as Japan, Sweden, and France (Projeções 2030 e o Futuro, Fundação Francisco Manuel dos Santos, 2012).

An aging population has wide-reaching social, political and economic implications for societies. This has caught the attention of governments and supranational bodies, such as the World Health Organization, which launched in 2019 the Global Campaign to Combat Ageism. A key economic implication is the strain imposed on social security and pension systems, which is why many OECD countries have changed their policies regarding early retirement and are aiming to increase labour participation of older workers. This can result in younger workers being granted fewer or more precarious job opportunities due to competition from more experienced older workers. It is also possible, however, that policy-makers will promote hiring of younger workers, to address public concerns regarding youth unemployment, which in turn can create fears of job loss among older workers. In these and other ways, changes in the workforce age composition can create social tensions, perceptions of threat and challenging workplace dynamics, especially between younger and older workers. Therefore reducing intergenerational tensions and combatting workplace ageism deserves special attention from researchers, policy makers and organizations.

The resulting social challenges are not only due to objective changes in the workplace and labour market, but also rise from subjective perceptions fuelled by ageist attitudes, as well as personal and group interests. One way in which age is frequently categorized is using a generational approach (i.e. groupings based on age cohorts and shared historic events). Although the use of generational generalizations is controversial and their effects in the workplace have been scientifically challenged (e.g. Constanza et al., 2023; Rudolph et al.,

2021), modern workplaces have more groupings than ever, with so-called Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964), Gen X (1965-1980), Millennials/Gen Y (1981-1996), and Gen Z (1997-present) working together. It is crucial to better understand how younger and older workers see each other, and how this affects how they interact.

Although the social psychological literature has provided important insights into ageist perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors, the lion's share of research has focused on how older people are perceived. Acknowledging the bidirectional nature of age biases – i.e., that age biases can be directed at both younger and older adults/workers – is an important step in better understanding and addressing the challenges that an aging workforce poses.

The age@work research team conducted a three-year research project on bidirectional ageism in Portugal, with the generous support of the Fundação Francisco Manuel dos Santos. Data were collected from different samples, including a 1,000-person representative sample of the Portuguese population. Over 20 surveys were conducted, and an experiment was run to rigorously show effects of ageism on workplace outcomes. A variety of qualitative and quantitative approaches were used to analyse the data. A thorough review of relevant literature was conducted, and experts within and outside of Portugal were consulted along the way. Key findings from our research are overviewed in this book.

This “Resumo da Fundação” aims to disseminate the main findings and conclusions of the study “Understanding ageism toward younger and older workers”, edited by Fundação Francisco Manuel dos Santos. Readers can access the full study through the website ffms.pt.

1. What is ageism?

Ageism can be described through three interrelated ideas:

1- It is a psychological process based on categorizing people into age groups

Age, like gender and ethnicity, is a social category that is usually readily identifiable given its association with specific physical characteristics and features. While aging itself is a biological process, we socially construct what it means to be 'young' or 'old'. Hence, society shapes and defines the meanings and expectations associated with various stages of life. Assigning people into social groups triggers a set of culture-specific social heuristics which are mental shortcuts that enable people to navigate complex social situations by making quick judgments or decisions about a person or group. 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. Such social judgments are heavily informed by stereotypes, which are generalized beliefs about the social category the person belongs to. Though stereotypes might be true, quite often they are not, thus resulting in a biased view of those belonging to a certain social category. For instance, seeing a person with wrinkles and grey hair may lead to assumptions of frailty and patronizing behavior towards this person. This type of social bias towards people based on their age is commonly referred to as 'ageism'.

2- It consists of stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination and is often very subtle

Ageism can be expressed in three different ways: (1) stereotypes (i.e. what kinds of characteristics are associated with older/younger people), (2) prejudices (i.e., the feelings associated with older/younger people, such as whether they are liked), and (3) discrimination (whether older/younger are treated differently because of their age). It is important to note that ageism can also include positive stereotypes and positive discrimination. For example, older people are often seen as nice but not so competent, which is a stereotype that includes both a positive and a negative evaluation. This can result in patronizing behaviors which may not be readily recognized as discriminatory, but can still be degrading; for example, when

individuals use 'baby talk' with older people. 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 an age-related decline in cognitive abilities are often accepted at face value and reinforced in society through language, literature, humour, and mass media.

3- It can be directed toward both older and younger people and has profound implications

Ageism is bidirectional, like a two-way street. Younger people have negative attitudes towards older people, but older people also have negative attitudes towards younger people. Compared to middle-aged adults, both younger and older people are usually perceived as having lower social status when it comes to power, wealth, respect, influence, and prestige. This is why ageism is bidirectional, because it targets both younger and older people. These two forms of ageism can be referred to as youngism and oldism, respectively.

Ageism has also been shown to be experienced more often than sexism or racism (Abrams et al., 2010). Yet it is still heavily underresearched, which is concerning given the evidence showing that ageism can have profound negative implications for individuals, organizations and societies. For example, experiencing age discrimination can diminish the will to live for older people (Levy, et al., 1999), while internalizing positive stereotypes can increase longevity (Levy, et al., 2002). For organizations, ageism can lead to deteriorated working environments (Wilks et. al, 2013), with implications for employee performance and organizational productivity (Kunze et. al, 2013).

Age discrimination is costly for societies, too. A recent estimate for the United States puts the one-year cost of ageism against older people at \$63 billion because it aggravates some of the most expensive health conditions (e.g., cardiovascular disease, and mental disorders; Levy et al., 2020). Hence, identifying ways to tackle ageism is paramount for creating better conditions for all ages. Yet, there are still many unanswered questions about the functioning of ageism and its implications in the workplace, especially when it comes to ageism directed at younger people.

Understanding stereotypes is important

Because ageism is rooted in what people believe about certain age groups, stereotypes are particularly important to understanding why someone would discriminate against another person on the basis of their age. Stereotypes are shared beliefs about what people in a

particular group are like or should be like, that we learn from others. These beliefs simplify and exaggerate differences between groups and are automatically activated when paying attention to someone from a particular group.

The social psychological literature distinguishes between three kinds of stereotypes: (1) descriptive stereotypes, (2) metastereotypes, and (3) prescriptive stereotypes. Descriptive stereotypes have been researched the most and describe what people think members of a group are/ behave like. For example, younger people may be generally characterized as inexperienced and immature. Metastereotypes are attributed intergroup beliefs, i.e., individuals' beliefs regarding how a social group is viewed by other groups. For instance, a younger person may believe that older people see younger people as inexperienced and immature. Finally, prescriptive stereotypes are beliefs about how people should be/ behave because of their group membership. For instance, thinking that older adults should not dress as if they were young is a prescriptive stereotype about older people.

Because of their prescriptive nature, prescriptive stereotypes are especially powerful in intergroup relations, as they involve one group exerting social control over another. They are also particularly detrimental because they imply not only being different, but being in violation of what is expected. 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. Although prescriptive stereotypes can lead to prejudice/discrimination in instances where descriptive stereotypes do not, this kind of stereotype has been researched the least in the ageism literature.

Takeaways:

- This project adopts a bidirectional ageism perspective by disentangling ageism into 'oldism' and 'youngism'.
- 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.
- Ageism is experienced by more people than racism and sexism and has important negative consequences for individuals, organizations and societies.

- Ageism is an underresearched topic, especially with regard to ageism against younger people.

2. What do we know about workplace ageism?

The aging 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 increased importance of understanding ageism and intergenerational relations in organizations. However, as with ageism research in general, workplace ageism research has predominantly focused on older workers, in spite of recent research showing that ageism can also target younger people, including in the workplace domain.

HR and personnel decisions involving younger and older workers are often age-biased

Ageism has been shown to affect HR and personnel decisions for both older and younger workers. Workplace oldism research has shown that older applicants are provided less access to interviews and to higher paid vacancies than younger applicants, and offered fewer training opportunities (Bal et al.'s, 2011). Older workers, compared to younger ones, are also less well-evaluated in terms of performance, development potential, and interpersonal skills, such as vitality and risk-taking.

In terms of workplace youngism, more than a quarter of young employees report age discrimination during all phases of their employment, from recruitment to promotion and lay-off (e.g., de la Fuente-Núñez et al., 2021). Younger workers also tend to be relatively underpaid and report not feeling valued, receiving belittling comments, being perceived as less competent, and also receiving fewer development opportunities. When bosses are younger than their team members, the team tends to give them lower ratings for job expertise.

Ageism has negative effects for both targets and endorsers

Ageism can have detrimental effects for both workers towards whom ageist attitudes are directed (ageism targets) as well as for workers who hold ageist attitudes towards others (ageism enablers). Older workers who experienced age discrimination reported lower self-esteem, lower perceived personal control, lower job satisfaction and lower levels of organizational affective commitment (e.g., Snape & Redman, 2003). Similarly, younger

workers who experienced age discrimination reported lower job satisfaction and employee work engagement and an increase in work-life interference, thereby reducing work-life balance (e.g., Jelenko, 2020). With regard to individuals who hold ageist attitudes towards others, it was found that the more individuals held oldist and youngist beliefs, the more they experienced anxiety towards these age groups, and the more they enacted counterproductive and harmful behaviours towards colleagues, such as insulting someone about their job performance (Paleari et al., 2019).

Age stereotypes can be positive or negative and are often untrue

Understanding ageist stereotypes is especially important, because they underlie prejudice and discrimination but if recognized, can be tackled via education and awareness-raising programs. Examples of descriptive stereotypes towards older workers (how older workers *are*) include: low ability and performance, resistant to change, more frequently absent, less motivated, not open to training, but more dependable, reliable and displaying more integrity than other age groups(?). Examples of descriptive stereotypes towards younger workers are: not committed, poor work ethics, and entitled and argumentative, goal-oriented, tech-savvy, innovative, eager and bright. Although stereotypes can also be positive, younger and especially older workers are mostly targeted with negative stereotypes.

It is important to emphasize that stereotypes are generally not accurate. While less is known at this point about the (in)accuracy of younger worker stereotypes, a review of 418 studies by Ng and Feldman (2012) has clearly shown that common stereotypes held about older workers (e.g., less motivated, less willing to participate in training and career development, more resistant to change, less trusting and less healthy), are generally not empirically supported.

Prescriptive age stereotypes, which are generalizations regarding how members of a an age group *should* behave (North & Fiske, 2016), can predict prejudice/discrimination even when descriptive stereotypes do not. An example of a prescriptive age stereotype is the expectation that older workers should step aside to make way for the younger generations in the workplace. An important prescriptive age stereotype regarding younger workers is that they should accept lower status in the organization (e.g., by accepting menial tasks) and not challenge the hierarchy or status quo. If an older or younger worker does not conform to

these expectations, they may face a backlash, for example, by being presented with less interesting work opportunities or being socially ostracised.

How organizations can tackle age stereotyping and foster age-diversity

In organizations, less tension and more contact between different generations, as well as fewer (negative) stereotypes regarding those, are important conditions for the development of a positive workplace intergenerational climate. Research shows that this kind of climate has beneficial outcomes, such as increased job satisfaction (King & Bryant, 2017) and reduction of intentions to quit (Iweins et al., 2013). Age diversity training programs are an effective tool that organizations can use to foster a positive climate and improve interactions between age-diverse co-workers. An example is the Burmeister and colleagues (2021) training methodology, which has produced positive impacts such as increased contact quality, reduced stereotype threat, and greater knowledge transfer. Other practices aimed at improving the skills, motivation, and opportunities to contribute can be directed to employees of all ages and have been also shown to contribute to a positive intergenerational climate (Boehm et al., 2013).

Takeaways:

- Because up to four generations may coexist in contemporary organizations, it is increasingly important to understand ageism and intergenerational relations in organizations.
- Workplace ageism negatively affects HR and personnel decisions for both older and younger workers.
- Stereotypes tend to be inaccurate generalizations, and being stereotyped has negative effects for well-being and in the workplace, for both targets and enablers of ageism.
- Understanding stereotypes is an important part of diversity- and awareness-raising programs in organizations.
- Addressing ageism in the workplace can have multiple benefits for organizations, including reduced intentions to quit and increased performance and job satisfaction.

3. The prevalence of ageism in Portugal

By 2030, the number of people aged 65 and above could represent almost half of the working age population in Portugal.

(Projeções 2030 e o Futuro, Fundação Francisco Manuel dos Santos, 2012).

Between 2018 and 2080, Portugal's population is expected to decrease from 10.3 to 8.2 million, with a significant decline in the number of younger people (under the age of 15; from 1.4 to 1.0 million), and a considerable increase in the number of older people (aged 65+; from 2.2 to 3.0 million). As a consequence, the working-age population (those aged between 15 and 64 years old) will also decrease from 6.6 to 4.2 million (INE, 2020). These changes are also reflected in the ageing index which is rising exponentially, with 27.5% in 1961, 98.8% in 2000, 161.3% in 2019 and 183.5% in 2022 (PORDATA, 2022). In addition to these objective changes affecting Portugal, the subjective part of the equation also needs to be understood and taken into account. There is the need to consider how people personally experience these changes and how they can affect individual wellbeing, relationships among different age groups, and workplace dynamics. These social implications of an ageing population were the focus of this research project.

In spite of the fact that ageism can change how one sees and relates to others, and how one sees himself or herself, the determinants and consequences of ageism are still not fully understood. A frequently overlooked aspect of ageism is the cultural contexts in which it is manifested and studied. Most research on ageism has been conducted in Europe and North America, and in Anglo-Saxon contexts in particular. It, therefore, becomes important to complement and enrich the research to date with findings and insights from other cultural contexts.

There are important ways in which Portugal differs from countries such as, for example, the United States, which may influence how ageism is experienced and responded to. The U.S. is characterized by low power distance (less importance paid to hierarchy), high individualism (versus collectivism), low uncertainty avoidance (high tolerance for unpredictability; Hofstede, 2001), and weak social norms (Gelfand et al., 2011). Portugal, on

the other hand, is characterized by a culture that is high in power distance and collectivism, low in uncertainty avoidance (preference for rules and structure), and strong social norms with little tolerance for deviance. It has been suggested that the latter cultural context might in fact show the most ageist attitudes in the workplace (Marcus & Fritzsche, 2016) and therefore deserves to be studied more.

In this chapter, we provide a brief overview of previous research that is focused on the Portuguese reality. We then present our project findings regarding the prevalence of experiencing and endorsing workplace ageism.

What is known from previous research?

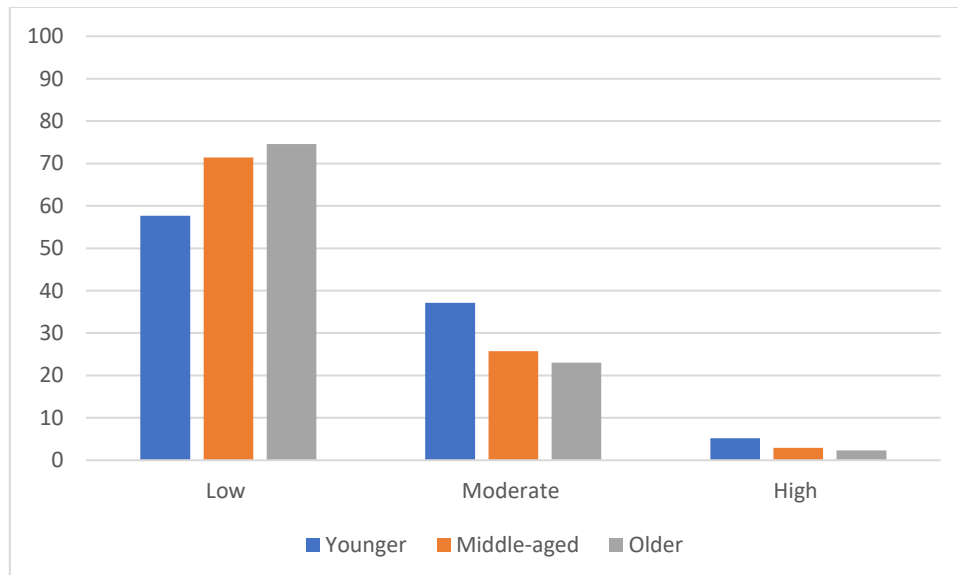
Marques and colleagues (2006) provided some answers about the age-biased beliefs associated with different age groups in Portugal. According to their research, Portuguese adults of all ages see younger adults as *healthy, adventurous, active, fast, pretty, fun, sociable, expansive, creative, and educated*, as well as *hasty and vain*. In contrast, older adults are seen as *experienced, mature, conservative, intuitive, sociable, calm, and wise*, as well as *advice providers, lonely, dependent, superstitious, slow, and cranky*. Both younger and older age groups are also seen as more nice than competent (Lima et al., 2010). Thus, there are ambivalent beliefs about these two age groups in Portugal reflecting a positive bias (or positive stereotype) as well as a negative bias (or negative stereotype).

Furthermore, research with representative data shows that 17.1% of the Portuguese adult population reported having experienced age discrimination. Moreover, experiencing ageism was reported more frequently than experiencing sexism or racism. Individuals over 65 years of age reported the most age-based discrimination, with both genders reporting similar levels (Lima et al., 2010). The study by Lima and colleagues (2010) provided crucial insights into the prevalence of ageism in Portugal. However, it studied ageism in general and did not focus on the work context. Hence, in order to investigate the pervasiveness of ageism at work in Portugal, within the scope of the present project, a survey was conducted with a representative sample of 1,002 Portuguese workers. The sample was carefully selected to mirror the Portuguese population in terms of age, gender, and geographic distributions, so that the results provide a strong indication of the reality in Portugal.

Who is targeted by workplace ageism?

Feeling discriminated against on the basis of age was measured using the Workplace Age Discrimination Scale (WADS, Marchiondo et al., 2016). On average, Portuguese workers reported relatively low levels of discrimination: 2.2 on a scale of 6. More concretely, while 66.5 percent of participants reported low levels of age-related discrimination, 29.8 percent reported moderate levels, and only 3.7 percent reported high levels. Nonetheless, feeling discriminated against was predicted by several socio-demographic characteristics. Younger workers (18-35 years old; 2.45 out of 6) reported the highest levels of perceived discrimination, followed by middle-aged (36-50; 2.05 out of 6) and older workers (51 and above; 1.99 out of 6). In fact, 42.3 percent of younger workers reported moderate or high levels of age-related discrimination, compared to 28.6 percent of middle-aged workers, and 25.6 percent of older workers (for more details, see Figure 1).

Figure 1 – Percentage of workers who experienced age-related discrimination, according to age group



In addition, workers with lower incomes reported higher levels of perceived age-related discrimination and managers felt less discriminated against than other workers, even when age was controlled for. The size, industry sector, and regional location did not predict

workplace ageism. However, less age discrimination was reported by workers in organizations with a more flexible and modern culture. Interestingly, gender did not significantly predict feeling discriminated against on the basis of age, nor did level of education.

Who endorses workplace ageism towards older workers?

We also investigated the extent to which Portuguese workers in the representative sample endorsed negative and positive attitudes towards older workers. The negative attitudes were measured with the *Succession* dimension of the Succession Identity and Consumption scale (SIC; North & Fiske, 2013), and with a scale measuring four negative attitudes towards older workers (Rego et al., 2017). The *Succession* dimension of SIC measures the beliefs that older people should hand over roles and resources to younger generations, rather than hold on to them. Thus, it is a prescriptive stereotype and can be considered negative towards older workers. The four negative attitudes towards older workers, which were combined into a single score, related to older workers' perceived lack of adaptability, valued competencies, organizational conscientiousness, and performance. Two positive attitudes toward older workers were also measured: whether older people should be included in the workforce (International Social Survey Programme; Jutz et al., 2017), and beliefs that older workers were generous and had high social capital, in terms of positive workplace relationships (Rego et al., 2017).

The *Succession* dimension was evaluated with an average of 3.71 out of a maximum of 6 points, showing moderate support for the belief that older workers should step back and make way for younger workers. Younger workers reported the highest endorsement of *Succession* beliefs, with 90.7 percent being moderate or high endorsers, while only 83 percent of middle-aged workers, and 71.8 percent of older workers moderately or strongly endorsed these beliefs (for more details, see Table 1). When it comes to the negative attitudes toward older workers, although they were generally not strongly endorsed by Portuguese workers, with an average score of only 2.52 out of 6 points, a similar pattern was observed. While 49.1 percent of younger workers endorsed the negative attitudes toward older workers at a moderate or high level, only 42.3 percent and 30 percent of middle-aged and older workers respectively did so (for more details, see Table 1).

Positive attitudes regarding older workers' generosity and social capital (3.82 on a 6-point scale) and beliefs that older workers should be included in the workforce (3.70/6) were

both endorsed at a moderate level – and, notably, more strongly than the negative attitudes regarding older workers. However, younger workers were less strong in their support for the positive attitudes than middle-aged or, especially, older workers, with 88.9 percent believing at moderate or high levels that older workers were generous and had high social capital, and 76.2 percent believing that older workers should be included in the workforce. Middle-aged workers' scores were slightly higher, with 91 percent believing that older workers were generous and had high social capital, and 76.5 percent believing older workers should be included in the workforce. Older workers most strongly endorsed both positive attitudes toward older workers, with 95.3 percent high or moderate in believing that older workers were generous and had high social capital, and 84.5 percent high in believing older workers should be included in the workforce (for more details, see Table 1).

Positive and negative attitudes toward older workers were associated with several socio-demographic characteristics. Negative stereotypes and attitudes regarding older workers were more strongly endorsed by men. The *Succession* stereotype was more strongly endorsed by workers in private companies than by those in public administration. The positive attitudes regarding older workers were more endorsed by people in managerial positions than by those in lower-level positions. Beliefs that older workers should be included in the workforce were also higher for individuals without a university degree, in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area and South regions, and for individuals with higher incomes. Moreover, positive beliefs regarding older workers' generosity and social capital were related to political orientation, with those with left/liberal views on social issues endorsing them more. Workers in more modern and flexible (versus traditional and rigid) organizations also endorsed these positive beliefs to a greater extent.

Who endorses workplace ageism towards younger workers?

We investigated the extent to which Portuguese workers endorsed negative stereotypes towards younger workers. Holding prescriptive stereotypes against younger workers was measured using the *Workplace Ambivalent Youngism Scale* (WAYS), developed within this project. The first dimension, *Humility-Deference*, refers to expectations that younger workers should accept the hierarchy and lower status. The second dimension, *Loyalty-Belonging*, states that younger workers should integrate into and demonstrate long-term commitment to their organization. Finally, the *Vitality-Innovation* dimension, refers to expectations that

younger workers be dynamic, proactive, creative, and tech-savvy. WAYS was generally endorsed at a moderate level by Portuguese workers, with an average score across the three dimensions of 4.44 out of a maximum of 6 scale points. However, there are important differences among the three dimensions. *Loyalty-Belonging* stereotypes were the most strongly endorsed (4.82), *Vitality-Innovation* stereotypes were less strongly endorsed (4.52), and *Humility-Deference* stereotypes were the least strongly endorsed (3.98).

There were also strong differences among age groups, with prescriptive age stereotypes regarding younger workers being generally endorsed less by younger respondents and more by middle-aged workers and older workers: *Humility-Deference* was strongly endorsed by 30.7 percent of younger workers, 32.8 percent of middle-aged workers, and 31.9 percent of older workers; *Loyalty-Belonging* and *Vitality-Innovation* were highly endorsed by 62.9 percent of younger workers, 73.5 percent of middle-aged workers, and 79.8 percent of older workers; and *Vitality-Innovation* was highly endorsed by 56.5 percent of younger workers, 61.1 percent of middle-aged workers, and 69.5 percent of older workers (for more details, see Table 1).

In addition, these stereotypes were endorsed more by individuals with more right/conservative views and less endorsed by individuals with university education. In addition, professional role and organizational context related to higher endorsement of specific WAYS dimensions. Greater professional experience related to stronger endorsement of all three WAYS dimensions, and having a managerial role related to higher endorsement of the *Vitality-Innovation* stereotype. In addition, Individuals who worked for organizations with a more flexible (versus rigid) and more modern (versus traditional) culture were more likely to endorse the *Loyalty-Belonging* and *Vitality-Innovation* stereotypes regarding younger workers.

Table 1 - Percentage of workers who endorsed ageist beliefs and attitudes, according to age group

		Younger (18-35)	Middle- aged (36-50)	Older (51+)
Succession stereotype	Low	9.3	16.9	28.2
	Moderate	54.1	59.5	54.9
	High	36.6	23.5	16.9
Negative attitudes toward older workers	Low	50.9	57.7	70
	Moderate	46.4	40.7	29.1
	High	2.7	1.6	0.9
Generosity and social capital of older workers	Low	11.1	9	4.7
	Moderate	72.2	63	45.1
	High	16.7	28	50.2
Inclusion of older workers in workforce	Low	23.8	23.5	15.5
	Moderate	51.6	43.7	37.6
	High	24.6	32.8	46.9
Humility-Deference, stereotype, younger workers	Low	7.4	6.3	4.7
	Moderate	61.9	60.8	63.4
	High	30.7	32.8	31.9
Loyalty-Belonging. stereotype, younger workers	Low	2.5	1.6	0.5
	Moderate	34.6	24.9	19.7
	High	62.9	73.5	79.8
Vitality-Innovation, stereotype, younger workers	Low	1.5	1.3	0
	Moderate	42	37.6	30.5
	High	56.5	61.1	69.5

Note: The scores for each ageist belief and attitude are coded as low (1-2.6, on a scale of 1 to 6), moderate (2.7-4.3), and high (4.4-6), in order to have a similar range within each level.

Takeaways:

- While the majority of Portuguese workers reported low levels of experienced discrimination, there were still 33.5 percent reporting moderate and high levels of age-related discrimination.
- Considerably more younger workers (42.3%) reported moderate or high levels of age-related discrimination, compared to middle-aged (28.6%) and older workers (25.6%).
- Younger workers and workers with lower incomes reported higher levels of being discriminated against on the basis of age.
- Being a manager and working in an organization with a more flexible and modern culture are both associated with less reported age discrimination.
- Positive attitudes toward older workers were more strongly endorsed by older age groups, by people in managerial positions, by people with left/liberal political orientation, by workers in more modern and flexible organizations, and by individuals with higher incomes.
- Negative attitudes toward older workers and beliefs that older workers should make way for younger workers were more strongly endorsed by younger workers, by men, and by workers in the private sector.
- Stereotypes toward younger workers were more likely to be endorsed by middle-aged and, especially, older workers, and by workers with more right/conservative views.

4. Consequences of being targeted with ageism

If somebody in your workplace was described as an 'Old Dear' by a colleague, what would you think?

- A. It is harmless enough and often said affectionately
- B. I can see it as a bit patronising but it is not my business to get involved
- C. It is belittling and unacceptable – I should call the person out on it

The question is part of an ageism quiz that can be found at https://www.everyagecounts.org.au/take_the_quiz. The website points out that when people refer to somebody as an 'old dear' or a 'sweet old thing', people are saying that they conform to one of the common stereotypes of older people (especially older women) as "being nice, kind, perhaps a bit slow and forgetful and not to be taken as seriously as other people". People are all probably familiar with this stereotype, and with its opposite – the grumpy old man or woman. Or the one about the younger worker that is always on their phone and thinks they know more than they do.

When colleagues comment on our age in this way, it conveys certain assumptions that are being made (implicitly) about us. These assumptions are heavily based on stereotypes that people have about our age group. People seem to think that, because one is a certain age, then one behaves in a certain way, has certain characteristics, and certain abilities. Not only that, but also one *should* behave in a certain way, *should* have certain characteristics, and certain abilities. How this can affect members of particular age groups, young and old, is the focus of this chapter.

A person's assumptions about others (people or groups) influence how they interact with them and what is expected from them. These assumptions are very often not accurate, and almost never true for all members of a group. One may not even be aware that one's behavior towards certain people/groups is related to these assumptions. One of the consequences of holding (negative) assumptions about others is treating them unfairly. Receiving unfair or prejudicial treatment because one belongs to a certain group, such as a certain age group, is called discrimination. It is well-established that being discriminated against leads to negative consequences. These consequences are felt in different areas of life,

including in the workplace, with both younger and older workers experiencing high levels of age discrimination throughout the entire work life cycle. Despite this, little is still known about the consequences of being targeted with ageism, especially when the targets are younger workers.

What is known about consequences of stereotyping and discrimination?

It is known that discrimination, and even perceiving a situation as discrimination, can negatively impact one's health and wellbeing (e.g., WHO, 2021). Discrimination is a public health issue (APA, 2022), which can lead to a multitude of stress-related emotional, physical, and behavioral consequences. For example, distress, sadness, and anger (stress-related emotional responses) can lead to both an increase in the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other substances (health-harmful behaviors) as well as a decrease in sleep and physical activity (health-promoting activities). Simply being a member of a group that is often discriminated against can be stressful and demotivating. Consequences of experiencing discrimination can be especially far reaching for members of disadvantaged groups, including in terms of the harmful impact on their psychological wellbeing.

What about ageism, in particular?

In the case of older adults, evidence shows that experiencing ageism can result in poorer physical health, including chronic health conditions, and poorer mental health/ psychological wellbeing, greater financial insecurity, decreased quality of life, and lowered life satisfaction (Levy, 2009). Research by Chang and colleagues (2020) showed negative effects of ageism in all 45 countries and 11 health domains studied. Being targeted with ageism can be a significant obstacle to the retention and full utilization of older workers, by damaging their self-confidence and discouraging them from pursuing professional opportunities. It can also lead to premature retirement, which might represent a loss and a significant cost to the organization. On the positive side, while workplace ageism significantly decreases older workers' job satisfaction, a healthy intergenerational workplace climate can positively increase their level of satisfaction (Lagacé et al., 2019).

When it comes to age-related discrimination, both younger and older workers (the disadvantaged age-groups) experience far more negative impact from age-based discrimination than middle-aged workers. Workplace ageism against younger adults,

especially for those under 30 years old, is reported throughout the work life cycle, from the recruitment process, through promotions, to departing the organization. For younger workers, being targeted with ageism can result in not feeling valued, receiving belittling comments, being perceived as less competent, and receiving fewer development opportunities, as well as lower salaries for similar work and less access to benefits. It also negatively impacts job satisfaction and work engagement, satisfaction with coworkers, and affective organizational commitment. It contributes to the disruption of the work-life balance, and younger adults, facing “multiple -isms” (based on age, skin colour, ethnicity, and class) also show worse mental health outcomes (de la Fuente- Núñez et al., 2021). As with older workers, when the young face workplace ageism they are less likely to achieve their full potential at work.

Research on stereotype threat - the belief that one may be targeted with degrading stereotypes – has shown that it can negatively impact cognitive performance and physical functioning, as well as mental health and job attitudes. On the other hand, being targeted with positive stereotypes can sometimes result in improved performance – known as stereotype boost. However, even positive stereotypes have been shown to lead to negative outcomes, as a result of the fear of having to live up to expectations created by the positive stereotype.

It is also worth mentioning the importance of distinguishing effects of feeling *stereotyped* from effects of feeling *discriminated* against. When one feels stereotyped, one feels put into a category (such as old, or young), and that as a result how one *is*, or how one *should* be and behave, is viewed differently. This can lead to discrimination, defined as the unfair treatment of individuals based on their membership in a group. However, stereotyping people does not always translate into discriminatory treatment, and feeling stereotyped does not always lead to feeling discriminated against.

Even though previous research has already provided some insights into the effects of ageism, there is still little research on ageism against younger people, especially in the workplace, and in the Portuguese context.

What was learned from the current project?

Our project findings show important, mostly negative, consequences for targets of ageism, including both older and younger workers. In our research, both stereotyping and discrimination on the basis of age had important consequences.

In our study of over one thousand Portuguese workers, of all ages and from all regions of Portugal, feeling discriminated against on the basis of one's age related to a range of negative outcomes. For Portuguese workers of all ages, feeling discriminated against was associated with perceiving more interpersonal conflict in their workplace, especially for younger and older workers. Although feeling discriminated against was not related to performance, it was associated with lower job satisfaction, especially in the case of older workers, and with a greater desire to leave the current organization. Experiencing discrimination also increased stress levels, though more so for younger and middle-aged workers than for older workers. It also was associated with lower mental health and physical health for all age groups.

Because different stereotypes apply to different age groups, we looked at effects of specific stereotypes relating to older workers in a study of 150 Portuguese older workers, and to younger workers in a two-wave study of 362 Portuguese younger workers. In both studies, we investigated effects of prescriptive age-based stereotypes - beliefs regarding how different age groups *should* and *should not* behave. Our results showed that when older workers felt stereotyped in their workplace (in terms of beliefs that older workers should step back and make way for younger workers), they felt less commitment and dedication to the organization, and experienced lower levels of employee engagement. They also reported lower performance, fewer behaviours to help colleagues, and higher levels of absenteeism. Thus, for older workers the consequences of feeling stereotyped were uniformly negative.

When it comes to Portuguese younger workers, whether being stereotyped has negative or positive consequences depends on the specific stereotype that younger workers feel targeted by. We tested effects of the three prescriptive age-based stereotypes regarding younger workers identified in our research: 1) that younger workers should accept lower status and never challenge hierarchy (termed *Humility-Deference*), 2) that younger workers should show loyalty and make efforts to be socialized into their organization (termed *Loyalty-Belonging*), and 3) that younger workers should be energetic, creative, and tech-savvy (termed *Vitality-Innovation*). Feeling targeted by the *Humility-Deference* stereotype, which

gives younger workers lower status, was consistently associated with negative consequences, including lower perceptions of fairness, lower organizational commitment, less employee engagement, and stronger desire to leave the organization. However, when younger workers felt targeted by the *Loyalty-Belonging* and *Vitality-Innovation* stereotypes, they reported performing better and feeling more capable in their work role, both positive workplace outcomes. However, on the negative side, these same stereotypes predicted increased stress and decreased mental health, and in the case of *Vitality-Innovation* actually predicted lower perceptions of organizational fairness and stronger desire to leave the organization. These results highlight the ambivalent nature, and consequences, of prescriptive workplace stereotypes regarding younger workers, which can impose both negative and positive expectations on younger workers - with even the positive expectations sometimes having negative consequences for individuals and organizations.

Our results clearly show the negative effects on individuals and organizations when workers feel discriminated against on the basis of age. Feeling unfairly treated as a younger or older person can negatively affect work attitudes, performance, relationships in the workplace, and even mental and physical health. However, the results of our research regarding stereotypes suggest that they do not always lead to discrimination, and can in fact lead to both positive and negative consequences in the workplace. For example, more negative stereotypes regarding younger workers can lead to negative workplace attitudes, but more positive stereotypes can increase some aspects of individual performance, even if stress and mental health are still negatively affected. Unfortunately, for older workers the effects of being stereotyped seem to be more uniformly harmful, to the individual and to their organization.

Not only does ageism negatively affect people that are stereotyped and discriminated against, it can also impact the workplace attitudes, behaviour, and wellbeing of the people that categorize and discriminate on the basis of age, as we discuss in the following chapter.

Takeaways:

- Experiencing age-related discrimination is associated with negative workplace outcomes, including more perceived interpersonal workplace conflict, lower job satisfaction, and greater desire to leave the organization.

- Experiencing age-related discrimination negatively impacts wellbeing, in terms of increased stress levels, lower mental health, and lower physical health.
- For older workers, feeling targeted with the *Succession* stereotype was associated with lower commitment to the organization, lower performance and employee engagement, fewer behaviours to help colleagues, and more absenteeism.
- For younger workers,
 - Feeling targeted with expectations that they should respect the hierarchy and accept lower status (*Humility-Deference* stereotype) was associated with lower perceptions of fairness, lower employee engagement and commitment to the organization, and stronger desire to leave the organization.
 - Feeling targeted with the *Loyalty-Belonging* and *Vitality-Innovation* stereotypes had both negative consequences (higher stress and lower mental health) and positive consequences (including better self-reported performance, and feeling more capable in their work).
 - Feeling targeted with the *Vitality-Innovation* stereotype, had additional negative consequences, in terms of lower perceptions of fairness and stronger desire to leave the organization.

5. Consequences of endorsing ageism

Which of the following statements best matches your views about older people in the workplace?

- A. Older people have an obligation to retire and make way for younger people
- B. Age is irrelevant – it is about whether or not you can do the job
- C. Older workers tend to be less effective and have more accidents at work

As in Chapter 4, this question is part of an ageism quiz that can be found at https://www.everyagecounts.org.au/take_the_quiz. The first answer, that older people have an obligation to retire and make way for younger people, clearly reflects an ageist stereotype regarding what older workers should do (make way for younger workers) and should not do (hang on to their positions). While many older people want to retire, many others prefer to keep working. In fact, often they have no choice – they have to keep working in order to get by financially and pay their bills. It is important to note that the respondents were not told about the competencies, performance, or commitment about the older worker, which should be considered before making a decision. The third answer, that older workers are less effective at work and have more accidents, also reflects misconceptions about older workers. Although our reactions to age groups are often implicit and automatic, they can have consequences not only for the age groups we are judging, but also for ourselves. That is what we will be discussing in this Chapter.

When thinking about other people's age, one may notice that there are certain underlying assumptions. There are things about certain age groups that one believes to be a certain way, to be true, or untrue. One of those assumptions might be that one's own age-group is more capable, has more abilities or more knowledge than other age-groups. In sum, that one's age-group is "better" than other age groups. And this is not surprising. In fact, one of the main social motives that drives people is valuing "me" and "mine". This means that, as human beings, people are motivated to favour those they perceive as belonging to our social groups, namely their age-group. Even though favouring one's own groups is not the same as harming other groups, being driven by this social motive may translate into derogatory behaviour towards those belonging to "other" age groups. One of the forms such derogatory treatment

may assume is discrimination – treating others unfairly because they belong to a certain group, namely a certain age group. Interestingly, it has been shown that discrimination is not equally endorsed by all groups. Dominant and high-status groups, such as male engineers in the high-tech industry, are likely to be more discriminatory than low-status groups, such as women in the same industry (e.g., Neely et al., 2023). And we already know from Chapter 4 that feeling targeted with discrimination, namely age-related discrimination, results in a myriad of negative consequences.

But what about endorsing ageism?

How is one's life, including the work life, affected by holding ageist beliefs?

It is known that the tendency to dislike “other” groups can have negative impacts. There is evidence that such biases can spawn anxiety, stress, and negative emotions, such as anger and resentment. And this is also the case for those endorsing ageism. There is evidence that holding ageism towards older workers relates to greater anxiety towards these workers and to worsened quality of contact with other age groups – a relationship that endured over a three-month period. Interestingly, that was also the case for those endorsing ageism towards younger workers. They experienced more anxiety towards younger workers, decreased quality of contact with other age groups, reported more negative interactions with younger coworkers, and displayed more counterproductive behaviours toward coworkers of all ages. It was also shown that negative perceptions regarding perceiving contact between different age groups leads, in turn, to reduced vitality at work, which is related to thriving and personal wellbeing at work (Paleari et al., 2019). For younger adults working in age-diverse teams, endorsing ageism can also have a negative impact on their general health status, as well as the number of days of reported physical and psychological impairments. Evidence also shows a U-shaped relationship between age diversity and health, with younger workers and older workers showing poorer health than middle-aged workers.

Because holding certain assumptions about others may prone us to act in a certain way, it can be easily imagined that endorsing ageism might also lead to more negative behaviours and/or less positive behaviour towards certain age groups. In the organizational context, this is also a concern and has been studied in the form of organizational citizenship behaviours (OCBs) and counterproductive work behaviours (CWBs), both of which can be displayed towards coworkers and/or the organization. OCBs refer to behaviours that go “above and

beyond” the formal job description, thus, being generally beneficial. CWBs, on the other hand, refer to behaviours that go against the interests of an organization, thus, being not only negative, but even harmful. Interestingly, evidence has shown that endorsing ageism indirectly related to the display CWBs, such that ageism towards older adults worsened the quality of contact with older workers, and ageism towards younger adults worsened the quality of contact with younger workers. This, in turn, increased the display of CWBs towards coworkers of all age groups (Paleari et al., 2019).

There is also evidence pointing to some of the conditions that lead to perceiving contact with older workers as positive. These include increased age, a workplace climate where workers have positive attitudes and feelings towards workers of different ages, namely in terms of the existence of less tension between the different generations, more contact between the different generations, as well as fewer (negative) stereotypes regarding the different generations and greater job satisfaction. In the same vein, research has shown that for those holding ageism towards older workers, high quality contact between different generations and greater empathy towards older workers increased job satisfaction. These are important findings, as job satisfaction has been related to feeling motivated at work and displaying positive attitudes toward the organization and the job. Along the same lines, evidence shows the positive impact of age-inclusive HR practices, which refer to practices aimed at improving the skills, motivation, and opportunities to contribute by employees of all ages. These practices were shown to contribute to an organizational age-diverse climate, which, in turn, lead to increased organizational performance and fewer intentions to leave the current organization.

What was learned from the current project?

Consequences of holding ageism against both older workers and younger workers were investigated in the same representative sample of 1,002 Portuguese workers mentioned in Chapters 3 and 4. Endorsing ageism towards older workers was measured in terms of *Succession* beliefs (i.e., that older workers should make room for younger workers), general negative attitudes towards older workers, as well as positive perceptions regarding older workers’ generosity and whether they should be included in the workforce. Endorsing ageism toward younger workers was measured in terms of the three prescriptive age-based stereotypes regarding younger workers identified in our research: 1) *Humility-Deference*

(younger workers should accept the hierarchy and lower status), 2) *Loyalty-Belonging* (younger workers should show loyalty and commitment to their organization), and 3) *Vitality-Innovation* (younger workers should be energetic, creative, and tech-savvy). Holding ageism toward older and younger workers had important consequences, for the workers endorsing ageism and also for their organization.

Endorsing ageism towards older workers 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 fewer negative attitudes toward older workers (in terms of value, performance, adaptability, and conscientiousness), and less strongly believed that older workers should step back and make room for other generations, reported higher quality workplace contact with older workers. Holding positive beliefs about older workers, in terms of their inclusion in the workforce and their generosity and social capital, was also related to greater job satisfaction and intentions to remain in their current organization. Endorsing negative beliefs and attitudes towards older workers was also related to worse mental health, whereas holding more positive beliefs regarding older workers related to better mental health.

Endorsing prescriptive stereotypes against younger workers was related to both positive and negative workplace consequences, as well as individual wellbeing, depending on the specific stereotype. Workers that endorsed the *Loyalty-Belonging* and *Vitality-Innovation* stereotypes reported higher quality contact with younger workers, and greater job satisfaction and intentions to remain in the organization. In addition, self-reported performance and helping colleagues were higher for workers that endorsed the *Loyalty-Belonging* and *Vitality-Innovation* stereotypes, as were self-reported mental health and physical health. Thus, endorsing the *Loyalty-Belonging* and *Vitality-Innovation* prescriptive stereotypes was related to several positive outcomes. It is important to note, however, that endorsing the *Humility-deference* stereotype, which attributes lower status to younger workers, did not result in similar positive outcomes. In addition, the results of an additional study we conducted with 213 workers, an experiment in which participants responded to a hypothetical workplace situation, clearly showed that high endorsers of the *Humility-Deference* stereotypes were more likely to negatively evaluate younger workers (in terms of performance, morality, and warmth) who did not comply with the stereotype. In addition,

people who held these stereotypes supported, accepted, and regarded as fair punishing younger workers for not complying to the *Humility-Deference* stereotype.

These findings clearly show that ageist biases also have consequences for people endorsing ageism. When it comes to ageism toward older workers, holding more negative attitudes can have adverse consequences for the individual and their organization, while holding positive attitudes can have benefits. When it comes to ageism toward younger workers, the more positive stereotypes (*Loyalty-Belonging* and *Vitality-Innovation*), which acknowledge the strengths of younger workers and their potential to integrate into organizations, show benefits. In contrast, the more negative stereotype that assigns lower status to younger workers shows no positive consequences. These results clearly show that the valence and content of our beliefs regarding age groups can influence their positive and negative effects on us and on our workplace.

Takeaways:

- Ageism has consequences not only for people being targeted with it but also for those who have ageist attitudes towards others (ageism endorsers).
- On average, Portuguese workers endorse age stereotypes towards older and younger workers at low to moderate levels.
- People who endorsed negative beliefs and attitudes towards older workers were found to have worse mental health, whereas holding more positive beliefs regarding older workers related to better mental health.
- People with stronger negative attitudes toward older workers and less strong beliefs that older workers should step back and make room for other generations reported higher quality workplace contact with older workers.
- People with stronger positive beliefs about older workers, in terms of their inclusion in the workforce and their generosity and social capital reported greater job satisfaction and intentions to remain in their current organization.
- Endorsing the more positive prescriptive stereotypes of *Loyalty-Belonging* and *Vitality-Innovation* toward younger workers was associated with higher quality contact with younger workers, greater job satisfaction, stronger intention to remain in the organization, higher self-reported performance, and better self-reported wellbeing.

- Endorsing the more negative Humility-Deference stereotype toward younger workers was associated with more negative evaluation of younger workers (in terms of performance, morality, and warmth) and with more strongly supporting and regarding as fair the punishment of younger workers who did not comply with these stereotypes.

Conclusion

With the generous support of Fundação Francisco Manuel dos Santos, this project has improved our understanding of the psychological, contextual, and organizational factors that predict and can result from bidirectional workplace ageism. We have added to existing knowledge in this important area in several relevant ways. Many of our studies focused specifically on better understanding how age discrimination and stereotyping are enacted, perceived, and responded to in Portugal, complementing prior research from other countries. Unlike much of the previous research, which investigated ageism across a variety of domains, our focus has been on the workplace, where ageism can be especially consequential. We also considered ageism directed at both ends of the age spectrum (i.e., at both younger and older adults) important to investigate. And whereas previous research on ageism has looked more at targets of ageism and consequences to them, we explored some of the powerful beliefs and attitudes that, if left unchecked, can lead to conflict and division among age groups.

Although people's wellbeing and performance is of course influenced by material outcomes and objective workplace conditions, our research clearly shows that individuals are also profoundly affected by what they think about themselves and about others. 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 is targeted by them, is related to lower levels of psychological wellbeing. Hence, combating ageism in the workplace is not only beneficial for the targets of discrimination, but carries wellbeing benefits for those endorsing ageist beliefs as well.

Of course, one size does not fit all, when it comes to addressing workplace ageism. Ageism is experienced differently by different groups in organizations, and this should be reflected in the remedies proposed. We also need to acknowledge that understanding ageism is not the same as addressing it. Nonetheless, a better understanding is an important first step, albeit one that should be built upon strongly and swiftly.

Addressing ageism is a collective effort that involves contributions from everyone. Based on past research and key insights from this project, we make the following recommendations for individuals:

- Be aware that:
 - there is a natural tendency to stereotype others, but remind yourself that stereotypes are generalized and oversimplified beliefs which do not do justice to individual differences. Hence, remain self-critical and question your assumptions regarding individuals of different age groups.
 - stereotyping, and even discrimination, on the basis of age is often unconscious and non-malicious, but speak up when you see it happening to you or to someone else so that different perspectives can be exchanged and an inclusive environment can be promoted.
- Recognize that:
 - there are predominantly negative consequences associated with feeling stereotyped, and especially with feeling discriminated against.
 - even positive stereotypes can have negative consequences because of the pressure that they can put on individuals to live up to expectations.
 - experiencing ageism can have serious personal and organizational consequences; therefore, it is an important issue to address in the workplace.
- Behave in a way that:
 - you spend more quality time with individuals of different ages in your workplace, as better intergenerational relations are shown to result in numerous positive outcomes for everyone involved.
 - you acknowledge instances when you are being stereotyped on the basis of age, but choose whether to conform or instead to communicate why the stereotypes are not applicable to you. Open and respectful communication about stereotyping can help others learn about and better understand misconceptions that contribute to biased beliefs.

Organizations have a very important role to play in combatting workplace ageism. As it is the quality of intergenerational contact, rather than its frequency, that improves attitudes and relations between younger and older workers, organizations should create opportunities for positive intergenerational contact, for example through cross-generational teambuilding activities, as well as mentoring and reverse mentoring programs. The role of HR is crucial in ensuring that the selection, evaluation, and training of employees is done in a way that

considers awareness towards biases, and that equal workplace opportunities are provided to all, regardless of age.

By definition, stereotypes regarding diverse age groups vary widely – in their valence, content, and strength – and initiatives to tackle stereotyping should be adapted to the specific context and conducted in a pragmatic and evidence-based way. Organizations should implement diversity training to raise awareness about stereotyping and its complex effects on targets and to communicate that greater inclusion of all age groups should lead to better employee engagement, performance, and retention. From the top levels of organizations to the shopfloor, leaders and managers should challenge ageist assumptions regarding the ability, motivation, and commitment of different age groups. Because ageism often interacts with other “-isms”, such as racism or sexism, workplace training may in some circumstances need to tackle more than one at a time, in order to alleviate the multiple burdens experienced by some individuals in our society.

Given its potential to create a society that is more equitable and inclusive, addressing workplace ageism should be a priority for Portugal. With the rapid ageing of the population in Portugal and the accompanying workplace challenges, policymakers should prioritize initiatives to address ageism towards both older and younger people. To be most effective, they should include input from and participation of the various stakeholders, including non-governmental associations, educators, industry organizations, labour unions, and health experts. Intergenerational initiatives are likely to be the most fruitful given the importance of intergenerational contact quality for reducing ageism (see the imAGES programme for an intergenerational intervention example in Portugal, Marques et al., 2014). In addition, events and campaigns to combat and raise awareness about workplace ageism can be organized. Policymakers should collaborate more closely with researchers to ensure policy advice and recommendations are evidence-based. These initiatives should acknowledge the fact that ageism is bidirectional and not prioritize one age group over another, as such one-sided attention could further fuel intergenerational tensions.

Addressing ageism towards both older and younger workers is crucial for promoting equality, fostering inclusive workplaces, and maximizing the potential contributions of individuals across all age groups. However, facing a challenge as complex and entrenched as bidirectional ageism in the workplace requires support from across society. We hope that findings from this project can be used in the design and implementation of policies, training,

and interventions aimed at combatting ageism in Portugal, and toward promoting diverse and inclusive workplaces. A more inclusive workplace, that respects and provides equal opportunities for all age groups is a goal worth striving for together.

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Glossary

Ageing index: The number of people aged 65 and over for every 100 people under the age of 15. A value of less than 100 means that there are fewer older people than young people.

Ageism: Negative or positive stereotypes (how we think), prejudice (how we feel) and/or discrimination (how we act) against (or to the advantage of) younger or older people on the basis of categorizing them as young or old.

Descriptive stereotypes: Beliefs about the attributes, roles, and behaviors of members of a social group.

Discrimination: Negative, hostile, and injurious treatment of members of a disadvantaged social group.

In-group bias: The tendency to favour one's own group, its members, its characteristics, and its products, particularly in reference to other groups.

Metastereotypes: Beliefs individuals have regarding how their social group is perceived by other social groups.

Oldism: Stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination (ageism) directed at older people. Workplace oldism refers specifically to ageism targeting older workers.

Positive discrimination: Preferential treatment of members of a disadvantaged social group.

Prejudice: A biased and often negative attitude toward another social group.

Prescriptive stereotypes: The characteristics/behaviours that we think people in a social group should have/do, to be considered "normal" and to maintain that group's proper place within a culture.

Social categorization: The process through which we group individuals based upon social information, such as age or ethnicity.

Stereotype boost: When people perform better than they otherwise would, because of exposure to positive stereotypes about their social group.

Stereotype threat: When people perform worse than they otherwise would, because of exposure to negative stereotypes about their social group.

Stereotypes: Cognitive generalizations (e.g., beliefs, expectations) about the characteristics of the members of a social group.

Youngism: Stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination (ageism) directed at younger people. Workplace youngism refers specifically to ageism targeting younger workers.

List of Abbreviations

APA – American Psychological Association

CWBs - Counterproductive Work Behaviors

INE – Instituto Nacional de Estadística

OCBs – Organizational Citizenship Behaviors

OECD - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

SIC – Succession, Identity and Consumption scale

U.S. – United States (of America)

WADS – Workplace Age Discrimination Scale

WAYS – Workplace Ambivalent Youngism Scale

WHO – World Health Organization

“To learn more” - Recommended literature

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