

# Chapter 12

## Ageism and Older Immigrants



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### 12.1 Introduction

Since the 1950s, the global economy has been characterized by transnational movements of people in search of better lives and employment opportunities in developed countries (Castles and Miller 1993; ILO 2011; Sasken 1999). In the past few decades, the population of older immigrants in Europe has also significantly increased (Torres 2015; White 2006). This population consists of two main groups: individuals who migrated as labour migrants during the mass-migration flows, who then aged in the host country, and individuals who migrated in older age for either family, amenity, or other reasons (Warnes et al. 2004; Warnes and Williams 2006; White 2006). The current chapter examines ageism towards these two populations.

Immigration policies are usually designed to meet the host country's labour market needs, as well as demographic trends and objectives. There are several immigration types. Permanent migration, which characterizes countries such as Australia and Canada, means a long-term stay of immigrants in their host countries, which requires their adaptation to local society and culture. In recent decades, these countries' policies have become more selective to meet the local economic and labour market needs. Temporary migration is sought for a limited period of time, and is

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aimed at meeting labour force shortages, such as in the fields of domestic care, construction, and agriculture. A third type is family reunification migration. This type mostly entails the migration of family members who are considered dependents, usually the spouse and minor children. Family reunification is not recognized as a universal right, but rather relies on individual nations' migration objectives. A fourth migration type is highly skilled migration. These migrants are usually granted preferential treatment compared with less skilled migrants (United Nations 2013).

The literature describes older immigrants in a variety of terms, such as "older immigrants" (e.g., Leach 2008; Terrazas 2009), "elderly immigrants" (e.g., Torres 2006), "older migrants" (e.g., Attias-Donfut 2016; Torres 2015; Van der Geest et al. 2004; Warnes et al. 2004; Warnes and Williams 2006), "immigrant seniors" (e.g., Koehn et al. 2010), "elderly migrants" (e.g., Bolzman et al. 2006; Ruspini 2010; Zahlen 2016), "older ethnic minorities" (e.g., Lievesley 2010), and "ethnic minority elders" (Victor et al. 2012). Other terms emphasize these people's past as workers, such as "post-retirement migrants" (e.g., Ackers and Dwyer 2004) and "older labour migrants" (e.g., Bolzman et al. 2004). The ambiguity caused by such a variety of terms might partially be due to the neglect of the topic of older immigrants by both migration and gerontology researchers (Torres and Karl 2016) and also to the limited public and political discourse regarding older immigrants. The current chapter uses the term "older immigrants" in order to focus on the important fact of their having moved to a different country, and to emphasize the immigration's *permanence* (in contrast to the focus on *movement* that is embedded in the term "migration").

At the beginning of 2015, there were nearly 53 million persons living in EU member states who had been born outside their current countries of residence. The age structure of this population was younger than the EU countries' national age structure (Eurostat 2016). The exact number of older immigrants in Europe is difficult to calculate, because of the group's heterogeneity (Ruspini 2010; Torres 2006) and because data are only sporadically available. Not all countries and regions have data on their older immigrant population, and the different measurement tools they use make the existing data not readily comparable (White 2006). According to one estimate, as of 2006, there were more than 2.5 million older non-nationals aged 55 and older resident in EU member states, with approximately 30% of this group aged 65 or older (Dwyer and Papadimitriou 2006). Later estimations suggest an increase in numbers of older immigrants in Europe from 7 million in 2008 to 15 million in 2015 (Ruspini 2010). Different estimates suggest that the current number of older immigrants is increasing and will continue to grow substantially during the coming years (Eurostat 2016; Lievesley 2010; Warnes et al. 2004; White 2006).

Because being an older adult and an immigrant might place an individual at risk of experiencing a double jeopardy of marginalization and social exclusion, the presence of this population raises specific questions regarding ageing, welfare needs, and policy responses (Torres and Lawrence 2012). In this chapter, we examine older immigrants' characteristics and policies regarding older immigrants, and discuss these characteristics and policies within the context of ageism. We examine the existence and weight of the age factor in immigration policies as well as policies

concerning age-related issues such as health and retirement that affect immigrants. We examine whether a migrant status constitutes a situation of increased vulnerability to ageism. First we discuss the association between ageism, ageing destination countries, and immigration policies. Then we outline the disadvantages of older immigrants who have aged in the host country and the countries' immigrant age limitation policies, and discuss these within the context of ageism. The chapter concludes with recommendations and implications given current immigration waves.

## 12.2 Ageism, Ageing Destination Countries, and Immigration Policies

*Ageism* has been defined as a complex and often negative socially constructed perception of old age (Bytheway 1995; Palmore 1999) that takes place at the institutional and cultural level (macro-level), in social networks (meso-level), and on the individual level (micro-level) (Iversen et al. 2009). Ageism may be expressed in both positive and negative forms (Cuddy and Fiske 2002; Levy and Banaji 2002). Ageism includes behavioural (e.g., discriminating), cognitive (e.g., stereotyping), and affective components (e.g., positive or negative feelings) (Iversen et al. 2009).

Ageism can be either implicit or explicit; in other words, even without intention or awareness, people might discriminate against older people (Iversen et al. 2009). Explicit ageism can be direct (and therefore not “politically correct”) or indirect, hidden in various practices (e.g., employers' justification of ageism based on unrelated grounds) (Cheung et al. 2011; McVittie et al. 2003).

Ageism may frequently form as a double jeopardy, because it is easier to use ageist attitudes and behaviours against socially disadvantaged groups (Dowd and Bengtson 1978). The literature reveals older immigrants' vulnerabilities to poverty (e.g., Terrazas 2009), health problems (e.g., Beiser 2005; Jass and Massey 2004), mental health problems (e.g., Bhugra 2004; Pumariega et al. 2005), and social isolation (e.g., Victor et al. 2012); yet most immigration studies have failed to examine ageism towards older immigrants.

The association between ageing, ageism, and migration is reflected in various ways. Classic modernization theory (Cowgill and Holmes 1972) suggests that as societies become more industrialized and modernized, younger people tend to leave their extended families and establish their households in modern cities. According to this theory, Zimmermann (1995) argued that stagnating and aging populations tend to attract migrants, while young and large populations generate more mobile individuals. The migration targets tend to be industrialized countries with a high demand for workers (Castles and Miller 1993; ILO 2011; Sasken 1999). Consequently, in the sending countries, older people might be left behind, without their children to look after them (Van der Geest et al. 2004; Warnes et al. 2004), and the economic and social vitality of the countries of origin might therefore be threatened (Warnes et al. 2004).

Recent data regarding asylum seekers in Europe shows that in 2016, more than 1,200,000 people applied for asylum for the first time in the EU-28 member states. Among them, more than 83% were younger than 35 years old (Eurostat 2017). This is not a unique situation; the history of immigration to Europe since 1945 shows that asylum seekers are usually young (and usually men). Young men were also the first labour migrants who immigrated to Europe during the period of “blooming economies” in the 1950s and 1960s. Many were later followed by their family members (Hansen 2003).

Industrialized countries that demand workers are usually ageing countries (United Nations 2013). The case of Austria may serve as an example: similar to other European countries, Austria has an ageing and shrinking population, with positive net immigration being the only demographic driver of population growth. The total fertility rate was 1.44 children per woman in 2013, measured by the “net reproduction rate” such that the generation currently at reproductive ages will numerically reproduce itself by only 69%. Population forecasts based on 2013 data foresee a share of 28% being 65 and older in 2050 (Statistik Austria 2014). If so, contemporary Austria (like other industrialized countries) is a country that depends on immigration to compensate for an ageing and shrinking population.

Immigration policies usually assume that immigration is an option which is intended and appropriate for young people (Harper 2011; Van der Geest et al. 2004; Vullnetari and King 2008). Younger people are perceived as replacements of the ageing labour force, assuming that higher immigration and higher economic activity might slow the economic consequences of structural ageing (Aydemir 2013; Harper 2011). For instance, migration is a valid policy approach in the context of worker deficit in the UK; immigrant workers fill both the demand for highly skilled workers and the gap in unskilled employment (Harper 2011). Furthermore, immigrants are often perceived by host countries as having larger families than the local population have, and therefore as a potential means to raise the number of births in the country. This perception is associated with the view of immigrants as a potential means to delay population ageing and to maintain the support ratio (Aydemir 2013; Harper 2011). Hence, age and ageing are significant parts of the current migration processes (Van der Geest et al. 2004).

### **12.3 Disadvantages of Older Immigrants Who Aged in Their Immigration Countries**

This section describes the multiple disadvantages of older immigrants who aged in their immigration countries. This population consists largely of older labour migrants and their family members.

**Economic Difficulties** Older immigrants are over-represented among the vulnerable, marginalized, and disadvantaged sections of the population (Bolzman et al. 2004). Because older immigrants are often employed in poorly paid jobs, with limited job security and poor pension rights, they depend on state pensions in retirement (Ahmed 2016; Nazroo 2006). If they have an occupational pension, it is typically low, due to unemployment or early retirement (Bolzman et al. 2004). One particular disadvantaged group in Europe is that of older non-European immigrants. This is because EU immigrants are able to transfer some pension rights, but non-European immigrants usually cannot. In addition, non-Europeans are characterized by higher rates of unemployment, and their concentration in low-skilled or unskilled sectors is associated with lower levels of occupational pension (Dywer and Papadimitriou 2006).

**Inferior Health** Evidence from different countries demonstrates the inferior health state of older immigrants. According to Nazroo (2006), ethnic inequalities in health increase markedly with age, and are largely driven by economic inequalities. Moreover, Nazroo (2003) showed evidence of the significance of racism and discrimination to the life chances of older immigrants who migrated to the UK in the 1950s and 1960s. In Switzerland, a high proportion of older immigrants was forced to retire early because of health problems. For example, half of the older immigrants in Switzerland who had worked in construction left the labour market before the official retirement age and received a disability allowance (Bolzman et al. 2004). This syndrome has been referred to as the “exhausted migrant effect” (Bollini and Siem 1995, cited in Bolzman et al. 2004): immigrants who arrived in their host countries in good health and after years of hard manual work, problematic living conditions, and an insecure legal status, developed health problems.

**Limited Welfare and Health Entitlements** As workers, immigrants contribute to public welfare funds: immigrants’ age structure usually denotes little demand on public sector finances (Harper 2011). However, immigrants’ welfare rights eligibilities are linked to their location within a particular state (Dywer and Papadimitriou 2006). For instance, according to Bolzman et al. (2004), Swiss cantons and communes pay supplementary benefits to those whose old-age pensions are insufficient to cover their basic needs. In the case of immigrants, access to supplementary benefits depends on nationality and the existence of bilateral social agreements with Switzerland, and on the duration of residence in both Switzerland and the canton. Immigrants must have an unbroken 10-year residence to qualify for supplementary benefits. Older immigrants are less likely to have supplementary health insurance than locals. The Swiss case exemplifies the high cost of supplementary health insurance, as well as the low probability that older immigrants, even if they have worked in Switzerland for years, are eligible for supplementary benefits (Bolzman et al. 2004).

**Limited Access to Services** Older immigrants' access to various governmental services and entitlements is limited. Various reasons have been suggested to explain this disadvantage: inadequate language ability, lack of education and cultural capital, lack of information, poor local social networks, and low ability to deal with bureaucracy. As a result, older immigrants in need usually turn to their families or communities (Bolzman et al. 2004; Warnes and Williams 2006; White 2006). Professionals and planners who work with older immigrants tend to attribute the under-use of services to the characteristics of the immigrants and not to the nature of the organization or the services provided (Patel 2004, as cited in Ruspini 2010). However, according to Bolzman et al. (2004), services tend not to be accessible for older immigrants because of the absence of policies to ensure the inclusion of this population in society, including insufficient attention to older immigrants on the part of many mainstream institutions, and insufficient training in multicultural approaches to health and social work. Ahmed (2016) discusses older immigrants in the UK as a group that social care services have traditionally disregarded.

**Lack of Policy or Insufficient Policy** Despite the fact that the regulation of migration is prominent in contemporary European social policy discourse, the discourse on migration policy has habitually focused on immediate and short-term economic issues. A failure to look ahead at the consequences of ageing among immigrants is manifested through the neglect of many issues concerning ageing and immigration: long-term socio-cultural issues as well as health and welfare issues (Warnes and Williams 2006). Failing to plan for the specific needs of a population subgroup can constitute a form of social exclusion (White 2006). This maintains their perception as “birds of passage” rather than as accepted elements of society (Bolzman et al. 2004).

Some countries have a statutory policy concerning one of the immigrant groups (e.g., immigrants who aged in the host country) but not for the other (e.g., people who immigrated in older age). Israel, for example, regards its Jewish immigrants as a returning diaspora and is committed to their integration (Semyonov et al. 2015). Israel's Law of Return does not impose any age limits on Jewish immigrants and their descendants (Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs n.d.). Moreover, Israel holds a statutory supporting policy concerning immigrants who have immigrated to Israel in older age: in Israel, older people are entitled to older-age state pension if they have accumulated seniority through their old-age insurance. However, older immigrants who have not accumulated the required seniority receive a special benefit from the National Insurance Institute, funded by the Ministry of Finance (National Insurance Institute of Israel n.d.). In addition, special grants and benefits are given to this group of older immigrants by the Ministry of Immigrant Absorption and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Services. Services such as nursing homes, older adults' clubs, and counselling, are available in many immigrants' languages. However, this policy usually does not include immigrants who moved to Israel earlier in life and aged in Israel, as they are not entitled to special support (Dolberg 2013).

Another example comes from Iceland, a country that has experienced a significant increase in immigration in the last decade (Vinnumalastofnun n.d.). In 2007,

the Icelandic government released the first Icelandic state policy of integration of immigrants, which emphasized that immigrants should have access to health care and municipal resources as non-residents (Iceland's Ministry of Social Affairs 2007). Older immigrants are subject to the same rules as other older persons in the social security system: in order to be entitled to an old age state pension, the person must have resided in Iceland for at least three calendar years between 16–67 years of age. Old age state pensions are paid as a proportion of the period of residence between the ages of 16 and 67. Over the past 4 years, there has been a substantial increase in the population of older foreign citizens receiving financial assistance. The numbers have increased from 2.7% to 5.2%. The reason for this increase is that they are not entitled to full social security benefits because of their short time of residence (Municipality of Reykjavik 2016). In a policy plan on care of older people in Iceland for the period 2003–2015, the special needs of older people with a foreign background were emphasized (Iceland's Ministry of Healthcare and Social Security 2003). However, a specific policy regarding older immigrants has not yet been formulated.

**Risk of Being Portrayed as a Social Problem** Holding a statutory policy regarding older immigrants might also be associated with exclusion and marginalization, as the Swedish case demonstrates. In the late 1990s, the Swedish government appointed a committee to develop elderly care policies. The purpose was to “take into consideration the growing number of elders with foreign backgrounds and the problems that they might pose” (Statens Offentliga Utredningar 1997, 2002, p. 413, as cited in Torres 2006, pp. 1341–1342). According to Torres (2006), at the core of the equation “elderly immigrants = special needs” lies the assumption that older immigrants are disadvantaged. One of the reasons for this assumption is that almost all research on older immigrants in Sweden (until 2006) focused on immigrants who came outside Europe, and were usually less privileged in terms of continuity of social rights. In fact, older immigrants in Sweden are an extremely heterogeneous group. These previous studies might be partially responsible for perpetuating a potentially damaging stereotype, as new generations of Swedish care planners and providers have learned to regard these elders as “problematic others” (Torres 2006).

## 12.4 Immigrant Age Limitation Policies

Individuals who aim to migrate in older age for family, amenity, or other reasons, might be subject to age discrimination in the form of nations' age limitation policies (Warnes et al. 2004; Warnes and Williams 2006; White 2006). Two main forms of discrimination are presented as examples: discrimination against skilled older workers and discrimination against older family members.

**Discrimination Against Skilled Older Workers** A substantial number of western countries impose age limitations on potential immigrant workers by relying on points-based assessments to obtain skilled immigrants. Points-based systems

attempt to capture a multi-dimensional notion of human capital. In most points-based systems, age is one dimension according to which points are allocated. Other dimensions are education level, professional experience (or previous earnings), factors that might influence integration costs (such as language ability or previous in-country work experience), and current national demand for particular skills (Parsons et al. 2014).

Although points-based systems vary across countries and the age criterion has a different weight in each, age usually has a high weight in the total multi-dimensional score (Parsons et al. 2014) and might be a barrier for applying for an immigration visa. For instance, applicants for Australian skill stream visas must be under 50 years old (this age threshold was changed from 45 to 50 in July 2011) (Van de Ven et al. 2014). Moreover, age has the heaviest weight of all factors in the Australian skilled migration system, as it may provide the applicant with the maximum number of points—30 out of a minimum of 60 points required as a threshold (Facchini and Lodigiani 2014). However, only 25–32-year-old applicants can receive 30 points for age; 33–39-year-old applicants receive 25 points, 40–44-year-old applicants receive 15 points, and 45–49-year-old applicants do not receive any points for age (Australian Visa Bureau n.d.), and therefore, their chance of passing the 60-point threshold might be low.

Another example is that of Austria's recent "Red-White-Red Card" criteria-based immigration scheme, introduced in 2011. The program was introduced in order to regulate immigration of qualified third-country workers and their families with a goal of permanent settlement in Austria. In order to receive a Red-White-Red Card, the applicant has to achieve a sufficient number of points (e.g., for education, professional experience, age, language skills). Again, the prioritization of young migrants is demonstrated by the points given for age when applying for the Card: 20 points for an age up to 35, 15 points for ages 35–40, and 10 points for ages 40–45. No points are given after the age of 45. The minimal pass mark point score is 70, out of a possible 100 (Migration.gv.at n.d.).

The award of points for age represents an attempt to reward experience along with selecting younger migrants, who could potentially contribute to the work force of host countries for a longer time than older migrants. Following this rationale, people in their late 20s to early 30s are awarded the most points (Parsons et al. 2014). However, these policies might represent a type of institutional ageism. Under this system, older people who wish to immigrate might not be able to, and therefore might be excluded from being part of society merely due to their age.

**Discrimination Against Older Family Members** Older people who wish to immigrate for family reasons sometimes face another form of direct ageism. Research has shown that these older people might face more discrimination than younger people who wish to immigrate on the same basis. One example comes from Canada, where Family Class immigrants account for almost 80% of the immigrants who arrive in Canada after the age of 60. In British Columbia, older Family Class immigrants are dependent on their family sponsors, who are expected to support



them financially for 10 years, a considerably longer period than for other family class groups (the period for a sponsored spouse, for example, is 3 years). During that period, older immigrants are usually not eligible for public benefits (Koehn et al. 2010; Koehn and Kobayashi 2011).

In the past two decades, several governments have been changing their policies regarding older immigrants who apply for family reunification. For instance, in 1997, Sweden introduced restrictive rules for family reunification. The age limit for family reunification was lowered to children under 18 years old. The ability of older parents, especially widows and widowers, to unite with their adult children in Sweden was restricted (Migrationsverket n.d.-a, b) solely to cases in which the following can be shown: (a) a relationship of dependence between relatives such that it is difficult for them to live apart; (b) the older parent and the sponsor (the adult child in Sweden) lived in the same household immediately before the adult child moved to Sweden; (c) the older parent's application was submitted soon after the adult child settled in Sweden. However, even under these restrictive limitations, this regulation includes a warning concerning the "difficulties of applying for reunification directly after the sponsor settled in Sweden" (Government Bill 1996/97:25, p. 113, as cited in Riekkola and Nilsson 2011).

A more recent change occurred in the UK in 2012, with the new Adult Dependent Relatives rules. Previously, UK permanent residents' parents or grandparents over the age of 65 (or under 65 in exceptional circumstances), who had no other family abroad and were financially dependent on their UK relatives, were able to apply for settlement in the UK. The UK sponsor was required to commit to a 5-year sponsorship without recourse to public funds (UK Visas and Immigration (n.d.), Immigration Directorate Instructions 2012, as cited in JCWI 2014). Under the new rules, older parents and grandparents asking to reunite with an adult child or grandchild in the UK should prove that, due to age, illness, or disability, they require long-term personal care to perform everyday tasks and are unable to obtain the required level of care in their country of origin, even with the financial and practical support of their UK sponsor (Immigration Directorate Instructions 2012, as cited in JCWI 2014). The likelihood of the older parents or grandparents of a UK permanent resident receiving a settlement visa of this category is practically negligible (JCWI 2014).

These changes to the Adult Dependent Relatives rules in the UK prompted reactions from NGOs as well as from Parliament members. According to the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants report (JCWI 2014), the Adult Dependent Relatives rules prior to the changes were not a significant burden on the taxpayer. This is because parents and grandparents of UK citizens and settled residents consistently represent less than 1% of the overall net migration and less than 3% of grants of settlement in the category "Family Formation and Reunion" since 2005. According to the report, the cost-benefit analysis in the government's impact assessment is primarily focused on partners coming to the UK. Therefore, the report suggests that the UK government's proposed policy objectives of "reducing the burden on taxpayers, promoting integration, preventing abuse and contributing to reducing

net migration” are not met by the new rules, and that “there is a complete rationale disconnect between the harshness of the rules and the aims they are meant to achieve” (JCWI 2014, p. 43).

Hence, governments’ objectives to reduce net migration and to reduce the burden on taxpayers by disadvantaging older immigrants might appear as discriminative. The next section discusses whether this practice might be considered ageist.

## 12.5 Summary and Conclusions

Europe is ageing, and so is its immigrant population. Moreover, the older immigrant population in Europe is expected to grow substantially in the coming years. This chapter examined policies concerning older immigrants and the disadvantages that characterize this group within the context of ageism. This was done in order to examine whether migration status and old age increase vulnerability to ageism.

Two types of discrimination against older immigrants were presented. The first type of discrimination against older immigrants consists of the various disadvantages that older migrant workers often face. These disadvantages include inferior health, economic difficulties, limited welfare and health services, limited access to services, a lack of policy or insufficient policy, and the risk of being portrayed as a social “problem”. The second type of discrimination consists of age constraints in immigration policies. This category includes discrimination against skilled older workers and discrimination against older family members. The question that arises is whether these discriminatory practices and disadvantages could be referred to as ageist.

We will start this discussion with regard to the various disadvantages older migrants are exposed to. Short-term policies concerning immigrants represent a failure to look ahead at the consequences of immigrants’ ageing (Warnes and Williams 2006; White 2006). Turning a blind eye on the later phases of immigrants’ lives in this way can be interpreted as passive ageism: a lack of policies that meet the needs of older adults (Bugental and Hehman 2007; North and Fiske 2013; Rosen and Persky 1997). Here we wish to emphasize that older immigrants are one segment of the wider ageing community, which should be equally treated, yet might be an easier target for discrimination or neglect.

The host country should consider the entire life course of immigrants’ lives and the lives of their relatives. Stereotypical generalizations about older adults and failure to take into account the later phase of immigrants’ lives represent an exclusion of older immigrants and therefore, in our opinion, might be referred to as ageist.

Attempts to address the needs of this heterogeneous population without “othering” them—that is, without assuming that they are “problematic others” who might have “special needs” (Torres 2006)—is a multifaceted task. This mission requires a careful study of each cultural group, and thorough research concerning the charac-

teristics and needs of older adults within each cultural group. The different issues and needs of immigrants who aged in the host country and people who immigrated as older adults should be examined. Because countries differ in policies, each cultural group should be studied in its own context in order to better understand the intersection between the infrastructure of the country and older immigrants' needs. Caution should be exercised regarding stereotyping older immigrants and "othering" them; the heterogeneity of the older immigrant population must be taken into consideration (Torres 2006).

To address the multiple disadvantages of older immigrants, we recommend allowing older immigrants efficient access to services. Moreover, we recommend implementing services that target older immigrants, such as translators, cultural brokers, and older adult care services. Because the care of older immigrants often lies with their families, beyond the relief of the older immigrants themselves, these services could assist the families and further strengthen their bond with the local community and the country.

The other type of discrimination against older immigrants consists of age constraints in immigration policies. Because older immigrants have the right to apply for public funds in their countries of immigration in some of the cases, policies that discriminate against older immigrants on the grounds of age might rely on the idea that public resources are limited. Because immigration policies are usually designed to meet the country's labour market needs, as well as demographic trends and objectives (United Nations 2013), the decision to restrict immigration by age could be regarded as being simply due to economic efficiency. Hence, age constraints on immigration may not unequivocally be seen as discriminatory.

However, when people are banned from immigration because of their age, and are therefore excluded from being part of a society due to their age, we see it as age discrimination, which might involve both explicit and implicit ageist policies. Furthermore, placing age limits on immigrants sends a clearly age-discriminatory message not only to potential immigrants but also to the country's native born people. Though protective laws against age discrimination have come into force in various countries (Kapp 2013), many older adults who wish to be part of these countries are being discriminated against.

Social identity theory (Tajfel and Turner 1979; presented by Lev et al. in this volume) includes the idea that foreigners become an easy target for discriminatory responses. One possible grounds for discrimination is age. Following this line, as foreigners, immigrants might be subject to age discrimination more than non-immigrants. Therefore, countries that hold protective laws against age discrimination might still discriminate against older immigrants.

In summary, the older immigrant population in Europe has grown in recent decades and is expected to continue to grow. This chapter aims to raise awareness about older immigrants and their unique characteristics, as well as the restrictive policies and disadvantages they might face. We argue that these experiences of older immigrants can be viewed within the context of ageism.

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