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The Welfare State and Services for Elderly Immigrants

Ageing in a foreign country is a global topic concerning all industrial nations. The combination of processes of ageing and international migration over the past few decades has given rise to significant changes in the age and ethnic composition of national populations, causing an increase of elderly immigrants in Europe. It is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore these processes in the policymaking process. Are these trends of ageing and international migration adequately reflected by policymakers in the implementation of social policy instruments? This issue has grown in importance in light of recent debates about strong immigration flows to Europe. One of the most significant current discussions is multiculturalism and the ageing societies of European countries. However, there is still a lack of theory concerning the situation of the elderly immigrants and it has become the reason for the interest of this essay. The aim is to answer the question of whether the implementation of social policy instruments influences the social inclusion of elderly immigrants in countries with different conceptions of the welfare state. The analysis shows that there are several characteristics that may influence the process of social inclusion. Countries of origin with similar background to the host country may positively influence social inclusion of the immigrants. Analysis also showed that countries of origin of the elderly immigrants are completely different from countries of origin of refugees and therefore the social instruments targeted at the main groups of origin of the elderly immigrants in the country do not necessarily meet the needs of the refugees. The findings also support the premise of influence of diversity and ageing on politics and public policy. The elderly immigrants are entitled to certain social services in all compared countries which decreases the risk of their social exclusion. Finally, the high level of public social expenditure does not automatically lead to social inclusion.