

Along with some increasing awareness about the presence of older people in prison, the need for knowledge about the nexus between imprisonment and growing older has become even more pertinent. To this end, we have scrutinised the meaning of imprisonment in later life by means of an ethnographic study that has been conducted at two prisons in Belgium. We have examined, inter alia, what it means to be an older prisoner in terms of their criminal profile and different dimensions of age, which is put into the wider context of a quantitative analysis of the profile of older adult prisoners in Belgium. This study has further disentangled the well-established but formerly inadequately substantiated heterogeneity of this prisoner population and their experiences on the basis of different types of age, in close interaction with the material and the social prison world. Lastly, we have also focussed on these older prisoners' inner world and self-transcending context that has been captured by our findings which have been translated into terms of coping with imprisonment and meaning in life.