Don’t Put all your NGOs in the Same Basket: Investigating the Role of NGOs in Implementing Reintegration Policy for Older Adults in Conflict with the Law

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Abstract

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Western industrialized countries are experiencing an increase in the portion of their populations which are 65 and older. One result of this demographic shift, which is still occurring, is the increasing number of individuals in prisons and jails who are older adults. In Canada, up to 25 % of the federal prison population is considered older. Current studies focus on prison infrastructures and routines which are inadequate for older adults, with many authors suggesting that community placements are more appropriate for this population. Studies on prisoner re-entry focus on the success and use of programs for employment and substance use disorders.

This study focuses on an understudied group: older adults under carceral supervision who are provided reintegration services in the community. Grounded in the social construction of target populations framework – alongside NGO research on social constructions, advocacy and resource dependency – this project asks: *in a context of the devolution of reintegration policy, what explains how re-entry NGOs act to broaden the bounds of reintegration for older adults?* This research uses a four-case comparison of NGOs in Montréal, Toronto, San Francisco and Houston to assess how social constructions of older adults, combined with NGOs’ strategic action through advocacy and resource diversification impacts the bounds of reintegration policy. Newspaper thematic analysis, statistical analysis of funding streams and semi-structured interviews were conducted to compare reintegration services across NGOs. Compared to the two American NGOs, Canadian NGOs provided a greater number and range of services although there was important similarity between the Toronto and San Francisco cases. Within countries the more liberal-leaning cities, with the higher frequency of positive portrayals of aging were associated with more generous bounds of reintegration policy. The findings of this project highlight the importance of considering NGO service providers as agentic rather than passive recipients of correctional department funding. NGOs deploy social constructions, strategic funding searches and advocate to achieve their organizational goals.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

I. Introduction and Context

As a result of an aging population and stricter sentencing, the number of older adults in penal institutions has increased steadily in Western countries. In some extreme cases, like the United States, there has been a 282% increase in this group and even in moderate cases, like that of Canada, this population has increased by 50% which represents an important change to the demographics and management of those in penitentiaries (Maschi, Viola, and Sun 2013). In most Western countries the population of older adults, those 65 and older, is increasing and represents a larger proportion of the overall population than in previous years. This is attributed to lower birth rates and increasing advances in medicine and technology (LaPierre and Hughes 2009). This structural demographic change represents a shift in previous demographic distributions and has caused much public attention to the longevity and sustainability of public programs such as pensions, medical and education systems (Gee 2000; Bongaarts 2004; McDaniel 2000). A 2017 study links these demographic changes to explain the marked increase in aging characteristics within penal institutions (Luallen and Cutler 2017). Less covered in these aging debates, is how this demographic change impacts hidden populations like those who are housed in penal institutions known as older adults who are in conflict with the law (OACL).[1]

Beyond structural changes, criminal justice policies under the "tough on crime" frame also account for the aging of the carceral population. Harsher sentencing, three-strike laws, and mandatory minimums are just some examples of policies which scholars have attributed to the general increase in the captive population since the 1960's (Baumgartner et al. 2021; Zinger 2016; Newburn 2007). Importantly, authors are careful to note that these policies were implemented to varying degrees; however, overall, they represent a shift in "tough on crime" approach to criminal justice policies resulting in a higher carceral population and longer sentencing periods (Rikard and Rosenberg 2007; Newburn 2007; Zinger 2016). Many scholars have critiqued the impacts of these policies such as the inappropriate housing of older adults within penitentiaries (Lynch and Sabol 1997; Wilson and Boratto 2020; Aday 2003).

The majority of studies on older adults who are in conflict with the law focus on the population's poor physical and mental health status within carceral institutions (Williams and Abraldes 2007; DiTomas, Augustine, and Williams 2022; Greene et al. 2018; Hayes et al. 2012; Kuffel et al. 2021). For instance, there is an increased prevalence of physical conditions such as COPD, limited mobility, hypertension, Type II diabetes and dementia (Hayes et al. 2012; Kuffel et al. 2021; Greene et al. 2018), and mental illness such as post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and anxiety occur at higher rates for this group (Di Lorito, Völlm, and Dening 2018). Consequently, OACL age at an accelerated rate thereby causing correctional departments to consider someone aged 50 and above to be an older adult (or senior) comparatively to the traditional age of 65 across the US and Canada (Williams and Abraldes 2007). This research utilizes the same standard and for this project OACL refers to those 50 and older.

The poor conditions faced by OACL has caused advocacy NGOs such as Human Rights Watch and government officials such as the Canadian Office of the Correctional Investigator to

[1] This language was introduced to the researcher by a practitioner in the field and was adopted for this project.

call for the early release of OACL (Zinger 2016; Human Rights Watch 2012). There exists very little research on OACL who have re-entered into the community after an incarceration, or the organizations meant to aid these individuals in their re-entry process (Murolo 2022; Wyse 2018; Colibaba 2019). In fact, since the 1990s, and in part due to the larger austerity measures, NGOs have come to play an increasingly important role in service provision in the penal sector (Tomczak 2016, 6). It is questionable to call for the release of individuals without proper understanding and preparation of the services needed to enable their reintegration.

This dissertation fills this important gap by studying reintegration services to OACL. Specifically, it offers a comparative qualitative assessment of NGOs in Canada and the United States, as they are the key providers of these services. The study uses novel empirical data regarding the impacts of culturally derived social constructions of older adults on the bounds of reintegration services provided to this group. Through interviews and textual analysis, this research involves the examination of the environment surrounding volunteer penal organizations and, as importantly, the types of services they provide. This dissertation focuses on NGOs targeting OACL in Montréal, Toronto, Houston and San Francisco. The following section will outline the major theoretical foundations, research questions, and proposed arguments included in this project. The final section of this chapter will outline the organization and presentation of data to follow.

II. Theoretical Foundations

This study is situated in the field of public policy and deploys studies from NGO literatures to consider the types of organizations charged with the reintegration of individuals. Historically, sub-national and national governments have dominated this policy space in Western-style democracies such as the United States, Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom. The 1990s signaled a new era of reintegration policy, marked by a devolution of responsibilities by state actors to non-governmental organizations tasked with providing a diversity of services meant to aid the formerly incarcerated adjust to life outside of prison (Thompkins 2010; Smith 2010; Tomczak 2016, 1,8,9; Armstrong 2002). Research on reintegration is primarily concerned with state actions of cutting funds for in-prison reintegration programs, outlining the restrictive nature of "contract financing" and other examples of the current neoliberal governance model (Evans and Shields 2014, 119; Tomczak 2016; Rubin and Phelps 2017; Corcoran et al. 2018). Specifically, authors have focused on the ways in which this model limits the contents of reintegration policy to neoliberal principles of employability and individual responsibility (Mijs 2016). The centrality of the state in the reintegration literature has overshadowed our knowledge of the strategies of NGOs who also occupy this policy space (Rubin and Phelps 2017, 428).

The omission of NGOs from consideration is problematic, first because NGOs in the reintegration policy sector, and beyond, are fundamentally different from state actors. NGOs are generally advocates for specific marginalized populations and are often described as "softer and kindhearted, able to mobilize voluntary effort, linked to communities, and values driven" (Brinkerhoff and Brinkerhoff 2002, 3; Beer, Bartley, and Roberts 2012). As such, NGOs often work to provide additional resources to materially and/or socially excluded populations (Beer, Bartley, and Roberts 2012). Second, NGOs are the primary actors responsible for implementing reintegration policy and as the broader implementation literature has demonstrated repeatedly the actions and behaviors of front-line workers dramatically effects the shape, bounds and impacts of

public policies (Meek, Gojkovic, and Mills 2013; Kaufman 2015; Zhang, Roberts, and Callanan 2006; Maynard-Moody and Musheno 2000; Lipsky 2010). Third, NGOs are strategic actors who navigate their environment by advocating through pressuring government actors and who build coalitions through resources or community connections (Beer, Bartley, and Roberts 2012; Carpenter 2007; McEntire, Leiby, and Krain 2015).

OACL re-entry needs go beyond what is generally provided by correctional departments as reintegration services which are employment readiness and substance use disorder programs (Duwe and Clark 2017). OACL often exit incarceration with high medical and social needs, making them often unable to find employment, secure housing, or access government services (Wyse 2018). For this population, NGO efforts to provide services beyond what is traditionally funded are crucial: for example, the creation of age-appropriate long-term housing.

Utilizing the policy literature on social construction of target populations framework (SCTP), this project adds an important element to the study of these organizations. Ingram and Schneider's framework points attention to the ways in which target groups, in this case older adults, are framed according to their societal power and evaluation as deserving or undeserving (Schneider and Ingram 1993). Crucially, if a group is considered positively constructed, powerful and deserving, policy benefits are provided because elected officials view political benefits in doing so. In the opposite case, negatively portrayed groups are punished by policies and programs because public officials do not fear political consequences. The framework's authors suggest that social constructions represent the popular stereotypes, media representations, and culturally informed framings of a group to be considered when analyzing any policy aimed at a particular group. Overall, seniors are viewed as positively constructed in their framework because older adults hold political power but suffer from the plights of old age (Schneider and Ingram 1997). By contrast, those in conflict with the law are viewed as undeserving of benefits because they have committed a crime, and the media and public officials reinforce this message by continuing to pass punitive policies towards this group. Thus, OACL hold two contrasting social constructions which present an interesting puzzle in relation to the broader penal politics literature and broader literature on older adults, specifically how these social constructions interact with the bounds of reintegration policy for OACL. This project connects the literature on social construction of target populations, NGOs and OACL to investigate this puzzle further by posing the following questions.

III. Research Questions and Arguments

The primary research question for this project is: *in a context of the devolution of reintegration policy, what explains how re-entry NGOs act to broaden the bounds of reintegration for older adults?* This question seeks to understand the activities of NGOs and crucially the factors which enable and restrict their ability to provide reintegration services to OACL. Older adults in conflict with the law present higher social and medical needs than average age groups, making imperative the actions of NGOs to provide service beyond traditional reintegration programs. To achieve these aims, two additional sub-research questions are proposed. First, *what is reintegration policy for older adults who are in conflict with the law?* Here, the focus is on the social constructions of older adults and surveying the services provided by reintegration NGOs targeting OACL to map the conditions of reintegration for this group. Second, this project targets the strategies of NGOs within these conditions asking: what *approaches or strategies are used to deliver reintegration policy?*

Argument under investigation

Building on the social constructions of target populations framework and the literature on NGO strategic action this project forwards that the positive framing of older adults provides an unusual source of leverage for reintegration NGOs providing services to OACL. If older adults are considered deserving of services such as infrastructure modification, food delivery programs and abuse prevention campaigns then NGOs can locate and use services or funds to provide to OACL. NGOs are active in searching for funds outside of correctional departments, which fund specific re-entry initiatives thereby allowing OACL organizations to achieve their humanitarian missions (Mitchell 2014). Further, NGOs navigate a context where they emphasize certain positive constructions, old age, over a conflict with the law construction to better achieve outcomes for OACL. Crucially, the argument proposed here is dependent on two equally important forces: the positive construction of aging and the deployment of constructions by NGOs to find and secure more funding for OACL reintegration services specifically. Where constructions are negative and older adults are depicted as undeserving of aid, then NGOs activities in the direction of specifically OACL reintegration will show a smaller bound. This argument proposes two major contributions to the policy, NGO and penal volunteer literatures.

First, the public policy framework on the social constructions of target populations is limited in predictive power when considering two dueling constructions, negative and positive; therefore, this project shines light on how these dueling constructions interact with NGOs ability to provide reintegration services. It would be mistaken to assume that the negative construction should predict all interactions; instead, this project points attention to the unintended consequences of how one construction can alleviate burdens of another. Studies utilizing the framework on dual constructions have suggested more work should focus on the conditions under which particular constructions are presented as opposed to others (Yoo 2002; deLeon 2005). Interestingly, when contrasting identities have been studied NGOs have been shown to use strategic logic to emphasize one frame over another to respond to external environmental challenges but also internal issue group political dynamics (Carpenter 2007).

Second, the NGO literature on penal volunteer organizations focuses intensively on correctional departments-NGO funding relationships and specifically the restrictive nature of the relations (Meek, Gojkovic, and Mills 2013, 348; Phelps 2011, 49; Miller 2014, 311; Mijs 2016, 296). Some ethnographic studies have argued that governments restrict the bounds of reintegration policy by funding a limited number of programs thereby "co-opting" the activities of the organization (Mijs 2016; Miller 2014). Some have come to argue that reintegration NGOs are an extension of the carceral reach and controlling organizations: other researchers have begun to explore the conditions under which these NGOs can and do exert agency in their programming and service delivery (Marwell 2004; Kaufman 2015; Salamon 2014; Mahoney and Baumgartner 2015; 2013). Precisely, Kaufman critiques the assumption that NGO corrections' department funding status, alone, determines the services they provide (Kaufman 2015, 544). Kaufman's work points to a gap in our understanding of how these post-incarceration organizations operate and to an interesting point of investigation particularly where there exist dueling constructions. To contribute to this literature, this project investigates the funding choices of NGOs serving OACL

IV. Methodological Approach

To answer these research questions, this project presents the results of 22 semi-structured interviews and is combined with an analysis of hundreds of public documents including newspaper articles, aging strategic plans, aging department funding reports, audits, publicly available financial records, NGO mandates, strategic plans and media accounts of NGO activities. To test the importance of social constructions this project will study four re-entry NGOs which cater to formerly incarcerated older adults in Canada and the United States, where the social constructions of this group differ. Importantly, the choice of four NGOs allows for comparison within countries which is crucial as reintegration policy is delivered by NGOs facing different political environments. The literature claims that seniors' social constructions are more positive in Canada than in the US, meaning that Canadian NGOs - assuming similar institutional structures- should be better able to expand their activities and policy reach further (Gusmano and Allin 2014; Foot and Venne 2005; Gee 2000). The two American NGOs are in San Francisco, California and Houston, Texas. The two Canadian NGOs are in Montréal, Québec and Peel, Ontario, which is located in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), justifying its classification here as a Toronto-based NGO.

To the best knowledge of the researcher this project is the first to provide cross-national interview data on OACL NGOs who are the key policy actors in the penal volunteer sector. Also, this project is the first to assess and provide information on the conditions and strategies faced and used by these organizations (Clarke 2017; Murolo 2022). Overall, this project brings valuable information for OACL and those responsible for enabling their reintegration into the community. This approach diverts from traditional studies on re-entry which highlight the medical and social needs of this group while incarcerated (Murolo 2022; Clarke 2017). Instead, this project focuses on what happens to these individuals once in the community, which a majority of incarcerated persons return to (Visher, LaVigne, and Travis 2004). Beyond focusing on the needs of OACL this project points our attention to the conditions that help or hinder organizations' ability to respond to OACL reintegration. The aim here is to push the conversation on OACL towards initiatives and potential best practices by organizations to increase the capacity of governments to increase releases of OACL currently incarcerated.

V. Chapter Outline

Chapter two introduces the three major streams of literature this project is built upon. To introduce these three streams, the review is organized around three major questions: why reintegration policy, why older adults and why NGOs? Each of these interrogations will illuminate the ways in which this project deviates from mainstream approaches to the study of prisoner re-entry. Chapter two concludes with a discussion of the theoretical and empirical contributions this project proposes. Specifically, this project seeks to fill the gap in our understanding of OACL reintegration policy as it is implemented in the community. Chapter three presents the project's methodology; concretely, the chapter begins with the conditions, research questions and proposed argument derived from the discussion of literature in chapter one. The chapter then turns to the three methods undertaken for this project, focused comparison, textual analysis, and semi-structured interviews. The focused comparison section will outline the justification for case selection across the 4 cities – Montréal, Toronto, San Francisco, and Houston. Textual analysis and interview methods are generally discussed in chapter two; however, more detail is provided in the subsequent chapters to boost the comprehension of the

presentation of data. Textual analysis was conducted on NGO organizational documents, government funding data and media accounts among others. Interviews were conducted with 22 NGO staff and those implicated in the penal volunteer sector across the four cities.

Chapter four presents the first of three data chapters focusing on the general social construction of older adults within newspapers in the four cities. Social constructions are measured in newspaper portrayals of older adults in the most popular newspapers within the cities under study. Results from the textual analysis are presented with special attention paid to whether the data aligns with the theoretical expectations of previous media studies on older adults. Comparisons between the United States and Canada are also presented, and international variations are discussed. Chapter five and six include data from semi-structured interviews and the textual analysis of documents. Both chapters follow a similar structure wherein organizational profiles are first sketched and explain the services offered by the organization. Second, each chapter defines the aspects of strategic action undertaken by the organization and its employees. Both chapters conclude with a comparison of findings within a country, and chapter 6 includes a specific section for cross-national comparisons. The concluding chapter will summarize the major results of the study and explore future avenues of research and practice.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

I. Introduction

This chapter presents the ways in which this project deviates from the mainstream prisoner re-entry literature, the process in which an individual leaves a carceral institution, by answering three major questions: why reintegration policy, why older adults, and why focus on NGOs? Since the 1990s, Western governments have, to different degrees, restructured many public institutions to be more in-line with private sector market forces wherein policy is considered best delivered by non-government actors competing to provide the most cost-efficient product (Tomczak 2016, 5; Corcoran 2011, 36; Armstrong 2002, 345; Maurutto and Hannah-Moffat 2016; Evans, Richmond, and Shields 2005, 77). In line with these changes, NGOs and specifically not-for-profit organisations have played an increasingly important role in the re-entry and management of those in conflict with the law which recently earned attention from scholars attempting to understand these efforts (Tomczak 2016; Corcoran 2011; Rubin and Phelps 2017; Maier, Ricciardelli, and McNeill 2023). The questions, which guide this review, are meant to inform this growing field with frameworks and insights from the fields of public policy and international relations studies on NGOs.

To achieve this aim, this chapter will begin with a discussion of reintegration policy which serves as the main outcome of study. A majority of studies on the penal policy sector focus on predicting levels of recidivism across populations and contexts which problematically obscures major aspects shaping experiences of incarceration and release (Bunn 2018; Andersen et al. 2020). Namely, recidivism flattens consideration of socio-economic, cultural and community factors which are themselves important for understanding trends, causes of crime and policies devised to respond to crime (Carlton and Segrave 2016; Hannah-Moffat 2005). In response to critiques of recidivism studies, this project centers on reintegration policy or the official program supports provided by NGOs to provide a more well-rounded presentation of the conditions faced by individuals as they exit incarceration. Reintegration policy, as an outcome of study, prioritizes the actions of the State in responding to re-entry into the community rather than concentrating study on criminal actions of an individual after incarceration (Carlton and Segrave 2016; Heidemann, Cederbaum, and Martinez 2016). Additionally, this project focuses on reintegration rather than recidivism as rates of re-offence are particularly low amongst older adults suggesting that this measure is inadequate for understanding realities of incarceration for this group (Rakes, Prost, and Tripodi 2018). The poor medical and social conditions faced by incarcerated older adults has rightly dominated studies of OACL and has been critiqued by human rights groups (Human Rights Watch 2012; Maschi, Viola, and Sun 2013). Inappropriate infrastructure, routines and lack of programming are some of the barriers faced by this group within penitentiaries; conversely, less is known about programs available to this group as they re-enter into society after incarceration (Williams et al. 2012). To fill this gap this project focuses not on the individual OACL but on the official programs and supports provided which are meant to enable reintegration and represent reintegration policy more broadly.

Studying reintegration policy from a public policy perspective introduces the analysis of a policies' target population, how a policy problem is framed, how a policy is implemented and by whom (deLeon 2005; Rein and Schön 1996; Maynard-Moody and Musheno 2000). To the

best knowledge of the researcher, there exist few studies which study the penal policy sector from a public policy perspective (Tomczak 2016). To fill this gap and to contribute to the reintegration stream of the larger re-entry literature this study targets the construction of older adults as recipients of reintegration policy and the primary policy actor responsible for reintegration policy, NGOs. Ingram and Schneider point to the importance of highlighting culturally derived stereotypes assigned to a target population to explain the contents of policies for groups (Schneider and Ingram 1993). Inspired by their framework this project assesses the dueling stereotypes of OACL who are both positively and negatively portrayed as this manifests through the delivery of reintegration policy (Hudson 2013; Harding et al. 2014). Last, inspired by the public administration literature on policy implementation and NGO literature this dissertation centers on the choices of NGO staff as they develop and deliver the policy to OACL in different contexts (Hodge and Piccolo 2005). This project links the literature on NGO funding strategies and the social construction of target groups to understand the contents of reintegration policy for OACL.

To achieve this aim, this chapter will begin with a discussion of reintegration policy which serves as the main outcome of study. The second section will define OACL, outline the drivers of the aging carceral population and what is meant by accelerated aging experienced within penitentiaries. The current status of OACL within penitentiaries and in the larger community features prominently in this section as it represents a majority of studies on OACL. This section also includes the public policy framework the social construction of target populations (STCP) and its use for the study of reintegration policy. The final section outlines the NGO literature on funding and its dominant impact on the generosity and shape of the programs and services organizations deliver.

II. Why reintegration policy?

The individual incarceration process generally covers three major periods, sentencing, incarceration, and release or re-entry (Visher and Travis 2003). This dissertation focuses on the final step of the process, prisoner re-entry, which refers to the transfer from institutional penitentiary supervision and to individual re-entry into the community (Travis 2005; Petersilia 2003). Re-entry is experienced by all individuals who do not die in prison of natural causes or are executed (Visher and Travis 2003, 90). Both Canadian and American criminal justice systems, where the cases for this study take place, include a two-tier system separating local (state or provincial crimes) and federal sentences. In the United States, crimes committed across state lines or against federal institutions such as the Internal Revenue Service are considered federal and individuals therefore serve time in federal penitentiaries (O'Connor 2014, 29–31). All other crimes, and a majority of individuals who are in conflict with the law, serve in state prison sentences. In Canada, those who are serving sentences longer than two years are housed in federal penitentiaries while those with a penalty of less than two years serve time in provincial institutions (Public Safety Canada 2021). In both countries those in conflict with the law are meant to receive pre-discharge planning and supervision in the community if granted parole which often occurs in and through halfway-houses/ community-based residential facilities (CBRF) (Gobeil 2014). Also, in both countries, these community corrections institutions; are, in part or fully, funded by the state through correctional departments (Lee 2023, 123; Desai 2019, 3).

Typical studies of prisoner re-entry originate from the disciplines of sociology and criminology and focus on identifying individual characteristics most correlated with re-offending (Wyse 2018; Harding et al. 2014; Crawley 2004; Zhang, Roberts, and Callanan 2006; Gendreau, Little, and Goggin 1996). This is unsurprising considering that re-entry studies are part of the larger literature on incarceration, criminal justice, and social control (Beckett and Western 2001; Maruna, Immarigeon, and LeBel 2004; Griffiths, Dandurand, and Murdoch 2007). This approach to prisoner re-entry has been termed the recidivism perspective and is considered the dominant approach to the study of re-entry (Bunn 2018; Heidemann, Cederbaum, and Martinez 2016). The recidivism approach forwards that individuals are considered successfully re-entered if they do not reoffend or are brought back into custody (Visher and Travis 2003, 93; Koschmann and Peterson 2013, 190; Lynch 2006, 405; Maxwell 2005).

Critiques of the recidivism perspective argue that authors who use this definition of successful re-entry focus on "narrow outcomes of arrest or not" (Visher and Travis 2003, 93) Specifically, studies focus on the individual characteristics that most closely relate to reoffending and rarely focus on societal-level factors (Broadhurst and Mailer 1990; Zamble and Porporino 1990; Stahler et al. 2013; Phillips and Lindsay 2011). Further, some have questioned this re-entry approach for overvaluing the positive transformative potential of incarceration and overlooking the importance of community contexts individuals re-enter into (Bunn 2018, 3; Visher and Travis 2003, 93; Maxwell 2005; Koschmann and Peterson 2013, 190). Bunn explains that the recidivism approach assumes reoffending is avoidable by the simple fact that individuals have experienced the ills of prison life and therefore can simply choose to not re-offend regardless of their environment (Bunn 2018, 3).

Ultimately, authors have found that the recidivism approach works to highlight and promote the responsibility of individuals to the detriment of other structural causal factors of crime (Shantz, Kilty, and Frigon 2009; Hannah-Moffat 1999). Also, the recidivism approach defines success from the perspective of the state (Carlton and Segrave 2016, 284; Heidemann, Cederbaum, and Martinez 2016, 25). Studies centered on recidivism focus on snapshot assessments of wrongdoing such as drug use and render a verdict of unsuccessful re-entry rather than from the perspective of the individual in conflict with the law. Carlton and Segrave in their study on women's re-entry in Victoria, Australia find that women in conflict with the law tend to define successful re-entry in alternative ways such as a decrease in the use of drugs rather than full-stop sobriety (Carlton and Segrave 2016, 292). Last, studying re-entry from the perspective of recidivism obscures important parts of the experience of exiting prison for certain groups such as older adults. Older adults have been consistently shown to display lower levels of recidivism once re-entering the community (Rakes, Prost, and Tripodi 2018). This has been shown to apply despite various education levels and types of crime committed suggesting that measuring recidivism among older adults replaces studying more useful measures such as: – What programs aid the return of an individual to increase their sense of autonomy after time spent in an institutional setting? Is it possible to say that older adults experience a successful re-entry if they do not reoffend but are socially isolated and lacking monetary means to survive? As will be discussed later, OACL do experience increased challenges finding age-appropriate housing to enable their reintegration (Colibaba 2019). In fact, critiques of the recidivism approach argue that the focus on re-offending alone undercuts efforts toward the study and development of support systems such as monetary, health and life programs which are truly responsible for lower crime rates and lower recidivism rates (Bunn 2018; Ganapathy 2018, 157). In this way, older

adults as a target population for re-entry policy challenge what is considered an ideal outcome, which points to the importance of expanding the focus of re-entry research to study reintegration rather than recidivism.

In light of these critiques, this project uses reintegration policy, defined below, rather than recidivism measured through re-offending rates as the main outcome to be studied. Before outlining the specific outcome, targeted in this project, it is important to discuss reintegration as a concept and explain how it is different from recidivism. Reintegration is defined as "the attainment of stable housing benefits, and employment: (b) network factors, such as the (re) establishment of social relationships and roles; and (c) psychosocial factors, such as feelings of "mattering" or being valued within these relationships." (Wyse 2018, 2154). As this definition demonstrates, unlike the "snapshot" nature of the recidivism approach reintegration incorporates structural and community-level factors to understand life after incarceration (Visher and Travis 2003, 93; Harding et al. 2014, 442). Reintegration policy is defined as official "support given to offenders during their re-entry into society following imprisonment" (Griffiths, Dandurand, and Murdoch 2007, 3; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2006, 1; Chikadzi 2017, 289).[2] The research on the actual contents of reintegration policy is particularly sparse; however, some cross-national generalizations are beginning to emerge (Tomczak and Buck 2019).

A majority of studies on the empirical realities of reintegration policy find that governments tend to provide "official support" for employment and counseling for substance use disorder (Kaufman 2015, 539; Mijs 2016a, 296; Meek, Gojkovic, and Mills 2013, 348; Phelps 2011, 49; Miller 2014, 311). Kaufman finds that the American Federal Prisoner Re-entry Initiative explicitly states that reintegration policy is aimed at "giv[ing] ex-offenders a second chance to become productive citizens" underlining the centrality of "labour market productivity" in state visions of reintegration policy (Kaufman 2015, 538). Others find that employment programs "are among the most common programs in United States corrections" (Nur and Nguyen 2023). Meek et al. support Kaufman's findings by demonstrating that state-funded third sector organizations in the United Kingdom also overwhelmingly provide work and treatment services (Meek, Gojkovic, and Mills 2013, 348). There have been many scoping reviews and studies related to employment and reintegration given that governments invest most heavily in these efforts (Berghuis 2018; Newton et al. 2018; Visher, Winterfield, and Coggeshall 2006; Duwe 2015; Ugyen and Wakefield 2008). It is not unusual to read as an introductory sentence to these studies: "stable post-release employment is intuitively one of the more promising keys to desistance from crime" (Duwe and Clark 2017, 657). Here, like the critique of the recidivism stream, older adults as a target population of reintegration policy challenges what is traditionally studied and assumed to be a success. Older adults exiting the prison system have been found to struggle securing employment or have intersecting medical and social needs hindering this process (Lee et al. 2019; Wyse 2018). Authors have written about a potential double bind faced by older adults who must overcome the stigma of incarceration and older age as they try to secure employment (Cadet 2020; Brown and Greco 2024). These studies push forward important questions: what does reintegration for older adults look like? What programs exist to attend to the multiple barriers experienced by older adults exiting prison? Where is this occurring? Implemented by whom? These questions guide the choice to use reintegration policy as the main

[2] The literature does include broader definitions of reintegration policy which include official support provided in-prison however, things exceeds the empirical context of this project so for the purposes of clarity I have chosen to include a stricter definition (Chikadzi 2017, 289).

outcome of this study. Older adults present an interesting puzzle for the traditional criminological and sociological definitions of reintegration, and they also signal a larger demographic shift within penitentiaries that has become an increasing subject of attention (Wyse 2018; Kirkwood and McNeill 2015).

III. Why older adults?

The prison population, or those who are currently incarcerated, on parole, or reintegrating into the community after incarceration, is growing older. More specifically, the percentage of older adults in custody makes up a growing proportion of the general incarcerated population. This rate of increase is important to note, particularly if considered from a policy perspective. The United Kingdom reported an increase of 111% for individuals aged 50-59, while the proportion of those 60 years and older increased by 216% (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2009, 125). Importantly, the same report found that the UK's general prison population only increased by 51% (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2009, 125). Japanese figures paint a similar story, citing a 160% increase in their older adult prison population from 2000 to 2006 (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2009, 125). The starkest example of this dynamic comes from the United States as it currently stands as the country with the most incarcerated individuals (Statista 2024). A Human Rights Watch report cited a 282% increase in the older American incarcerated population from 1995 to 2010. Similar to the Japanese case, American prisons experienced a lower increase of their general population with 42% (Human Rights Watch 2012, 6). It is also worth noting that within the United States, certain states have seen even larger rises in their aging carceral population. For example, California and Colorado reported a 500% and 720% increase from 1990 to 2009 (Human Rights Watch 2012, 22). In Canada, a recent review of prison demographics found that this population has increased two-fold; also, these figures mirror the increase of this population in the community (on parole, in halfway houses, or statutory-release) (Office of the Correctional Investigator 2019, 13). In short, this phenomenon is occurring across Western industrialized democracies. While true that the degree of severity ranges, it remains a demographic shift that requires public attention. Human rights groups, such as Human Rights Watch and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, have begun to call for the release of these individuals, citing violations in the ethical treatment of older persons subject to age-inappropriate living conditions (Human Rights Watch 2012; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2009). Further, academics and practitioners have echoed these calls while simultaneously critiquing the criminal justice policies which, in part, are responsible for this demographic change (Williams and Abraldes 2007, 57; Maschi, Viola, and Sun 2013, 544; Rikard and Rosenberg 2007, 152). These causes are worth naming in more depth.

Drivers of an Older Carceral Population

The most obvious driver of this carceral shift lies in the general increase in older adults in industrialized societies. Those aged 65 and older represent an increasing portion of the overall global population. This is explained, in part, by advances in medical procedures, technologies, and care, prolonging life for most. Additionally, birth rates have decreased in most industrialized nations, which has changed the shape of our societies, displaying more weight towards the top of the age distribution tree. (LaPierre and Hughes 2009). For context on the magnitude of the demographic shift, a recent empirical study estimates that population aging accounts for half of the aging of the United States prison populations (Luallen and Cutler 2017). Beyond structural changes, criminologists have also pointed to shifts in public policy approaches to crime.

Criminal justice policies have shifted towards a "tough on crime" frame since the 1960s causing a general increase in the population in conflict with the law (Rikard and Rosenberg 2007; Zinger 2016; Newburn 2007). Tough on crime policies generally refer to an assemblage of policies adopted by public officials seeking to harden the severity of prison sentences, aiming to achieve lower crime rates. The effectiveness and impacts of these policies have come under heavy scrutiny from academics and activists. Baumgartner et al. have extensively reviewed the convergence of public concern, media framing, and political messaging, which accounted for this policy shift in the United States (Baumgartner et al. 2021). Their study critiques the impact of these policies as dramatically increasing the incarceration rate generally and by consequence causing a "geriatric explosion in U.S. prisons" because more older adults were now entering the criminal justice system (Baumgartner et al. 2021). Additionally, authors have pointed to the structural impact of higher incarceration rates as felt on a community level; for example, imprisonment causes family ruptures, financial strain, and high emotional distress (Lynch and Sabol 1997). Lynch and Sabol are careful to underline that tough on crimes policies disproportionately were applied to Black Americans and were regionally concentrated exacerbating the punitiveness of the policies for certain community contexts (Lynch and Sabol 1997). Beyond this, the relationship between tough on crime policies and a reduction in crime has been described as nebulous with important caveats related to types of crime and perception of the punitiveness by individuals (Wilson and Boratto 2020, 3).

While particularly associated with United States correctional policies, many countries and political parties have adopted this approach. For example, Wales and England observed this adoption in the 1990s, while Canada experienced this penal turn under the 2010s tenure of Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper (Zinger 2016; Newburn 2007). This assemblage of policies ranges from the simple increase of bookings for incarceration, lengthening of sentences, mandatory minimums, three-strike laws to more abstract political rhetoric of "strength" against crime that alters bureaucratic cultures within corrections departments (Zinger 2016). Since the inception of these policies, aging scholars have criticized the health and social impacts of holding older adults in criminal custody (Aday 1994; Vito and Wilson 1985).

For the purposes of this study, "older offenders" or "formerly incarcerated seniors" are replaced with the term older adults who are in conflict with the law (OACL). This term comes from practitioners who have worked with this population and insist that language plays a key role in the imposition of negative stereotypes onto this population, ultimately undermining the goals of reintegration and rehabilitation (The Fortune Society, n.d.). Therefore, for the purposes of this project, the term OACL refers to those 50 years and older who are serving an incarceration, whether in federal or local penitentiaries, those on parole, and those reintegrating into the community after an incarceration. As the next sections will show in greater detail, OACL experience mental, physical, and social pressures intensifying the aging process. For this reason, corrections departments have accepted to lower the age category to 50+ for OACL, which is contrasted to community-dwelling older adults who are generally considered old when they reach 65+ (Maschi, Viola, and Sun 2013; Williams and Abraldes 2007).

Among the literature on this population, most studies focus on the physical health characteristics of those currently housed in penitentiaries (Greene et al. 2018; Zinger 2016). This is not surprising, considering general prison conditions and the seriousness of their health status. Several key themes have emerged. First, incarceration has been shown to accelerate the aging process (Maschi, Viola, and Sun 2013; Wang et al. 2012; Di Lorito, Völlm, and Dening 2018).

By accelerating, authors have shown that this population tends to display high prevalence of chronic illness, such as diabetes or COPD, high prevalence of physical disabilities, and cognitive impairments, such as dementia (Hayes et al. 2012; Kuffel et al. 2021; Greene et al. 2018). This finding holds constant across different national contexts; for example, data has emerged from studies in Canada, the United Kingdom, United States, and Japan (Williams, Ahalt, and Greifinger 2014).

As an illustrative example, the Office of the Correctional Investigator conducted a recent report of 721 OACL within Canadian federal custody and found that at least 70% of these individuals had a chronic illness (Office of the Correctional Investigator 2019, 14). An English and Welsh study found that 85% of those OACL reported one chronic illness. Chronic illnesses include conditions like obesity, hypertension, Osteoarthritis, Parkinson's, Type II diabetes, and high cholesterol (Fazel et al. 2001).

Less explored, yet just as important, OACL also tend to display poorer mental health and higher prevalence of psychiatric disorders (i.e., post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and anxiety) than older adults in the community. A 2019 systematic review of the international literature on OACL and psychiatric disorders found that across studies, on average, 38% of this population suffers from one of these disorders (Di Lorito, Völlm, and Dening 2018). Surprisingly, the study compares this figure to community-dwelling seniors and finds that "an older inmate [presenting] 'any psychiatric disorder' is more than double (2.5) compared to an older person living in the community" (Di Lorito, Völlm, and Dening 2018, 7). National studies with variable sample sizes show a similar trend: 20% of OACL in Canadian penitentiaries reported feelings of anxiety, 23% of an American cohort of OACL were diagnosed with a mental disorder, and 50% of an English cohort were diagnosed with a mental illness (Office of the Correctional Investigator 2019; Stoliker and Galli 2019; Kingston et al. 2011). Problematically, most recent research on this topic has found that while a majority, or 75%**,** are prescribed medication for physical disabilities, only 18% of the same population are prescribed medication for mental disorders (Baidawi and Trotter 2015). While a Canadian study found that 39.1% of a 197-sample were diagnosed, only 14% regularly visit a psychiatrist (Iftene 2016). Both studies note that there exists a discrepancy between the quantity of care available and provided for physical medical conditions as opposed to psychiatric treatment. A recent exploratory project found that OACL "lifers" or those with a life sentence exhibit a particular strain of Post-Traumatic Stress disorder known as Post-Incarceration Traumatic Stress (Baidawi and Trotter 2015).

Drivers of "Accelerated Aging" for OACL

The literature has identified two primary causes for the physical and mental health status of older adults who are in conflict with the law. First, many individuals who are in conflict with the law have led difficult lives of cumulative disadvantage (Williams, Ahalt, and Greifinger 2014). This means these individuals have experienced being unhoused, lack of financial capital and access to financial institutions, trauma, and violence (Maschi, Viola, and Sun 2013). It is generally accepted that these factors negatively affect one's health and mental health outcomes. Second, prisons, infrastructures, and internal culture can exacerbate difficulties for those with health concerns. For example, prisons rarely include ramps, wheelchair-accessible cells, accessible emergency buttons, and accessible transportation to and from off-site appointments (Office of the Correctional Investigator 2019). Older adults with mobility challenges struggle to

walk to cafeterias in the allotted time, fall to the floor during emergency drills, and use the restroom with medical devices such as ostomy bags or oxygen tanks without handle bars (Prost, Archuleta, and Golder 2021). Besides the obvious negative impacts of not having enough time to eat or use the restroom, this infrastructure can compromise health and social care for OACL. For example, a sample of OACL within Canadian Federal penitentiaries were asked about pain and medication use: 64% of the sample stated that they experienced pain while only 47% receive medication for their pain, in part, stating that daily pick-up of medication was a decisive factor (Iftene 2017, 70–73). Another telling example is provided by a recent study of OACL across three American prisons which found that 61% of the sample of 118 OACL stated that they feared dying in prison specifically due to their past negative interactions with prison medical and security personnel. Within this study, negative interactions were described as excessive treatment delays (Novisky, Narvey, and Prost 2022).

This dissertation deviates from these streams of thought by bringing a public policy perspective to the issues of OACL who are reintegrating into the community after incarceration. It is a well-established fact that 95% of OACL will eventually be released from incarceration and will walk this path of reintegration. Despite this fact, after extensive searches in academic databases, scoping reviews, and government reports, the researcher concludes that there exists very little, if any, research which analyzes reintegration as an act of public policy (Murolo 2022; Clarke 2017). This conclusion is based on my own search within the literature and is supported by similar findings in two recent PhD dissertations on the topic (Murolo 2022; Clarke 2017). This is a crucial gap in the literature on prisoner re-entry as it suggests many important policy questions are unexplored. For example, how is the problem of OACL defined in reintegration policy? What policy tools are used to address these stated problems? Who is the target population of reintegration policy? Who is responsible for its implementation? What intentional; and unintentional; behavior does the policy promote and discourage? What symbolic messages do the policies reinforce or discourage?

The literature on OACL, in general, is growing, enhancing our knowledge of who these individuals are and details on their health, mental, and social status. A majority of the literature on OACL focuses on those currently housed in penitentiaries, among the under-studied of this already under-studied group exist those housed in the community and those in the process of reintegrating (Brown and Greco 2024, 2). A recent Ph.D dissertation, published in 2022, which focuses on the view of parole officers serving older adults on parole found that only one other published work has tried to provide empirical data on OACL reintegration into the community (Murolo 2022, 391). This matches my own search of literature related to this group, finding a handful of articles focusing on the reintegration of OACL. Ultimately, it is in the interest of the OACL, NGOs serving this group, and governments to better understand the parameters of social reintegration as it exists "on the ground." First, this population is generally less healthy than their community counterparts. For example, OACL are twice as likely to develop cardiovascular disease and cancer as their community cohort (Munday et al. 2019, 208). Second, considering that the aging of prison populations will only grow in prominence as a societal issue needing attention, some have already called for the early release of this population. Studies are needed to understand the process of reintegration for this group and the organizations which will make their social reintegration possible.

Policy Perspectives on Older adults and OACL

Since the 1993 publication of The Argumentative Turn (TAT), policy scholars have increasingly acknowledged that policies and programs are embedded with symbols and meanings, that social problems do not exist in a neutral reality but instead are crafted and hold multiple meanings (Bacchi 1999; 2012; Fischer and Forester 1993; Stone 1989). This approach to policy analysis marked a "turn" from the legal-rational approach which dominated early policy studies. The field of public policy and public administration is a relatively new discipline, birthed in the 1950's when national governments undertook ambitious economic and social policies (Howlett and Ramesh 1998). Early approaches portrayed the policy process as a linear, technocratic, and rational endeavor, for example, the canonical framework from this time, Laswell's policy cycle.

The policy cycle is based on an understanding of human decision-making wherein individuals list their choices of action, create cost-benefit calculations, and act on the choice with the highest efficiency. The policy cycle follows this logic, starting with agenda setting (goal listing), design (list all relevant variables and choose the best course), implementation (act), and evaluation (evaluate future courses based on this action) (Lasswell 1956; Jann and Wegrich 2006). The argumentative turn, and the authors who subscribe to this approach, reject the neutral portrayal of societal problems. Simply put, these authors believe that policymaking is enmeshed in politics, and so too should policy studies be informed by political processes of argumentation, persuasion, and interpretation (Fischer and Forester 1993; Majone 1992). Further, because social problems are constructed, the subsequent policies devised to solve these problems represent the perspectives of those who hold political power (Bachrach and Baratz 1962). As a result, feminist and critical scholars have demonstrated that policies often reward particular groups and punish others according to societal perceptions (Bacchi 1999; Hankivsky 2004; Verloo and Lombardo 2007).

From an ontological perspective, TAT scholars assume that policy studies should highlight the experiences of those they study. Studies are aimed not at creating variables, frameworks, or hypotheses, but instead focus on lived experiences and providing practical knowledge aimed at ameliorating conditions of deprivation (Fischer and Gottweis 2013). Researchers are encouraged to situate their values and perspectives when conducting research (Jessop 2013). This dissertation was inspired by the work of practitioners who have served OACL for decades, and it seeks to highlight the work of these practitioners and help them improve the conditions of OACL reintegrating into the community. As such, this project has adopted some of the principles and approaches at the heart of the TAT scholarship by using Ingram and Schneider's works on social constructions of target populations to highlight how OACL group identity impacts how they experience reintegration (Schneider and Ingram 1993; Barbehön 2020). This project does not adopt a strict application of their framework, but rather focuses on the tension between two identities – older adults and criminal-justice-involved persons, to better understand how reintegration policy implementors deliver services. The next section will outline Ingram and Schneider's framework as well as how it relates to NGO literature.

The authors of the framework, Ingram and Schneider, define social constructions as "the recognition of the shared characteristics that distinguish a target population as socially meaningful and the attribution of specific valence orientated values, symbols and images to the

characteristics" (Schneider and Ingram 1993, 335). Constructions can be positive or negative and are directly linked to notions of deservedness of policy outcomes. For example, economic deprivation can be portrayed as hard times befalling a person or as an outcome of an individual's reluctance to work (Schneider and Ingram 1993, 335). A 2014 review of the framework uncovered hundreds of applications varying in target populations, geographic locations, and policy sectors. Ultimately, the review found that the framework can provide a "credible lens for understanding the policy process" by focusing attention on the ways group stereotypes impact how policies are created and implemented (Pierce et al. 2014, 21). Pierce et al. argue that the breadth of its application supports a foundational pillar of the framework; namely, that in a variety of contexts and policy sectors, policies do not provide benefits and punishments uniformly but rather according to constructions of target groups (Pierce et al. 2014, 6). Also, the framework is presented as one of the major approaches to the study of public policy because it has been shown to "correctly predict[]" why policies fail to produce their desired effect (Sabatier and Weible 2014; Smith and Larimer 2018). Interestingly, in Pierce et al.'s work the authors find that social policy or social welfare represented the highest number of applications or 32 % of their 111 application sample (Pierce et al. 2014, 10). This comes as no surprise as TAT scholarship asserts that social problems, the issues social policies are aimed at fixing, are themselves constructed by public officials, media, citizens and narratives (Fischer and Forester 1993; Stone 1989; Reinarman 1988; Lauer 1976; Rein and Schön 1996).

For example, Thurnell-Read traces how medical professionals, media and sociologists each uniquely present the problem of alcohol consumption by assuming certain behaviors of individuals (Thurnell-Read 2015). Policies aimed at alcohol usage will be determined on the particular frame which wins this contestation of alternative frames (Thurnell-Read 2015). Reintegration policy, or the main outcome of study in this project, is a form of social policy which carries many assumptions about punishment, who incarcerated individuals are, and what it means to be part of a community making this framework appropriate for this study (Bunn 2018).

Further, many applications of the STCP framework have been in conjunction with other theoretical approaches, supporting the methodology undertaken in this project (Pierce et al. 2014, 22). This dissertation also acknowledges the weaknesses of this approach; namely, that STCP does not account for changes or conflicting constructions (deLeon 2005). For this reason, this project has chosen to use STCP in conjunction with other approaches such as the strategic decision-making model from literature on NGO operations (Viens 2020; Froelich 1999; Hodge and Piccolo 2005). Also, this project focuses on two conflicting constructions – older adults and those in conflict with the law as a means of pushing the literature on social constructions forward. For these reasons, while critiqued, the STCP approach remains fundamental to this dissertation.

Schneider and Ingram are careful to outline social constructions as "stereotypes about particular groups of people that have been created by politics, culture, socialization, history, the media, literature, religion and the like" (Schneider and Ingram 1993, 335). The media and public policy documents such as laws or guidelines are specifically mentioned as points of data (Schneider and Ingram 1993, 335). This methodological approach lies with the greater tradition of the TAT movement which pays great importance to the structural level messages societal actors are exposed to (Fischer 2019, 135; McBeth et al. 2013, 137).

The current criminology research finds that seniors in conflict with the law display poor overall physical health, have low rates of re-offending, and are more costly to keep in custody than younger prisoners (Marquart, Merianos, and Doucet 2000; Williams et al. 2010; Wyse 2018; Chiu 2010). A study of North Carolinian OACL ranging from ages 45 to 65+ found that age was a major predictor of recidivism. In fact, the authors argue that this factor proved more important than typical measures such as demographic or criminogenic variables (Rakes, Prost, and Tripodi 2018).

Once released, these citizens demonstrate greater medical, housing, and psychological needs than "average" age individuals in conflict with the law (Human Rights Watch 2012; Williams et al. 2012; Williams and Abraldes 2007; Strupp and Willmott 2005; Loeb and AbuDagga 2006). Further, these unique needs appear incompatible with the state priorities of employment and drug counseling, which suggests that NGOs serving this constituency would be especially motivated to find alternative funding to that of the corrections-funded reintegration programs (Duwe and Clark 2017). Counter-intuitively the social construction of older adults may provide these NGOs with the financial means to achieve these goals (Kaufman 2015, 546). First, individuals in this group hold two contrasting social constructions according to the STCP framework. Those in conflict with the law are considered powerless and undeserving of public benefits (Schneider and Ingram 1993). Ingram and Schneider explain that older adults benefit from perceptions that they are an electorally powerful group, and they are rewarded through exclusive access to some welfare services such as nutrition programs and public pensions (Hudson and Gonyea 2012; Binstock 2010; Siegler et al. 2015; Schneider and Ingram 1993).[3] Importantly, various studies have shown that Ingram and Schneider's typology requires nuanced as it relates to older adults. For example, Hudson and Gonyea argue that this construction of older adults is more recent and is a shift from their previous status as powerless (Hudson and Gonyea 2012). An application of the STCP framework to older adults from 1947 to 1994 in official United States budget proposals finds throughout this period older adults maintain the position of deserving of public aid (positive); yet, are also considered weak because they are financially dependent on society (McGonagle 1998). Older adults are also considered positively constructed due to the longevity of social security in the United States known for its limited welfare state (Campbell 2011). Interestingly, a study on the changing perceptions of older immigrants receiving supplemental security income in the United States found that this group moved from a not deserving to a deserving label through stressing the vulnerability of old age (Yoo 2002, 32). As mentioned above, social constructions are determined by the context in which the they are embedded which therefore forwards that political leanings hold impacts for determining which groups are positively and negatively portrayed (Schneider and Ingram 1993). For example, a 2015 regression analysis of the most prevalent social constructions of obesity finds that gender and political leanings on the individualism vs. collectivism spectrum are most predictive of respondent views of obesity (Husmann 2015, 434). Those who were more liberal and women were more likely to identify social causes of obesity rather than one of an individual responsibility (Husmann 2015, 434). Studies have also shown that political ideology as expressed through a tension between individual goals and communal welfare also impacts which constructions of social issues are most salient (Kallio and Niemelä 2014; Unsworth and Fielding

[3] In some localities in the US voting is restricted for those in conflict with the law. However, this is not a uniform policy and does not apply in Canada suggesting that those in conflict with the law can hold electoral power (Diaz 2024; *CBC News* 2019).

2014; Dancey and Goren 2010; Bell 2021). In an illustrative example, a 2017 study finds that SNAP, or the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, generosity is determined by up to 40% by the ideology of the State's governor (Brown and Best 2017, 803). Studies like these argue that conservatives are generally more concerned with individual freedoms and rights and liberals are more concerned with ensuring the well-being of a group; therefore, liberals favor more spending on social programs (Kallio and Niemelä 2014, 112; Fording, Soss, and Schram 2011, 1624). Studies have also shown that these results apply cross-nationally where the United States is often compared to European or Swedish states to demonstrate that there exists a relationship between ideology and variation in group construction (Soss, Fording, and Schram 2011; Kallio and Niemelä 2014; Esping-Andersen 1990; Quadagno and Street 2005; Hunt and Bullock 2016). In fact, there also exists a robust literature which outlines and measures differences in United States and Canadian public policy, public opinion, and media framing on the basis of this ideological difference (Lipset 1990; Baxter-Moore et al. 2016; Unnever and Cullen 2010; Béland et al. 2021; Banting 1997; Myles 1998; Clark 1993; Meyer and O'Malley 2005; Rachul, Toews, and Caulfield 2016; Penning et al. 2024).

The most well-known and potentially most-cited comparison is Seymour Lipset's work *Continental Divide: The Values and Institutions of the United States and Canada* wherein he utilizes historical analysis of "dissimilar histories: the successful revolt in one and reaffirmation of the monarchical base of legitimacy and order in another" to explain the primacy of individualism in the United States and respect for law and collective projects in Canada (Lipset 1990, 90). Authors such as Banting, Clark, and Béland et al. have used this argument to assess and declare the Canadian government more generous than the U.S.A citing the provision, of universal healthcare, more generous poverty alleviation measures and responses to health epidemics such as COVID-19 (Banting 1997; Clark 1991; Béland et al. 2021). Baxter–Moore et al. apply a rigorous quantitative test of Lipset's assertation through a survey of first-year university students at Brock University and University at Buffalo. Along three measures, the authors write that their findings are "consistent with the hypotheses of Lipset (i.e., Canadians slightly higher in support for the idea that free speech may need to be curtailed in the interests of the public order, the need for protests to be supervised by police, and lower support for the idea of vigilante justice and the acceptance of violence as natural)"(Baxter-Moore et al. 2016, 441). Interestingly, Lipset's work has also received criticism from scholars who argue that Lipset's conclusions rely on historical analysis from French Québecers, which hold different and more socially egalitarian views than the rest of Canada (Baxter-Moore et al. 2016; Grabb, Curtis, and Baer 2000). This suggests that there exist an important site of investigation which seeks to uncover whether regional differences negate or supersede national differences within this comparison (Kornhauser 2015).

Media studies have also begun to show a difference in the construction of seniors in Canada and the United States; specifically, Canadian media portrayals tend to portray older adults as deserving of public aid while United States media focused on the negative implications of population aging (Gusmano and Allin 2014; Penning et al. 2024; Vervaecke and Meisner 2021). A more in-depth discussion of these frames will be provided in chapter four to ensure a tight link between theory and evidence.

By comparison, those in conflict with the law are consistently described as powerless and disadvantaged (Uggen and Stewart 2015). For example, there exist a stream of literature outlining how an incarceration status carries "collateral consequences" wherein those in conflict

with the law are barred from applying to certain jobs, housing, and social programs (Pinard 2010; Harding et al. 2014; Travis 2003). Beyond these well-known consequences are lesser-known impacts such loss of child custody, eviction from housing and loss of access to student loans (Ewald 2012). These restrictions have been shown to increase barriers to reintegration wherein finding employment, housing and a social network are stated as crucial to this process (Andersen et al. 2020; Uggen, Manza, and Behrens 2004; Western et al. 2015). Using Ingram and Schneider's framework a 2004 study of state spending aimed at curbing the spread of HIV/AIDS in prisons finds that social construction of prisoners was determinative of the generosity of the program across the 50 states (Nicholson-Crotty and Nicholson-Crotty 2004). The social construction of prisoners was measured through the black members present in the state legislature, incarceration rates, spending levels for Aid to Families with Dependent Children program (Nicholson-Crotty and Nicholson-Crotty 2004, 249). Specifically, the authors find that social construction whether positive or negative explain whether and how much a state spends on the issue of prisoner HIV/AIDS testing, education and reduction measures (Nicholson-Crotty and Nicholson-Crotty 2004, 254). Lofaro and McCue argue that the categorization of those in conflict with the law as deviants was reinforced as public officials either ignored or downplayed the infection rates of those housed within correctional institutions (Lofaro and McCue 2020, 383). For example, officials in Santa Barbara stated that infection rates in the Lompoc Federal Correctional Complex should not be considered in re-opening plans because "they are really a whole separate population" (Lofaro and McCue 2020, 383). Interestingly, Lofaro and McCue find evidence that age, particularly those 55 and older, were portrayed as less violent and therefore worthy of early release during the pandemic (Lofaro and McCue 2020, 382). Importantly, these authors measure this through the reduction in county jail population compared to Federal institutions in the United States. However, it is not clear that older adults were released in greater numbers from this data. What is clear from their study is the difference directions the constructions of older adults and a person who in conflict with the law point to (Lofaro and McCue 2020).

This project takes seriously those who subscribe to the intersectionality approach, which rejects that we should understand social constructions as merely being additive (Hancock 2007). Instead, intersectionality authors argue that the specific context is crucial in understanding how an individuals' social construction predicts their interaction with governments, non-governmental organisations or other citizens (Hankivsky 2012; Carastathis 2016). To these ends, this project does present expectations that OACL will only suffer from being powerless and disadvantaged as a strict interpretation of the Ingram and Schneider typology. Instead, their framework points to an open question of which construction is most salient in reintegration policy.

To thoroughly understand how identities impact reintegration policy, this study follows authors in the policy literature who argue that policy can best be understood by studying its implementation in the community (Evans and Harris 2004; Maynard-Moody and Musheno 2000; Nicholson-Crotty and Nicholson-Crotty 2004). Further, centering this study on NGOs moves focus away from the state and towards civil society, which is a major ontological approach of the reintegration stream of literature (Carlton and Segrave 2016). Public policy authors argue that the discretion of policy implementors, depending on the institution and context, change the substance and direction of programs or services (Lipsky 2010). Additionally, the inclusion of NGOs is necessary given they are the primary policy actors that implement reintegration policy

for OACL. For these reasons, reintegration NGOs who provide services to older adults are the last important factor to be explored as part of this study.

IV. Why NGOs?

Non-governmental organizations have traditionally played an important role in service provision and advocacy for citizens with specialized needs or the otherwise marginalized (Robbins 2006; Brinkerhoff and Brinkerhoff 2002). These organizations have provided welfare assistance, poverty relief, and educational services to these populations in the Western world, dating back to the creation of the modern state (Salamon and Anheier 1998). The NGO sector is well-known for its diversity of actors, activities, implicated policy sectors, and geographic distribution; in fact, the canonical description of the sector is of a "loose baggy monster" (Kendall and Knapp 1995). Yet, authors interested in cross-national comparisons of the nonprofit-sector have worked to delineate the sector which is of particular use in this project. Salamon and Anheier explain that NGOs are organisations with some degree of institutionalization, which is not controlled by the government, which do not funnel profits to owners, who are self-governing and depend in some way on voluntary participation (Salamon and Anheier 1998, 216). Crucially, the authors argue that in their comparison of the NGO sector in eight countries the sector represents a "major economic force" meaning they represent 4.5 % of the total labor force across Hungary, Italy, Sweden, Japan, Germany, U.K., France and the United States (Salamon and Anheier 1998, 218). Despite their importance, the role of these organisations has been overlooked, in the public policy literature, until the introduction of a neoliberal reforms of the 1970s, which caused a re-evaluation of the previously assumed role of policy actors (Evans, Richmond, and Shields 2005; Cheng 2018; Beer, Bartley, and Roberts 2012). This previous approach accepted the notion that federal, provincial, or city governments were the sole sites legitimate and appropriate of policy-making, and policy implementation (Hjaer 2003; Moe 1981).

In the 1970s, public officials and advocates were critical of state initiatives as "monolithic, intrusive, clumsy and bloated," and thereby inadequate at responding to the variety of needs of different societal groups (Peters and Pierre 1998, 222). These critiques culminated in reforms to the welfare state, state bureaucracy and relationships with non-governmental organisations in favor of the logic of market. Under these reforms termed New Public Management (NPM), the government is said to the play the role of steering (i.e. enacting a policy direction and coordinating among actors) and NGOs engage in rowing or service provision (Evans, Richmond, and Shields 2005, 77). In practice these reforms placed heavy importance on expenditure cuts and control, the role of the private sector in service delivery and quantitative performance measures (Evans, Richmond, and Shields 2005, 77).

Initially, some lauded the potentials of a new governance style where new actors and voices were said to be incorporated into service delivery and policy formulation (Torfing et al. 2012). Non-governmental actors and supranational organizations presented unique and innovative avenues to tackle increasingly difficult policy problems (Hajer 2003). The European Union, for instance, could pool national resources and establish "best practices" to untangle "wicked problems" like national poverty levels, meanwhile local NGOs could more efficiently deliver services as their proximity to target populations granted them superior knowledge of policy problems (Saint-Martin 2004; Fung and Wright 2001; Rittel and Webber 1973).

However, a more recent wave of contributions has emerged, which offers nuance to these pronouncements of a "new" governance style (Evans, Richmond, and Shields 2005; Leech 2006; Smith 2010; Alexander and Fernandez 2021). Notably, authors have suggested that in some policy sectors, federal and local governments have retained their traditionally held authority and control through funding agreements while off-loading the implementation of services to new actors (Torfing et al. 2012; Jessop 2002; Kooiman 2003, Chapter 11). There exists a dearth of studies which have critiqued NPM reforms for their inability to uniformly lower costs of service provision, decrease the sense of fairness and discretion among civil servants, and a "hollowing out" of the state and state responsibilities (Hood and Dixon 2016; Hood 2006; Rhodes 1994; Jessop 2002; Peters and Pierre 1998). New Public Management has had a noted impacted on NGOs as their funding environment shifted from that of consistent core funding and engagement with government actors to a context of one-off project grants and requirements for matching contributions (Evans, Richmond, and Shields 2005). Generally, the funding context under NPM reforms is restrictive, unstable and creates unproductive competition among like organisations fighting for singular contracts (Evans, Richmond, and Shields 2005, 85). Under this funding regime, NGO vulnerability increases because organisation survival depends on securing the next government contract which thereby encourages or forces NGO activity towards aligning with government funding priorities (Evans, Richmond, and Shields 2005, 81). NGOs are not market actors in that their central mission is not solely to increase funds for the organisation; instead, NGOs have core missions which target a social problem (Hyndman 2017; Glennon, Hannibal, and Meehan 2017). Studies have noted that NGOs under this funding regime feel they are unable to serve their mission because "the world is changing, we don't have any control, its all in the hands of the funders" (Glennon, Hannibal, and Meehan 2017, 202). On the other hand, monies alone do not guarantee that NGOs will become more active in a policy sector; for example, research on NGO advocacy activities finds that government funds do not uniformly increase an NGOs ability or desire to engage in advocacy activities (Leech 2006; J. M. Berry 2003, 133). Instead, the charity status of the organisation and their label as politically active or inactive correlates with increased lobbying efforts on the part of the organisation (Leech 2006). The debate over NGO mission drift and funding relationships as caused by instable funding regimes is also a central debate for the emerging literature on the penal volunteer sector.

Since the 1990s some scholars have noted an increase in non-governmental activity in the sector of in-prison rehabilitation and community reintegration efforts (Tomczak and Thompson 2019; Garland 2002; Thompkins 2010; Corcoran 2011; Miller 2014). Penal volunteer organisations are similar to that of NGOs in general: however, their activities are specific to criminal-justice involved individuals and their families. Corcoran's definition has gained traction in the literature for accurately capturing the breadth of activities undertaken by these organisations which are "charitable and self-defined voluntary agencies working with prisoners, (ex-) offenders, their families and their victims in prison, community and policy advocacy programmes "(Mary Corcoran 2011, 33; Tomczak 2016, 3). The term charity and volunteer is meant to delineate for-profit from not-for profit groups operating in this space (Tomczak 2016, 5).

In a recent evaluation of this literature, Tomczak and Buck argue that one of, if not the, central debates relates to the role of NGOs as mere enactors of state criminal justice policy or as an agentic force providing alternative or additional services (Tomczak and Buck 2019, 900). Miller's ethnographic study of prisoner reintegration in Chicago outlines what he terms "carceral devolution" wherein criminal justice and social welfare services are "offloaded" onto NGOs and where NGO staff are charged with caring for and supervising those in conflict with the law (Miller 2014). Miller explains that control of which services are offered is determined primarily through funding contracts which are dictated by the government rather than determined by the mission of the organisation (Miller 2014). Reintegration policy then represents what correctional departments are willing to fund, which several studies have outlined translates to an emphasis on job-readiness and substance use disorder programs (Duwe and Clark 2017; Maschi et al. 2014; Miller 2014; Maier 2018; Binswanger et al. 2012). In a telling study, Maguire, Williams, and Corcoran interview 205 front-line staff and managers in the penal volunteer sector on how environmental changes impacted their work with those in conflict with the law (Maguire, Williams, and Corcoran 2019, 432–33). These authors find evidence of changes within organisations such an increase usage of the term risk or assessed level of risk to better align the organisation activities with funding contract priorities (Maguire, Williams, and Corcoran 2019, 439). The authors write explicitly: "some interviewees complained that the concept of risk was creeping into all aspects of their work and acting to reframe clients in criminal justice terms rather than in terms of need." (Maguire, Williams, and Corcoran 2019, 439). Several other authors have tied the increasing role of NGOs in the penal sector to welfare state retrenchment experienced to varying levels in many Western democracies starting in the 1980s (Quinn 2020; Wacquant 2010; Giorgi 2017; Quirouette 2018; Thompkins 2010).

Subsequent authors have sought to nuance Miller's work by highlighting the diverse actions and strategies of NGOs operating in this space. Nicole Kaufman's work is crucial in this regard, as her 2015 study of reintegration NGOs in Wisconsin, demonstrates that corrections funding contracts alone do not determine services provided (Kaufman 2015). Instead, Kaufman argues for the inclusion of consideration of different funding sources; specifically, funds from private actors (Kaufman 2015). Kaufman's work suggests that funding diversification is an important site of NGO autonomy which finds empirical support in the NGO literature most associated with international relations (Prakash and Gugerty 2010; Froelich 1999; Mitchell 2014; Lu 2015; Mikołajczak 2018).

Previous work on revenue diversification has demonstrated that organizations tend to increase their longevity and their ability to buffer exogenous shocks more effectively when revenue diversification increases (Carroll and Stater 2009). Other work has shown that NGO revenue may appear diverse in number of donors, yet funding may be concentrated in one or two service areas which reduces NGO autonomy overall (Chang and Tuckman 1994). Mitchell's work demonstrates the importance of considering NGO strategic responses to resource dependence and diversification as it captures a fuller picture of NGO activity. Mitchell argues that resource dependency studies tend to overemphasize the external environment while obscuring the ways in which NGOs navigate these constraints (Mitchell 2014, 71). Mitchell's own study of 152 interviews with transnational NGOs finds that the literature undervalues NGOs able to "adapt to their domestic environment by borrowing and drawing down endowments and operating cash buffers" when faced with a "volatile" revenue context (Mitchell 2014, 87). Carpenter's work on issue adoption by international NGOs operating in the children and armed

conflict sector shows that NGO mandates and services are also determined by "institutional environment" meaning the context that NGOs face externally and internally (Carpenter 2007). Carpenter demonstrates that the frame "children born of war" as an issue of concern was not adopted by certain NGO networks as the issue spans two interdependent issues and advocacy networks, wartime gender-based sexual violence and children and armed conflict (Carpenter 2007, 116). Carpenter's work underlines the importance of studying the relationship between NGOs themselves within a particular policy sector. Overall, the studies above demonstrate that NGOs activities, particularly advocacy work and service provision, are not only determined by funding relationships with state partners. Instead, NGO are themselves strategic actors acting on funding conditions, stakeholder demands and internal network politics which shape their behaviour. For the purpose of this project, NGOs are the main unit of analysis as they implement the main outcome of study for this project, reintegration policy. The purpose of the project here is to demonstrate the ways in which OACL reintegration is determined in part by the environment faced by NGOs. Specifically, that OACL reintegration is, in part, determined by the presence of a permissive frame for NGOs to secure and thereby provide services specifically for older adults.

In using the social construction of target populations framework, this project considers how the identities of age and conflict with the law impacts the kinds of services NGOs provide. Reintegration as an outcome, I argue here, must consider the identities of the target population because, pulling on the NGO literature, it can be forwarded that these identities help or hinder the types of funding available to these organizations (Schneider and Ingram 1993).
This project seeks to uncover the specific ways in which aging can be used by NGOs to provide services. The second site of theorization focuses on the monetary streams that organizations can acquire, for example, funds from outside of correctional departments (Kaufman 2015). By considering both of these factors, this project shows how NGOs can succeed to provide more services to OACL; namely, by leveraging funding streams based on identity of old age. Beyond these theoretical contributions, I propose two additional contributions.

First, this study, to the best knowledge of the researcher, is one of very few projects which features NGOs who specifically provide services to older adults who are in conflict with the law. Second, this project also includes a cross-national and intra-national comparison of these NGOs which is specifically targeted towards answering Tomczak and Thompson's assertion that the penal volunteer sector is one marked by diversity, which needs to be explored. Last, this project provides a path forward for what has been called a human rights violation of keeping older adults incarcerated by pointing to the success of NGOs who are nobly creating organizational capacity to meet their needs in the community. Only through the creation of receptive institutions can older adults be released.

V. Conclusion

The purpose of this literature review is to outline the three major streams of literature utilized to understand the empirical reality of the aging carceral population. This project was inspired by the work of NGOs who provide services to OACL which as a subject of study spans boundaries of many social sciences disciplines such as criminology, sociology, political science, and social work. To capture the nuances of the work of NGOs within this policy sector this project pulls on the re-entry stream of prisoner re-entry, the public policy literature on the

constructions of target populations and the NGO literature centered on funding and strategic decision-making.

The first section highlights the current study of recidivism as the dominant outcome of study for prisoner re-entry. This project diverts here by choosing to study reintegration or the State sponsored supports provided to individuals to aid in their resettlement after incarceration. The second section defines the concept of older adults in conflict with the law and current studies on the conditions they face within carceral institutions. The STCP framework is introduced to study OACL as a group who carry both positive and negative evaluative labels in order to fully consider how culturally derived stereotypes impact how reintegration policy is experienced. The final section focuses on the importance of NGOs as policy implementors and outlines studies which point to the conditions under which NGOs deliver reintegration services to OACL. Specifically, this section focuses on the funding parameters and relationships of organizations and their impact on the types of services an organization can provide.

Chapter 3: Methods

I. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the research questions and methodologies undertaken for distinct aspects of the project. The first section of this chapter will outline key theoretical pillars from the NGO and policy literatures which help to situate the main outcome under study, reintegration policy. As proposed in the literature review chapter, the novelty of this study involves challenging traditional recidivism approaches to the study of re-entry by introducing social constructions of older adults and strategic funding streams on the part of NGOs to leverage the constructions towards funding. Therefore, the second section will outline the major research questions and arguments used to connect the construction of older adults and NGO funding streams to reintegration policy. Section three proposes and justifies a four case intra and international comparison of social constructions and funding strategies to study variations in this factor as it relates to reintegration policy. Section four defines and importantly details the key analysis methods undertaken for this project – content analysis of newspapers, policy documents, and semi-structured interviews. The last section will discuss the limitations and challenges of the project, especially given the impact of the COVID -19 pandemic.

Western democracies are and will continue to experience the aging of the carceral population requiring urgent attention as activists, politicians and academics call for their early release (Human Rights Watch 2012; Maschi, Viola, and Sun 2013; Chiu 2010). While still growing, there now exists a small but robust literature on the elevated health and social needs of this population while incarcerated (Marquart, Merianos, and Doucet 2000; Williams, Ahalt, and Greifinger 2014; Baidawi and Trotter 2015). In fact, the lack of programming, poorly adapted infrastructure and medical services are often cited as presenting a human rights violation for this population (Human Rights Watch 2012; Williams et al. 2012). It is a well-established fact that an overwhelming majority of justice-involved individuals will re-enter the community with some studies citing return rates of 98 % (Austin 2001). Within this context, unfortunately, there exists little research on the reintegration policy aimed at OACL as they embark on this path (Wyse 2018). To fill this gap this project connects two major factors – social construction of older adults and NGO strategic funding choices – to understand the contents of reintegration policy for this group.

II. Theoretical foundations and expectations

Before outlining the specific research questions and subsequent operationalization it is important to first discuss some aspects of NGO activity which are expected from the literature. These are the background conditions or the broader context in which the research is situated (Falleti and Lynch 2009). These background conditions have been thoroughly discussed in the academic literature on NGOs and have been found present in a variety of contexts thereby legitimating their use here. Further, the conditions listed below should be present in order for the argument proposed later to hold; however, they alone cannot explain the contents of reintegration policy (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994, 76). Based on the literature the following three points are expected and are applied to all the cases understudy here; meaning, without these conditions, the reintegration policy cannot be accurately measured. Conversely, focusing on these points exclusively tells us little about the contents of reintegration policy for OACL. The following three points can be visualized as the understructure upon which social constructions and strategic funding choices grow and substantially shape what reintegration policy is for this group.

First, NGOs, fueled by a desire to act as advocates for their chosen population, continuously search for funding to expand their monetary resources (N. Kaufman 2015, 539; Tomczak 2016, 34; Richmond and Shields 2005, 516; Brinkerhoff and Brinkerhoff 2002, 6). Therefore, I expect each NGO under study here to engage in a steady state of searching for additional funds. Second, and related to the first, NGOs also seek to increase their financial means in order to expand the types and generosity of the services they offer to their populations (Beer, Bartley, and Roberts 2012, 329; AbouAssi, Makhlouf, and Whalen 2016; Hodge and Piccolo 2005, 171). Bluntly, NGOs are expected to be distinct non-state actors that exert agency in the direction and content of their services. These expectations are derived from a vast NGO-centered literature which has found, and continues to reinforce, that NGOs often operate in contexts where monetary resources are scarce yet they are expected to take on roles traditionally executed by the state (Leroux 2005, 352; Froelich 1999, 248; Mitchell and Schmitz 2014, 495; Biermann et al. 2016, 2). Within the policy literature this dynamic has been termed devolution and is expected to remain consistent across all the cases under study here (Torfing et al. 2012).

Third, correctional departments, charged with crafting reintegration policy, work to continuously restrict the bounds of this policy by channeling their funds to a select few services (N. Kaufman 2015, 539; Mijs 2016b, 296; Phelps 2011, 49; Zhang, Roberts, and Callanan 2006, 554; Meek, Gojkovic, and Mills 2013, 348). As mentioned in the literature section on the penal volunteer sector, one consistent finding within this specific literature is the directed focus of correctional departments on employment and drug abuse programs as comprising the overwhelming majority of reintegration services (Phelps 2011; Garland 2002; Hall, Wooten, and Lundgren 2016). Employment insecurity and substance use disorder treatments are only two issues faced by individuals in conflict with the law; this population often faces a variety of other issues related to housing, medical care, education, and restricted access to public benefits (Travis 2005; Petersilia 2003; Gaes and Kendig 2015; Harding et al. 2017). This last expectation interacts with the first wherein NGOs attempt to provide more services to meet these diverse re-entry needs which would be an expanded bound of reintegration policy. Conversely, I derive a related set of the expectation that correctional departments will restrict the breadth of services through their limited funding choices centered on employability and sobriety. Therefore, for the purpose of this study reintegration policy, as an outcome, will be analyzed according to its breadth and depth. Meaning, it is expected that restrictive reintegration policy or one where NGO staff was not successful in expanding the bounds should only comprise limited number of programs with shorter duration. A more generous reintegration policy would comprise a multiplicity of programs beyond employment and substance use disorder and longer service provision duration. While considering these three points this project asks the following questions.

III. Research Questions and Arguments

First**,** *What is reintegration policy for older adults who are in conflict with the law?* Here the project will map the services presented to OACL by using data and accounts from NGOs that provide them. Also, chapter four will present textual analysis of newspapers to gauge the construction of older adults within each context as this project forwards this will have an important impact reintegration. This question will fill a large empirical gap related to re-entry for this group as few studies exist which treat the contents of reintegration as the main focus and from the implementors perspective (Colibaba 2019). Second, this study focuses on *what approaches or strategies are employed to deliver reintegration policy?* Despite few monetary resources and a limited number of programs promoted, the aim here is to shine a light on how NGOs can align

with their humanitarian mission to holistically meet the needs of OACL. Bluntly, how do they do it? These questions will collectively answer the overall question guiding this project: *in a context of the devolution of reintegration policy, what explains how re-entry NGOs act to broaden the bounds of reintegration for older adults?*

This project forwards that NGOs can act to broaden reintegration policy by including a broad array of services beyond employment and substance use disorder based on the presence of two related factors, positive social constructions of seniors and NGOs strategic funding action. First, older adults must be socially constructed in a positive manner meaning they are portrayed as deserving or having a legitimate need for public aid. NGOs operating where older adults are seen as negative, as in unfairly accessing these benefits at the costs of younger generations or where they are presented as a homogenous group experiencing affluent retirement, will be less successful in expanding the bounds of reintegration for OACL. Second, where the constructions are positive NGOs will strategically apply for funding outside of programs offered by the correctional departments to meet the varied needs of OACL. I consider the action of NGOs to be termed strategic given that this term implies innovative and impactful approach to service provision for OACL. Neither the construction of older adults nor strategic thinking alone can explain the production of a comprehensive social reintegration policy for OACL; instead, both must be present. A proper assessment of this argument requires testing its applicability across contexts where variations in the factors exist. The following section will justify the cases selected to demonstrate this argument.

IV. Methodological Approach

This project employs the comparative method and more specifically what Peters, George and Bennett refer to as a "focused comparison" (Peters 2013, 69; George and Bennett 2005, 69) that is usually used for single or two case research projects (Mahoney 2004, 1099). Focused comparisons entail using a set of "standardized general questions across cases" and applying these "selectively with only certain aspects" of the cases under study (Mahoney 2004, 1099). This approach to comparative research allows researchers to study political phenomena with enough detail to develop internally valid theories while also increasing the external validity by adding another case (Mahoney 2004, 1099; Gerring 2006).

This method is most appropriate for this study because while the social construction of target populations framework highlights the importance of the relationship between social construction and public policies, Schneider and Ingram's work is a framework which outlines relevant variables but not specifically how these variables interact in distinct policy sectors (Ostrom 2011, 8). One of the purposes of my project is to develop a more detailed approach towards how social constructions interact with funding strategies and how this impacts what reintegration "looks like" in practice for older adults.

The cases selected for this study are meant to show how different types of social constructions of older adults (i.e. negative and positive) interact with NGOs strategic action to explain expanded or restrictive reintegration policy. This method is justified because the argument here adopts the ontological assumption made by Schneider and Ingram that social constructions are characteristics which differentiate one group from another (Schneider and Ingram 1993, 334). Their framework assumes that within civil societies there are generally accepted shared characteristics of some groups of people which are assigned important meaning. For example, those 65 and older are considered older adults and many societies expect that an individual will stop

working at this age (Ney 2005). Moreover, the unique evaluative narratives surrounding a specific group are embedded in a history or culture to be considered on their own. As such, this project includes cases which allow for a richer understanding of variations in the portrayals of older adults rather than all groups which receive reintegration policy.

By selecting a focused comparison, which includes "only certain aspects of the cases under study, I reinforce that my argument should not be assumed to be able to "travel" to all other societal groups and all other countries alike (Coppedge 1999). For example, the constructions of justice-involved youths are different in their content and direction from that of older adults (Malakieh 2018). An application of Ingram and Schneiders framework to that population is possible but the themes of the constructions are particular to that group. The assertion here is that social groups such as young or older justice-involved groups merit their own study to understand how stereotypes of their group impact the types of services they receive. There exists much research on justice-involved youths; yet little on OACL which undercuts better knowledge of what services they are provided and under what conditions (Psick et al. 2017). Additional studies of OACL are required to facilitate comparisons of reintegration policy across age categories. Last, this project is only applicable to localities under study in the United States and Canada given that social constructions are culturally and historically derived, it would be inappropriate to generalize beyond these borders (Schneider and Ingram 1993). For these reasons, a focused comparison allows me to develop a specific argument of NGOs who expressly serve older adults while also ensuring that the methodology of my approach matches the ontology of my argument (Hall 2003). Based on these justifications, I undertake a focused cross-national and intra-national comparison of two reintegration NGOs serving older adults in both the United States and Canada.

I have chosen to study two NGOs in the United States and Canada for several crucial reasons. First, this inclusion serves to "increase the number of observations," or empirical values, linked to the factors in my argument (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994, 29). Having more data increases the certainty that the relationships uncovered in my research represent a "systematic" political phenomena rather than a random event (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994, 75). Second, as Snyder explains, sub-national units are important to consider because there exists great variation and "un-evenness" in how particular regions within a country experience political and social processes (Snyder 2001). Further, federalist regimes by their very structure assume differences in local governing practices (Snyder 2001, 93). Lastly, particularly in the United States, there has been much written about the political culture and ideological variations between northern and southern states (Keiser and Soss 1998; Barrilleaux and Bernick 2003; Lax and Phillips 2012; W. D. Berry et al. 1998). Intra-national comparisons in the United States are therefore crucial to understanding how localities differ in their implementation of public policy. Given that the argument presented earlier speaks to group characteristics which can be derived from cultural practices it is important to identify potential differences of social constructions within a country and how this impacts reintegration policy.

I have chosen two NGOs in cities in states and provinces which are known for their left-leaning political orientation (Lax and Phillips 2012; Bjørnskov and Potrafke 2012, 149). One is located in Montréal, Québec and one is located in San Francisco, California. I have also chosen two NGOs in conservative states and provinces, one is located near the city of Toronto, Ontario and one is located in Houston, Texas. This selection is rooted in research which has underlined these localities as strongholds for particular ideological orientations. Political historians have traced the long history of liberal progressive politics in San Francisco, the city has been regarded

as “the capital of the progressive movement in [America]” with a public policy focus on “social movements, policy innovations … [and] experiments in urban populism” (DeLeon 1992, 2). Similarly, Montréal, has been established as a progressive liberal city within Québec known for its strong principles of redistribution and for having uniquely explicit government recognition of NGOs as an important actor representing an “autonomous community sector” (Boudreau 2003, 800; Boudreau et al. 2006; Noël 2013; White 2012).

By contrast, Houston, Texas has a history of embracing more politically conservative values of market-led public policies embodied by a motto of “anti-anything which seem[s] to represent in fact or fantasy the implementation of limits on the economic prerogative and activity of the city’s business community” (Fisher 1989, 146). Despite increasing immigration and diversification of the cities’ population, the city still aligns with American Conservative party values shown in a recent study comparing Houstonians views on climate change. The study found that more than half of residents reject that global warming is caused by humans (Smiley 2017). Crucially, the study explains these findings are based on the city’s ideological commitment to the growth of the business sector (Smiley 2017, 78). Similarly, while more liberal than Houston, Toronto represents the financial center of Canada, where business elites are given primacy (Rivière and Curnow 2016, 40).

The NGO in the Toronto case is in region of Peel in the “informally” recognized Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and is considered part of the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (Drackley, Newbold, and Taylor 2011, 3; Joy and Vogel 2015, 36). The population of Peel has increased rapidly due to its closeness to the downtown core of Toronto where many individuals commute for work, access to goods and services (Drackley, Newbold, and Taylor 2011, 3). Urban policy scholars have traced the more conservative political ideology of Toronto to a desire to become a “competitive city” culminating in conservative Rob Ford’s election in 2010 on the political message of battling against “gravy-train, no-service cuts, plenty of revenue fantasy” (Rivière and Curnow 2016, 42; Kipfer and Keil 2002; Boudreau, Keil, and Young 2009). Aligning with the case selection for this project the NGO in the GTA, Peel more specifically, is embedded in a conservative context compared to Montréal (Joy and Vogel 2015, 36). Electoral data shows that region of Peel, across three ridings in the 2022 provincial general election voted for the Conservatives while the downtown core voted for the liberal New Democratic Party (Elections Ontario 2025). Importantly, these values map onto views of criminal justice policies and programs (Meyer and O’Malley 2005; Hatt, Caputo, and Perry 1992; Ruddell and Winfree 2006).

In a recent literature review, the relationship between public opinion and criminal justice policy finds that one important stream of this research is related to ideologies of publics. For example, they cite a study that finds that “public liberalism consisting of generalized views about whether the government should do more or less on New Deal–related issues” explains 70% of variation in policy preferences (Pickett 2019). Lax and Philips sketch an ideological map of the United States with Texas representing conservative leaning views on issues of criminal justice and California presenting more liberal views on topics such as application of the death penalty and favoring mandatory prison sentences (Lax and Phillips 2012, 151). Within their study they find on average, a 60% convergence of policies adopted and political opinions (Lax and Phillips 2012, 152). Interestingly, one study has directly compared criminal prosecutions in Texas and California as they represent two ideological poles on the punitiveness of the policy. Texas laws seek to increase arrests while California adopts a more liberal approach of establishing sanctuary cities where officials limit cooperation with national immigration authorities thereby reducing

arrests (Light, Robey, and Kim 2023, 146). Additionally, much research has been conducted showing the difference in criminal justice approaches between Canada and the United States which explicitly refer to differences in political ideology (Meyer and O'Malley 2005; Hatt, Caputo, and Perry 1992; Ruddell and Winfree 2006; Katz and Bonham 2006; Johnson 2006). Ruddell and Winfree point to the Canadian commitment to rehabilitative programs which are associated with liberal-leaning projects aiming to reintegrate an individual. Conversely, the authors point to the much harsher punitive policies adopted by the United States which focus more on deterrence through punishment (Ruddell and Winfree 2006). Studies have supported that Canadian regions, like United States cities, vary in their ideological approaches to issues suggesting that inter-Canadian comparison on a range of political issues is appropriate and necessary (Aubertin, Axsen, and Gunster 2024; Bilodeau, Turgeon, and Karakoç 2012; Héroux-Legault 2024; Cochrane and Perrella 2012; Henderson 2004). Based on these studies this project includes Houston, San Francisco, Toronto, and Montréal to examine these regional differences on social reintegration policy which has yet to be tested.

Before proceeding it is important to consider the bounds of a locality as this project compares across different cities in different countries. As mentioned in the literature review, in Canada and the United States, local governments or those operating at the city level, generally depend on state or provincial governments to fund health and transportation among other services (Dilkens 2014, 25–35). City governments do exert autonomy in how services are organized, coordinated and implemented although this can vary depending on factors such as city tax base and accepted rates (Wolman et al. 2008, 380; Dilkens 2014, 28; Jones and Woods 2013, 31). This is particularly relevant for the case of Toronto, where the NGO for this study is located outside the heart of the city in the surrounding municipality of Peel. This dissertation understands cities to operate in a context of "hybrid mixtures of global flows and local nodal interactions," wherein it is important to consider the full territory that a city governs rather than what is defined as a metropolitan city proper (Jones and Woods 2013, 34; Massey 1991). Within some academic studies and common parlance, the region of Peel is often understood to be operating in the larger context of the GTA where large numbers of individuals and goods flow between the municipality and the downtown core daily (Drackley, Newbold, and Taylor 2011, 3). In the 1990's following the amalgamation of the old city of Toronto, York, East York, West York, Scarborough and Etobicoke government restructuring increased the representation of councilors representing conservative suburban municipalities (Joy and Vogel 2015, 41). For these reasons, it can be reasonably assumed that the NGO in Peel shares a political paradigm and social constructions context similar to that of Toronto.

V. Methods of Analysis

This section will describe the two general methods undertaken throughout this project with more specific measurement details included in the later analysis sections. This is to ensure that analysis chapters demonstrate a strong link between the specific method employed and the result uncovered. Later content chapters will include more information relating to the specific operationalization of the research method used. To test my argument, across the four cases, this project undertakes two major types of analysis: textual analysis social constructions of target populations and semi-structured interviews.

First, the social construction of older adults is tested across the cases by using thematic analysis of the four most popular newspapers within each city. In addition, relevant aging policy

documents are analyzed such as city aging strategies, state or provincial aging strategies, and city strategic plans if they contain information about infrastructure changes required for an aging population. Second, to undercover the types services which are provided to OACL by the four NGOs, this project conducts textual analysis of NGO documents mission statements, annual reviews, financial assessments or audits, and press releases. Interviews were conducted to support and reinforce the findings of the textual analysis.

Social construction of older adults refers to the accepted stereotypes of societal groups and is said to be created through media and political discourse (Schneider and Ingram 1993). Further, the authors assume that these portrayals are quantifiable and measurable across societies. The most popular means of measuring social constructions of target populations has come in the form of content analysis of different news coverage or policy documents; precisely, Pierce et al., who have conducted a systematic analysis of the different applications of the STCP framework have cited studies which have all used these methods (Pierce et al. 2014). In fact, in their 1999 manuscript on the STCP framework newspapers are cited as important media actors involved in creating social constructions (Schneider and Ingram 1997, 147). News media, unlike advertising or entertainment media, aims to "provide its readers with some coherent sense of broader social forces that affect conditions of their everyday lives" (Gamson et al. 1992, 373). In this sense, news media is considered a site of information for citizens suggesting that media portrayals strive to reflect back to society how it is composed (Elvestad, Phillips, and Feuerstein 2018, 218). By studying newspaper portrayals of older adults this project seeks to understand how older adults are socially constructed in the United States and Canada which is part of answering a sub-research question: *What is reintegration policy for older adults who are in conflict with the law?*

Therefore, I conduct content analysis of newspapers in all four sub-national sites (Québec, Ontario, California and Texas). *The Toronto Star, Montréal Gazette, The San Francisco Chronicle and Houston Chronicle* were selected for analysis given their respective high readership in each locality. French-language newspapers were excluded from this study to facilitate the comparisons of constructions across the different newspapers. Further, the readership for Montréal Gazette is comparable in portion of population to the other three newspapers, suggesting that the reach of the four is similar in scope (Mekki-Berrada and d'Haenens 2023; Vessey 2016). Newspapers were read and coded according to previous themes uncovered in media studies on older adults. The following section will present a summary of the themes used in the coding process while more in-depth explanations of these themes reside in the following chapter on newspaper content analysis.

Rozanova et al.'s work in this field is of particular interest as they uncover a dueling representation of older adults as either negative (conflictual ageism) or positive (compassionate ageism) (Rozanova, Northcott, and McDaniel 2006). Negative portrayals frame older adults as in conflict with younger individuals, notably students, over finite government and societal benefits (Rozanova, Northcott, and McDaniel 2006, 380). Negative portrayals here focus exclusively on the lack of deservingness of older adults in receiving public aid given that seniors are seen as powerful wave of greedy individuals who already possess more benefits than their younger cohorts (Binstock 2010). By contrast, positive portrayals have been found to focus on the physical health of seniors to suggest that they are in fact in need of public benefits (Vervaecke and Meisner 2021). Here older adults are dominantly portrayed as victims of violent crime or financial

fraud, with little monetary resources and generally in fragile or declining physical health (Rozanova, Northcott, and McDaniel 2006; Marier and Revelli 2017). Binstock has written extensively on these portrayals arguing that they created fertile ground for the creation of older adults as "deserving poor" (Binstock 2010). Importantly, these portrayals of ageism, while considered positive or negative, are considered ageist because both portrayals consider aging from a fundamental ableist perspective as aging itself is treated as an illness or inevitable decline. Even the STCP classification of older adults as positive and powerful rests on the notion that older adults need help because they are diminished by age. Building on his work, this project considers these portrayals as positive or compassionate ageism because they provide a supportive base on which older adults are considered meriting public aid.

Importantly, research has shown that these constructions vary according to the political ideology of the locality (Marier and Revelli 2017; Gusmano and Allin 2014; Greenberg 2000). For example, compared to Canada, the United States has been shown to feature more conflictual ageism than compassionate ageism: There is an intense focus around the sustainability of the health and pension systems (Marier and Revelli 2017; Gusmano and Allin 2014). These media studies are supported by policy studies on the relationship between program generosity and political ideology (Lax and Phillips 2012; Moody 2009; Lockhart, Giles-Sims, and Klopfenstein 2008; Hirschfield and Piquero 2010; Meyer and O'Malley 2005). For example, Lax and Phillipps work on the responsiveness of public officials to voter ideology finds that there exists a link between voter opinion and policy adoption (Lax and Phillips 2012, 160). Additionally, those who identify as liberal, or more likely to support the liberal party, in the United States are more in favor of redistribution policies (Jæger 2006, 331). Based on these studies, and previous findings on portrayals of aging and ideology, this study expects that newspaper articles from the United States – those in the San Francisco Chronicle and Houston Chronicle will contain more conflictual ageism, or negative portrayals, given its hostility to public benefits to seniors than the Canadian papers. Within the United States, California has been shown to favor more liberal leaning political candidates and policies suggesting that the *San Francisco Chronicle* will focus more on compassionate ageism, or positive portrayals, than the Houston based paper. The *Montréal Gazette* should also feature more compassionate ageism portrayals than the Toronto paper. Beyond social constructions, to better understand the types of services offered by NGOs and their strategic thinking on how to acquire funding this project will deploy analysis of NGO and public policy documents and semi-structured interviews.

Using Bacchi's approach this project examines NGO documents such as organizational mandates, annual newsletters, fiscal reports, press releases, policy reports produced by the organization or in partnership with other organizations, panel presentations, media interviews, participation in academic studies or projects (Bacchi 2012). Specifically, these documents are used to answer the following questions. What services are provided by the organization? Where are they provided? How are services funded? Importantly, who funds these services? How many funding streams are present? Has the funding changed over time? If so, what general themes can be pulled from these changes? Using post-structural analysis to consider the answers to these questions is crucial because this project understands funds, policies and official public statements as symbols with important embedded assumptions about who appropriate actors are and what is the most appropriate solution to an asserted problem (Bacchi and Goodwin 2016, 5). For example, if funding slowly decreases over time for a policy, Bacchi's approach helps to analyze this not

merely as a neutral act of financing but also as a messages about government intentionality towards an issue or the government's lack of acknowledgement of the persistence of the issue (Bacchi and Goodwin 2016, 59).

The NGOs selected for this project are all non-profit institutions meaning they are held to account for how they use funds which are provided to them. Both Canada and the United States have regulations which outline the direct requirement for publicly disclosing organizations finances (Keating and Frumkin 2003; Government of Canada 2022). This project also uses and examines pictures and personal stories of organizations which were published during the time when the COVID-19 pandemic restricted in-person contact between researcher and participants. Semi-structured interviews supplement these findings as they fill the gaps of potentially incomplete NGO documents.

Strategic actions and thinking on the part of NGOs can only be uncovered through conversations between researcher and NGO staff (Rose 1991). This project is particularly concerned with how NGO staff perceive the services available for OACL and importantly how they determine the best course of action to meet their needs. Explicitly, I am interested in their reasoning for projects which require a qualitative approach where participants lead conversations to expose their way of thinking. During the proposal stage of this project an initial scan of NGO documents uncovered that it would be insufficient to solely rely on documents to answer questions this project forwards. Financial records, while available, were at times sparse and missing information such as a detailed list of how each funder related to specific services. Also, NGO documents did not include a full and detailed list of all services, service history and location of services which are necessary to have a full understanding of the breath of services which make up social reintegration policy for OACL. This added importance to the semi-structured interviews, and they could supplement any holes in this search.

This project undertook 22 interviews with a variety of NGO staff from and surrounding the four localities at the heart of this project. Interviews included were primarily focused on NGO staff that serviced OACL during their period of re-entry. Therefore, participants ranged from front-line workers to executive or clinical directors of OACL programs. Additionally, interviewee pools were expanded to include some government officials involved in this policy sector across the four localities. For example, government programs focused on re-entry or those that provided funding to NGOs to enable their service provision. Additionally, correctional departments were omitted from consideration given the requirements for their participation would hinder the neutrality of this study and the confidentiality of the participants.

VI. Challenges and Limitations

Initially, this project had planned to include interviews with officials from Corrections Departments. In the initial attempts to contact these departments it became clear that to include Correctional Service Canada (CSC) officials there would need to be an additional ethics certificate acquired from this institution. To acquire ethical clearance from Correctional Service Canada a proposal is judged on "contribution to the achievement of the Mission and the priorities of CSC" (Correctional Service of Canada 2017). Crucially, CSC also requires that "any research conducted by CSC employees and/or the use of an employee's CSC affiliation in reporting independent research, including projects approved by the EXCOM Sub-Committee for External Research, must be submitted to the appropriate sector/regional heads for information purposes prior to external distribution" (Correctional Service of Canada 2017). This type of ethical certification

process would put into jeopardy the independent nature of the information produced by this study. Further, this would also endanger the confidentiality of participants. The project is meant to provide information on OACL and social reintegration policy as it exists not as it serves the mission of a Correctional department. Therefore, it was decided to remove Corrections officials participation from the project. Instead, this project omits correctional departments from potential pool of applicants.

As mentioned above, this project had to be altered to account for several challenges. First, recruitment for the project has been particularly difficult given that the COVID-19 pandemic halted in-person research activities. The pandemic took full force two months into the planned fieldwork of the project stopping the on-site visits originally planned. COVID-19 greatly altered the operations of this policy sector as American and Canadian correctional departments tightened contact with and among incarcerated individuals (Nelson and Kaminsky 2020; Ricciardelli et al. 2021). Understandably, correctional departments reduced regular activities such as visitations and short releases to devote substantial measures to limit the spread of COVID-19 within their institutions (Ricciardelli et al. 2021). These restrictions were also imposed on individuals residing in re-entry NGOs; notably, these organizations were charged with limiting disease spread with little to no additional funding to acquire protections (Segura 2020; "COVID-19 and Restrictions in Halfway Houses" 2020). Consequently, the project was altered to comprise of over-the-phone interviews and recruitment via email. Online recruitment was slow and challenging given that project participants or potential participants were themselves dealing with the challenges of working from home and providing services to a particularly vulnerable group, OACL. It was difficult and understandably demanding to get in touch with individuals to participate in the project given the physical distance between myself and them.

VII. Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter is to present the three major methodological choices present within this project. First, this study uses a focused comparison of 4 localities to compare the social construction of older adults across varying ideological contexts. Second, the use of textual analysis of newspapers, NGO documents and relevant aging policies was justified. Last, this project uses semi-structured interviews to bolster the data revealed in NGO documents to uncover the strategic thinking of NGO staff as they craft reintegration policy.

Despite these challenges this project successfully conducted textual analysis and 22 interviews with NGO staff and government officials serving OACL within and between two national contexts which to best knowledge of the researcher is the only project to do so to date. This fills a large empirical gap in the scientific literature related to OACL and prisoner re-entry more generally. Also, the number of interviews and documents acquired for this project, despite a once in a lifetime pandemic, were sufficient to answer the research questions proposed here. In doing so, this project does point to what could be considered some "best practices" undertaken by NGO staff for OACL.

Chapter 4: Social Construction of Aging Across Four Cities, Toronto, Montréal, Houston and San Francisco

I. Introduction

This chapter presents evidence of social constructions of older adults in Montréal, Toronto, Houston and San Francisco. Evidence and variation in this factor will be used to answer the following question – what is the social construction of older adults across the four contexts in which the NGOs under study in this project are located? The purpose of this question is to help answer the sub-research question: *what is reintegration policy for older adults who are in conflict with the law?*

One of the major assertions of this study is the relevance of culturally derived social constructions in shaping the reintegration process; specifically, Ingram and Schneider argue that social constructions are a result of culturally accepted framings (Schneider and Ingram 1993). It is anticipated that there are variations across the four localities based on the literature discussing the influence of culturally informed political leanings on policy outcomes. (Lax and Phillips 2012; Light, Robey, and Kim 2023; Meyer and O'Malley 2005). Concretely, studies like those of Barbera et al. or Lax and Smith demonstrate that political officials respond to the views of the publics they are meant to represent; for example, in conservative leaning localities politicians do tend to adopt policy stances that align with conservative views on policy such as lower taxes, reproductive policy, retirement policy, and harsher criminal sentences (Lax and Phillips 2012; Barberá et al. 2019). While there does exists a gap between public stances and tangible policies passed, it should be noted that the argument forwarded here highlights the role of social constructions as they are expressed and reinforced by media, culture, and political statements beyond official policies. Further, the STCP framework assumes that reality is constructed through and by public frames and portrayals . Therefore, it is important to include public stances as well as policies adopted. Building on prior work which has demonstrated that political orientation impacts specifically perceptions of older adults, this study has purposively selected localities which are conservative-and liberal-leaning in their policies and media representation of a variety of issues to assess the impact of these factors on social reintegration policy (Gusmano and Allin 2014; Zhao et al. 2020; Han, Xu, and Pan 2022).

This chapter seeks to sketch the portrayals of older adults in the media in ideologically varying and opposing contexts to achieve two aims. First, this chapter adds to the small, yet growing, literature on the relationship between political orientations and media portrayals of older adults (Gusmano and Allin 2014; Marier and Revelli 2017; Vervaecke and Meisner 2021; Oh 2023). Second, this project forwards that structural conditions such as the social construction of older adults create a foundation upon which NGOs strategically act to try to secure funding to provide tailored services to OACL. Where conditions are less conducive, meaning when older adults are portrayed as burdens who are undeserving of public assistance, NGOs are less likely to be successful in leveraging constructions of older adults to provide aging-specific services to OACL who are reintegrating into the community.

Generally, the literature on media portrayals of older adults was supported by confirming several theoretical expectations. First, overall, there was a difference in portrayals both between and across the two countries. Second, Canadian newspapers, as a whole, contained more articles of compassionate ageism, or what I consider positive constructions, compared to newspapers in

the United States. Within the total sample, Houston contained the highest percentage of negative constructions or portrayals of aging as conflictual ageism. One surprising finding was the high percentage of compassionate ageism or positive constructions present in the left-leaning San Francisco locality compared to the Canadian results. The content analysis of newspapers in the four localities enhances support for the literature on the relationship between political orientation and social constructions by finding evidence for some of its claims and providing further evidence for future comparisons (Pinard 2010; Zhao et al. 2020; Bjørnskov and Potrafke 2012).

This chapter begins with a discussion of the literature on the social construction of older adults. Following this, a dedicated section on the methodological approach taken to select and analyze newspapers. Here, explicit mention of the theoretical expectations that were tested in the study are discussed. Third, a section will outline the results from the analysis. Last, a section will discuss implications of the findings for the larger literature on media portrayals of older adults. Also, this section will outline how these results will be used to construct the larger argument of this project.

II. Theoretical Foundations and Expectations

As mentioned in the literature review, this project adopts the methodological and ontological assumptions of authors from *The Argumentative Turn (TAT)* (Fischer and Forester 1993; Fischer and Gottweis 2013; Jessop 2013). Specifically, this project agrees with TAT authors who forward that the most fruitful approach to studying public policies and their impacts is through considering policy as symbols, embedded with multiple evaluative messages about societal groups, policy solutions and tools. Central to this approach to the study of public policy lies the assertion that societal problems and characteristics of social groups are constructed rather than inherent or naturally occurring (Bacchi 1999). Schneider and Ingram's framework on the Social Construction of Target Populations (SCTP) is a crucial approach from the TAT movement which seeks to identify how the constructions of certain groups explain why some groups receive policy benefits and others policy burdens (Schneider and Ingram 1993). This project takes on that call by analyzing specifically newspaper coverage of the target group. Before discussing the specific data sampling methods undertaken here, it is first important to mention some key findings which have already emerged in the literature on the social constructions of older adults.

Early media studies, meaning those before the 1970s, blossomed in frequency in the post-WWII era in conjunction with modern political and policy studies. The focus of these studies was on the lack of visibility of older adults in media portrayals; for example, in newspaper portrayals, older adults represented less than 1% of groups discussed (Vasil and Wass 1993, 78). Crucially, when discussed, older adults were generally described in negative terms. A study on descriptions of older adults in children's literature found that "adjectives old, little, and ancient represented 85% of all physical descriptions of [older] characters" (Vasil and Wass 1993, 77). Robert Binstock, an American gerontologist, is credited with naming this portrayal "compassionate ageism" and analyzing its parameters through calls for Social Security reform in the United States in the 1960s (Binstock 1983; 2010). Binstock outlines relevant aspects of this frame using newspaper, magazines, and political speeches most popular during the times of reform. From these sources, compassionate ageism portrays older adults as physically frail individuals who therefore cannot provide for themselves (Binstock 1983; 136). Binstock outlines that older adults are in need of compassion or are considered "deserving poor" as the plight of age is imposed on individuals rather than constructed as an act of poor decision-making

(Binstock 1983; 136). Compassion within this frame is expressed through government interventions to help older adults which crucially Binstock argues is embedded in the political ideology of collectivism salient in the 1950s. The passage of Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid by 1965 are presented as evidence against typical United States "ideological bulwark of individual responsibility" and towards an approach of government responsibility "against the risk associated with old age" (Binstock 2010, 575).

Binstock's analysis relies on assessing the adjectives and pejorative language deployed in national media and political discourse. Binstock's concept has garnered much empirical support from later studies. Uotila et al.'s study on perceptions of loneliness in later life, through discourse analysis of 154 print media articles, found that a majority of articles present loneliness as a condition imposed on older adults. The authors explain that "older adults [are depicted] as victims of loneliness," which reinforces the lack of agency described by Binstock (Uotila, Lumme-Sandt, and Saarenheimo 2010, 122). Fealy et al. further provide support by analyzing two newspapers' coverage of a single news event, welfare reform for older adults in Ireland in 2008 (Fealy et al. 2012). Similar to Uotila et al. discourse analysis was undertaken to show that a majority of articles display "sympathy" for older adults who are labeled as specifically "very deserving pensioners" as a broad category (Fealy et al. 2012, 93). Work has also uncovered that social media posts during the pandemic overwhelmingly highlight the physical vulnerability of seniors, enforcing the stereotype of frail older individuals in need of societal benefits during a pandemic (Vervaecke and Meisner 2021). Important within these studies is the finding that aging is considered a negative condition that is imposed onto an individual which needs rectification. Binstock explains that this link is underlined by the dominant political ideology of the 1950s, which shifts in the 1970s.

The 1970s marked a changing political moment where political discourse railed against welfare state projects targeting recipients of benefits as lazy or undeserving (Quadagno and Street 2005). Using tabloid and newspaper headlines as evidence Binstock outlines what he calls conflictual ageism wherein older adults are painted as an opportunistic wealth hoarding societal group (Binstock 2010). Binstock suggests that language such as "greedy geezer" underlines that older adults in this frame are not deserving of aid and instead are described in antagonistic terms (Binstock 2010, 574). This frame has also found support in the literature although with interesting nuances in cross national comparisons. A 2006 analysis of newspaper coverage of aging in Canada finds evidence of both themes. Rozanova et al. argue for the inclusion of multiple themes within media analysis acknowledging that media frames rarely exist in isolation. They find evidence of conflictual ageism wherein articles describe the ills of old age as tied to dependence to younger generations (Rozanova, Northcott, and McDaniel 2006, 380). Here older adults are portrayed as dependents similar to that of compassionate ageism; however, the difference lies in the perceived validity of aid provided. In the compassionate ageism frame public aid is seen as appropriate whereas in conflictual ageism the cost of aiding seniors is highlighted as problematic because "the generous welfare state will collapse under the escalating costs of sustaining aging baby boomers" (Rozanova, Northcott, and McDaniel 2006, 380).

Missing from Binstock and Rozanova et al.'s work is the frequency at which the themes occur in the coverage. Martin et al. explore this issue in their analysis of aging in The Economist, which they consider a highly influential newspaper for policymakers. Two authors read 262 articles to assess to what extent aging is portrayed as desirable where negative language is considered undesirable and positive language is considered desirable (Martin, Williams, and

O'Neill 2009). A majority of articles or 64% consider population aging as negative, which associated the demographic burden with phrases such as "time bomb" or "unsustainable cost" for society (Martin, Williams, and O'Neill 2009). Gusmano and Allin argue that media frames of aging vary according to national context, making crucial cross-national comparisons in sketching the frequency of portrayals. Gusmano and Allin present content analysis of print coverage of healthcare spending in Canada, the United Kingdom and United States. A majority of articles across the three cases show aging is identified as a main cause of changes in healthcare spending; further, the United States was linked to the highest proportion, or 41%, of articles negatively linking population aging to healthcare spending. Canada displayed the least proportion of articles tying population aging to healthcare spending. Gusmano and Allin are careful to note that identifying population aging as a driver of healthcare spending is an indicator of conflictual ageism as one social group, older adults, are blamed for the sustainability of government systems which all citizens utilize (Gusmano and Allin 2014, 13).

While still present in media today, this more conflictual construction of aging has received considerable criticism and has been, in some contexts, replaced with new ageism (Gee 2000; Walker 1990; Rozanova, Northcott, and McDaniel 2006). Gerontologists have heavily criticized the notion that seniors are inherently frail and dependent service-users instead, more recent constructions of active or healthy aging have emerged (Katz and Calasanti 2015). Here, aging is understood as a personal responsibility to remain active, busy, and in good physical health to blunt the effects of old age (Martinson and Berridge 2015, 59). Textual support for this construction comes from print media which paints retirement as a "glorious [time] which people can stay ageless, vital and happy" obscuring those who cannot age in this way (Rozanova 2010, 214). Retirees are shown to be physically fit wealthy individuals often engaged exercising (Williams, Ylänne, and Wadleigh 2007; Loos and Ivan 2018; Zhang et al. 2006). In this construction, physically fit retirees are portrayed as deserving of aid because their actions to remain fit demonstrate their ability to fend off dependency thereby removing the blame imposed by the conflictual ageism frame (Rozanova 2010). Gerontologists have pointed to the strong link between new ageism and ideological conservative concepts of individual responsibility and capitalism where individual fitness is prized (Liang 2012; Moody 2009; Martinson and Berridge 2015; Minkler and Fadem 2002; Bytheway 2005; Rozanova 2010).

Using the work of the anthropologists, sociologists and gerontologists mentioned above, this project will use three major constructions as themes to guide the analysis of the sample of newspaper articles. Compassionate ageism and new ageism are considered positive because government benefits are deemed appropriate; conversely, conflictual ageism is considered negative because government assistance is viewed as inappropriate as it hurts other members of society. This dissertation takes seriously the notion that issue frames are informed by the context from which they emerge; specifically, the frames of compassionate ageism, intergenerational conflict and new ageism are said to hold deep ideological underpinnings such as individualism, collectivism and the desirability of the government as the appropriate actor to resolve instances of deprivation or vulnerability (Gusmano and Allin 2014; Clark 1991; Allwright 2018).

For example, Allwright's 2018 dissertation compares United States and Canadian framings of Syrian refugees through content analysis of 850 articles, for each country, from major newspapers in both countries. Multivariate analysis was conducted to demonstrate with statistically significant ($p < .001$) variation in tone and frame between the two countries. Unlike in the United States newspapers, Canadian newspaper coverage of immigrants is positive, and

focus lies on government programs to integrate refugees (Allwright 2018, 169). Importantly, Allwright attributes these differences to a culture of higher individualism displayed in the United States where individuals value "limited governmental support" (Allwright 2018, 68). A 2020 study reinforced these findings through a content analysis of 318 articles centered on refugees in four major newspapers in Canada and the United States. The authors do not outline the frequencies at which the themes appear, but they summarize their findings by noting that after the Paris attacks of 2015, Canadian coverage stressed both security concerns of welcoming refugees and a portrayal of "a welcoming and tolerant space" (Jaworsky 2020, 476).The United States coverage is stated to focus on the individual security of Americans, which may be compromised by refugees. Gusmano and Allin explicitly speak to the political ideology of individualism vs. collectivism in media framings of healthcare spending in Canada and the United States. Their content analysis of major newspapers across both contexts found that 40% of articles in the United States tied population ageing to an increase in healthcare spending, which the authors consider the presence of intergenerational conflict. By comparison, these articles only represented 28% of their total Canadian sample. (Gusmano and Allin 2014, 318). Building on this work, Marier and Revelli compare the frequency of ageist themes across Canada and the United States finding that intergenerational ageism features in 50% of American newspapers chosen for the study compared to only 29% in Canadian papers (Marier and Revelli 2017). A recent 2024 study on media framings of vulnerability in later life during COVID-19 finds similar trends in coverage. Pennings et al. compare two national newspapers *The New York Times* and *Globe and Mail* finding that older adults were framed as vulnerable in more Canadian news articles, 34%, compared to 17% in the United States. Interestingly, this frame was distinct from frames of vulnerability for economically deprived individuals, which was most frequent in *The New York Times* coverage which the authors note is a consequence the differences in the countries' orientations towards the generosity of social safety nets (Penning et al. 2024, 5,9).

Some commonalities of these studies are worth noting. First, these studies suggest that political ideology, specifically the contrasting of values of individualism and collectivism in Canadian and United States society, expresses itself through media frames. Second, these works use newspapers with wide circulation; in almost all studies, newspaper selection is justified based on circulation figures to measure the differences in framings. Lastly, in most of the studies cited above the authors note that more studies must be conducted to test the generalizability of the findings, particularly at the sub-national level (Rozanova, Northcott, and McDaniel 2006; Gusmano and Allin 2014; Penning et al. 2024). Political ideology also operates at the sub-national level where state and municipal governments are charged with making and administering policy (Daigneault et al. 2021). To meet this gap in the literature, this project has chosen to select newspapers from four ideologically opposing cities to test if ideologically informed frames of aging are present and vary across the cities.

Using this literature, this project expects that Canadian papers will display more instances of compassionate ageism because this frame positively paints older adults as deserving of public aid to ward off the plight of old age. Here, aging is understood as an imposed difficulty worthy of rectification. Gusmano and Allin's work predicts that the United States will display more instances of conflictual ageism, given the frame focuses on negatively portraying older adults as undeserving because of their disproportionate use of medical and social services (Gusmano and Allin 2014). In this portrayal, aging is also painted as a difficulty to overcome; yet, here aid is not considered appropriate because it hinders other members of society. According to Gusmano

and Allin, this frame relies on American cultural values of individualism and limited government intervention (Gusmano and Allin 2014; Allwright 2018, 68). New ageism with its ideological underpinnings in capitalist productivity and encouraging older adults to remain self-sufficient as successful aging is expected to appear more frequently in the United States where this frame was first uncovered (Martinson and Berridge 2015; Rozanova 2010; Liang 2012). Within countries, I mirror the expectations to the sub-national level, where Québec and San Francisco are often presented as more liberal than Houston and Toronto, which are considered comparatively conservative (Berg et al. 2017; Smiley 2017). For the purposes of argument sequence, this project envisages that social constructions are determined, in part, by ideological context, which are then acted upon by NGO actors. Ideological context informs social constructions, which inform strategic decision making by NGO actors. The next section will detail the content analysis undertaken to test the first section of this argument.

III. Methodology

This section will explain the methodology undertaken for the newspaper analysis. This project uses content analysis of four major newspapers, *Toronto Star, Montréal Gazette, Houston Chronicle,* and *San Francisco Chronicle,* to determine the social constructions of older adults in Toronto, Montréal, Houston and San Francisco. Newspapers were selected based on reported circulation figures targeting sources with the highest readership within the locality (CCAB BPA Worldwide 2020; "Top 10 California Daily Newspapers by Circulation" 2015; "Top 10 Texas Daily Newspapers by Circulation" 2016). Newspaper selection based on circulation figures remains the most common approach in newspaper content analysis studies because the objective of these studies is to make generalizations about widely consumed media frames (Rozanova, Northcott, and McDaniel 2006; Gusmano and Allin 2014; Jr and Hassett 2014). Each newspaper was ranked and chosen in their locality based on circulation figures barring the *Montréal Gazette.* [4] The two highest circulating newspapers in Montréal were excluded for the following reasons; first, the highest newspaper in Montréal, *Le Journal de Montréal,* is a tabloid newspaper ("Top 10 Canadian Newspapers" 2015). Tabloid coverage differs from traditional broadsheet coverage as it involves little to no fact checking as it seeks to publish more inflammatory construction of news topics (Esser 1999; Örnebring and Jönsson 2004). Authors have shown that tabloids are "generally considered synonymous with bad journalism" and therefore are a less trusted news source (Örnebring and Jönsson 2004, 283). For this reason, this journal was excluded as the purpose of this section is to test social constructions in a general manner not solely from an inflammatory source. Second, the second highest journal Le *Journal de Québec* targets the Québec City locality. *Metro,* which is the third highest circulating newspaper in Montréal is a free daily newspaper making it unlike the other newspapers in the study (CCAB BPA Worldwide 2020; Newspapers Canada, n.d.). For this reason, *Montréal Gazette* was chosen as it is the most like the other newspapers in content, publication schedule and fee for purchase. Also, the high readership of the *Montréal Gazette* ensures that it is still a valid measure for the purposes of this study ("Top 10 Canadian Newspapers" 2015). Further, the choice to include the *Montréal Gazette* facilitates the comparison across the three other newspapers which are English speaking localities. In-depth content analysis of the articles requires a nuanced understanding of how phrases and words are

[4] Later sections of the project will show that the Toronto NGO is in the region of Peel which is still considered part of the Greater Toronto Area and crucially that the Toronto Star is the highest read newspaper of the region (Staff 2016).

used in context which I as the sole coder and researcher can apply in English but not in French. To reiterate, the *Montréal Gazette's* readership is high enough to be representative of the media representations in Montréal. Also, the choice of newspapers aids in the feasibility of the study as newspapers are easily accessible through databases.

Once the newspapers were chosen, 10 weeks of the 52 yearly weeks for 2018 were selected at random using a random number generator. This selection process was chosen to achieve a large enough sample of newspaper articles to be analyzed while still creating a pool which could feasibly be read for content analysis by one researcher.[5] The following weeks were chosen from the random number generator: July 1st to July 7th 2018, October 1st to the 8th 2018, October 15th to 22nd 2018, August 5th to 12th 2018, November 12th to 19th 2018, July 23rd to 30th 2018, January 8th to 15th 2018, March 26th to April 2nd 2018, May 7th to May 14th, May 15th to May 22nd 2018. Included dates reflect the publication schedule of the newspapers; meaning, if a paper only runs 5 or 6 days a week only those days are chosen to include in the sample across all newspapers. This selective sampling approach was inspired by already existing studies on media portrayals of older adults in Canadian media and closely follows their methodology as the aims of those studies and this project chapter are similar (Rozanova, Northcott, and McDaniel 2006; Rozanova 2010; Marier and Revelli 2017).

All four newspapers were accessed through Concordia University databases and a keyword search was conducted across the selected 10 weeks. The following keywords were used: older adult, elderly, retirement, seniors, 65+. No exclusion terms were included at this phase. These four keywords were meant to capture the general construction of aging in the newspapers and also follow previous studies on newspaper analysis of older adults (Rozanova, Northcott, and McDaniel 2006; Rozanova, Miller, and Wetle 2016). Using similar words allows for comparisons of previous data and was therefore limited to these five terms. Each week's search results were examined for duplicate articles (i.e., articles were published on both website and in print and were therefore duplicates in the search result)[6] or those which did not focus on aging (e.g., the article mentions high school seniors or senior government official). These articles were removed from the sample leaving 360 total articles.

All articles were printed out and read by the researcher, who highlighted important phrases, context, and construction of aging paying specific attention to social characteristics of seniors, social roles, the context surrounding the issue or older adult, and to gauge the overall point of the story (Rozanova, Northcott, and McDaniel 2006). Articles where older adults were portrayed as vulnerable and where positive adjectives, descriptions or assertions are made about interventions to aid this group are coded as compassionate ageism. Articles which use antagonistic or disparaging language, metaphors, or assertions about older adults as government services users or society "dependents" are coded conflictual ageism. Last, articles which praise and exclusively focus on older adults who are physically fit, active and "busy" are coded as new ageism (Martinson and Berridge 2015). Articles were read for both explicit and implicit evaluations of aging: meaning, articles did not need to use a specific phrase but instead the

[5] The author has chosen to not include computer analysis programs (NIVO) as a method of analysis given the aim of the chapter is to assess each newspaper article in its explicit and implicit representations which the researcher feels is best captured by individually reading each article.

[6] The duplication seems a result of the academic research search engine as an individual would encounter either the online news or in-print but not both as in an academic search result.

article was read for its evaluation of older adults and their perceived impact on society. This method was used and described by Rozanova et al. 2006 and it replicated here. This will boost our understanding of media portrayals of seniors more generally as it will shine light on nuances in coverage according to locality and time. *The Toronto Star* included 71 articles, *Montréal Gazette* 83 articles, *Houston Chronicle* 102 articles, and *San Francisco Chronicle* 104 articles.

It is important to mention here why the year 2018 was chosen. First, this year was selected as it was the closest year to when the dissertation fieldwork began. The pandemic starting in March 2019 to arguably today represents a remarkable moment in history as media coverage specifically focused on older adults and their health status (Vervaecke and Meisner 2021). Media coverage during that time was not representative of older adults' coverage in the media more generally. Therefore, to avoid biasing the sample, this dissertation has chosen to use 2018 as the year for content analysis.

IV. Results

Table 1: Distribution of Keyword Search Results Across Themes and Newspapers

Newspaper	Conflictual Ageism	Compassionate Ageism	New Ageism	Miscellaneous	Total Newspaper articles
Montréal Gazette	11 (13%)	54 (65%)	6 (7%)	12 (14%)	83
Toronto Star	9 (12%)	44 (61%)	2 (2%)	16 (22%)	71
San Francisco Chronicle	17 (16%)	77 (74%)	2 (1%)	8 (7%)	104
Houston Chronicle	35 (33%)	26 (25%)	18 (17%)	23 (22%)	102
Total articles by theme	72	201	28	59	360

A total of 360 newspaper articles were coded to test the theoretical expectations mentioned above. Interestingly, Canadian newspapers represented a total of 154 articles or 42% of articles which were analyzed across the two newspapers. American newspapers contained a total of 207 articles, or 57%, of the total 360 articles in this study. In fact, there exists high similarities between the two localities in the number of articles which covered aging. The *Toronto Star* search resulted in 71 articles and *Montréal Gazett*e 83 articles. American newspapers results were slightly more numerous but followed a pattern of high similarity. The *Houston Chronicle* produced a sample of 103 articles while the *San Francisco Chronicle* included a 104-article search result. Importantly, all constructions which were mentioned in the literature were supported by the content analysis presented here. The exact distribution of each type of theme is discussed in more detail in the next section.

Canadian Newspapers

The Toronto Star featured 71 total articles which were selected for content analysis after duplicates and non-relevant articles were removed. A majority 44 of 71, or 61%, displayed the construction of older adults who were frail, dependent and crucially tie this to deserving of public help. These themes were coded as compassionate ageism; meaning, they were positive given they present older adults as deserving of public benefits considering their situation. In each of the 10 weeks analyzed at least one article constructing older adults in this way was present suggesting that this theme was consistent as well as numerous. For example, one article presented the issue of housing insecurity in Toronto and discussed the success of a new housing program which paired older adults with younger tenants. Interestingly, the article illustrates the benefits of the program by sharing a story in which the older tenant experiences a bug bite which requires immediate attention provided by the young tenant. Older adults are described as "struggling" and in need of "help [to] ease the burden of physical labour." Younger tenants are being described as benefiting from this relationship as they can find cheaper housing while older adults "get someone to share a meal with, go for a walk or just have a conversation"(Ngabo 2018). This article illustrates two core constructions of older adults under compassionate ageism as the dependency of the older adults is implied and explicitly mentioned. The older tenant was explicitly described as "very weak" and in need of urgent help from a bee sting. Second, this illustration applauds the development of programs and benefits to alleviate the burdens of aging. Here, the legitimacy or appropriateness of the help is not questioned but instead encouraged which is the crucial component to this frame for this project.

By contrast, only 9 articles, or 12 % were coded as highlighting the theme of aging as a conflictual process between age cohorts in the *Toronto Star*. For example, one article heavily criticized Doug Ford for his 2018 criticism of the proposal for free licensed daycare which Ford argued would result in a substantial increase of taxes without benefit to families. The author of the article uses mocking language to disparage Ford's choice not to critique older adults who were also slated for increased medication reimbursements in the 2018 proposal (Mallick 2018). Interestingly, the author mentions that older adults will receive these benefits because "seniors have power, and I mean real power" although the source of this power is not explicitly outlined (Mallick 2018). The author instead presents two contrasting groups, needy toddlers and powerful older adults, who are slated to receive benefits from the 2018 budget. Two articles highlighted the theme of new ageism and 16 articles, or 16%, were coded as miscellaneous. For example, one article promotes a online tool which older adults should use as a self-testing tool often to ensure they maintain their speech (Star 2018).

The *Montréal Gazette*, featured a total of 83 articles. Of those articles, a majority, 54 out of 83, or 65% were coded as the more positive compassionate ageism construction. 11 articles did feature the more conflictual comparison and antagonism between the two age groups; although these articles were clearly a minority of the representation of older adults in *the Gazette*. Similar to *the Toronto Star*, examples of compassionate ageism focused on older adults' vulnerability around issues such as summer heatwaves and telephone fraud. One article clearly states "those most at risk include the elderly," an assertion which is made solely on biological age (Fidelman 2018). Interestingly, the article brings attention to Québec provincial opposition parties' explicit criticisms of the inadequate government programs to rectify the lack of supports for older adults in summer in Montréal. New ageism did play a larger role in this coverage, consisting of 6 articles, representing 7%. One interesting example outlines plans for a retirement community which crucially is praised as positive for seniors because as one resident explains the emphasis is on being active. Tellingly, an individual embodies new ageism by exhaustively listing the activities they engage in but are careful to note that they stretch first as this is important for longevity. Here the article uses praising language for the active community and personal responsibility of members to stay fit (Lerner 2018). As was the case with *the Toronto Star* findings, a small yet substantial portion of the sample were coded as miscellaneous themes as their mention of older adults was incidental, meaning not central to the story and therefore not enough information is given to assess a positive or negative portrayal. Miscellaneous coded articles were therefore removed from analysis. *The Montréal Gazette* contained 12 of 83 articles, or 14%, labelled miscellaneous. Interestingly, both miscellaneous categories represented more articles than the more conflictual, negative, constructions of seniors in both Canadian newspapers.

American Newspapers

The Houston Chronicle keyword search produced a total of 102 newspapers after the removal of duplicate and non-applicable articles. 35 total articles were coded as the more negative construction of conflictual ageism. This accounts for 33% of the total sample of articles for this newspaper. However, it is important to note here that this 33% accounts for the most prominent theme within the whole sample of articles from *the Houston Chronicle.* The coverage of older adults in this newspaper was markedly different; for example, a case of an older woman using a gun to intimidate younger residents was labeled "conspiracy granny" (Contreras 2018). The article does not go on to give details about her age or how her age is linked to the crimes committed. Instead, the title is given as a throwaway. Another article mocked the notion that older adults, children or those with a disability need help as it means "the governed [] used to having things done for them" (Will 2018). Articles which followed this construction often compared attributes across generations; for example, one author writes "baby boomers will forever be the generation that redefines societal norms and expectations" while also urging this generation to "break through the myths associated with aging such as too old, too expensive, too rigid" or "overqualified" (Thompson 2018). Population aging as a topic was overtly expressed as "a looming demographic crisis [which could] could imperil economic growth" (Myers and Ryan 2018). Older adults are portrayed as being powerful consumers in the economic marketplace of aging. For example, one story highlights the closing of a retirement home as a luxury for older adults as this signals increased competition for more services. Population aging is mentioned as a growing problem which will fix the lack of used beds in nursing homes (Span 2018). Or older adults are portrayed as "greedy" because they chose to retire even though they are not financially

prepared. One article makes clear; many older adults assume that public benefits will be enough to support their lifestyles (Gores 2018). Compassionate ageism represented 25% including 26 articles of the total sample. New ageism is more prominent in this sample with 18 total articles representing 17% of the sample which is the highest percentage of all newspapers. Miscellaneous themes were present with a total of 23 articles or 22% of the Houston Chronicle articles.

The San Francisco Chronicle contained a total of 104 newspaper articles which featured older adults or aging in the 10-week sample. Of the 104 articles, an overwhelming number, 77, represented aging under the construction of compassionate ageism. This construction represents 74% of the total sample of articles from the California paper; in addition, this paper included the highest frequency of this construction across all three other newspapers. More work should be undertaken to test the nuances of differences across more localities to speak more specifically about the variations of cities within the United States and compared to Canada. However, given the contrast in variations with the Texan paper the data here is fruitful for testing the projects' argument related to how NGOs use these constructions.

As for the content of the San Francisco paper, like the heatwaves in Montréal, wildfires in California were largely covered as compassionate ageism where older adults were described as vulnerable to external factors because their older age limits their ability to take of themselves. In a striking example of the vulnerability of older adults an article describes that transitional care employees were planning to "shelter patients in the tiled shower rooms and a walk-in freezer. It was an option that would have proven fatal" during a wildfire (Johnson 2018). Notably, this article describes scenes of chaos where employees of the care center were desperate to find a way to help the patients who are portrayed as helpless. The article reinforces this notion by explicitly mentioning that the workers had work to load wheelchairs and "each patients' medications neatly tied on the handlebars" (Johnson 2018). In a previous line the article's author mentions that this town was a "popular retirement town … for the elderly" which homogenizes the entire older adult population to those within the transition care facility needing to be saved.

When not painted as victims of wildfires, cuts to public benefits aimed at older adults were explicitly criticized. Work requirements introduced by the Trump administration to Medicaid were described as "illogical" and "callous war" specifically because they target older adults (The Chronicle Editorial board 2018a). Unlike in *the Houston Chronicle*, intergenerational conflict construction was lacking in frequency representing only 16% of the sample or 17 total articles. When present conflictual ageism featured portrayals of older adults as resistant to change and having lived a safer and easier life. For example, older adults are said to have enjoyed "L.B.H.T or Life Before High Tech" where identity theft was not prominent. When faced with the introduction of digital license plates the newspaper cites an older adult as responding by asking "If this is what the future holds, maybe I'll just travel by public transit or walk" (The Chronicle Editorial board 2018b). The article paints older adults and the younger generation as in conflict over the use of technology and suggests older adults are resistant to change. New ageism was not prominently represented either, representing only 1% of the sample with only two articles. One illustrative example titled "Aging well can be very rewarding" features writers requesting to be part of the "Aging Hall of Fame" and are accepted when they "have sex twice a day" do not have grey hair and do not have "replacement parts" (Hoppe 2018). Miscellaneous themes were present in this sample, featuring 8 total articles: yet, only representing 7% of the total number of newspaper articles in the 10-week sample. For example, one article recounts the suicide of an older inmate; yet the article does not make

another mention of age but rather the details of the crime (e.g., the time it occurred, what the individual was wearing). The age of the individual fades into the background (Ravani 2018).

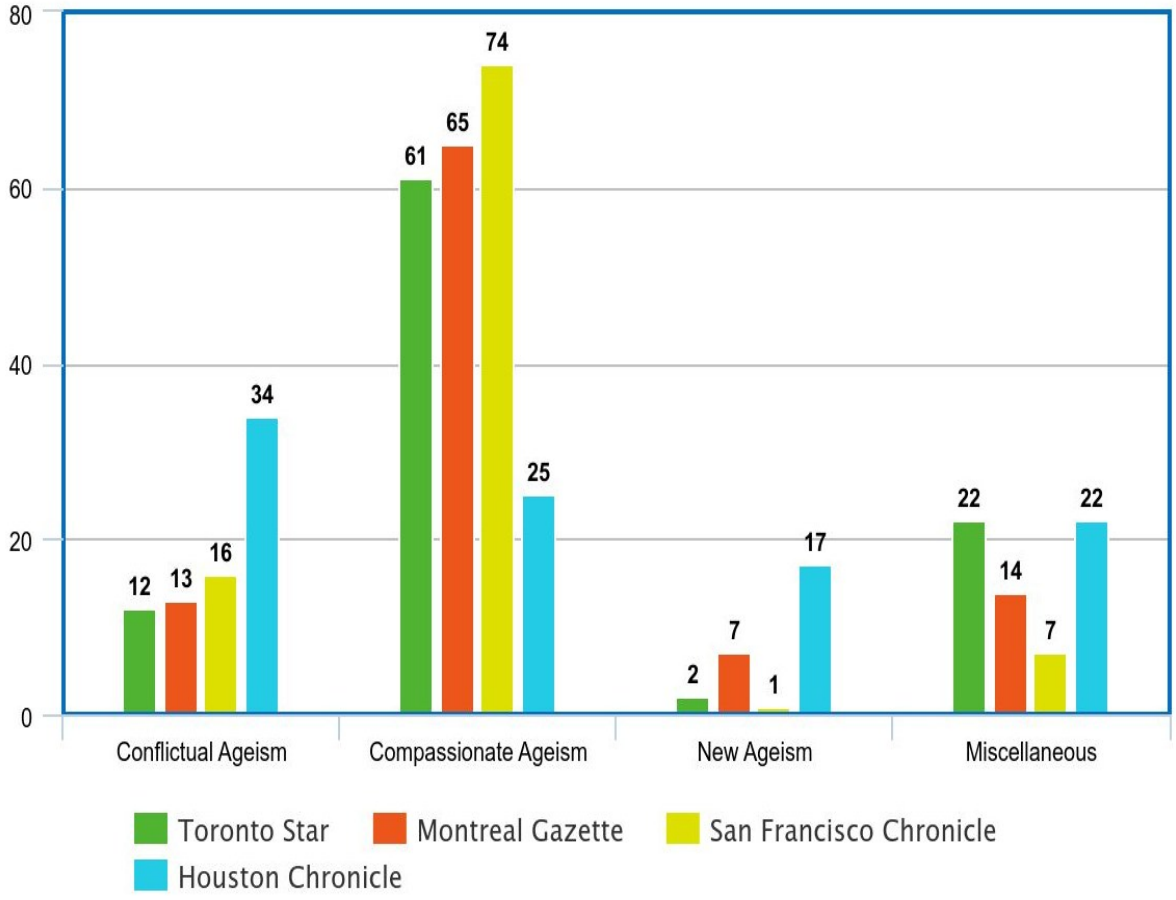
The data also found that new ageism is more apparent in the United States than Canada. New Ageism did not exceed 10% of either Canadian newspaper samples. The *Houston Chronicle* presented 17% of articles as new ageism. Notably, new ageism accounted for only 2% of the San Francisco sample and 7% of the Montréal Gazette sample challenging this assertion. However, considering the relative difference with the Houston case and the other three newspapers overall, this data lends support the notion that this type of ageism or construction is most stark in communities which most align with individualistic and capitalistic political values (Liang 2012; Martinson and Berridge 2015).

V. Discussion and Conclusions

Overall, this chapter finds empirical evidence of variations in social constructions of older adults across four ideologically varying cities. Canadian constructions of aging were on the whole more positive than in the United States case. Specifically, compassionate ageism, or positive constructions, were more present in the Canadian newspapers than in the combination of the two American newspapers. Within countries there also exists variation wherein *Montréal Gazette* includes more compassionate ageism than the *Toronto Star* and similar patterns are present in the United States case. More specifically, *the Houston Chronicle's* most prominent theme was conflictual ageism. Conflictual ageism was far rarer in the Canadian newspapers, accounting for no more than 13% in either newspaper sample. The *San Francisco Chronicle* only contained 16% of this construction, which should also be noted is higher than in either Canadian newspaper. The different constructions of aging are present enough to give confidence that there is enough variation in this variable to observe different outcomes across the four localities.

For further visualization of data, a chart is presented below:

Table 2: Distribution of Aging Portrayals by Theme Across Four Newspapers



The purpose of this chapter is to determine the social construction of olde
Montréal, Toronto, Houston, and San Francisco. In doing so, this chapter demonstra
of the larger argument of this dissertation which combines the social construction of older adults and the strategic action of NGOs working in reintegrating older adults in conflict with the law. To achieve this aim, this chapter is guided by the following research question: what is the social construction of older adults across the four contexts in which the NGOs under study in this project are located? Content analysis of the four major, with highest readership, newspapers in the localities was undertaken and described here in detail. 360 newspapers articles were read and coded according to the major constructions of older adults derived from the gerontological, sociological and public policy literature on the topic. Three constructions were proposed as themes to be found within the newspaper articles, compassionate ageism, conflictual ageism and new ageism. All three constructions identified in the literature were uncovered in the sample of newspaper articles.

Overall, the Canadian newspapers, together, were found to include the highest percentage of positive portrayals, or compassionate ageism, of older adults. This was expected based on

previous studies of media framings of aging, which found the United States presents more conflictual ageism frames (Gusmano and Allin 2014; Marier and Revelli 2017). In alignment with this previous literature, *the Houston Chronicle* operating in the most right-leaning locality in this study was expected to include the highest instances of negative or conflictual ageism, which was confirmed. Interestingly, *the San Francisco Chronicle* was found to have the most numerous count of positive portrayals by a single newspaper, which was not expected by this literature (Foot and Venne 2005; Arber and Ginn 1991; Penning et al. 2024). These findings are important for several reasons. First, the frames discussed above are pulled from particular ideological underpinning, which authors such as Binstock and Rozanova argue explains their salience in certain contexts (Binstock 2010; Rozanova, Northcott, and McDaniel 2006) This chapter shows variation in frames when selecting localities where the ideology varies which I understand to lend support to Binstock's assertation and use this to create expectations for the second section of the argument of this project. Further studies should be undertaken to flesh out exactly the extent to which this orientation matters when comparing a larger sample of localities. Also, this study did not include French language newspapers which should be included in future studies to contextualize the Anglo-Canadian findings but also how those results compare to the *Montréal Gazette* findings presented here. Second, inspired by Rozanova et al. 2006 piece this chapter demonstrates the importance of analyzing several constructions of aging rather than whether just one is present in media accounts. Compassionate, conflictual and new ageism each carry a set of distinct assumptions about older adults which must be analyzed and critiqued as they appear in media and inform how older adults are conceptualized in the public and policies (Rozanova, Northcott, and McDaniel 2006). This chapter contributes to media studies by providing empirical evidence on the frequency at which the frames occur, which is missing from much previous aging media studies, thereby making comparisons across studies difficult.

Third, the results of this chapter allow for a suitable test of the second section of the argument of this project. NGOs seeking to expand what constitutes reintegration policy for OACL depend on funding to provide services beyond what is traditionally funded by correctional departments specifically employment and substance use disorder programs (Beckett and Western 2001; McKim 2008). The driving force of this argument is that where positive portrayals exist more opportunities will be present for NGOs to find programs or services aimed at seniors to include in their service provision under the label of reintegration policy. Conversely, where portrayals are negative NGOs will be less successful in finding funding to expand reintegration services. Also, given that there exists a small yet present variety between the cities within the different countries it is also expected that left-leaning localities will have more success than those operating in more conservative-leaning cities. The next chapter will focus on interviews with those operating in the Canadian cities to assess the NGO strategic action portion of this project.

Chapter 5: Canadian NGOs and the Bounds of Social Reintegration Policy

I. Introduction

This chapter features the results from document analysis and semi-structured interviews conducted with individuals implicated in criminal justice and reintegration policy sectors operating in cities in Canada. A total of 18 semi-structured interviews ranging from 60 to 90 minutes were conducted throughout Ontario and Québec with front-line workers, policy analysts and NGO staff. The main cases are located within the Toronto and Montréal areas; however, additional NGOs were interviewed in both provinces to help increase data on NGO activities and strategic action. The primary comparison for this chapter remains between Montréal and Toronto. Included here is data from comparisons within Canada: U.S.A data will be compiled in the next chapter to allow space and discussion here for differences in reintegration policy across the two cities. This chapter tackles the core research question of this dissertation: *in a context of the devolution of reintegration policy, what explains how re-entry NGOs act to broaden the bounds of reintegration for older adults?* Implied in this question are the following sub-questions which will be answered here. *1.) What is reintegration policy for older adults who are in conflict with the law? 2.) What strategies are employed to deliver this policy?*

This chapter begins with a description of the services available to older adults who are in conflict with the law (OACL) across the two Canadian cities Montréal and Toronto. This section of the chapter is aimed at answering the first of the sub-research questions. This includes NGOs' deployment of adapted housing, meal services, medication management, transportation services, and general life skills counseling. Variations in depth, breadth, and type of services will be discussed in more detail to flesh out differences. The major focus of this chapter will be on the strategies employed by NGOs to ensure the delivery of these services. This will seek to answer the second sub-research question related to how NGOs come to provide the services they do.

These questions are assessed in cities where there exists a variation in the social constructions of older adults Montréal, Toronto, San Francisco and Houston. To an extent, the policy literature on social constructions was supported in the data presented here. Overall, the bounds of reintegration policy were broader in cities where compassionate ageism was the dominate portrayal of aging. Specifically, Montréal held slightly more constructions of compassionate ageism than Toronto and this relationship was also mirrored in services provided to OACL. Also, the findings support the NGO literature on strategic action predicting the success of NGOs in broadening the depth and breadth of policy based on diversity of funding opportunities for different target populations (Kaufman 2015; Kaufman, Kaiser, and Rumpf 2018; Tomczak and Thompson 2019). One unpredicted factor, from the growing NGO literature on the penal volunteer sector, centered on the multiplicity of funding originating from diverse *levels* of government, exacerbated by policy devolution, which helps to explain the reach of reintegration policy (Garland 2002; Thompkins 2010; Corcoran 2011; Brangan 2023). The findings here bolster claims of the NGO literature on resource dependency theory where resource diversification is considered more central to NGO action (Prakash and Gugerty 2010; Mitchell 2014; Clément 2022). Overall, these results show the importance of including diverse literature in the expanding studies on the penal volunteer sector as the discussion of reintegration policy is

often siloed to criminologists and sociologists (Murolo 2022; Tomczak 2016; Maier 2018; Clarke 2017).

To test the argument listed above, section one briefly reviews the theoretical assumptions under investigation and the methods deployed to gather, read, and analyze relevant policy documents. Also, this section will discuss the interviews methods and questions which involved important complications related to COVID-19 which altered the interview process. Next, this chapter focuses on the services provided across the two cities, focusing first on Montréal and then Toronto. Second, an in-depth discussion of the ways in which strategic action plays a role in creating those local services will be raised. This chapter concludes with a survey of the relevant implications of the findings.

II. Theoretical Foundations and Expectations

At the heart of this project is the underlying condition of the variation of social constructions of older adults across different localities. The previous chapter presented the results of the content analysis of Canadian newspapers (Vervaecke and Meisner 2021). To briefly summarize, Montréal newspapers were found to present the most compassionate ageism portrayals of seniors wherein government benefits were framed as necessary for this age group. Montréal presented 4% more articles of compassionate ageism than the Toronto-based paper. While the margin was narrow, between Montréal and Toronto newspapers, a difference of 4% was present which some may consider in the margin of error. However, as the section below explains, additional literature on Montréal's left-leaning approaches to social issues, more recent studies on media portrayals of aging, and the explication of the coding scheme in chapter four, this study considers Toronto more conservative-leaning than Montréal.

Berg et al. dedicate a manuscript to the study of differences in service cuts at the provincial level, and its most populous city, Montréal, which is characterized as "going against the current" by resisting a reduction in social programs to the extent of their Anglo neighbors (Berg et al. 2017). Rooted in a strong commitment to engagement with advocacy groups and the passage of the Social Aid Act in 1969, the authors argue that the province has been particularly concerned with funding "positive activation measures" also known as social welfare programs (Berg et al. 2017, 21). Deena White's study comparing Ontario and Québec experiences with the 1980's cuts to government institutions points attention to official Québec acts such as Multisectoral Regional Roundtables and official recognition of autonomous community action groups as signs of the provincial government's willingness work with these groups (White 2012, 217–18). The roundtables ensure NGOs-government direct dialogue on key issues faced by both partners as they formulate and implement policy. Further, the Québec government also developed Community Action policy wherein they fund NGOs as "specifically autonomous organizations working in accordance with their own missions" (White 2012, 219). Crucially, White explains that these funds are used by 84 % of the NGOs in the province and allow Québec NGOs to resist the Ontario experience wherein government funding of NGOs became "increasingly unstable" causing " a general state of vulnerability" for organizations (White 2012, 213). In Ontario the provincial government restricted NGO action by pulling funds for "political activities" and replacing block funding with individual project funding requiring cost competitive applications by organizations (White 2012, 211).

Berg et al. also draw Québec in direct contrast with Ontario which has adopted a broader approach of curbing expenditures since the 1990's. The authors are clear to note that cuts

did occur throughout Canada, but that in comparison Québec remained committed to its social investments to reducing poverty and inequality (Berg et al. 2017, 6). Research on the difference between Montréal and Toronto heavily feature differences in provincial politics given that provincial governments are primarily responsible for social, health and immigrate settlement to name a few policy areas (White 2012, 200; Nielsen, Hsu, and Jacob 2002). Studies tracking investments across different policy sectors such as taxation, day care, social assistance and economic development policies support Berg et al.'s description of Québec (Berg et al. 2017; Haddow 2015; Banting and Myles 2013; Noël 2013; Béland and Daigneault 2015). In fact, some have pointed to the "Québec model" as representative of the notion that "the Québec State intervenes more in the economy and society than its North American counterparts" which was supported by a 2021 study on subnational welfare states (Daigneault et al. 2021, 239). This suggests that as a location Montréal, considering it is in Québec, is most likely, when compared to Toronto, considering it is located in Ontario, to see the provision of benefits to those deemed deserving. This Québec Model has also found support in the literature on age-friendly cities.

Age-Friendly Cites (AFC) is a concept that encapsules the efforts of international organizations, federal, and provincial governments to meet the needs of the growing older adult population in Western democracies. The concept generally refers to infrastructure and programmatic changes which can be made to make cities more inclusive of older adults (Buffel et al. 2014). Within the literature on AFC, Québec and Montréal more specifically, are praised for its investments in the AFC program (Forsyth and Lyu 2024; Rémillard-Boilard 2020; Moulaert and Garon 2015). This is not to suggest that the Montréal or Québec AFC initiatives have not come without criticism, studies have cited a lack of coordination amongst governmental levels, lack of funds or limited inclusion of older adults in the consultation process (Buffel and Phillipson 2016; Golant 2014; Joy, Marier, and Séguin 2018). Yet, for the purposes of the project here the focus is rather on the distinctiveness of the Montréal AFC project which is seen as successful because of the implication of different levels of government. Meaning, it is supported by both the municipal and provincial governments. Québec funds two initiatives Programme d'infrastructures Québec-Municipalités – Municipalité amie des aînés and Québec Ami des Aînés which makes it more invested than other cities (Rémillard-Boilard 2020, 13). By comparison, Toronto is portrayed as a city more concerned with economic growth at the expense of social projects (Boudreau et al. 2006; Boudreau, Keil, and Young 2009; Joy and Vogel 2015). Toronto's AFC policy has also come under criticism for focusing on blunting the impacts of population aging on the cities' service infrastructure rather than truly meeting the needs of older adults themselves (Joy 2018).

Interestingly, studies on media portrayals of seniors during COVID-19 also demonstrated negative framing in Ontario compared to Québec. A study on the media coverage in long-term care facilities in Ontario during the COVID-19 pandemic found that older adults were portrayed as positive meaning compassionately frail and vulnerable (Dunsmore 2021). Yet, there were mentions of the lack of market incentives to explain the degree of the deaths seen within these facilities (Dunsmore 2021, 1,55). This adds support to studies which argue that Ontario, and therefore Toronto, services and infrastructure are aimed primarily at economic growth and market forces (Bachour 2023). By comparison, a study of French speaking newspaper coverage of older adults during COVID-19 found themes only relating to calls for increased aid to the health and long term care infrastructure to help vulnerable seniors (Archambault, Lagacé, and Fraser 2022). Within this Québec case there were no mentions of market forces but rather a

singular focus on the deservingness of older adults to receive more support for the long-term care sector. Considering the evidence above, an NGO operating in Montréal are expected to present the broadest bounds of reintegration policy, given the presence of compassionate ageism, which provides a permissive context in which NGOs can act and thereby secure funding to provide services which are most appropriate for older adults. This would be considered a broadening of reintegration for OACL because typical reintegration policy primarily comprises of employment and substance-abuse programs (Phelps 2011). By contrast, an NGO operating in Toronto is expected to present a smaller bound of reintegration policy due to the less permissive context. Specifically, NGOs in Toronto are expected to provide more shallow and less broad services. The next section will discuss how this project identifies the differences in service provision across the two cities and crucially provides insight into how these services came to be.

III. Methodology

This project marries both textual analysis and interview data to uncover data about NGOs providing services to OACL. Textual analysis mostly relied on NGO documents such as yearly accounting reports, organizational mandates and missions as stated on public websites, publicly available tax-returns, audits, newspaper articles or organization's self-generated reports on special topics. The textual data lays a foundation for the interview questions as a specific methodological choice was made to read and analyze all publicly available documents before conducting the interviews. Textual data was mostly used to outline the range of services an NGO provides. NGOs were generally generous with providing information on the types of services offered and most NGO websites focused on the variety of services and programs offered. Any figures related the costs of programs, mandates and official populations targeted by programs were available on the websites of NGOs. It is also important to focus on the programs that are promoted by an organization as it represents a symbol of the direction, purpose, and priorities of its activities. All texts, whether they be government policies, NGO mandates or informal newsletters were read by the researcher. To assess how or why certain NGOs provide one service over another and to probe deeper into the thinking or analyses of NGO staff when considering how to fund or find funding for OACL services this project also relies on semi-structured interviews.

The interviews undertaken here were purposively meant to dig deeper into service provision process for NGOs. Potential interview participants were contacted with the explicit mention that interviews would focus on funding strategies and relationships. Interviews were loosely structured around two sets of questions. First, a broad discussion of services, i.e. what types of services does the organization provide to OACL? Where and how are those services administered? Here questions were meant to probe any outstanding questions from the textual analysis. For example, if there were details missing about a program length or populations targeted these questions were crucial for data collection purposes. The second major section of questions focused on funding strategies. Here the focus was to probe into how participants framed their general approach to securing funds. What conditions did participants name as central to their decision making related to funding OACL services. For this section, semi-structured interviews were imperative because they allowed the participants to drive the direction and intensity of the conservation on a topic. This helps to ensure the objectivity of the results given that they are participant driven. Interviews were conducted on NGO sites, public venues, or over the phone to ensure the comfort of the participants. Further, given the sensitive nature of discussing funding strategies all participants were given the option to not have the interview

recorded and to choose to remain anonymous. Meaning, in the presentation of data, those who chose not to be identified are given a pseudonym to ensure their privacy. Conversely, one of the stated potential benefits for participants, of this project, was to promote the activities of organizations who operate in this context. For that reason, while conducting interviews there was the option to include their name and organization name in the final results of this project. Participants were not provided a monetary incentive to participate; in fact, all participants were generous in giving time from their work schedules to answer questions. All those who participated in interviews for this project were briefed on the purpose of the project and provided a choice to participate on their terms. To ensure the wishes of those who requested to stay anonymous several strategies were undertaken.

First, a list of all interview participants was created wherein codes were assigned to all individuals. Only the researcher had and has access to this list. Importantly, the researcher transcribed all interviews and assigned these randomized codes to file names and transcription records. This was done to help ensure the privacy of the participants. In some cases, multiple people were interviewed together and, in those cases, if one person chose to remain anonymous all participants were given a code and identities were protected. Second, identifying information such as position titles, email addresses, or physical addresses were removed from data presentation to also help respect the privacy of those individuals. Interviews were transcribed by only the researcher responsible for this project and where interviews were conducted in French translated and transcribed in English as this would be the final presentation language. The researcher chose to transcribe the interviews in a "naturalized" style as to omit grammar and speech mistakes (McMullin 2023).

Interviews were analyzed qualitatively; meaning, each interview was transcribed by the researcher and later reviewed for common answers to questions or consensus rejections to questions. Thematic analysis was also used to carefully interpret the explicit answers to the questions but also implicit answers or sentiments (Guest, MacQueen, and Namey 2011, 11). It is crucial to include the implicit answers and messages within the interview data as it allows for an investigation of the "complexities of meanings" (Guest, MacQueen, and Namey 2011, 11). Interviews were specifically chosen as an instrument of measurement for this project as they can capture this exact complexity in the strategic thinking of those who provide services for OACL. Also, qualitative analysis was chosen as the method of interview analysis because of the small number of cases and interviews secured for the project. This project was undertaken before and throughout the COVID-19 pandemic which increased the difficulty of feasibly visiting NGO sites thereby decreasing the pool of potential participants. As such, quantitative analysis would be inappropriate in analyzing these interviews as the content of responses to specific questions is more useful. Instead, responses were judged based on their "keyness" in that "a theme is not necessarily dependent on quantifiable measures but rather on whether it captures something important in relation to the overall research question" (Braun and Clarke 2006, 82). It was crucial to allow space for novel or theoretically unexpected answers so other more theoretically bounded, i.e. grounded theory, types of analysis were deemed inappropriate. The next section will begin with a brief organizational profile and then a more precise description of the services provided. The latter sections will display the importance of the nature of semi-structured interviews.

IV. Results

Organization Profile – Maison Cross Roads – Montréal, Québec

Maison Cross Roads is a not-for-profit corporation residing in a neighborhood located in downtown Montréal. Maison Cross Roads undertakes two major service provision activities. First, Maison St-Leonard, which falls under the classification of a community residential facility (CRF), which aims to "provide a structured release program for inmates transferred from federal penitentiaries. Residential and supervision services are provided for inmates released on day parole, full parole, statutory release and unescorted temporary absence" (Maison Cross Roads 2023a). The second major activity is related to a targeted program for older adults, specifically the program Service Oxygène, aimed at older adults who have had contact with the law whether that be a prolonged confinement or interactions between a senior and law enforcement (Maison Cross Roads 2023d). Both Maison St- Leonard and Service Oxygène have slightly different aims which are important to spell out here.

Maison St-Leonard provides services for a broader spectrum of individuals. For example, exclusion criteria for this transition program are related to those needing pronounced psychiatric care, those currently using substances or those with a sex offense record (Maison Cross Roads 2023b). There is no age requirement for using the services related to Maison St-Leonard making it a large umbrella service. For scale, the organization, from 2020 to 2021, serviced 79 individuals, as part of this program. Of those 79 individuals, 71% were those released as part of a regular day parole (Maison Cross Roads, n.d., 15). Additionally, Maison St-Leonard is an important service provider for local Indigenous communities, as this organization is one of the few that offers reintegration services in both French and English (Maison Cross Roads, n.d., 15). The inclusivity of the program is particularly well noted as the clinical director is explicit in writing in the annual report that:

> St-Léonard is a highly sought-after resource for all types of clienteles, especially long-sentence clients, especially long-sentence and court-ordered seniors. Our regular staff with contacts to Correctional Service Canada confirm that the clinical framework we offer is appreciated, as it applies particularly well to the social reintegration work carried out with these people (Maison Cross Roads, n.d., 17).[7]

In line with this inclusive thinking, the humanitarian mission of Maison Crossroads is central to the mission of St-Leonard. The transition home is clearly stated to follow a mission of "humanistic and individualized approach to social reintegration" (Maison Cross Roads 2023b). There are several distinctions within this statement that are worth mentioning. First, the mention of a humanistic approach suggests that the clinical approach of the organization is linked to treating each client as a holistic individual which cannot be extracted from ones' social context. Second, the mention of an individualized approach underlines the organizations' orientation towards discharge and programing planning that considers the needs of the individual and not only the availability of resources. This point is also stressed in the outlining of the major goals of the 2021 calendar year. Specifically, that the organization strives in all of its activities to provide high quality services to clientele which requires "being innovative in creating community partnerships to facilitate their social reintegration"(Maison Cross Roads, n.d.-b, 10). Importantly, this demonstrates the agency of the organization to create services. Lastly, the explicit mention of

[7] Quote is directly translated from French by the researcher, original phrasing may be found on the organization website URL included in the references section.

social reintegration is important as it denotes a specific policy orientation on behalf of Maison Cross Roads. Public Safety Canada's 2007 published report on social reintegration notes that:

> Social reintegration is often understood as the support given to offenders during their reentry into society following imprisonment. A broader definition, however, encompasses a number of interventions undertaken following an arrest to divert offenders away from the criminal justice system to an alternative measure, including a restorative justice process or suitable treatment. It includes imposing community-based sanctions rather than imprisonment in an attempt to facilitate the social reintegration of offenders within the community, rather than subjecting them to the marginalizing and harmful effects of imprisonment…….. In recent years, more emphasis has been placed on designing comprehensive interventions, based on a continuity of care, to provide consistent assistance to offenders within and beyond prison (Griffiths, Dandurand, and Murdoch 2007, 3).

The language used above shows the implicit rejection of imprisonment and its harmful effects on individuals interacting with the criminal justice system. The orientation toward social reintegration assumes that incarceration is harmful and unsuccessful in deterring dangerous behavior. Importantly, Maison Cross Roads stresses less the importance of measuring recidivism as a marker of success. Instead, the organizations' main page features the title "Maison Cross Roads social reintegration services for men and women," marking the centrality of considering social dynamics in the life of a person who is in contact with the criminal justice system (Maison Cross Roads 2023a). This orientation is further stressed in the individual services provided to be discussed below. St- Leonard lists the following services as part of their organization activities:

> Individual assessment of social reintegration needs; individual intervention specifically adapted to meet these needs; Referrals to community resources and agencies; 22 single occupancy and 6 double occupancy rooms; Wheelchair accessibility; Meals, washer/dryer, television/DVD; Proximity to Adult Education Centres; Membership to local gym (Maison Cross Roads 2023b).

Additional services include, "references to various community resources, rooms and bathrooms adapted for people with reduced mobility" (Association des services de réhabilitation sociale du Québec 2023). Within the services of St-Leonard it becomes apparent that Maison Cross Roads is adapting to fill a service gap providing reintegration services for older adults. Within their 2020- 2021 annual report the clinical director notes that of the 206 applications for residency that the program assessed in 2020 to 2021 65 % of cases stated they had a "un niveau de besoin élevé" or a high level of assistance required (Maison Cross Roads, n.d., 14). Of all the clients serviced under St- Leonard 14% demonstrate or state difficulty moving around and 53% of clients are 50 years and older (Maison Cross Roads, n.d., 16). As of fall 2019 Maison Crossroads stated its intent to expand its services for OACL and to acquire recognition from CSC for its "specialized facility for complex cases and court-ordered seniors" as a unique "specialized housing resource" (Maison Cross Roads, n.d., 17). Funding for this project will be detailed below as it demonstrates important evidence of NGO agency.

Service Oxygène targets specifically those who are 50 years and older who need assistance exiting detention, reintegrating into the community after an incarceration, or "who are, for one reason or another, destitute (ex: persons without a support network or a residence" (Maison

Cross Roads 2023d). Listed program objectives are important to analyze here as they demarcate how this organization conceptualizes social reintegration and in what directions they believe will lead to the most successful attempt at this reintegration for an older adult in conflict with the law.

Objectives include:

1.) To intervene on behalf of the clientele with the Canadian Correctional Service and the community at large so that their needs are met with the best possible living arrangement.
2.) To support the community reintegration of the people under its care by promoting an increased sense of autonomy and the desire to take on new challenges.
3.) To incite the clientele to assume their responsibility and to respect the values and norms of the community they live in.
4.) To create and maintain a network of community supporters (halfway houses and services for senior citizens, counsellors, volunteers, etc.) and correctional workers (penitentiaries, area offices, CCC, etc.) with the purpose of supporting the community reintegration of the people under its care.
5.) The workers from Service Oxygène meet with the individuals faced with one or more of these needs and intercede, on their behalf, within the various correctional and community networks.
6.) The workers from Service Oxygène have an excellent knowledge of these networks and can offer, to some, alternatives to long-term incarceration. To those individuals already in the community, Service Oxygène helps prevent disorganization (Maison Cross Roads 2023d).

Implicit here is the notion that reintegration for OACL requires a boosted sense of autonomy, consistent appropriate housing, and crucially a community network that is ready and able to welcome older adults back into the community. Importantly, these objectives are framed differently than the broader St-Leonard CRC programing. Maison St-Leonard's stated primary purpose is the provide individualistic and humanistic programming for those exiting prison. References to needs are general and left abstract. By comparison, Service Oxygène frames its purpose slightly differently focusing instead on service provision which is "respectful of everyone's right to live in dignity" (Maison Cross Roads 2023b). The program brochure states that finding age-appropriate housing (i.e., those that include modifications such as ramps and wheelchairs accessibility) is central to their mission (Maison Cross Roads 2023b). Also, Service Oxygène, unlike the brochure for St-Leonard's more general program, outlines specific needs of OACL such as access to senior centers, long-term care facilities and impacts of ageism (Maison Cross Roads 2023b). This evidence suggests that for Maison Cross Roads OACL social reintegration is, in part, dependent on recognizing the unique challenges that aging presents such as limited mobility and finding long-term care. Having a wheelchair accessible facility allows for the reception of more OACL in the community rather than in an in-prison setting. Maison Cross Roads here stresses the vulnerability of OACL as older adults with limited mobility which requires a specific service.

Notably, Maison Cross Roads website objectives do not mention that the result of the program should be a productive employable individual. Correctional Service Canada (CSC) places heavy emphasis on employment and education programs in service of employability. For example, Correctional Service Canada's main webpage states their broad mandate is "to contribute to public safety by actively encouraging and assisting offenders to become law-abiding citizens, while exercising reasonable, safe, secure and humane control" (Correctional Service Canada 2023). Important in this quote is the framing that CSC is attempting to actively encourage individuals to undergo a transformation. Crucially, the programs it provides are the means by which CSC achieves this goal (Correctional Service Canada 2023). The Service only lists one program, CORCAN, on their website which they highlight is crucial to achieving this transformation

CORCAN operates under the umbrella of CSC and is a special operating agency with a strategic mission to "offer[] the employment and employability program to federal offenders throughout their sentence, in collaboration with other areas of CSC. CORCAN provides interventions and services for offenders, including: on-the-job training apprenticeship hours vocational certifications, and essential skills training" (Correctional Service of Canada Government of Canada 2022). Additional evidence of this dynamic is present in the 2022-2023 Correctional Service Canada Departmental Plan wherein "safe reintegration" is stated to be a possible where "basic literacy, academic and personal development skills" are provided. Yet, the Departmental plan provides only examples of the CORCAN or agricultural vocational training services they offer rather than a full slate of diverse programs meant for social reintegration. CSC make mention of "integration programs, recreation, self-help, life skills training, and social and cultural activities to assist offenders in gaining the social and interpersonal skills that will help them reintegrate into the community" (Correctional Service Canada 2022, 16). However, employment programs are mentioned at a rate of 2 to 1 compared to other types of services within the Department Plan (Correctional Service Canada 2022, 16). Further, within the 2024 to 2025 Departmental Plan CORCAN represents 46 % of the departments' 100 million dollar overall budget dedicated to correctional programs (Correctional Service Canada 2024). This underlines the implicit message that reintegration is achieved through employability and this message is not present in Maison Cross Roads' mandate or Service Oxygène program activities. This marks a contrast in understanding of social reintegration and it demonstrates the tangible differences in services targeted by Maison Cross Roads on the one hand and Correctional Service Canada on the other.

Service Oxygène does mention employment training as offered but it does not hold the centrality present in CSC plans and strategies. Service Oxygène also undertakes public education activities meant to "bring awareness to the public, as well as to the correctional community, about the geriatric and criminogenic issues facing elderly offenders and the community at large" (Maison Cross Roads 2023d). The most recent and most impressive service offered by Service Oxygène is the satellite apartments. In a 2018-2019 annual report the Executive Director states that Service Oxygène and its satellite apartments are the "first community organization in Canada's Correctional system to address the phenomena of aging in the justice system" (Maison Cross Roads, n.d.-a, 2). The apartments can house up to 11 men, provides animators who enable daily functioning, age-modified facilities and "cohabitation with people having a similar history" (Maison Cross Roads 2023a). The clients of Service Service Oxygène are described as having

complex, over-lapping and unique needs as compared to other justice-involved populations (Maison Cross Roads, n.d.-a). The following description from the 2018-2019 report is provided as evidence:

> For most of them, the complexity of this return to the community is made all the more difficult by social isolation, financial insecurity, premature ageing, physical/psychological health problems and unfamiliar social norms for older people in the legal system (Maison Cross Roads, n.d.-a, 15).

Specific adaptations to the physical infrastructure to the satellite apartments are an on-going activity for Maison Cross-Roads; specifically, in all the annual reports available on their website, mentions are made of renovations to the toilets, showers, and door frames to ensure they meet the needs of those with mobility assistance devices. For example, the installation of a mobile shower (Maison Cross Roads 2018, 24).

Beyond physical infrastructure, specialized social services are also provided such as the "accompanying" or support of OACL who needed to access government services during the COVID-19 pandemic. This could be as simple as helping individuals with technology requirements for online appointments and meetings such as working on a computer. Or, more complicated tasks such as trying to book adapted transportation (Maison Cross Roads, n.d.-b, 22). The 2020-2021 report notes that OACL were particularly impacted by the increased use of technology during the pandemic and this increased the need for more support from organization staff (Maison Cross Roads, n.d.-b, 22). Further, the satellite apartments as a space for OACL with similar experiences functions as an important social service wherein individuals are said to able to "adapt progressively and safely …. without losing their former points of reference all at once" (Maison Cross Roads 2023a). OACL, per the organization 2017-2018 report, most often suffer from institutionalization effects where individuals are not used caring for themselves and have difficulty expressing their needs in an unfamiliar environment (Maison Cross Roads 2018, 23). Housing OACL together creates some familiarity for these individuals which is stated to help in the creation of a new identity and new life path which is crucial for integration into a community (Maison Cross Roads 2018, 23).

The expansion of the Service Oxygène apartments is funded by the Canadian federal government, provincial and city governments aimed at creating 15 new social housing units in the Montréal neighborhood of Verdun. This would add to the already existing Service Oxygène's satellite apartments – Résidence Leo's Boys and Maison Jacqueline Verrette. The city of Montréal has pledged support for a span of 20 years marking the true longevity of the project. Interestingly, this funding comes from not Correctional Services Canada but Canada's Federal Minister of Housing, Diversity and Inclusion, and the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for the Québec provincial government (Ville de Montréal 2022). Later sections will show the presence of consistent adapted housing that is offered indefinitely is a truly revolutionary act of boundary pushing for this group. The Service Oxygène's website is explicit to mention that "the length of stay depends on each resident and his ability to become sufficiently autonomous to reintegrate into the community in a satisfactory fashion" (Maison Cross Roads 2023c). Literature on the needs of OACL clearly find that adapted housing is crucial for the reintegration of this group; further the lack of housing is often mentioned in the literature and was reinforced in the interviews for this project (Colibaba 2019; Murolo 2022; Wyse 2018).

As a recapitulation, Maison Cross Roads program, Service Oxygène, provides a wide variety of resources such as adapted housing, help with placement into long-term care residences, transportation, garden program, meal preparation, planning and creation of community networks for an individual (Maison Cross Roads 2023d). As it relates to breadth, program Oxygène provides a range of services which cater to a person's medical, housing, and social needs representing a wide spectrum of reintegration needs. Unlike transition homes aimed at the general population, it provides a physical infrastructure which is adapted to the needs of older adults (i.e. wheelchair accessible hallways and washrooms). Further, Maison Cross Roads provides individualized services meant to help reintegrate an individual who faces major adjustments; for example, cellular phone technology has changed drastically within a span of 2 to 3 years much less 10 years. A person incarcerated for a 10-to-15-year sentence at an advanced age requires individualized specialized support to acclimate to this new world (Maison Cross Roads 2023d). Crucially, these programs are conceived and implemented acknowledging the trauma of incarceration for an OACL. Program documents are clear to stress that services must include "former points of reference" to an incarcerated life when introducing new skills and new atmospheres (Maison Cross Roads 2023d). This adapted service provision and creation is key to the dynamic of boundary pushing explored in this project. To this point, the services of Maison Cross Roads have been named and explained. What makes the Montréal case remarkable and unique, when compared to later cases, is the extent to which strategic action, on the part of NGO staff, intersected with a favorable context to create the further pushing for OACL reintegrating into the community. The most explicit example of this is the creation of Résidence Leo's Boys which provides housing to OACL on a long-term basis and a 5-million-dollar investment into the organization by the city of Montréal (Maison Cross Roads, n.d.-b). Lack of housing is listed, often, as the most pressing concern for OACL in any locality (Crawley 2004; Hayes et al. 2012). The next section will analyze the results of semi-structured interviews with participants who have knowledge of the Montréal criminal justice sector. The interviews highlight how and why these programs were created with a special mention of key activities for the future.

Strategic Action –Maison Cross Roads– Montréal, Canada

In the Montréal area, this project undertook several interviews with NGOs providing front line services, or political advocacy and network building at various levels of government. From these interviews, one theme emerged describing a similar path to program creation for those servicing older adults attempting reintegration. From the interviews, participants with knowledge of funding approaches outlined an intensive process of capacity building prior to engaging in work with OACL.

One participant, a long-time serving Executive Director of Maison Cross Roads, explains that his introduction to providing OACL reintegration services originates from 1991 where he undertook an initiative in Ontario to support reintegration efforts of "lifers." The director entered institutions to identify the needs and resources of these individuals; consequently, the elevated physical and social needs of OACL began to emerge in roundtable discussions from this work. Through this the director developed a program to hire lifers to enter into penitentiaries to assess particular cases where an individual may be eligible for parole should they have adequate resources to enter into the community into. This assessment would lead to a recommendation of a halfway house which could meet those needs. This program became funded by Corrections Canada in 2003-2004 fiscal year. This project would eventually transform into the project known as Service Oxygène (Interview # 15).

A similar process was explained by the clinical supervisor of Maison Dutil, an NGO providing reintegration services to OACL in the surrounding Québec City region. While this NGO is not located in Montréal, its inclusion in this section of the project was considered important because it was one of the few organizations which provide these services throughout the province. Further, data from this NGO was used only to add support to the finding related to how services originate for OACL and importantly because it mirrored the Maison Cross Roads experience. Maison Dutil is part of a larger organization known as RÉHAB which opened in 1982 and has since focused on social services and criminal justice prevention programs (RÉHAB, n.d.). In our interview, the supervisor explained that RÉHAB had been working in this sector for decades developing up to 35 programs addressing different types of "traditional reintegration" issues. Within this frame, she explains:

> We have a very good relationships with CSC, this organization wanted a second specialized transition home….. The organization bought the house, Henry Dutil…..the house they bought was well kept…… and they adapted its aging clients. An access ramp outside, a stairlift, handles everywhere in the house, the total kitchen, they put a camera system. (Interview # 8).

Here we see a similar pattern wherein the NGO must build the capacity and then show a particular interest in the development of programs for some populations existing in service gaps. Crucially, during the interview the notion of Maison Dutil creating long-term housing similar to Maison Cross Roads satellite apartments was raised and identified as a goal for Maison Dutil as well. The need to extend the duration of housing services was identified as crucial for this population (Interview # 8). Beyond this example, the next section will demonstrate that attempts to expand services for OACL are also enacted through the development of specific older adult planning tools, public education campaigns, and lobbying activities (Interview # 15).

The director of Maison Cross Roads explained, during their interview, OACL policy responses must move beyond ad-hoc initiatives from the volunteer sector:

> Its really impressive what some volunteer sector people do, huh, I think in my thinking at some point, however, and that's why I designed this intervention model, I felt that the elderly people needed something more than just goodwill and goodheart, you know. We needed knowledge, we need geriatric knowledge, we needed to have huh a view ageism and all sorts of things that impact on the services we provide to people. so I would say there is a bit of difference in terms of how we are directing and what direction we are directing (Interview # 15)

This evidence, as delivered by one of the few service providers in this sector, exposes the state of reintegration policy for OACL as lacking a structured approach that meets their needs as older adults. The Office of the Correctional Investigator's report on aging in federal Canadian penitentiaries also finds that community alternatives are "lacking and are not well resourced" (Office of the Correctional Investigator 2019, 65). Simply put, there are not enough accessible beds in the community, restricting the number of OACL who can embark on their journey of social reintegration. The report also found that the CSC does not collect data on the specialized

housing needs of incarcerated individuals nor does it forecast needs by groups, greatly hindering the department's ability to plan for future needs (Office of the Correctional Investigator 2019, 67). The report names only two NGOs in Canada providing OACL services Maison Cross Roads and Haley House who are "excellent examples" of specialized community-based residential facilities (Office of the Correctional Investigator 2019, 67). The report praises Maison Cross Roads for providing accessible accommodation and gerontology-informed services (Office of the Correctional Investigator 2019, 68).

Through the experiences of Service Service Oxygène, Maison Crossroads has developed an assessment tool aimed at helping OACL through their discharge, reintegration and parole planning. This tool makes specific mention to gerontological issues faced by these individuals and how they intersect with criminal justice system barriers (Maison Cross Roads 2023d). Crucially, the intervention tool is then used to identify the services needed by the individual (Maison Cross Roads 2023d). The intervention relies on principles such as acceptation, selection, optimization and compensation. Each principle considers how aging limits or enables certain areas of potential action and encourages individuals to choose areas where they can exert their own will "taking into account the contingencies of the environment, motivations, aptitudes and biological capacities of the individual" (Gagnon and Revelli 2022). This tool is needed because OACL who reenter the community often suffer from institutionalization where many aspects of their daily living were predetermined by Corrections Canada (i.e., prison clothing, schedule, housing, health care) (Gagnon and Revelli 2022). Once in the community, these individuals must adapt their decision-making to the realities of post-incarceration and older age. The intervention model provides a way to navigate this challenge. The creation of this tool shows the all-encompassing approach Maison Cross Roads takes to OACL, meaning they consider the age of the person as a crucial point of entry for services and needs of the individual for their reintegration.

Beyond programmatic tools, Maison Crossroads and organization RÉHAB are members of the Association des Services de Réhabilitation Sociale du Québec (ASRSQ) which aims "to promote social rehabilitation and support the work of its members non-profit organizations in the social and community reintegration of adults in conflict with the law and crime prevention" (Association des services de réhabilitation sociale du Québec 2023). In an interview with the Chief Executive Officer, it was explained that ASRSQ aims to educate and influence official criminal justice cases or policies being discussed or decided by public officials (Interview # 6). ASRSQ achieves this through roundtables meetings with NGO workers and directors which is then relayed to CSC. CSC provides funds to NGO transition homes based on a formula. The chief officer noted that ASRSQ has pushed the CSC on providing clearer needs for beds from the community and a reevaluation of the formula components (Interview # 6). Specifically, the CSC calculates funds based on the beds occupied rather than the total cost of providing a service for the NGOs. The ASRSQ Director explains that funding is based on what CSC estimates is the cost of using the services of the NGOs which often does not represent the whole cost of providing the service. As such, the Director points out that his organization has tried to convince CSC to provide grant funding in some cases where bed occupancy may vary or costs are higher than anticipated by the CSC formula. In some cases, the Director explained that the CSC was not paying the full per diem amount to NGOs which was rectified by this organization through roundtable talks (Interview # 6). This is crucial because it demonstrates the "pushing" engaged in by NGOs and the networks they create to reinforce this push.

In 2019, the ASRSQ, in partnership with Maison Cross Roads and Équipe de recherche en partenariat VIES (vieillissements, exclusions sociales et solidarités) planned a symposium to be held in a federal penitentiary.[8] The symposium was to bring together criminal justice sector workers, healthcare, and social care workers to discuss and engage on the issues of older adults in CSC custody. The lieu of the symposium was specifically chosen to cause reflection for service workers to better understand the intersection of aging and interactions with the criminal justice sector. The symposium was moved online during the COVID-19 pandemic and spanned three days. More specifically, the event aimed to educate participants about the unique needs of this group and details about the impacts of incarceration on an older adult. Further, the event was also aimed at creating links between community organizations to help spread best practices and to increase service reach. For example, during the symposium, organizations from Québec City specifically asked to have access to programmatic tools developed by Maison Cross Roads. A full day was dedicated to outlining gaps in pre-release planning and ways in which the health and social service systems can help bridge these gaps. Some attendees were there to learn how their organizations could help OACL reintegrate. The symposium is understood as advocacy because it increases the profile of OACLs and their needs such as more accessible accommodation to encourage the CSC and community actors to provide more for this group.

To summarize, this project has uncovered several crucial moments of strategic action, where funding is not directly tied and controlled by CSC. Precisely, the Director of Maison Cross Roads, explained that the accessibility modification of including an elevator in the transition home was secured through a separate federal program. It was not related to Correctional Services Canada funding (Interview # 15). The creation of accessible accommodation outside of penitentiaries allows for OACL to exit prison and socially reintegrate with dignity. Having an accessible bed is therefore expanding what is currently available to OACL. The symposium is an additional example of "work" which is not explicitly funded by CSC but is instead funded by the research and advocacy associations Maison Cross Roads is associated with (Équipe VIES, Maison Cross Roads, l'Association des services de réhabilitation sociale du Québec, et al., n.d.). Further, and in the most expansive effort to provide deeper reintegration services, Maison Cross Roads was able to secure funding for long-term housing from the Minister of Housing, Diversity and Inclusion (Ville de Montréal 2022). Long-term housing has been noted as a key, if not the most, important factor to securing the successful reintegration of older adults (Crawley 2004; Griffiths, Dandurand, and Murdoch 2007; Lemieux, Dyeson, and Castiglione 2002; Office of the Correctional Investigator 2019). The textual data uncovered the new housing project while the interviews highlighted the strategic action NGO actors need to undertake to position their NGOs to provide these services. Both sources were needed to understand the full extent of services provided to OACL who receive services from Maison Cross Roads.

Organizational Profile - St. Leonard's Place Peel (SLPP) – Toronto, Canada

Upon initial scans of the downtown Toronto area, the researcher was unable to find an NGO that provides reintegration services for older adults men or women that was located in the heart of the city as was the case in Montréal. Instead, web research and interview responses led to St. Leonard's Place Peel which is located in the greater Toronto area (GTA) in the region of Peel. The lack of organizations specifically geared towards this population within the downtown core of the city of Toronto was also confirmed in an interview with an NGO worker involved in

[8] The researcher for this project was involved in the planning and realization of the symposium.

this sector in the city (Interview # 21). Within the same interview SLPP was named suggesting it is the only NGOs servicing OACL in the GTA (Interview # 21). The organization states their mandate as "dedicated to supporting our clients, building their capacity and enabling the developments of key life skills through evidence-informed holistic programs and services that optimize quality of life" (St. Leonard's Place Peel 2019a). SLPP brands itself as "serving men requiring complex medical, geriatric, neuro-behavioral and/or palliative care" (St. Leonard's Place Peel 2020b).

In concrete terms, they "provide[] community-based residential support for men over 18 years of age who have significant mental health and substance use disorder problems, as well as those who've had involvement with the justice system" (St. Leonard's Place Peel 2019a). This is achieved through three "streams" of programs. First, the New Leaf Program targets those in need of housing due to substance or mental health concerns. Second, the Community Residential Facility Program which is a more traditional housing option for those on conditional community release. Last, the graduate program "builds the capacity of men advanced in age to eventually live independently with confidence in the broader community" (St. Leonard's Place Peel 2019a). The aims of the Graduate program achieved through "building financial security, pro-social network building, and the next stage of life planning for clients" (St. Leonard's Place Peel 2019). The Graduate program was described to the researcher as encouraging individual capacity building through job development and life skills programs (Interview # 43). Crucially, those in the Graduate Program must first complete the New Leaf or Community Residential Programs to enroll in the Graduate Program (St. Leonard's Place Peel 2019a). The program also aims to provide housing for up to five years to "New Leaf graduates aged 50 years and older" (St. Leonard's Place Peel 2020, 4).

SLPP differentiates what they provide into programs and services. Programs include – life skills programs focused on "personal/selfcare, understanding oneself, goal setting, nutrition and healthy living, effective communication, problem solving and decision making" (St. Leonard's Place Peel 2019b). Meal programs provide three meals per day for residents. Also, included are job development programs and physical therapy aimed at "improving clients' physical and mental health" (St. Leonard's Place Peel 2019b). From an interview the researcher conducted with someone familiar with the organization and its operations, SLPP staff offer programs on a needs basis whereas services such as nursing clinic for seniors and counselling are provided to all residents (Interview # 43). Like Maison Crossroads, St. Leonard's Place Peel engages in advocacy work – they introduced an initiative focused on aging. Aligning Seniors Against Poverty (ASAP) which aims to provide direct poverty alleviation services but also the introduction of an advisory council to guide program direction (St. Leonard's Place Peel 2020a). As with the Graduate program, ASAP places primacy on SLPP "building financial security" which is comprised of monthly workshops and an assessment of individual poverty risk (St. Leonard's Place Peel 2019). The ASAP initiative targets three populations of seniors – those struggling with mental illness, addiction and/ or conflict with the law (St. Leonard's Place Peel 2019). This approach to aging focuses on more singular issues such as poverty rather than a more encompassing approach to this population as having a variety of issues related to being an OACL. Namely, Maison Cross Roads' work focuses on treating this population as primarily being both older adults and those in conflict with the law delivered through specific discharge planning and housing support (Interview # 15).

In terms of variety of services SLPP provides similar services to that of Maison Cross Roads. Both organizations provide a meal service, counselling, transportation, physical therapy and education classes. In this way, for these NGOs reintegration is defined as something more than work-skills training; instead, it encompasses many parts of one's life. Their education, mental health, physical health, eating habits and socialization are all services provided and therefore seen as key for reintegration.

SLPP's program aimed at older adults - Rotary Resolve House Residential Program- provides housing to 24 men in need of housing. The program description is not clear to target specifically older adults who are in conflict with the law but those are some program users (Rhodes, n.d.). Program users can be referred to from other programs within the SLPP clientele base. The program is estimated to cost 4 million and provide housing for up to five years on an as needed basis (Rhodes, n.d.). SLPP also provides programs such as OUT of The Cold and In From the Heat are programs aimed at providing housing in extreme weather conditions to all men over the age of 18. These programs serve a larger number of clients; according to their reports, in 2020 1104 individuals used the Out of the Cold program (St. Leonard's Place Peel 2020a, 07). The In From the Heath program served 256 individuals in 2022 to 2023 (St. Leonard's Place Peel 2023, 11–12). Both programs provide temporary housing for 24 hours and is framed as an issue of homelessness. This is not to suggest that OACL cannot use these services but rather that they do not provide aging specific long-term housing and social support that literature has shown is crucial for OACL to reintegrate into the community (Colibaba 2019; Office of the Correctional Investigator 2019; Williams 2013).

Importantly, both these programs are funded by the Region of Peel and Reaching Home (St. Leonard's Place Peel 2023, 11–12). This appears to be a result of a strategic choice which will be discussed in the section below. These programs are therefore not under the purvey of Corrections Canada but also do not directly address reintegration but rather the secondary implications of incarceration such as homelessness. The Region of Peel also plays a crucial role in providing 1.2 million in funding for the Rotary Resolve House Residential Program (Rhodes, n.d.). Interestingly, the next section shows that the interviews undertaken for this project highlight the importance of strategic and innovative thinking on the part of sector workers to develop programs outside of CSC funds.

Strategic Action – St. Leonard's Place Peel (SLPP)-Toronto (GTA)

Interviews with individuals familiar with SLPP and the greater Toronto penal context highlighted the initiative required to operate in this policy context. From my interview with an individual familiar with SLPP, a discussion arose related to how SLPP began to provide services targeted to older adults. It was explained that in 2017 the Chief Executive Officer perceived a need in a shift of programs to be prepared for population aging. It was expressed that there was an understood change in the needs of this cohort. Further, that medical care and medical support were becoming a key if not the primary service in use (Interview # 43). During the interview, it was also expressed that this was an initiative taken by SLPP rather than an externally imposed program.

According to the organization's website, in the early 2000's, the SLPP mandate was broaden "from only serving federal parolees to providing services to those facing vulnerability to homelessness and mental illness" (St. Leonard's Place Peel 2019). In 1995, as the city population increased and the Region assumes the responsibility for the municipal housing program (Peel

Region 2024). Form an early stage, the region of Peel prioritized reducing homelessness rates, a 2001 Regional Council report explains that the region was working closely with federal partners, Human Resources and Development Canada and the Homelessness Secretariat to craft a strategic plan which was "formatted" under the requirements of the Federal Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI). The Federal SCPI provides funds to organizations that serve the unhoused and foster the creation of novel local initiatives to combat homelessness (Commissioner of Housing and Property et al. 2001, 1). In 2019 the Federal Homelessness plan was replaced with Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy. Reaching Home is a community-based program which provides funds to a Community Entity which is charged with outlining locally informed community planning, advising on funding priorities and recommended projects. The Region of Peel is a designated Community Entity and SLPP plays a role on the Community Advisory Board (CAB) through the Peel Alliance to End Homelessness which is a standing member of the CAB. SLPP is a member of the Peel Alliance to End Homelessness (PAEH) which advises the CAB on funding directions and applications (The Peel Alliance to End Homelessness 2024). Tax returns, dating back to 2003, indicate that the Region of Peel has consistently provided around 15 to 20% of SLPP total revenues (Blumbergs Professional Corporation 2024b). The evidence above suggests that SLPP made a strategic choice to align with 2000 city plan of the Region of Peel which opened avenues of funding through the Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy. This marks a different approach than that of Maison Cross Roads.

SLPP, unlike Maison Cross Roads, focuses on the issue of homelessness in its strategic plans, annual reports, and membership to advocacy groups. Aging is rarely mentioned and is instead limited to the following mention of the organizations' "niche" of serving "men requiring complex medical geriatric, neuro-behavioral and/or palliative care" (St. Leonard's Place Peel 2020, 2). Ageism and the ways in which aging can create barriers for reintegration are not mentioned as they are consistently highlighted in Maison Cross Roads documents. Further, SLPP does not use a specific age-based discharge planning tool as in the case of Maison Cross Roads. In conducting interviews, the researcher chose to include some secondary cases such as Maison Dutil and the case mentioned below to help add observations outside the Montréal and Toronto cases to assess whether the differences in the two cities were specific to those localities. Furthermore, because acquiring interviews for the project proved particularly difficult, the researcher included these secondary cases to further nuance and contextualize the findings of the primary cases.

One such organization was the John Howard Society of Hamilton. The organization developed an adult diversion program specifically for older adults. This type of program had been funded for average age adults by Correctional Department Canada but those at the John Howard Society of Hamiton felt that there was no route available to older adults for diversion. They developed a new program to meet this gap in service provision. The program is called the Seniors Restorative Justice Program and provides a restorative remedy to a criminal act which has been undertaken by an older adult. The Program matches the individual with a committee that walks the individual through the five traditional steps of restorative justice principles. The committee is comprised of older adults who have been trained and supervised by the John Howard Society of Hamilton (Interview # 14). In a group interview with some committee members, it was expressed that the presence of older adults on the committee was crucial as it helped the individual feel comfortable and understood. (Interview # 26). This type of program

stands as a truly revolutionary approach to reintegration for older adults. It provides remedies and rectification measures with an aging lens. The program was funded by Service Canada as part of the New Horizons program which aims to increase "funding for projects that make a difference in the lives of seniors and their communities (Employment and Social Development Canada 2018). Interestingly, the federal grant program promotes its funding as an opportunity for senior volunteerism which shows that NGOs can use the frame of aging to increase reintegration of older adults (Interview # 46). No other organization interviewed for this project mentioned this program as a potential funding stream which was interesting.

The program's supervisor explained that the funding was discovered in their search for grant proposals and successfully submitted a grant proposal (Interview # 14). An interview with Government of Canada official who works closely with the New Horizons program explained that the program aims to support and "spread the wealth" amongst a variety of organizations throughout Canada (Interview # 46). As such, an organization cannot apply for renewing funding but instead apply to receive a one-time yearly grant (Interview # 46). Therefore currently, the program operates for John Howard of Hamilton on an unfunded basis. Importantly, these services are different than that of SLPP or Maison Cross Roads who provide more breadth of services namely long-term housing and medical services. John Howard Society of Hamilton program also only targets those with a provincial sentence (2 years or less penalty). OACL serving a federal sentence tends to make up the larger proportion of those reintegrating into the community and have higher medical and social needs given their extended stay in custody (Interview # 15, 43, 23). Further, SLPP and Maison Cross Roads were able to secure services through contracts with the cities of Peel and Montréal respectively. Hamilton operates in a much smaller community which does not provide the same funding opportunities as Toronto and Montréal. In fact, the program director and their direct supervisor were frank that funders had described OACL as "not poster friendly" highlighting the difficulty of securing funds in the locality (Interview # 31). This, in part, explains why the program director chose to package a restorative justice program for OACL as an opportunity for senior volunteerism for the committee members. The John Howard Society of Hamilton program was included in this project as it provides additional evidence that CSC funding alone do not determine the kinds of services reintegration NGOs can and do provide (Kaufman 2015).

V. Discussion

From the data above, one of the major differences in Maison Cross Roads and SLPP rests in the depth of the services provided. SLPP appears to provide a larger breadth of services while Maison Cross Roads focuses on depth of reintegration for OACL. SLPP's focus on breadth can be seen in their total revenue figures; for example, the organization reports a revenue of 6,268,509 million dollars for 2023 (Blumbergs Professional Corporation 2024b). In 2023, 3,140,536 or 50% of their budget is received from the Federal government while 1,750,281 or 27% is received from provincial or territorial governments (Blumbergs Professional Corporation 2024b). Also, SLPP received 220,267 dollars from registered charities in 2023 (Blumbergs Professional Corporation 2024b). As mentioned previously, SLPP provides a wide variety of services, temporary respite from hot and cold weather, poverty relief workshops, and limited beds for long-term housing among others which are available to OACL. However, those programs were not conceived and intended for specifically OACL but unhoused men 18 years and older.

SLPP holds strong ties to the region of Peel which has made focused efforts on receiving grants from the federal government to help alleviate homelessness concerns in the region since 2000 (Commissioner of Housing and Property et al. 2001). According to media articles, SLPP is described as "a not-for-profit organization that provides long-term residential care to homeless men in Peel Region" demonstrating SLPP advocacy and presentation as focusing on issues outside of a person's conflict with the law status (Guardian 2009; 211 Ontario 2024). SLPP holds different funding partners, the federal, provincial and city governments, which have resulted in a broad range of services which OACL can access but do not target them specifically. SLPP strategically identifies homelessness as a source of government funding and works with the funders to receive those grants. By comparison Maison Cross Roads focuses on service depth for specifically OACL.

Maison Cross Roads represents a revenue of 1, 832,027 million dollars for 2023 not reflecting the new housing project approved by the provincial and city governments (Blumbergs Professional Corporation 2024a). According to 2023 figures, 1,721,415 million dollars were received from the federal government making it the organization's primary funder (Blumbergs Professional Corporation 2024a). Maison Cross Roads program Service Oxygène is funded by CSC although the long-term housing portion is undertaken by provincial and city governments (Interview # 15). Service Oxygène provides tailored housing, food, and therapy services that are specifically adjusted for OACL. Maison Cross Roads advocacy efforts have focused more on ageism and conflict with the law issues as the organization is affiliated with aging research groups and reintegration groups (Équipe VIES et al. 2021). For example, CSC and the Office of the Correctional Investigator were present at the conference for OACL in federal penitentiaries hosted by Maison Cross Roads (Équipe VIES et al. 2021). In fact, a past executive director of the organization was awarded the *Ed McIsaac Human Rights in Corrections Award* by the Correctional Investigator of Canada, Dr. Zinger for his work "recognizing the growing and unique needs of the aging correctional population, Mr. Gagnon has devoted much of his career to designing and implementing numerous support services ….. for elderly men involved in the criminal justice system" (Office of the Correctional Investigator 2024). Finally, Maison Cross Roads was able to secure financing from the city of Montréal, among others, for a 15-unit long-term housing plan aligning with the higher instance of positive social construction for this group (Ceausu 2022). This evidence suggests that counter to the literature's assumptions regarding correctional department's efforts to reduce spending for reintegration efforts; the efforts of working with CSC by Maison Cross Roads lead to the creation of Service Oxygène. Given this success, it appears that Maison Cross Roads was able to continue on its mission to serve OACL in its community; conversely, SLPP's mission has appears to aligned itself towards its funding successes with the region of Peel targeting homelessness.

VI. Implications and Conclusions

This chapter focuses primarily on two NGOs operating in Toronto and Montréal which provide reintegration services for OACL. The findings from the interviews and textual analysis suggest that NGOs do in fact secure funding from a variety of partners, despite the restrictive nature of the correctional policy sector. Contrary to the literature on the penal volunteer sector which focuses on NGO funding relationships solely with correctional departments, the NGOs featured here secured funding from federal Correctional partners as well as provincial and city level funding. Maison Cross Roads was able to fund open-ended long-term housing for OACL under its care through federal, provincial, and city governments which are not exclusive to

Correctional Services Canada. These findings are important for several reasons. First, the differences in services between Maison Cross Roads and SLPP show a difference in the communities they service.

Maison Crossroads is more successful at focusing on the reintegration of older adults while SLPP appears to target broader social services provided to socially marginalized groups. Specifically, Maison Cross Roads provides an adapted transition home, in the heart of the city, which then provides long-term housing on a need's basis without a clear end date. Further, Maison Cross Roads has developed an aging-informed intervention model which speaks to the intersection of aging and conflict with the law status. Maison Cross Roads achieves this through securing funding, for specifically OACL, from city, provincial and federal partners. SLPP while also securing different funding partners approaches reintegration differently. SLPP's has a broader mandate than Maison Cross Roads therefore it provides a broader range of services not meant for OACL This finding was expected given that Toronto held less positive portrayals of aging. SLPP does provide long-term housing to OACL but the depth of this service is greater in Montréal. It was interesting that there were no NGOs providing these services in Toronto but in the greater Toronto area instead. Further, SLPP steers its advocacy towards the issue of homelessness while Maison Cross Roads engages in advocacy work tied more closely to organizations focused on aging. This crucial fact shows the most successful attempts at defining reintegration services points to reintegration as something not only in the purview of correctional departments. The project argues that the success of Maison Cross Roads is in part due to the social construction of aging in Montréal, Québec. With an emphasis on compassionate ageism as the dominant frame of aging in Montréal the STCP framework was supported in the data.

The penal volunteer sector is a new area of research for social scientists who are attempting to map various trends in this area of policymaking. Scholars are just now beginning to conceptually map actors, networks, and connections. One important trend from this literature is to move away from assuming homogeneity across penal cultures to "avoid sweeping assertions of either difference or sameness" (Brangan 2023; Sugie 2012). In using the STCP, this project brings to the forefront the differences among cities. This helps to create new avenues of theorizing related to how different organizations service particular clienteles' within the penal volunteer sector on the topic of reintegration.

One implication of this data is it pushes back against penal literature findings regarding the control exerted by CSC in funding relationships. Some scholars have argued that correctional departments are sole funders of reintegration activities thereby effectively controlling and limiting NGO mandates and directives (Tomczak and Thompson 2019; Kaufman 2015; Miller 2014). The data here has shown that this is a mistaken assumption within the literature which hinders the ability to capture the full breadth of activities of reintegration NGOs. Specifically, not considering these factors obscures how NGOs shape reintegration services for OACL. Further, the assumption of the reach of CSC also gives the false impression that state control continues to expand without resistance in this sector (Corcoran 2011; Kaufman 2015; Miller 2014; Thompkins 2010). This may lead some individuals to question state involvement altogether. However, this project has attempted to show that this would be a mistaken conclusion because NGOs operate through and around CSC to achieve the goals they believe are supplementary to CSC goals. The service that Maison Cross Roads provides, beds for long-term housing with no end date, is often cited in the literature as the one of the most important parts of social

reintegration for OACL (Office of the Correctional Investigator 2019; Williams, Ahalt, and Greifinger 2014; Machi and Leibowitz 2018; Baidawi and Trotter 2015; Colibaba 2019).

Chapter 6: United States NGOs and the Bounds of Reintegration Policy

I. Introduction

Building on the results of the previous sections, this chapter outlines and compares the services provided by two NGOs operating in ideologically opposing cities with contrasting social constructions of older adults. Houston, Texas, and San Francisco, California provide a test and contrast of services as Houston operates in a political right-leaning city where newspapers predominantly display a negative frame of aging (Light, Robey, and Kim 2023). By contrast, San Francisco newspapers contain the highest concentration of compassionate ageism which considers older adults deserving of public benefits and operates in a well-known liberal-leaning city (DeLeon 1992; Lehning 2014). The results of this comparison answer the project's secondary research questions: (*1.) What is reintegration policy for older adults who are in conflict with the law?* and *(2.) What strategies are employed to deliver this policy?* These questions are meant to assess how NGOs conceive of programs or services and crucially how they acquire the means to deliver on their goals. Answering these questions requires a description of the policy sector and the strategic choices that NGOs face and make accordingly. To achieve these aims, this section of the project relies on interviews with key NGO staff and government officials operating in the sector, a variety of public documents and numerous media accounts of NGO activity.

Overall, the data shows the social construction of the target population impacts the ability of NGOs to expand the bounds of reintegration policy for OACL. Mirroring the Canadian data, where older adults were positively portrayed in liberal-leaning cities NGOs like Bayview Services in San Fransisco, search and secure funding from different levels and sectors of public funds targeted at seniors. By comparison, where structural conditions present as conservative-leaning in political orientation thereby negatively portraying seniors as undeserving of public aid NGOs provide a less-generous bound of reintegration policy for OACL. Like the previous chapter, findings and implications demonstrate the importance of a deeper understanding of the diversity of funding streams and strategic action taken by these organizations as calls grow for the early release of OACL (Human Rights Watch 2012; Chiu 2010; Iftene 2019).

This chapter is organized into the following sections. Section one includes a brief description of the expectations determined by the literature and the reasoning behind case selection. This literature sets a crucial foundation for understanding why and how particular NGOs were selected in this study. Section two outlines the methodological approach in detail as it was altered to accommodate the COVID-19 pandemic. Findings will be presented in section three in a manner like chapter four, wherein organizations which are featured in the chapters are presented with an organizational profile. These profiles are particularly important in this chapter as crucial funding data and strategic aging plans bolster findings from NGO interviews. Also, unlike the Canadian case, numerous media reports provide important details on program development and planning strengthening interview findings which were difficult to secure in the localities. Interview data will follow organizational profiles to outline in detail strategic thinking and choices by NGO staff. Section four includes implications and conclusions focusing on comparison within the United States NGOs and Canadian results.

The implications section will highlight three major findings. First, results from the comparisons allow for a true contextualization of the broad picture of reintegration for older adults. Second, much of the conclusions from the Canadian chapter are mirrored; namely, that political ideology acting through social constructions sets a condition by which NGO exercise varying levels of strategic maneuvering to achieve their goals. Last, the findings here suggest that theorization surrounding funding relationships, NGO strategic thinking, and measure of social constructions of target populations is required to capture the full activities of the penal volunteer sector.

II. Theoretical Foundation and Expectations

Briefly, the first part of the argument, presented in this project, forwards the claim that there exists variation in the way older adults are framed across Canada and the United States due, in part, to ideological cultural differences towards individualism and collectivism. The United States is said, and has been shown, to valorize individualism and the ability of an individual to pursue personal achievements (Sabin 2012; Clark 1991; Baxter-Moore et al. 2016). By contrast, Canada's orientation is aimed at the well-being of the collective even if this can hamper individual goals (Clark 1993; Gusmano and Allin 2014). Aging scholars have linked compassionate ageism and the desire to help older adults buffer the vulnerabilities of older age to the cultural value of collectivism by explaining that within this frame help for seniors is considered important, legitimate, and encouraged (Binstock 2010; Gusmano and Allin 2014). Compassionate ageism shows aging as a condition imposed on helpless individuals thereby portraying older adults as a societal group who need support from other groups. Government programs such as poverty alleviation, medical care and changes to physical infrastructure to help the mobility limited are framed as favorable measures to ensure the flourishing of all social groups or the collective (Clark 1993; Kaufman 2009; Clark 1991). Meaning, helping older adults is justified because they cannot help themselves and because all members of the collective citizenry should be helped. Conflictual ageism reverses this logic by framing help to older adults as inappropriate or illegitimate because it disproportionately reduces resources for other social groups such as children. Under this frame, older adults are not helpless but instead are said to hold a surplus of resources and use services at a disproportionate rate which directly hampers individual freedoms of average and younger age citizens. For example, newspaper articles describe working-age adults the "sandwich generation" as their personal goals become subservient to caring for both young children and aging parents (Rozanova, Northcott, and McDaniel 2006).

Overall, from the newspaper analysis, more conservative-leaning cities such as those in the United States as compared to Canadian provinces showed more conflictual aging. For example, of 72 articles coded as negative portrayals 72 % or 52 articles originated from the United States newspapers. The Texas newspaper contained the highest percentage of negative articles or 34% of the total Texan sample. By comparison 74% of articles within the San Fransisco sample were coded as positive. This demonstrates high similarity with the Montréal and Toronto data where positive portrayals represent 61 % and 65 % of the sample, respectively. This nuances the studies on Canada and United States cultural differences and suggests that more studies should consider how collectivism vs. individualism are expressed at the sub-national level (Baxter-Moore et al. 2016; Kornhauser 2015).

The previous chapter conducts the first test of the strategic component of this project's argument finding that social construction of seniors does impact the breadth and depth of services that reintegration NGOs such as Maison Cross Roads and St. Leonard's Place Peel provide to OACL. Specifically, in both cases, to varying degrees, funding for senior services was strategically located and leveraged to provide social services as part of the organization's broader mission. For example, Maison Cross Roads was able to secure long-term housing contracts for their OACL from the city of Montréal as part of the city's initiatives targeting affordable housing for marginalized communities (Ville de Montréal 2022). Overall, the Canadian results show that where social constructions of aging are favorable, in part determined by political leanings, NGOs search and find or advocate for the creation of funding options which are important for the creation of social reintegration services for specifically meeting the age-related needs of OACL. Given these results, this chapter extends these results to expect that in conservative-leaning cities where social constructions of seniors are negative, such as Houston, Texas case, a less generous scope of social reintegration will be displayed. By comparison, in a liberal-leaning city where the social construction of older adults is positive, like San Francisco, a more generous bound of social reintegration will be present.

III. Methodology

To facilitate comparison with the previous chapters this sections' methodology consists of interviews and textual analysis of a variety of documents including NGO reports, plans, department of aging strategic plans, reports, budgets, audits and importantly media accounts of NGOs and changes in the policy sector of criminal justice. In this chapter, textual evidence from government funding partners was particularly important as the United States structures the funding for aging services differently than Canada wherein local provincial and city governments are provided federal funds administered by aging departments located within these respective governments (Niles-Yokum and Wagner 2018). Assessing these departments and the funds they provide is a key component of aging services in the United States and therefore plays a more important role in this chapter than the previous Canadian chapter. This information is discussed within the organization profile section as this was the section where Canadian funding findings are present. This was also meant to simplify the comparison with previous data to make clear the international variation in service provision to OACL by reintegration NGOs.

Interviews were also conducted with American NGOs in Texas and San Francisco to aid in the comparison of the strategic actions employed by NGOs in the different contexts. Interview participants were selected based on their implication in the policy sector. NGO staff at the two chosen NGOs, Turning Point Center and Bayview Senior Services were approached. Further, securing interviews for the United States context proved particularly difficult; therefore, to help contextualize the sector and receive more information about reintegration in the localities I expanded the research participant pool to includes a broader pool of participants which includes those not specifically serving older adults. Overall, four interviews were secured across the two localities. Following previous protocol, interviews lasted 45 to 90 minutes and follow semi-structured question format, so questions are posed in an open manner allowing participants to lead conversations. Two general sets of questions are presented; first, a general discussion of the services provided to boost results from the textual data on service provision answering the following questions: what types of services does the organization provide to OACL? Where and how are those services administered? Second, a set of questions focused on the strategic nature of finding and acquiring funds is present. Participants were asked: what is your general approach

to funding? What would you fund if funds were not a concern? These questions are meant to gauge the avenues which appear most promising to acquire funds, pointing attention to the conditions most important when those choices are rendered. To boost this data point, media reports were included in this section which are worth discussing in more detail below.

Unlike in the Canadian case, there exists more national and local media coverage of the actions of the United States NGOs as part of this project. For example, there are, at a minimum, 5 news articles on the development, value and importance of Bayview Services. Both NGOs were featured in national United States media articles naming the executives as CNN Heroes or community leaders (Dunn 2016; Irwin 2021). These points of data were crucial for the San Francisco case where the researcher encountered the most difficulty acquiring interviews which is result of poor timing. During the participant recruitment process for the locality of San Francisco, the COVID-19 pandemic was at its height, meaning with the most restrictions on movement and interactions. To counter the limited interviews possible for these localities, government documents and media accounts were utilized. Overall, the media accounts were detailed and featured interviews with NGOs staff tapping into similar data of my own NGO interviews. The media accounts were able to demonstrate the inner thinking of NGO executives as they developed programs or discussed barriers to their service provision.

IV. Results

Organizational Profile – Bayview Senior Services – San Francisco, California

Bayview Senior Services, or Bayview Hunters Point Multipurpose Senior Services, is an ideal test case for this project, given that it is lauded in the academic literature as one of the first and only NGOs which specifically targets older adults who are exiting incarceration through its Senior Ex-Offender Program (SEOP) (Williams and Abraldes 2007; Williams et al. 2012; Higgins and Severson 2009; Maschi et al. 2014; KiDeuk and Peterson 2014). Notably, the articles focusing on SEOP do not provide an in-depth analysis of its services as compared to similar organizations. A 2022 study on the impacts of COVID-19 on the re-entry needs of OACL noted that SEOP "is one of a limited number of programs in the U.S. that have begun to address the needs of older incarcerated individuals both prior to and after release" (O'Hanlon and Broome 2022, 285). This matches my own searches within the academic literature and grey literature on NGOs which provide these services in the United States. When considered SEOP is often analyzed as a single case study or in a general manner without details on its service provision (O'Hanlon and Broome 2022; Brie Williams and Abraldes 2007; Maschi et al. 2014). The inclusion of this NGO supports academic calls to increase empirical and theoretical data on these organizations in a systematic manner (O'Hanlon and Broome 2022; Higgins and Severson 2009; Murolo 2022). Also, including this NGO stands as an important test for this project as SEOP operates in a liberal-leaning city, where construction of seniors is positive, as opposed to the Texas NGO; therefore, this choice allows for the comparison of differences in funding strategies and services provided.

Bayview Services is located near the downtown in the city of San Francisco, it operates just outside the core of the city close to the old football stadium. The organization first started providing seniors services 40 years ago in this San Francisco neighborhood. The purpose of this organization has been to "to create a one-of-a-kind, state-of-the-art senior center co-located with senior housing to ensure a safe and vibrant future for the neighborhood's aging population" (Bayview Senior Services 2014). Here the mention of population aging is interesting as it

suggests that this organization perceives structural conditions that have a great impact on the community that they serve and respond to. The sense here is that the organization is filling a gap in need that the government has yet to approach. Bayview Services include access to "three senior centers, nutritious meals, information/ referral, case management, adult day health care, money management, a senior ex-offender program and housing advocacy" (Bayview Senior Services 2014). Bayview Services is made up of three senior centers wherein the structured programs are administered with the explicit mention of creating a space where older adults come together and exchange. The central humanitarian mission is to create a "continuum of care through the coordination of housing, social services, health care, financial services, recreation facilities and economic ventures that will ensure seniors have the option to improve their quality" of life" (Bayview Senior Services 2015a). Crucially, the SEOP provides specific reintegration services to older adults as part of the overall mission of Bayview Services. The SEOP offers temporary transnational housing for OACL which then allows access to all other nutrition programs, help accessing Social Security or Medicare, transportation needs and other programs that are part of Bayview Senior Services aimed at all seniors (Root & Rebound, n.d; Bayview Senior Services 2015b.). The SEOP receives individual referrals from the San Francisco probation department, Veteran Affairs, the San Francisco Sheriff's department (Interview # 23).

The program operates across three different homes, that are rented by the organization, with an estimated capacity of 15 individuals which can use the service (Interview # 23). Of the 15 there were 9 allocated for the Veterans program which does not specially identify OACL but rather those who are in unhoused situations. The other two houses are for OACL and are monitored by Bayview Services case managers (Interview # 23). One house is rented above a church and is a result of the strong community links organizations staff have worked to maintain and create over time (Interview # 23). The long-term plan is to acquire enough funding to ensure that they could buy and have a house that could sustain long-term housing for OACL (Interview # 23). Evidence from NGO documents and media accounts below will detail the development of the program provide crucial data on how funds were used to create the SEOP program and importantly where the funds originate.

Much of the literature on re-entry NGOs asserts that correctional departments control NGO activities through restrictive funding contracts (Garland 1991; N. Kaufman 2018; 2014). Yet, this is not the case with SEOP because funding for the program originated, in 2002, from a variety of sources including "through partnerships with the city and county government, including the Department of Aging and Adult Services and the Department of Veteran's Affairs" (McQueen 2019). In fact, the program is lauded for being innovative because it uses "federal Office of Aging funding to provide needed medical, financial, social, mental health, and work opportunities to older ex-prisoners" (Higgins and Severson 2009, 787; Williams and Abraldes 2007).

According to the NGOs own tax return data, in 2023, Bayview Services reported a total of 11 million in total revenue with 4 million in funding from the San Francisco Department of Disability and Aging Services (Bayview Senior Services 2023). This department is the largest funder of the organization and represents around 36 % of its total revenue (Bayview Senior Services 2023). The second largest funder, Human Services Agency of the city, represents 25 % of total revenue for 2023 (Bayview Senior Services 2023). In 2023 the SEOP was funded by three partners San Franscisco Adult Probation, Sheriff's Department and Veterans Administration. Notably, Veterans Administration, an government office focused on aging,

provides up to 38% of the programs total budget (Bayview Senior Services 2023). An analysis of the current policies aimed at seniors deployed by the San Francisco Department of Aging and Adult Services supports the finding here and suggests that the funding relationship has remained consistent over time.

Aging policy in the United States, unlike in Canada, emanates from national legislation, Older Americans Act of 1965, and is administered at the local level through Area Aging Agencies (Greg and Robert 2018). Area Aging Agencies are an important way to gauge the types of services funded and delivered to older adults in localities (Applebaum and Kunkel 2018). For example, the San Francisco Area Agency on Aging is housed within the San Francisco Humans Services Agency whereas the Houston Area Agency on Aging is operates from the cities' Health department (Department of Disability and Aging Services 2024, 11; Harris County Area Agency on Aging 2023). By consequence, the two Area Agencies differ in their orientation; for example, the Texas 2021-2022 Area Agency on Aging plan features five central goals of which the first is to "live active, healthy lives" and a third goal to improve quality of life through "engaging in the community and social interactions" (Harris County Area Agency on Aging 2020, 4). This focus on health was surprising given that the report finds that the top three needs for this population was access to transportation, caregiver availability and nutrition which are not explicitly health needs (Harris County Area Agency on Aging 2020, 3). In this way, the Texas Aging Area Plan is limited in its scope to that of health-based initiatives. By comparison the San Francisco Area Agency report listed health promotion as only one of five goals with diversity and inclusion standing as its first goal (Department of Disability and Aging Services 2024, 22). Instead, the San Francisco report spends much of its contents to reflect that the Department seeks to pay particular attention to the multiplicity of experiences of the aging process. For example, the report mentions that the city is marked by "progressive politics" which translates into a city that "continues to benefit from engagement of its diverse citizenry and meaningful investment in public services" (Department of Disability and Aging Services 2024, 9). Crucially, the report links the cities' inclusive orientation to a direct translation to service provision where investment in public services results in a wide range of services for older adults. As concrete proof of this orientation, the report cites 60 community-based organizations which are funded by the department and crucially, notes that these organizations aim to reach marginalized groups of older adults. Examples of funded organizations include the LGBTQ+ Mental Health Connections pilot program which is lauded for providing "specific subpopulation expertise" (Department of Disability and Aging Services 2024, 9). Further, the report mentions the creation of the Dignity Fund to achieve its inclusion goals which will be discussed further below. This data underlines the multiplicity of funding opportunities provided by the Department of Aging and that they explicitly aim to fund organizations which target groups like OACL which is a marginalized group within the larger category of older adults.

The report also aims to achieve its inclusion goals through funding senior centers, which vary in their geographic location, and the community demographics they serve. Bayview Senior Services is named a focal point center which receives funds from the department "where community members can obtain information about a full range of aging and disability services available in San Francisco" (Department of Disability and Aging Services 2024, 77). The report also mentions that beyond federal funding the department also uses additional funds to support what they refer to as community service centers or senior centers, one of Bayview Senior Services centers also appears on this list (Department of Disability and Aging Services 2024, 78). This is a

crucial finding for this project as it demonstrates that the Department charged with aging services continuously funds Bayview Senior Services, which the NGO is than able to use to support its reintegration program the SEOP. In addition to these funds the Department of Disability and Aging Services also provides funding directly to the SEOP program through its Dignity Fund. In 2022-2023 the Dignity Fund under its Community Connection and Engagement Service Area provided the SEOP with 135,000 dollars for its program activities (Department of Disability and Aging Services 2023, 71). Importantly, in line with the findings of this project that social constructions of older adults was positive in this city, the Dignity Fund was established as an explicit "special fund for community-focused aging and disability services with an initial baseline of $38 million that will grow to $71 million by FY 2026-27" (Department of Disability and Aging Services 2024, 17). The fund was a ballot measure which was directly supported by voters in 2016 (Department of Disability and Aging Services 2024, 19). This fund is another crucial data point for this project as it demonstrates two important sections of the argument.

First, the social constructions of aging where positive do lead to benefits, in this case the Dignity Fund, aimed specifically at older adults which in this case is a "special fund for community-focused aging and disability services" (Department of Disability and Aging Services 2024, 19). Second, funding for aging services can and are used by reintegration NGOs, in this case Bayview Senior Services, to fund reintegration services outside of what is offered by correctional departments. It would be a mistake to say that the SEOP receives no funds from correctional departments as the program is also funded, since 2006, by the cities No Violence Alliance (NOVA) project under the purview of San Francisco Sheriff's Department (Duggan 2010, 7). According to the organizations' tax filings detailing program funding SEOP is still funded by the Sheriff's Department (Bayview Senior Services 2023).

However, this project was created in collaboration with non-profits providing reintegration services to develop an alternative to previously harshly punitive criminal justice policies of the 1990's (Duggan 2010, 7). In fact, this program seeks to provide reintegration services to aid in the reduction of California's incarcerated population and reduce recidivism by providing adapted pre-release planning and case management during release (Duggan 2010, 6). An analysis of the program found it achieved these aims by relying on community organizations to provide "culturally competent services" where age was specifically mentioned as a consideration (Duggan 2010, 7).

The NOVA program and its mandate supports the finding that San Francisco is a liberal-leaning city which has important impacts on how it approaches aging services. The mention of older adults as those in conflict with the law underlines that San Francisco is dedicated to understanding a diversity of needs for seniors and crucially that programs are put in place to meet these needs. The finding that SEOP receives funds from NOVA, a program meant to find community alternative to incarceration, stands as evidence that correctional departments do not only act to limit reintegration to that of work programs or substance use disorder. Instead, where the political context is favorable, in this case in a liberal-leaning city with a positive construction of aging, alternatives are possible.

Strategic Action – Bayview Senior Services – San Francisco, California

After two years of attempting to contact and interview someone from the Senior Ex-Offender Program, I was able to interview the director of the program. They stepped into the role with experience from their previous work as an intensive care management worker for the larger

Bayview Services organization. There were three themes which came from the interview which reflected the strategic action NGOs use to secure funding for their specialized reintegration projects, for example those that fall outside the normal purview of the correctional justice sector.

First, the director explains that the creation of the program was to first and foremost to serve seniors of that community. This was a stated goal of whole organization but they keep special mind to the ways in which gentrification has heavily impacted San Francisco urban neighborhoods. During our meeting it was explained that:

> "this country has been gentrified and a lot of guys when they go … go to prison.… jail when they come back out they have no place to go…. displacement …. and so our major goal is to make sure they have somewhere to stay once they get out . . . our major goal is to put seniors into houses so that they can at least try to enjoy some of their last days on earth (Interview # 23).

This was the first of the total 22 interviews which mentioned gentrification as an important factor for reintegration. This quote demonstrates for SEOP workers the importance of considering community factors for reintegration as opposed to individual level factors. This is an important finding as it suggests that this organization pays particular attention to the structural elements of incarceration which is beyond the bounds of what is generally considered reintegration by correctional departments (Harding et al. 2014; Bunn 2018; Hannah-Moffat 2005; Garland 2002; T. L. Hall, Wooten, and Lundgren 2016). Bayview Services proudly mentions the original purpose of this organization. The program website supports this finding describing:

> Programs are designed to enhance and retain the health, quality of life, and culture of African American elders who remain as long-standing members of communities in San Francisco. We believe that when older adults and people living with disabilities in African American communities are cared for with dignity, honor and respect, they will be able to age in place and maintain a strong and vibrant cultural presence in San Francisco (Bayview Senior Services 2014).

The SEOP Director felt that this orientation is necessary because there exists a large void for those OACL exiting incarceration: "doing the work we are doing. The real purpose is, we are trying to put people that look like us back where they need to be …. We have a saying in our culture is that we have to look out for our own . . If we don't help our own no one else will. It's not being offensive, it's just being real, how this country looks at us" (Interview # 23). This is a direct example of the strategic planning by NGO actors to solve a structural problem such as racism and justice system bias. It tells a similar story to that of Maison Cross Roads. A central figure identifies a social problem then meets this social problem from a variety of angles i.e. services for seniors and reintegration services. This finding is also supported in the media accounts of the organization.

Media articles outline that the program was conceived by the founder of Bayview Senior Services who was a gerontologist by training and held "lifelong goals of redressing systemic injustice" (Irwin 2021). Crucially, as a gerontologist Bayview's founder "noticed people were coming home old, aged beyond their years. Already in the 1990s and 2000s, people were getting out without support systems, carrying that stigma" (McQueen 2019). The SEOP was created to

directly serve the organizations mission to "to enhance and retain the health, quality of life, and culture of African-American elders" (McQueen 2019). This approach to program creation, with a strong sense of redressing structural problems that lead to crime, mirrors closely the approach of Maison Cross Roads and other NGOs operating in contexts of positive constructions of aging. Bayview Services' unique approach considers the intersection of three identity markers, conflict - with-the-law status, age and race. Race appears crucial for the specific context of California where racial minorities are heavily overrepresented in penitentiaries and jails (Prison Policy Initiative 2023).

Dating back to 2006, SEOP directors are shown to have been heavily involved in advocating for an approach to reintegration that takes into consideration how these structural dynamics exacerbate barriers to reintegration. SEOP director was cited at the 2006 San Francisco Reentry Summit which brought together community providers and leaders to advocate for more and appropriate re-entry planning (Corcoran 2006). Former director of SEOP was cited as stressing the importance of focusing on "rehabilitation, ensuring the safety of the community while providing wraparound services for the individual from community-based and faith-based organizations, law enforcement, and government social services" (Corcoran 2006). This account shows the importance of structural dynamics in the thinking of SEOP directors but also that from the inception of SEOP NGO staff envisioned their program as partnering with organizations beyond correctional departments. The mention of government social services and community organizations also signals that the SEOP director was strategic considering a diversity of actors to fund and support their activities. The specific mention of different types of community organizations stands out. It is common in reintegration reports for community organizations to be categorized together into one term – community partners (Office of the Correctional Investigator 2019; Griffiths, Dandurand, and Murdoch 2007; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2006). The SEOP director is specific to name different private and public actors which is noteworthy. The Maison Cross Roads symposium was also specific in dedicating different days to the different service providers for example one day covered Corrections Canada, and another day was devoted to provincial health and social service providers (Équipe VIES et al. 2021). The SEOP director's quote and the Maison Cross Roads choice to divide days of the symposium are symbolic acts that signal an orientation towards a vision of social reintegration where a multiplicity of community engagement is overtly praised and encouraged and seen as key to reintegrating individuals into a network of community (Mijs 2016a).

Unlike in the Canadian findings, the program director mentioned that the SEOP was in the process of reevaluating their funders and expanding their search for funds beyond the public sector. The director mentioned that they were currently hiring a consultant to oversee grant proposal writing. Mainly, the consultant would start to look for private funders. Interestingly, they stated that they were aware that grant writing was not the organization's expertise and that this is a job for someone external to the organization (Interview # 23).

A consultant was also hired to access funds from private organizations which was perceived as more worthwhile future avenue of potential contracts given the distinct African American community this organization wishes to serve. When asked where future funding is located:

> It comes from an organization, it comes from the private sector. So yea… there is a lot of private organizations …

> that is looking to put money some place too. . . . That is why you get a consultant. . . Who does all the research and looks and see who wants to and one thing we do not want to. . . . We do not want to get government funding. . . We want to be able to pick who comes to our place, because you know what if they get to picking it, the people really want in there won't be able, I guarantee they won't be able to get there. We want the same people that grew up in this community. That grew up and not able to come back to their community those are people we want in the housing. (Interview # 15)

This quote highlights that the organization is consistently searching for funds for the program and where funds do not meet their goals, they are willing to search in unconventional means, in this case private funders. This finding undermines studies which find that correctional departments dominate NGO re-entry programming as they control all funds to these organizations (Garland 2002; Wacquant 2010; T. L. Hall, Wooten, and Lundgren 2016). During their interview, it was specified that additional funding was needed to create a stable long-term housing for OACL within San Fransisco who were exiting the SEOP (Interview # 23). This goal is also supported in media accounts of the organization's activities and future goals. Cathy Davis, Bayview Senior Services current executive director was cited as being excited for President Bidens' most recent infrastructure proposal as she is "excited that somebody thought about elder care as an infrastructure issue … it's a big huge, behemoth cost factor, and nobody wants to pay for it" (Irwin 2021). Here the director's strategic thinking about how funds can be used to respond to the diversity of structural needs of older adults is evident and shows continued willingness to search for more services and funds for this group. Notably, this is a similar goal to that of Maison Cross Roads in Montréal and St. Leonard's Peel Place. The evidence above, and from the Canadian cases, supports studies that note that the most pressing need for OACL is a lack of accessible, age-appropriate housing (Harding 2003; Maschi, Viola, and Sun 2013; Crawley and Sparks 2006; Hayes 2017; Prost, Archuleta, and Golder 2021). The findings here will now be contrasted with results from the Houston Texas NGO.

Organizational Profile – Turning Point Center – Houston, Texas

The selection process for the Houston, Texas NGO should be considered a finding. In the initial conception of the project, it became imperative to find an NGO that engaged in these types of services in a conservative leaning-city where constructions of older adults were comparatively negative. This proved quite challenging and an initial scan of reintegration NGOs serving OACL in Texas provided no results. I placed phone calls to organizations which focus on reintegration more generally to ask if they knew of organizations which cater to older adults and none were known of. Looking through the Texas Department of Criminal Justice re-entry guide, I was able to locate one NGO Turning Point Center located in Houston Texas which does provide these services. The organization is described in the guide as "prefer(ing)… offenders who were 10 years or longer incarcerated and meet age limit (50), feels they will be more willing to change, $600.00 per month, includes housing, program, essentials, can give them a couple of months" (Texas Department of Criminal Justice, n.d.). The difficulty in finding this organization suggests that reintegration for older adults exiting an incarceration is not a political priority in this locality. Further, it suggests that there exist few reintegration services for older adults as it took a researcher months to locate this NGO. It is unlikely that an OACL with limited means could find

this organization. This should be considered the first data point suggesting there exists limited bounds of reintegration policy for older adults in Houston, Texas. Additional support for this data can be found in two interviews conducted with government officials working within the policy sector.

One interview includes the Division Manager of the Community Re-entry Network Program which is housed within the Houston Health Department which seeks to reduce recidivism and provides services to respond to "the needs of the whole person" (Houston Health Department 2024). When asked of any services which cater specifically to re-entry needs of older adults it was explained that beyond what was offered by the Houston Health Department and the participant could not comment further on the subject (Interview # 1). When asked if the Community Re-entry Network Program has services specifically for older adults, they responded that the program does help older adults but that the program includes a more general approach of targeting re-entry throughout the whole life span (Interview # 1). This evidence suggests that there are no age specific programs or approaches to reintegration from the Houston municipal government. Another Houston program The Harris Center for Mental Health and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities is the "local mental health authority for Harris County" which includes several divisions such as the forensic division and community health division (Interview # 39). This program is envisaged as mental health "safety net" where individuals can access mental health services and social services once released from incarceration or those experiencing a crisis which could lead to incarceration. In those cases, the program seeks to decrease the "footprint" of the criminal justice system by using diversion services (Interview # 39). The Chief Executive Officer explained that while they collect data on service recipients by race, ethnicity, and gender chronological age was omitted from intake data. While they felt that the age-based needs were attended to in their intake procedures this omission suggests that the program does not treat individuals based on age. Overall, these two interviews show that older adults who are in conflict with the law will receive few services based on their age from the re-entry services available in their locality. In all other localities treating OACL based on their age was a key part of providing age-appropriate care (Interview # 26, 15, 8). Generally, Houston aging policies were less numerous and accessible than in the San Francisco case.

Unlike the San Francisco Department of Aging and Adult Services the Houston Area Agency published markedly fewer policies for older adults. Only one Area plan, from 2021-2022, was available on their website without mentions of previous plans (Harris County Area Agency on Aging 2023). The San Francisco Department lists all past plans, Strategic Plans, Needs Assessments and Program Reports and refers to audits of past plans (San Francisco Human Services Agency, n.d.). This is notably missing in the Houston case and a recent news article published by the American Association of Retired Persons, a national older adult interest group, calls for a strategic action plan for the state to better meet the needs of older adults in Texas (Haelle 2023). In 2019, the Mayor of Houston signed an executive order establishing a commitment by the city to turn Houston into an Age-friendly community by coordinating existing city services (Whalen 2019). Notably, unlike the other cities in this project, no separate report or plan exists; instead, a two-page executive order, which is sparse on goals and means for implementation, is available online (Whalen 2019). Unlike in the other cities, no city department is assigned the plan, which makes difficult finding readily available information on its contents. Lastly, all three other cities are listed on the WHO Age-friendly City initiative website, where individuals can search past iterations of plans, progress, and future goals (World Health

Orgainsation, n.d.). At the very least this data suggests that there is less political will to support these types of initiatives as compared to other localities who are on their second iteration of the plan (Fitzgerald and Caro 2014; Lehning 2014). This lack of aging policies provides fewer opportunities for NGOs in Texas to secure funds and this is seen in the differences in services provided by Turning Point Center.

The organization does not mention that it serves OACL on its website. Instead, a fairly standard description is given using general language of what is provided including: "food, shelter, and other rehabilitative services to meet the physical and emotional needs of a neglected segment of society, [targeted towards] underprivileged individuals, aged 50 and above, who are unable to provide safe and adequate living conditions for themselves" (Turning Point Center, n.d.). There are variety of services including a three meals a day, accessibility housing, clothing, and aid reinserting individuals into the safety net services such as "SSI / SSDI, food stamps, Medicare / Medicaid, Harris County Hospital District Gold Cards, retirement, and any other benefits for which they may be eligible" (Turning Point Center, n.d.). In an interview with the clinical director of Turning Point it was disclosed that the organization could only house 2 OACL (Interview # 11). Going beyond this number would change the legal status of the organization from shelter to a halfway house which was not the original purpose of the organization (Interview # 11). The director also explained that 2 years prior the city council passed an ordinance limiting the number of older adults with a criminal conviction the organization could take in without changing their legal status (Interview # 11). As such, there is a limited number of beds available which made it the most restrictive context faced by an organization in this study. This is a crucial finding for this project as it then shows the strategic choice to remain focused on homelessness issues as this frame was less negatively constructed in this locality.

The residents maintain and operate Turning Point Center. The clinical director explained in detail the responsibilities of the residents:

> The facility is operated and maintained by the residents. They do it all. They write the grants. They pay the bills. they drive the vehicles. They do the maintenance. They do the food service. They do all the clerical work here in the office. So, we find a spot for them based on their background. And um…. That starts the job training… they have to get up on certain time… they have to make the classes.. . They learn certain skills, so they update their skills (Interview # 11).

On average Turning Point generally houses residents for 18 months and those with more mobility constraints are provided first floor rooms with minimal elevator usage needed. All residents have access to a renovated apartment complex which then is used for service delivery. Importantly, the residents are expected to find employment within 60 to 90 days after they enter the organization (Interview # 11). Unlike other interviews with other cities this was the first instance of a paid admission for use of services. This is a difficult data point to square when considering that most OACL are those who do not have steady employment or access to funds (Wyse 2018; Prost, Archuleta, and Golder 2021). Furthermore, Turning Point Center markets itself as primarily serving the older unhoused community of Houston. This, like the limitation on OACL beds, is a crucial finding, as it demonstrates the organization's strategic choice to serve a less negatively constructed population. From my interview with the clinical director it seems that

residents were expected to pay for this fee through an upfront payment or through an employment they are expected to seek (Interview #11). This signals the challenge of operating an NGO targeting marginalized groups in a restrictive funding context. The interviews for the Texas locality presented some interesting results when considering the strategic decision-making by NGO staff which affirms the principal argument of this project.

Strategic Action -Turning Point Center – Houston, Texas

The findings from the interview will be organized into three major themes. First, Turning Point Center's clinical director explained that the organization was created on the volition of the director who found a clear and present need for services for older adults generally. In fact, the founder of Turning Point Center was named a CNN Hero and was interviewed providing additional textual support for the interview with its clinical director. The organization has been operating in this space for 36 years and was initially created to tackle the problem of homelessness. However, as the director began to encounter these individuals the needs and barrier grew in scope (Interview # 11; Dunn 2016). The goals of the director and the framing of the organization are different to that of the other NGOs featured in this study, as Turning Point Center is exclusively focused on homelessness; however, the choice to strategically follow funding is similar to that of the other organizations (Dunn 2016). Unlike the other organizations, Turning Point Center employs fewer staff, has the smallest board, and publishes the fewest reports of the NGOs in this project. The small employee pool may explain why finding information about this organization is difficult. As with the other NGOs, the director is described as an activist who fills the gap of the state to aid a marginalized population (Mitchell 2014). This is a finding that has been present across all four localities and is important, as it shows that NGO staff strategically frame their activities.

Second, the discovery during the interview related to the limited amount of OACL which are allowed to stay within Turning Point Center stands as an explicit example of the ways in which NGOs must strategically act to retain or acquire funds. When I asked the clinical director, during our interview, why there were such a small number of OACL which made up their clientele it was explained that the board of directors had discussed this and had chosen to deliberately only accept two OACL to ensure that they retained their status as a shelter rather than a halfway house (Interview # 11). When asking follow up questions it became clear that the central mandate of the organization was as a shelter for the unhoused which would on occasion accept OACL. Turning Point Center was chosen for this project as they are some of the only service providers who explicitly target those 50 and older seeking services in Houston. It's small scale and indirect method of meeting the needs of the OACL should be interpreted as evidence of the general state of reintegration policy for OACL in Texas. Meaning, there are very few, if any, organizations which specifically serve this population and where services are provided, they come from indirect sources such as unhoused shelters. This was reinforced in my interview with Turning Point Centers' clinical director but also with the city of Houston's Division Manager of the Community Re-entry Network Program and The Harris Center for Mental Health and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (Interview # 11, 39, 1). As mentioned above, age was not an explicit consideration for the Community Re-entry Network Program or the diversion programs of the Harris Center for Mental Health and Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities. Textual data from media accounts, public policies or academic reports lack references to organizations which specifically target OACL. This evidence was easily available in the other three cities marking a stark difference with the Texas case. The creation of prison diversion programs and

the re-entry division in the Department of Health funded by the city of Houston shows that reintegration services and resources for those in conflict with the law are in place. However, because in Houston, the conflictual ageism frame was more dominate there exist fewer avenues to find, apply for and secure funding to support OACL on the basis of their age.

Last, the interview with the clinical director also revealed that Turning Point Center heavily relies on a variety of funding to secure the services they provide. For example, when asked about the range of services it was explained that the organization relied on the University of Houston, local food banks, churches and schools. The organization's tax filings are more sparse on details than the other organizations in this study. According to 2023 figures 47.6 % of the 281,767-revenue raised originated from grants and contributions. The tax filing nor organization reports detail the origins of these funds (Suozzo et al. 2024). User service revenue, meaning the fees paid by residents, represents 47.9% of the organization's yearly revenue for 2023 (Suozzo et al. 2024).

When asked about the incentives for investing in Turning Point Center presented to funders there were two identified reasons; first, that the organization has great community links but also that the community organizations were fueled by the possibility of tax benefits by working with Turning Point Center (Interview # 11). This finding was supported by analysis of the Area Agency on Aging Plan which found that there was a general "level or decreasing of funding" to the Agency for aging services which results in their needing to find additional funds from local partners (Harris County Area Agency on Aging 2020, 52). Generally, from the Area Plan it appears aging services in Texas are in a precarious state (Harris County Area Agency on Aging 2020). This contextualizes why Turning Point Center focuses on different funding incentives like tax breaks as they operate in a less generous context than the other localities for this project. No other interviews or textual data suggested that tax incentives could provide a means for community partnerships or service provision. Instead, in other interviews it was more stressed that neighbors or partner organizations were brought in through personal links (Interview # 22, 15). This also suggests that Turning Point Center while operating in this context, stresses the frame of homelessness, as it presents the most fruitful avenues for their ability to provide services

V. Discussion

As the table below demonstrates there are important differences and similarities among the four NGOs.

Table 3: Summary of NGO Results

Organization	Services for OACL	Major Funders	Mission
Maison Cross Roads	*Service Oxygène* Adapted infrastructure for reduced mobility, Meal service, Gerontology informed intervention model, Referrals to community resources Temporary and long-term housing specifically for OACL (Résidence Leo's Boys (11 beds) & newly funded housing (15 units)),	Correctional Services Canada and City of Montréal, Québec and Federal government pledge support for housing project.	Social reintegration services for adults exiting a carceral sentence. Mission expansion to OACL.
Saint Leonard's Place Peel	*Graduate Program* Adapted infrastructure for reduced mobility, Case management, Physiotherapy, Meal service, Referrals to community resources, Temporary housing and access to Rotary Resolve House Residential Program targeting homelessness (24 beds for diverse clientele)	Correctional Services Canada, Region of Peel, Government of Ontario	Social reintegration for adults exiting a carceral sentence. Mission expansion to older adults and homelessness.

Bayview Senior Services	*Senior Ex-Offender Program* Access to accessible senior centers, Meal service, Referrals to community resources, Case management, Temporary housing across three properties (15 beds)	San Francisco Department of Aging and Adult Services, Department of Veteran's Affairs, San Francisco Adult Probation and Sheriff's Department	Culturally sensitive senior services expanded to OACL.
Turning Point Center	Accessible infrastructure, Meal service, Referrals to community resources, Temporary housing with legal limit of maximum 2 OACL	User fees, Private contributions, Government grant (not specified on 990 form or website)	Homelessness for older adults.

(Maison Cross Roads 2023b; Ville de Montréal 2022; St. Leonard's Place Peel 2019b; Blumbergs Professional Corporation 2024b; 2024a; Bayview Senior Services 2014; Turning Point Center, n.d; Suozzo et al. 2024).

From these results across the cases, it is clear that NGOs do exert agency and strategically act to create, search for, and secure funding streams in response to different funding contexts. In fact, all NGOs present a similar origin story wherein a founder identifies a marginalized group and works to fill this service gap. Bayview Services' Senior Ex-Offender Program and Maison Cross Roads' Service are noted for working with correctional departments to create funding streams to achieve their goals. Both organizations have participated in conferences with correctional department personnel to advocate for more reintegration services for their marginalized population (Corcoran 2006; Équipe VIES et al. 2021). SLPP works closely with correctional departments and the Region of Peel to create and receive funding to provide a wider range of services for older adults which OACL can access. Turning Point Center exerts agency by choosing to focus on homelessness to ensure the continuity of their funding. In each case, the environment in which the NGOs search and try to create funding streams impacts the services they can provide.

VI. Implications and Conclusion

Based on the textual data on the administration of aging in the two cities, media accounts of the organization activities and interviews with those implicated in the policy sector; Bayview Services was shown to provide more services for OACL and expand the bounds of what they experience as a reintegration policy as compared to the Turning Point Center. This finding is based on the finding that Bayview Services accepts funding from Aging Agencies to provide temporary housing, meals, medical access, and help reentering the social safety system. The organization works to create a more permanent housing space which has been identified in the literature as the most generous and needed service for older adults who are in conflict with the law (Colibaba 2019; Wyse 2018; Thivierge-Rikard and Thompson 2007). By comparison, the Texas NGO provides housing, meals and medical access; however, the scope of the services is much smaller than that of California. For example, at maximum capacity Turning Point Center can house 2 versus at least 15 in California. Second, the SEOP in California is more specifically geared towards the issue of incarceration rather than homelessness. This is an important finding because experiencing an incarceration at a later age is a unique path that requires particular modifications in discharge planning, confinement and release (Goff et al. 2007). Lack of attention to this means that the bounds of reintegration, meaning services provided, will be fewer. A shelter is not the same as a reintegration NGO in scope and function, a fact that was stated by a few participants (Interview # 21, 26, 15). The finding that the Texas NGO offered a smaller scope than the California NGO confirms what was predicted by the literature on culturally derived social constructions and its impact on policy (W. D. Berry et al. 1998; Quadagno and Street 2005; Mcbride and Mcnutt 2007). This was expected because the structural conditions such as a more liberal ideology impacting social constructions of seniors was a present dynamic. There are several reasons this an important finding; first, it suggests that reintegration experienced is in part determined according to the locality. This impacts the types of services received (i.e. more or less services), the price of the services (i.e. free of charge versus monthly fee) and access to housing. Second, this finding helps to contextualize the range of services across Canada and the United States. In Canada, the most generous NGO provides long-term housing on the basis of its centrality in the reintegration of an older adults (Maison Cross Roads 2023; Colibaba 2019). In Texas, if you are lucky to secure 1 of the 2 spots at Turning Point Center you must also have the advantage of having the funds to provide for your stay. The Houston case also shows the limits of NGO agency where formal restrictions bound what they can offer to OACL. Globally, across the four cases these findings help us to gauge the overall state of reintegration of OACL which is one of a small number of services and a population that receives very little attention from correctional departments (Interview # 15). However, NGOs, depending on context, can and do fill this service gap when they secure funding to develop services and programs that can meet their needs as older adults and those in conflict with the law.

Third, in both the Texas and California cases the search for funds was strategic in that funds and activities would be rejected if they violated the mandate of the organization. This has resulted in the search for private sector funders which rejects findings in the literature that the penal sector should be conceptualized as dominated solely by state actors (Garland 1991; 2002; Mary Corcoran 2011; N. Kaufman, Kaiser, and Rumpf 2018). The literature on NGO funding relationships argues that correctional funding contracts restrict NGO activities; however, this study finds that this obscures the innovative and diverse ways NGOs fund their work. Specifically, this literature cannot explain the advocacy and expansion of reintegration policy in San Francisco, Montréal, or Toronto where municipal governments play an important funding

role. This suggests that there must be some nuance in this literature to consider how the political orientation of localities interacts with how the target population is portrayed given that where older adults were positively portrayed the NGOs were able to find funding outside correctional departments. In the Texas case, where there was less funding for senior services, funding contracts did limit its activities however this is just one case of this study. Importantly, there has been a call to increase the theorization of the penal voluntary sector as not a homogenous entity but rather one made of diverse actors with diverse goals (Thompkins 2010). The results from this chapter suggest that political orientation of the city and construction of target populations are notable sites to capture the diversity of NGO activities.

The multiplicity of funding relationships and diversity of activity NGOs provide for OACL are not adequately capture in the emerging body of research on the penal volunteer sector (Tomczak and Thompson 2019; Tomczak 2016; Rubin and Phelps 2017). A variety of questions also arise from this sector of policy making which needs more theorization. Are the funding relationships similar or different than that of federal public funders across different conflict with the law populations? What are their funding conditions? What oversight measures are in place? In one interview with an individual in the Toronto region it was mentioned that oversight was stricter with correctional departments but lower-level municipal government focused on personal stories of development (Interview # 43). This suggests that more theorization is also needed around different levels of government and the services they fund. Do the funds from the city or provincial governments come on an on-going basis or are they project based? Where do the funds from municipal or city government originate? Are the funds pulled from a payroll tax or granted by federal partners? These are all questions which will need to be answered to capture how the penal volunteer sector operates for the marginalized community of OACL. This project has aimed, in part, to highlight these as potential avenues for future research.

The purpose of this chapter has been to present the results of the United States data for this project. The overall goal was to assess the types of services provided by NGOs in two ideologically opposed cities; where aging is presented in a more compassionately ageist manner, meaning a way in which the frailty of older adults is stressed, larger bounds of reintegration policy were found. In those contexts, it was predicted that NGOs in more liberal leaning city could strategically present reintegration services in such a manner as to acquire more funds from a variety of sources. This would act to broaden the bounds of reintegration policy for OACL by relying on federal, state, city and private funders to prioritize services. The data in this chapter has shown that in the American case, San Francisco, the more liberal city did provide a larger package of services. The more conservative city presented a restricted breadth of services. The range of services was limited in that there was no mention of an opportunity to provide long-term housing, the residents are expected to work and/or provide funds to access services. Additionally, the breadth of services was lower given that only 2 individuals could reside in the center at one point. These findings also help us to contextualize the relative generosity of Canadian organizations. The Canadian context demonstrates what a larger bound of services looks like in the practice of service delivery and advocacy. Overall, however, there exist very few resources for an individual who is exiting the prison system at the age of 50. From these findings this chapter has landed on two major implications for the relevant literatures.

The major implication is that structural conditions largely impact how strategically NGO actors can behave to achieve their organization goals. In the case of OACL in Canada and the United States the identity of an individual as older does matter in the types of services they can

receive if the structural conditions allow for the portrayal of seniors in negative yet politically deserving light. Portrayals of seniors as frail, vulnerable individuals who need protection, while a problematic global stereotype, does provide NGO with some leverage. The funding leverage results in a service with both breadth and depth which has been outlined above. Population aging will only continue and so will the growth of the older population in captivity. If governments are to follow the path of increasing releases of OACL because of their lower recidivism rates and higher cost of incarceration it should follow that more theorization is needed around how this policy should empower NGOs already operating in this space. A driver for this project has been to shine light on the lack of services for this group while also highlighting the resistance of reintegration NGO in deploying leverage to secure the funds. The data uncovered above should point to promising sites of support to these NGOs to help sustain their work.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

I. Introduction

In a context of carceral aging, this project brings together three diverse streams of literature on prisoner re-entry, NGO resource diversification, advocacy, and social constructions of groups to sketch the bounds of reintegration services for OACL in four cities in the United States and Canada. Specifically, this dissertation answers the following questions: *in a context of the devolution of reintegration policy, what explains how re-entry NGOs act to broaden the bounds of reintegration for older adults?* Two sub-research questions are proposed to answer this broader question: *First, what is reintegration policy for older adults who are in conflict with the law? Second, what strategies are used to create and deliver reintegration policy?*

The overall results of the data chapters four, five, and six suggest that the factors of the construction of OACL and NGO strategic action to seek funding provide a context in which NGOs exert agency in determining the depth and breadth of the reintegration services they offer for OACL. Chapter four outlines, from thematic analysis of newspaper portrayals of seniors variation in social construction of older adults in newspaper portrayals across four localities and across the two national contexts. Building on this variation, through semi-structured interviews, this project then highlights how positive or negative portrayals were deployed strategically by NGO staff to secure funding for reintegration services. Specifically, the Montréal case, located in a more favorable social construction context, was able to provide the largest bound of reintegration policy as predicted by the literature. Using the same interview method, chapter six showcases the interaction between social constructions and program delivery and conception in two American cities. This final chapter also includes a discussion of the United States and Canadian data, bolstering findings within NGO and policy literatures.

This chapter will begin with a summarization of the findings and methods used within this project. First, a general summary of methods will be provided following a summation of results outlined chapter by chapter. Section two will focus on the challenges confronted by the researcher during the completion of the data collection phase. The final section includes discussions of potential avenues of future research related to OACL, NGO and policy literatures related to prisoner re-entry.

II. Summary of Results

This dissertation applies three major research methods. First, the four cities presented here were chosen to increase the potential for variation in social construction of older adults. Therefore, this project uses a focused comparison of four cases to test the strength of the argument in contexts where older adults are portrayed differently. The four cases ensure inter-national and intra-national comparisons are feasible increasing the number of observations of the argument at study here (King, Keohane, and Verba 1994). Second, textual analysis features prominently as the second method of this project as thematic analysis was crucial for uncovering the portrayals of seniors in the different cities. Also, comparative data and statistics were used to uncover funding figures and relationships in NGO and governmental financial and organizational documents. Last, this dissertation includes semi-structured interviews with a variety of actors

implicated in the penal volunteer sector such as NGO directors, front-line workers, and civil society advocates to uncover the decision-making process of NGOs responsible for servicing OACL as they exit an incarceration.

The purpose of the fourth chapter is to establish the first pillar of the central argument of this project; specifically, that the social construction of older adults is a crucial factor to consider when assessing OACL NGO service provision. In order to answer the first sub-question Chapter four features the results of the textual analysis of newspapers of older adults across four ideologically diverse localities Montréal, Toronto, Houston, San Francisco. Newspaper portrayals are important because media sources are a central source of information gathering for the public, civil servants, politicians, and advocates. In part, the media projects how society regards a group or a topic. As such, media portrayals are an important measure for social constructions of target groups. Central to this project is the assertion that political orientations of a locality are informed and inform social constructions thereby in part accounting for variation in constructions. On this basis, the four localities represent four different ideological leanings which demonstrate this variation. Montréal and Toronto are located within more left-leaning cities as compared to the United States cases. However, within these national contexts variation also exists wherein Montréal and San Francisco represent more left-leaning cities and Houston and Toronto represent conservative-leaning cities in comparison.

As expected by the literature on political ideology and social construction of target populations newspaper portrayals were positive, or presenting older adults as deserving of aid, in more ideologically left-leaning localities, Montréal and San Francisco. For example, of the 83-articles included in the Montréal sample, 65% portrayed older adults as compassionately ageist, meaning seniors are homogenously vulnerable due to the ageist notion that aging is necessarily tied to decline. Importantly, compassionate ageism is considered positive here as public aid to older adults is legitimate given the difficulties of old age. These results were also present when considering differences in Canada and the United States. The Houston results, operating in the most conservative leaning city, showed the highest percentage of negative constructions of aging or 34% of the total articles. The Canadian newspapers, together, presented the highest percentage of positive portrayals of aging. The results here suggest that political ideology is an important deciding factor for social construction content. Also, this chapter affirms that social constructions do vary within national contexts which impact the shape of service delivery at the local level. These results suggest that generalizations about constructions must consider this variation when studying how target groups are impacted by policy formation and implementation. Building on these results, this project then turns to OACL NGOs operating within these contexts to demonstrate the bounds of reintegration services.

Chapter five builds on the social construction variation and assesses the type of services provided in Canada and crucially the NGO strategic action required to ensure service provision. Comparing two NGOs, Montréal's Maison Cross Roads and Toronto's St. Leonard Place Peel this chapter shows that OACL NGOs provide transitional housing, meal preparation and service, counselling, physical therapy, and life-skills programs. These services are often discussed as essential to the reintegration of older adults (Wyse 2018; Crawley and Sparks 2006; Clarke 2017; Williams et al. 2010). Crucially, both NGOs included plans to provide long-term housing to this target population as both had identified housing as a crucial need for OACL which they currently could not provide. Maison Cross Roads secured a partnership with federal, provincial and city governments to provide long-term housing to OACL who are unable to secure long-term housing

(Ville de Montréal 2022). Maison Cross Roads was also found to steer its advocacy in the direction of aging, aligning itself with aging research groups while SLPP forged alliances with the homelessness groups. This finding was crucial for several reasons; first, it deviates from the NGO literature which expects correctional departments to restrict services which Maison Cross Roads was able to avoid through advocating for more funding from CSC for project Service Oxygène. Second, this finding supports this projects' argument that the success of Maison Cross Roads is in part a result of the positive construction of aging within this locality. The project was justified on the basis that it helps those most vulnerable, older adults, access stable housing (Ville de Montréal 2022). By comparison, the St. Leonard Place Peel long term housing initiative includes a stay limit and does not explicitly target OACL instead focusing on the un-housed more generally (Rhodes, n.d.). As such the reach of services is smaller than that of the Montréal NGO; yet the Toronto NGO does provide a large breadth of services for older adults. In both cases, correctional departments were not solely implicated in funding, pointing attention to considering different types and levels of government funds. These findings become starker when comparing the results of the United States cases.

Chapter six features the results of interviews and textual data of two United States NGOs: in Houston's Turning Point Center and San Francisco's Bayview Senior Services. NGO services include transitional housing (paid and unpaid), meal service, and life-skills programming. However, in the United States case the magnitude of variation is pronounced. The San Francisco results mirrored Canadian NGOs with a similar service profile and advocacy activities. For example, both held conferences with correctional departments to push for more reintegration resources (Corcoran 2006; Équipe VIES et al. 2021). However, unlike the Canadian cases neither United States NGOs were successful in their attempts to provide long-term housing for OACL. Bayview Services provides temporary housing, meal services, counselling and access to their senior centers. The San Francisco NGO does have plans to fund long-term housing however interviews uncover that the organization is actively seeking funding outside government channels to realize this goal. Like the Canadian case, contrary to theoretical expectations regarding limited variety of source of funding, the San Francisco NGO receives diverse funding which crucially comes from the San Francisco Department of Aging services among others (Miller 2014). In fact, the Bayview Services program aimed at OACL was in part conceived with funds from the city's aging department (Bayview Senior Services 2015). Aligning with the research on political orientation and social construction of target groups, the more left-leaning city provided a broader depth and length of services for OACL. The Texas NGO, Turning Point Center, provides temporary housing, meal services and counselling to OACL with important limits on the organizations' ability to house only two OACL and requiring payment for usage of services which was a unique finding to this locality. The Houston NGO faces the most important legal restriction on its activities as it can only legally house two OACL at one time. This project interprets the limit of two OACL beds, and its fee for use of the services to represent the smallest bounds of reintegration services for OACL. This shows that even in cases where NGOs do diversify their funding, through user fees and contributions, their activities are still bounded by their environment. Legal restrictions on those in conflict with the law, in this case, effectively limit what Turning Point Center can offer to the OACL population in Houston, Texas.

An extensive search for OACL services in Houston revealed that this sector is generally limited in scope. Turning Point fills a large gap by providing services to OACL on their un-housed basis rather than criminal justice involvement. Generally, the limited bounds of

reintegration policy are a reflection of the lack of programs and services for OACL within this context. This was predicted by the literature on social constructions of aging as Houston presents the highest instances of conflictual ageism and operates in the most conservative-leaning city of the four included in this project. Collectively the results of this project affirm the introduction of the social construction of target population framework and the literature on the strategic action undertaken by NGOs operating in these contexts. Notably, in Montréal, San Francisco, and Toronto, the NGOs appear to expand their missions to include services for OACL. In Houston, services to OACL were restricted from 20% of the clientele to two beds, meaning services were to this group were cut to retain the organization's legal status (Interview # 11). Therefore, mission expansion appears to be a tool used by NGOs to expand funding and population served.

This project aims to answer the following: *in a context of the devolution of reintegration policy what explains how re-entry NGOs act to broaden the bounds of reintegration for older adults?* Through an examination of four cases across two countries in Montréal, Toronto, San Francisco and Houston this project asserts that in a context of devolution where NGOs act as the main implementors of reintegration policy for OACL the social constructions of older adults act as a crucial potential site of NGO agency to expand the bounds of reintegration services. Where constructions of older adults were positive in left-leaning localities such as Montréal NGOs operate in sectors where funding is various because older adults are provided services based on their identity. Therefore, the Montréal NGO acts strategically to find and secure funding from these various sources permitting the expansion of reintegration from limited transitional housing to securing long-term housing (Ville de Montréal 2022). Where social constructions are comparatively more negative the bounds of services are the smallest: for example, the Texas NGO. This argument relies on two interacting factors of favorable conditions, or the positive or negative construction of older adults, and the strategic action of NGOs to engage in continuous and multisectoral search for funds. To underline this finding, in the Texas case which presented the most negative portrayal of seniors present in a conservative-leaning locality only two OACL could receive services from the NGO providing services. This is not a reflection of the NGO desire to serve few OACL but rather on the poor construction of older adults and those in conflict with the law limit their capacity to do so.

III. Implications

The findings of this project point to important implications for the literature on OACL and NGO penal volunteer sector. First, this project questions the generalization that NGOs are co-opted by correctional departments through strict funding relationships. Of the four NGOs studied here four were able to secure funding from non-correctional departments which undermines the ability of correctional funding to solely dictate OACL NGO programming.

In a majority of interviews participants expressed that OACL present unique reintegration needs such as a pronounced need for case management including life-skills to adapt to the realities of a fast changing world. As an illustrative example, many OACL are unaccustomed to planning and preparing their meals while considering chronic conditions such as diabetes or hypertension (Interview # 15 & 8). Many OACL suffer from the psychological impacts of prolonged incarceration producing a higher need for programs which help adjusting to activities of daily living (Cadet 2020; Goff et al. 2007). OACL NGOs featured in this project have developed long-term age-adapted housing initiatives, meal services, transportation services, group-therapy programs, physical therapy programs, garden therapy groups and intensive case

management which are direct examples of how NGOs can and do exert agency in determining service provision. Crucially, on this basis the reach of the carceral state must include nuances based on the population under study. It may be the case that for average age individuals correctional departments do co-opt and control NGO behavior. However, in this case of older adults this argument does not hold uniformly. It is interesting to consider if certain populations produce more co-option and under what circumstances. In a recent evaluation of the penal policy sector Thompkins and Thompson asserts that more theorization is required to avoid homogenizing activities within this policy context (Tomczak and Thompson 2019).

The results here suggest that diversity of funding is an important factor to consider when studying the limits of state or NGO reach. Further, the penal volunteer sector literature rarely considers the impact of private funders or multi-sectoral partners on NGO capacity or service provision, yet interviews and tax data from the United States and Canada suggest that penal NGO are beginning to look in this direction further pushing the need evaluation of funding diversification (Interview #11 & 23; (Kaufman 2018)). Further, NGOs hold agency in the funding partners they seek and the issue they emphasize which require more consideration from this literature. This suggests that while the penal volunteer literature grows it can use important insights from other policy fields and sectors to understand NGO reintegration services.

Second, the social construction of target populations points attention to a crucial factor which impacts how successful NGOs can be in diversifying service provision to better meet the needs of their clients. This project has shown that in contexts where the construction of older adults is positive NGOs use a variety of funding streams to achieve their goals. Crucially, this project shows that NGOs search for or create funding by engaging in their own strategic advocacy wherein receptive frames are prioritized. For example, in Texas the frame of homelessness is stressed over OACL. This finding has important implications for aging policies more generally as it suggests that funding programs for a diversity of seniors opens opportunities for actors serving marginalized groups like OACL. All cities present in this study include strategic aging plans or aging departments charged with ensuring appropriate services meet the needs of seniors. By funding a variety of programs, rather than one issue area such as health, these plans create permissive structures through which NGOs can act. In Montréal and San Francisco aging plans take great efforts to highlight the diversity of aging and seniors more generally which provides the path through which marginalized groups can find aid (Department of Disability and Aging Services 2024; Service de la diversité sociale et des sports 2018). These localities also display more social initiatives meant to uplift a wide range of senior issues which, when considering how OACL NGO use these initiatives to advance their goals, should be encouraged.

Interestingly, in the Canadian cases funding for OACL NGOs not emanating from correctional departments was linked to ministers responsible for housing suggesting that there exists funding based on other social issue and identities which are important to explore in future research. For example, in the Montréal case funding the Maison Cross Roads long-term housing unit is funded by the Federal government on behalf of the Canadian Minister for Housing and Diversity and Inclusion (Ville de Montréal 2022). Additionally, in this case the municipal government also ensured financial support for 20 years for the project (Ville de Montréal 2022) This was mirrored in the Toronto case by Peel Region, suggesting that more local governments play an important role in funding programs which is not considered in the penal volunteer sector literature (Kaufman 2018; Marwell 2004; Bassford 2008). Much of the literature focuses on

correctional departments operating at the federal level without important consideration for how state/provincial and regional/municipal governments are important funding actors. State/Provincial or regional/municipal raise funds, propose initiatives and draft their own policies which need consideration as NGO operate in these contexts (Teles et al. 2021; Sperling and Arler 2020; Trounstine 2009). More research is needed to determine differences in impacts of funding relationships of provincial or more local governments.

IV. Limitations and recommendations for future research

This project includes several limitations worth mentioning. First, this project includes fewer interviews for the United States cases as the COVID-19 pandemic greatly impacted participant recruitment. Further, participant recruitment proved more difficult in the United States as the researcher holds fewer relationships with important policy actors than in Canada. Through online recruitment, the researcher faced great difficulty reaching and convincing participants to provide their time considering the great distance between the researcher and participant. In the Canadian cases, the research was able to visit sites to provide additional context of the services provided but given the pandemic restricted in-person activities. I was unable to visit the three other locations. Further, it is possible that NGOs which provide reintegration services which do not advertise online could have been missed by the researcher in the scanning phase of the project. Here contacts within the sector could have produced more cases. This work should be considered a first attempt to map out how Canada and United States differ in this policy sector with each case and crucially what makes one case successful while another more restricted (Sangster-Gormley 2016).

Additionally, corrections departments were originally included in the research design of this project. However, the requirements of the Canadian Correctional Service (CSC) to require the pre-screening of results, forced their exclusion from the project to ensure the confidentiality of the participants and potential participants. Further including CSC would have expanded the time required to finish the project which is infeasible for a PhD project under a time limit already prolonged by the COVID -19 pandemic. Including CSCs and United States Corrections could have provided a source of data to help provide context on the policy sector in each locality, however this was achieved through public documents or media accounts instead.

This study includes only English-speaking newspapers in the content analysis of newspapers included in chapter four. French speaking newspapers present unique framings which require an in-depth knowledge of the French language and how and where specifically terminology is used. The researcher here, as the only reader and coder of newspaper articles, does not hold these skills therefore limiting the use of French newspapers. Future work should include French newspapers to compare results with English speaking newspapers but also to assess if the results of the overall study here hold when considering a larger variety of newspapers. This problem was not present for public documents in Québec and Montréal as they are available in both French and English.

Based on the limitations above and implications raised by the findings here there exist several important avenues of future research on the topics of OACL and NGO service provision. The first avenue would include a broader range of cases to expand the variation of social constructions of target population within and across Canada and the United States. Future studies should include more cases within the regions and beyond to test the impact of local politics. Additionally, future research should include cases from other Western democracies experiencing

the aging of the carceral population to compare results here with the European contexts. Important questions should be asked of those cases including: are the similar framings of older adults present? How does this compare to the frequency of portrayals in the North American case? Further, how do portrayals in public documents differ? Importantly, what impact does this have on OACL? What or are their differences in services provided in those contexts? If the factors presented here matter less which conditions are presented as important instead?

Second, future research should include more consideration for a diversity of funding from provincial/state and regional/municipal governments. Are there patterns in the types of funding more local governments provide to OACL NGO or reintegration NGOs more generally? Crucially, what are the parameters of such funding relationships? How do correctional departments view the funds of local governments? Does this lead to fewer funds from correctional departments if local governments are seen as filling this gap? What issues are local governments more willing to fund for OACL? Under what conditions? The study here suggests funding related to housing is a site of fruitful future investigation. Also, what is the relationship between federal and local funders? Do they create partnerships, or do they fund services distinctly? Included in this consideration for funding are questions related to implementation. Crucially, more work should also focus on comparative studies highlighting potential differences in the shape of policy when funding varies.

Lastly, more research should be devoted to OACL as this study has attempted to fill the gap on their needs in the community as they reintegrate but there is much left to uncover. This project forwards that funding diversity and positive social construction are crucial to ensuring their supported reintegration. Yet, how OACL themselves understand and experience their dueling constructions is left unexplored. Do OACL perceive the construction of aging as positive? How does gender impact these considerations? Or are the barriers they face so great that the positive constructions of old age are imperceivable? OACL will come to represent a larger portion of the incarcerated population and understanding their realities is a crucial first step in ameliorating the conditions they face. This project has attempted to shine light on the organizations which serve to demonstrate that these entities are crucial to the safe and successful implementation of reintegration policy. It does not serve the interest of this group nor the communities into which they are released if this group is not met with adequate resources to aid their re-entry. Without proper research and resources, it is reasonable to expect that OACL will greatly suffer if they are only removed from incarceration with little to no afterthought. This project is an attempt to prepare for their increased release by showing the efforts that can be taken, in this case the diversification of funded programs aimed at meeting the heterogeneity of needs of older adults.

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