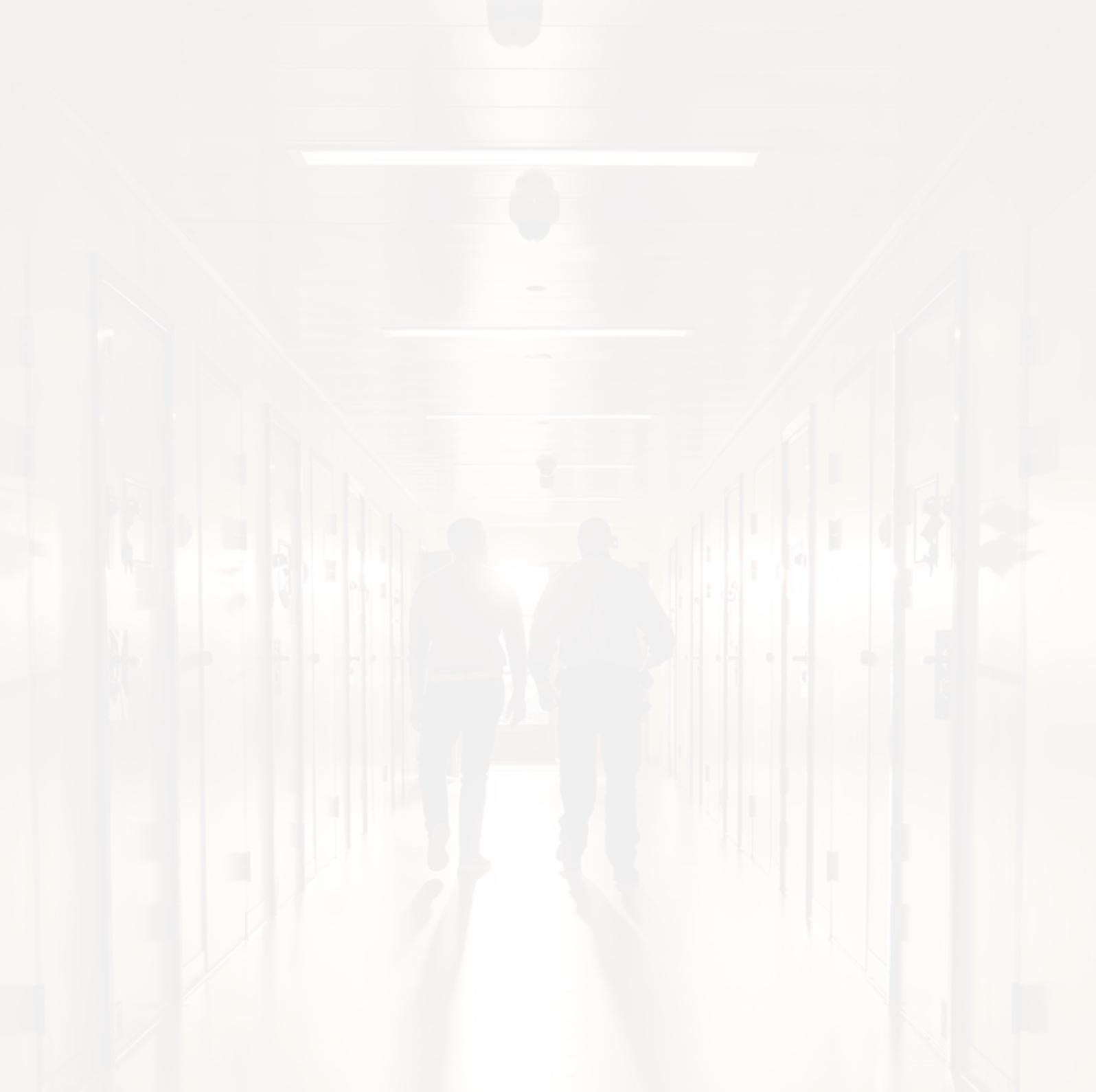




# Annual report 2023

Nordic Research Council for Criminology

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University of Oslo  
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# Chairman's letter

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## NSfK and the Nordic model of punishment

In the previous annual report, I noted that “without the Nordic Research Council for Criminology, there would not have been an international awareness and discussion about the Nordic model of punishment.” This year’s annual Research seminar in Finland addressed this central topic in the history of Nordic criminology: prison as punishment and rehabilitation.

NSfK’s 61st research seminar explored the current state and development of punishment and rehabilitation in the Nordics. What roles do the criminal justice system, the social and health services, and the NGOs respectively play in the Nordic model of punishment and rehabilitation? NSfK has for more than 60 years created a platform for scientific empirical knowledge about, and advise on, the use of prison and punishment. It is fitting that this year’s seminar was held in Finland, as former Chair of NSfK (2001-2003), Kauko Aromaa (1943-2019) already in 1977 presented to The Nordic Council recommendations for how to compare Nordic prison statistics, based on research supported by the Ministries through NSfK. I would like specially to thank the Nordic Ministries for the interest in this year’s Research seminar, and the Finnish hosts for making this event what it is supposed to be: an arena to meet, exchange and create knowledge and insights and learn from one another.

The Nordic system of punishment is also the topic of NSfK’s first policy brief written by the Norwegian researcher Synnøve Andersen. The Nordic countries have gained a worldwide reputation as world leaders in corrections and is a favored destination for international practitioners and policy makers interested in using firsthand experiences to drive with prison reform. Andersen has, together with other Nordic and US scholars, and funded by NSfK, studied what happens when one tries to implement philosophies, ideals, and practices of Nordic prisons in a US prison.

This has so far resulted in a series of academic outputs, but also in a TV documentary series now available on most Nordic public broadcasting channels. Andersen’s brief is the first in a new series of Policy briefs we have developed to make criminological research funded by the NSfK more accessible and useful to lawmakers, practitioners, and the public at large.

NSfK’s mission is to promote Nordic criminology and to advise governments on issues related to criminology, crime policy, and crime prevention. We fund research projects, publications, contact seminars between researchers and criminal justice professionals, working groups, and research trips.

Since the mid-1970s, we have published monthly newsletters where you can read news from the Nordic countries relating to criminology and crime policy, including seminars, publications, new crime statistics, legislation, policy initiatives, and much more. Our contact secretaries not only help disseminate the newsletter, but also assist with setting up contact between Nordic experts in various criminological areas and the public.

Publishing the best of Nordic criminological research has always been important for us. We have for many years supported one of the oldest criminological journals still in existence, *Nordisk Tidsskrift for Kriminalvidenskab* (NTfK). We also have our own journal, *Nordic Journal of Criminology* (NJC). In 2023, the journal became fully Open Access, including all back issues. Thank you to the editors, Anette Storgaard (NTfK) and Sébastien Tutuenges (NJC) for their excellent work on facilitating the dissemination of Nordic criminology to both Nordic and international audiences.

NSfK has for more than 60 years been central in the development of Nordic criminology and crime policy. Our history deserves attention, and in 2023 we have completed the digitization of our archives, in cooperation with the National archives of Norway. Our digital archive is now accessible to all interested in studying our history.

I would like to thank the Nordic Ministries of Justice for their ongoing support and excellent collaboration, and I would like to thank my fellow Council members for always working to improve the quality of Nordic criminological research and to maintain our position as the hub of Nordic criminology and crime policy. A huge thank you also to our excellent secretariat. Finally, I would like to encourage Nordic criminological researchers and criminal justice professionals to share their knowledge and expertise, whether it is in the format of a blog post or policy brief, sending information to our newsletter, or publishing in one of our journals. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with us if you have any questions, feedback, or ideas.



*Heidi Mork Lomell*

Heidi Mork Lomell  
Chair 2022-2024



# Organisation

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# Mission

The tasks and activities of the Nordic Research Council for Criminology (NSfK) are based on the statutes of the organisation as acknowledged by the founding members, i.e. the different Nordic Ministries of Justice.\*

The purpose of the Council is to further criminological research within the member countries and to advise the Nordic governments on issues related to criminology, crime prevention, and crime policy.

The activities of NSfK are funded by the Nordic Ministries of Justice. The Council consists of 15 members, three from each Nordic country, who are nominated by the national Ministries of Justice.

The Council awards annual research grants and is involved in planning and carrying out the different activities of the organisation. The Council members may also arrange their own working groups and contact seminars.

The Chair of the Council rotates every three years between the Nordic countries. The daily administration is carried out by a secretariat located in the country of the Chair.

For the period 2022-2024, the secretariat is based at the University of Oslo in Norway. The Chair is Professor Heidi Mork Lomell (NO). The secretariat is headed by Per Jørgen Ystehede (NO).

\*The statutes can be found on [nsfk.org](https://nsfk.org).

# Members of the Council 2023

## DENMARK



Annick Prieur  
Aalborg University



Linda Kjær Minke  
The University of Southern  
Denmark



Anne-Julie Boesen  
Pedersen  
Ministry of Justice

## FINLAND



Minna Piispa  
Ministry of Justice



Helena Huhta  
University of Turku



Mikko Aaltonen  
University of Eastern Finland

## ICELAND



Rannveig Þórisdóttir  
University of Iceland and  
the Metropolitan Police



Kolbrún Benediktsdóttir  
The District Prosecutor



Hanna Rún Sværisdóttir  
Ministry of Justice

## NORWAY



Heidi Mork Lomell  
University of Oslo (Chair)



Ragnhild Hennum  
University of Oslo



Arnt Even Hustad  
Ministry of Justice and  
Public Security

## SWEDEN



Tove Pettersson  
Stockholm university



Anna-Karin Ivert  
Malmö University



Erik Grevholm  
The Swedish National  
Council for Crime  
Prevention

## SECRETARIAT



Per Jørgen Ystehede  
Leader of the Secretariat



Maud Hol  
Communications



Elisabeth Neuhaus  
Communications

*Being a member of the NSfK council has broadened my perspective on Nordic criminological research. The council brings together policymakers, practitioners and researchers from the Nordic countries, and provides a great platform for discussions about current matters in criminal policy and crime prevention.*

*The most important annual task of the council is to decide on the research grants, and I have been generally impressed by the quality of the proposals. As specialized funding for criminological research is scarce, I see the funding opportunities of NSfK as particularly important for young Finnish criminologists and also for Nordic comparative projects*

Mikko Aaltonen (FI)

*Being a member of the council of NSfK has proven very fruitful for me in my work as a prosecutor. It is very important for us practitioners to be aware of and follow up on research in the field we work in, and the work done within the NSfK is very useful in that sense. Being a part of Nordic contact seminars on mediation in criminal matters and on offenders in sexual offence cases are examples of productive interdisciplinary work with both researchers and practitioners. Another example of an NSfK project that was very useful for the prosecution authorities was a rapport on sentencing for rape in the Nordic countries.*

Kolbrún Benediktsdóttir (IS)

# Contact secretaries

Communicating Nordic criminological research and policy in the North and beyond

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NSfK has a network consisting of seven Contact Secretaries, based in different Nordic countries including the autonomous areas of the Faroe Islands and Greenland.

The Contact Secretaries deliver the latest national news in the field of criminology and crime policy to our monthly newsletter. They also support researchers, government officials and the media in the North and beyond with questions about Nordic literature and data on crime and punishment.



Helena Brix  
Denmark



Daisy J. Iversen  
Faroe Islands



Emma Villmann  
Finland



Sara Kirstine Jakobsen  
Greenland



Jónas Orri Jónasson  
Iceland



Marina Foshaugen  
Norway



Emeli Lönnqvist  
Sweden



*– During my position as the NSfK contact secretary for Sweden from 2019 to 2023, I gained valuable insights into the remarkable criminological research activities across the Nordic region. Building connections and fostering relationships within this community of researchers, practitioners, and experts has been an enriching experience. My current research focus involves delving into the impact of court digitalization on social processes, and I eagerly anticipate further engagement with the NSfK community in the times ahead.*

Lisa Flower (SE)

In 2023, Emeli Lönnqvist became the new contract secretary of Sweden, taking over from Lisa Flower.

*– NSfK would like to thank Flower, for the important job she conducted for Nordic criminology.*

Heidi Mork Lomell (NO), Chair 2022-2024



# The future of punishment

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# Excerpts from the history

The theme of the NSfK Research seminar 2023 was the future of punishment. Making predictions about the future has always been a difficult endeavor. That, however, has not stopped NSfK and criminologists from trying.

Below you will find a quote by the professor in Criminology, Nils Christie (1928–2015) – and Chair of NSfK (1979–1982) – who in 1968 predicted as part of the future of punishment a rise in the use of electronic monitoring. In this prediction he was arguably correct, however, he also believed one would see a continuing decline in the Nordic prison population. Christie's article, written before the war on drugs, could not foresee what he thirty later would call the rise of the use of prison as punishment to industrious proportions.

On the picture you see professor Christie together with Inkeri Antilla (1916–2013) – Chair of NSfK (1971–1972) – and the first female professor in criminal law in Finland, the first director of the Institute of Criminology in Finland's Ministry of Justice in 1963, and the first director of the UN's European Institute for Crime Prevention and Control (HEUNI). They were both advocates through their careers for humane forms of punishment nationally and internationally.

*– In a community where the ordinary population enjoy increased leisure, imprisonment, its penal value will rise sharply, and therefore less of it can be used to compensate offences committed ... In the age of electronics, it will be possible to exercise effective control over criminal offenders outside prison. Cheaper, simpler, and, in the opinion of many, more humane substitutes for prison walls will be provided by radio transmitters fastened to offenders, by radio-locators, by telephone reports from criminal offenders to a controlling apparatus for facilities for voice analysis ... The welfare State of the future will, without the use of prisons, be able to provide more effective offers of help and support to those who assail and trouble the community.*

Nils Christie (1968)

*– A typical feature of Scandinavian criminology has throughout the last decade been a heavy orientation towards sociological research . . . and also psychologists and psychiatrists have accepted a fairly sociological outlook on crime and deviance.*

Inkeri Antilla (1974)



Inkeri Antilla and Nils Christie starting networking for their long-lasting Nordic cooperation within the Nordic Criminalist' Associations, Nordic Summer University and the Scandinavian Research Council for Criminology, in the 1950's (Lathi, Lappi-Seppälä and Törnudd, 2016, p. 209)

## Nordic research on prison funded by NSfK

After thirty years of existence, NSfK asked professor Cecilie Høigård to evaluate its work. Høigård questioned why the area of prison research had such a modest place in NSfK's research funding (Høigård 1992).

After discussion in the Council it was decided that the topic should be subject of study. Researcher Inger Marie Fridhov received this assignment on behalf of the Council and made an overview of prison research in the Nordic region. This overview is available in: **Nordic prison research - not completely absent** (Original title: Nordisk fengselsforskning - ikke helt fraværende).

Below you will find extracts of some of her main findings:

*– There exist Nordic empirical research on both prisons and inmates ... But these are relatively old. Then there is a plethora of research spread over a wide array of topics [related to prisons] – both old and recent. Thirdly there are historical and philosophical works on prisons. In addition, reports that governments themselves has taken the initiative to create. These have focused primarily on results of implementations, but one sees more and more evaluations of processes ... The biggest loss, however, is when it comes to the use of methods and the development thereof. In this regard little has been done sine Bondeson's development of the argot test in the 1970's\**

Inger Marie Fridhov (1994)

According to Fridhov, the support given by NSfK to prison research depended largely on how broadly (somehow related to confinement) or narrowly (i.e. institutional ethnographies) one defined prison research. From the early 2000s, the Council decided to make prison research a prioritized theme for research support.

*– ... in 2003 the Council decided upon a new policy by announcing that special themes would be prioritized for the next two or three years. The following themes that have been prioritized are as follows in a chronological order: prison research, crime prevention, violence, organized crime, economic crime, corruption, and the time after release. The same themes were also chosen as the main themes of the research seminars. The idea behind this arrangement was to better link the individual research, supported by the Council, to its research seminars. New studies on targeted themes would therefore, be presented and discussed at the research seminars. ... All in all, the policy of earmarked research ... resulted in an increased prison research in the Nordic countries. ... (2012:17).*

Hildigunnur Ólafsdóttir, former Chair of NSfK 2010-2012

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Prison and incarceration has been a hotly debated issue not only among Nordic criminologists and penal scholars, but also in the public at large. Sometimes influencing artists and film makers. One example is Release the Prisoners to Spring! (Original title: Släpp fångarne loss, det är vår!). The film was a kind of contribution to the 1970s debate about the liberalisation of the Swedish penitentiary system.



\*Fridhov here refers to the Swedish criminologist, Ulla Bondeson (1937-2009) who already in 1968 published: Argot knowledge as an indicator of criminal socialization: A study of a training school for girls. Scandinavian studies in criminology (Vol. 2, pp. 73-107). Bondeson was Chair of NSfK between 1983 – 1985.

# Selected prison research activities funded by NSfK 2004 – present

- David Wästerfors/Malin Åkerström (SE) «Fängelsebråkets interaktion och symbolik»
- Jón Fridrik Sigurdsson (IS) «Psychiatric illness and ADHD among Icelandic prison»
- Robert Andersson (SE) «Risktänkandet och behandlingstankens återkomst»
- Jane Dullum (NO) «De nye særreaksonene»
- Kristin Hanoa (NO) «Vold blant innsatte i fengsel. En intervjuundersøkelse med innsatte i norske fengsler»
- Knut Papendorf (NO) «En sammenliknende analyse av den norske fengselsloven»
- Per Åke Nylander (SE) «Fängelskultur och vårdarroll»
- Robert Andersson (SE) «Behandlingstankens återkomst och den nya psykiatrin»
- David Wästerfors och Goran Basic (SE), «Försoning och oförsonlighet i före detta lägerfångars berättelser»
- Karin Röbäck (SE), «Barn i fängelse – små barn placerade med mamma i anstalt»
- Tarja Pösö (FI), «Barn i fängelse»
- Juha Soivio (FI), «An everyday view on prison functions, spaces and violence»
- Peter Scharff Smith (DK), «Tværfaglige perspektiver på fængelsforskning»
- Thomas Ugelvik (NO) «Nettverksmøte for forskningsnettverket for skandinaviske studier av innesperring»
- Torbjørn Skarðhamar (NO) «Familieforhold og tilbakeføring til samfunnet etter endt soning»
- Teemu Taneli Kaskela (FI) «After the release from prison: the effect of substance abuse treatment on criminality»
- Roddy Nilsson (SE) «Skandinaviska fängelseforskningsnätverket»
- Mikko Aaltonen, Torbjørn Skardhamar og Anders Nilsson (FI/NO/SE) «Sysselsetting etter fengsling – En komparativ studie om konsekvenser av fengsling for sysselsetting i de nordiske landene»
- Annemette Nyborg Lauritsen (DK) «Kriminalitet, frihedsberøvelse og kontrol i Grønland»
- Yaira Obstbaum-Federley (FI) «Arbetsfordelingen mellem de institutioner som behandler alkohol- og drogrelaterede skador i Finland, fångars rusmedelsproblem och fängelsernas nya rusmedelsstrategier i ljuset av fånghälsundersökningar och myndighetsregister»
- Annette Olesen (DK) «Mentorordning og udvidet retshjælp til løsladte i Danmark og Norge»
- Dorina Damsa (NO) «Penal consciousness: the case of foreign nationals in Norwegian and Danish prisons»
- Ann-Karina Henriksen (DK) «Confinement of youths in the Nordic countries»
- Annemette Nyborg Lauritsen (GL) «Criminality, incarceration and control in Nordic island societies: The Faroe Islands, The Åland Islands, Iceland and Greenland»

A person is shown from the waist down, wearing a brown leather bag, grey pants, and brown leather shoes with blue laces. A white sensor is attached to their right ankle. The background is a warm, blurred orange and yellow light.

# Funded research

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# Grants

The grants are designed to support and promote Nordic criminological research and advise Nordic governments on issues related to crime prevention and crime policy.

The project must be carried out in one or more of the Nordic countries, and it is possible to apply for funding for:

- Research projects
- Working groups
- Contact seminars
- Travel grants

Research activities that receive funding are expected to send in an annual and/or final report. Besides a financial report documenting expenses, there are written reports on progress, changes to the project, and results.

Depending on the type of report, these may also include various forms of dissemination such as journal articles, blogs, and policy briefs.

# Funded projects 2023

The Nordic Research Council for Criminology has awarded grants for criminological research to provide new insights into a variety of topics: street crime, crime statistics, citizenship, Nordic penal practice, punishment, sexual violence and more.

This year NSfK received 3 applications for a joint Nordic project, 10 applications for individual research projects, 6 applications for working groups and 1 for a contact seminar. At its annual council meeting in March 2023, the council decided to award grants to in all ten research projects and working groups.



## **Ways Out of Street Crime: A Comparative Study of Street Crime Desistance in Denmark, Sweden and Norway**

Co-Nordic project led by Mette-Louise E. Johansen (DK)

Recently, there has been a growing concern about street crime and gun violence across the Nordics. While Nordic studies have explored factors that drive people into criminal networks, comparatively few studies have shown the mechanisms that drive people away from street crime. This project seeks to fill this knowledge gap through a comparative study of crime desistance in Denmark, Norway and Sweden.



## **The Historical Criminal Statistics of the Nordic Countries 1810-2020**

Miikka Vuorela (FI)

The first objective of this project is to compile a comprehensive database of historical criminal statistics of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden from the early 19th century to the present. The data will include statistics on criminal convictions, offenses reported to the police, sentenced punishments and imprisonment. The second objective of the project is to analyse the development of crime and punishment in Finland during the period of independence (1917-) and to compare the main findings to Denmark, Norway and Sweden.



### **(Re)Imagining the Citizen: Citizenship Revocation for Crime**

Kerstin Carlson (DK)

This project examines the expanding practice of citizenship revocation for crime in Denmark through trial ethnography and interviews with legal professionals.



### **The Blind Spot: Assessing the increase in self-reported victimization among young Swedish women**

Mika Hagerlid (SE)

The aim of the study is to examine if there has been a change in what is commonly referred to as measurement equivalence among young female respondents (ages 16-24) who've answered the Swedish Crime Survey during the period of 2006-2021.



### **Shaping Nordic Punishment – mapping and understanding the development of Nordic penal practice (PenalNordic)**

Peter Scharff Smith (NO)

PenalNordic examines the specific history of Nordic penal practices, including the use of open prisons and the introduction of rights-based practices such as self-catering and conjugal visits.

# Working groups and contact seminars

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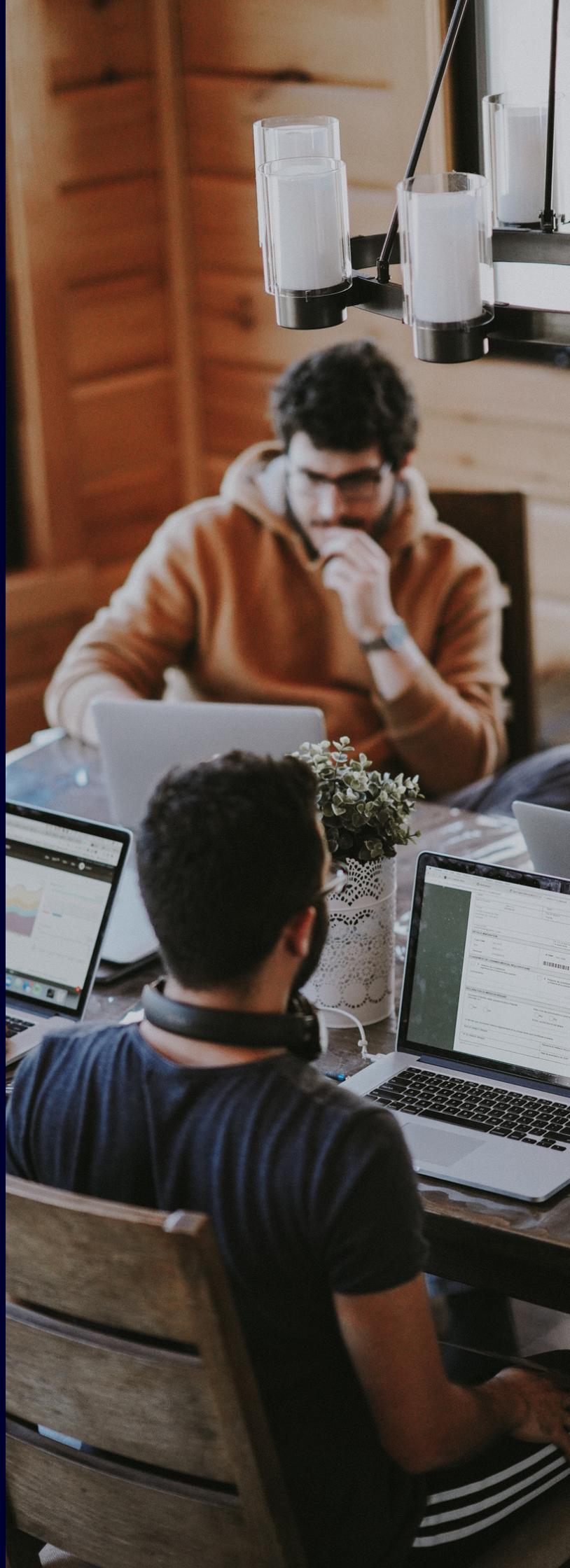
Working groups gather researchers from the Nordic countries. The working group meetings are intended for researchers planning or initiating a joint Nordic research project or who wish to establish research-related cooperation in another form. NSfK provided support for five working groups in 2023:

- Sentiments on justice in the Nordic countries, led by Klara Hermansson (SE)
- Prisoners' Access to Justice, led by Berit Johnsen (NO)
- Nordic Himpathy – the social construction of responsibility and sympathy in cases of sexual violation and rape, led by Sara Uhnöo (SE)
- Punitive Turn – Nordic style, led by Lene Wachter Lentz (DK)
- Nordic network for register-based criminological research, led by Torbjørn Skarhamar (NO)

NSfK contact seminars are an arena for researchers and practitioners in the field of criminology and criminal policy to meet in small, informal groups. The contact seminars serve as cross-professional expert forums in various areas of common concern for the Nordic countries.

One contact seminar was held in 2023:

- Nordic Seminar on Crime Victimization Surveys, led by Council member Anne-Julie Boesen Pedersen (DK).
- 



# Travel grants

NSfK provides financial support for conference-related travel, and research stays abroad\*. The support is given to researchers in criminology based in the Nordic countries.

In 2023, the following 11 scholars received travel grants: David Assadkhan (SE), Rose Boyle (NO), Jennie Di Rocco (SE), Clara Fahlstadius (SE), Dikke Hauch (DK), Klara Hermansson (SE), Thorbjørn Larsen (DK), Sanni Nieminen (FI), Pernille Nyvoll (NO), Frederik Rom Taxhjelm (DK) and Katarina Winter (SE):

- Three presented their research findings at the annual conference of the European Society of Criminology (Eurocrim) in Florence, Italy.
- Two conducted a research stay at the Prisons Research Centre, University of Cambridge.
- Two had a research stay at the University of Oslo, where one of them attended the Nordic STS conference.
- One had a three month research stay at Griffith University in Brisbane, Australia.
- One presented findings at the International Ethnography and Qualitative Research Conference in Trento, Italy.
- One participated at a one week course in statistic method at the Leibniz-Institute for the Social Sciences in Cologne, Germany.
- One presented research at the European Conference on Domestic Violence in Reykjavik.

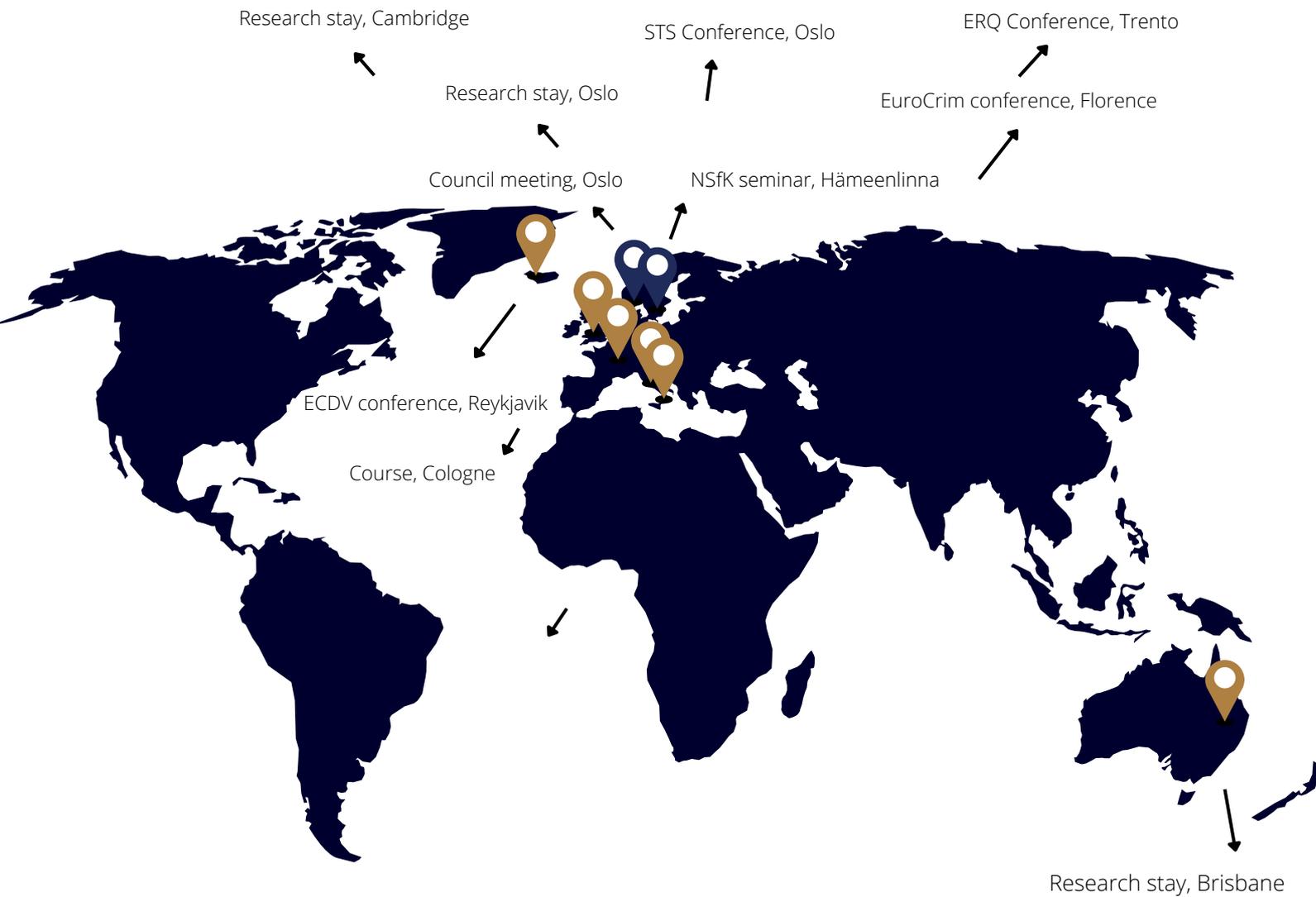
## What did the NSfK travel grant mean to you?

*– Participating in the European Conference on Domestic Violence (ECDV) in Reykjavik, Iceland was an inspiring experience. As ECDV brings together researchers, practitioners and civil society from both in – and outside Europe, it creates a vibrant buzz and offers diverse and interesting presentations. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to take part in so many empowering discussions and for everyone's great interest in intimate partner violence among youth.*



Clara Fahlstadius (SE)  
Stockholm University

\*For further information, see [§ 9 – Guidelines for awarding travel grants.](#)



# Travel grants

A total of 100,000 NOK enabled 11 researchers to:

- Participate in 4 different conferences.
- Conduct 4 research stays.
- Spread Nordic criminological research in a total of 4 countries outside of the Nordic region.

The travel funds also allowed:

- 80 Nordic criminologists and government officials to attend the research seminar in Hämeenlinna, Finland.
- The annual meeting of the Council to take place in Oslo, Norway.

# Policy briefs

A policy brief is a concise summary of a particular issue, the policy options to deal with it, and some recommendations on the best option. It is aimed at government policymakers and others who are interested in formulating or influencing policy.

In accordance with the Nordic Council for Criminology's statutes, article 1, the Council [shall] provide the authorities in the Nordic countries with assistance in criminological matters, as well as information on its activities and about Nordic criminology.

The practice of asking funded researchers for policy briefs is to strengthen this mechanism. However, it is important to note that the opinions expressed in this policy brief are the researchers own and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Nordic Research Council for Criminology.



The first policy brief of 2023 was written by Synøve Andersen, who received NSfK funding for the research project 'Nordic Correctional Exceptionalism in a Non-Nordic Context: Building the Foundations for Actionable Penal Reform'.

## US and Nordic prisons – not so different as they seem?

How do Scandinavian methods work in a prison in Pennsylvania? What works and what does not work when you try to design a prison unit based on practices and experiences of Nordic prisons in a US context?



Humanity Across The World: the Little Scandinavia Unit at SCI Chester.

### Prison Project Little Scandinavia

The Nordic countries have gained a worldwide reputation as world leaders in corrections and have for the last decades been a favored destination for international practitioners and policy makers interested in using firsthand experiences to drive with prison reform.

Synøve Nygaard Andersen has, together with other Nordic and US scholars, studied what happens when one tries to implement philosophies, ideals and practices of Nordic prisons in a US prison. This has so far resulted in a series of academic outputs focused on the development process, but also in a TV documentary series now available on most Nordic broadcasting channels (NRK in Norway, SVT in Sweden, DR in Denmark, YLE in Finland and Topic TV in the US). The documentary Prison Project Little Scandinavia also won the award 'Buyers Coup de Coeur' at the 25th International documentary festival in Cannes (MIPDOC).

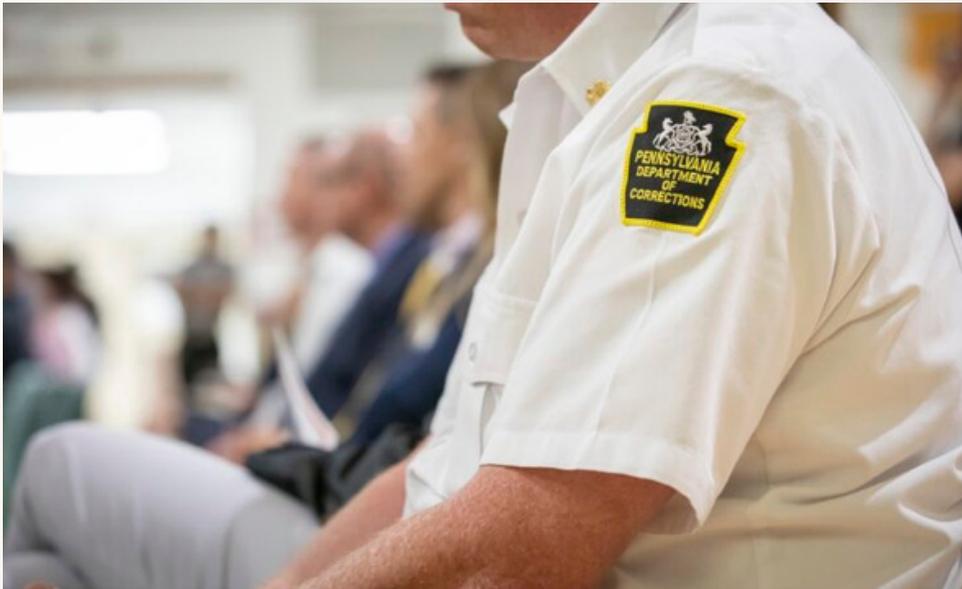


5 May 2022: Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (DOC) Acting Secretary George Little was joined by partners from the Norwegian Correctional Service (Kriminalomsorgen), the Swedish Prison and Probation Service (Kriminalvården), Drexel University, and the University of Oslo to officially dedicate the Little Scandinavia Unit at SCI Chester. Synøve Nygaard Andersen, University of Oslo, spoke to the attendees.

Broadly speaking, the fact that the bottom-up approach taken in this project has led to the successful development, opening and operations of a prison unit that is vastly different from the rest of the prison environment is an important proof of concept in and of its own – and something the skeptics thought could never happen given the stark differences between US and Scandinavian systems. Preliminary results from the research on the day-to-day life on the unit are also encouraging:

“So far both qualitative and quantitative data suggest that both staff and residents on the unit fare better than they did previously”, says Andersen. “Importantly, rates of serious misconducts linked to drugs and violence are down, and so far there have been no assaults on staff since the unit opened”.

The researchers will continue to document what happens on the unit and, as more people are released, assess whether serving time on the Little Scandinavia unit impacts post-release outcomes such as recidivism.



Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (DOC) officers took part at the opening of the Little Scandinavia Unit at SCI Chester.

**On the importance of NSfK funding**

Andersen received a personal grant from NSfK in 2019. The aim was to study what happened as a team of American correctional officers and leaders set out to identify, through first-hand experiential learning, values and practices in Nordic corrections that could be used as the starting point for actionable penal reform in their own system – and then what happened as they implemented these reforms in an American prison setting.

# Nordic Correctional Exceptionalism in a Non-Nordic Context: Building the Foundations for Actionable Penal Reform

Synøve N. Andersen

*The opinions expressed in this policy brief are the author's own and do not reflect the view of the Nordic Research Council for Criminology.*

## Findings

- Nordic corrections can serve as a key source of inspiration for concrete and implementable prison reform in the United States. Peer-to-peer mentorship and experiential learning opportunities facilitate the transition from theoretical to practical change.
- Officers and leaders in the Nordic countries see clear advantages to their participation in international collaboration – beyond goals of altruism. Local benefits include unique opportunities for critical self-reflection, improved motivation, group cohesion, heightened professional pride, and identity development.
- American officers describe the levels of stress, (un)safety, (dis)trust, and risk management as key areas of divergence between the Norwegian and Pennsylvanian prison environments.
- Both American and Norwegian correctional professionals see rehabilitation as a central goal of incarceration, but the groups differ in their perception of who is responsible for enabling this change: Norwegian participants see rehabilitation and reentry work as integral to the professional role of a correctional officer, whereas American participants assign responsibility to other prison staff (incl. trained therapists and counselors). Both groups identify differences in both recruitment and training of COs as drivers of this difference.
- American officers and leaders identify cultural differences linked to perceptions of crime and punishment in society, and the professional roles of COs in the prison environment, as key obstacles to actionable change in the U.S. context.

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## Background

The United States is a global outlier in the field of criminal corrections, and an increasing number of state and local governments have started to look abroad for ways to reform their prison systems. The focus of this project is an ongoing prison reform initiative led by the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (PADOC) in collaboration with correctional services in the Scandinavian countries. The academic research team is led by researchers from the University of Oslo and Drexel University. During the first phase of the project (2018-2022), which was partially funded by NSfK, correctional officers and leaders from Pennsylvania (PA) took part in international exchanges where they visited and worked in prisons throughout Scandinavia. Starting after the first exchange in 2019, they undertook development efforts that culminated in the establishment of a unique housing unit known as Little Scandinavia (LS) at State Correctional Institution (SCI) at Chester in May 2022. This unit has gone through substantial physical changes, and perhaps more importantly, the staff-to-resident ratio has been increased, and all officers have received additional training that enables them to engage more actively in residents' daily lives and rehabilitation.

The research endeavors in Phase 1 focused on collecting data on international collaboration, knowledge transfer, and reform development.

These data have formed the foundation for academic and policy-oriented publications and presentations on topics including staff well-being, the roles and responsibilities of correctional officers, and opportunities and barriers to prison reform in the US (see more below).

In the second, operational (and ongoing) phase of the project (2022-2025), the PA team is focused on the continued development and adaptations of the unit's policies and protocols, supporting the residents and staff from the LS community, and continue to engage with their Scandinavian peers. Working in parallel, the research team collects data from numerous sources to understand the impact of the housing unit on both staff and residents. This includes both in-prison outcomes such as negative behaviors and measurable changes in the prison climate, and longer-range outcomes related to community reintegration and recidivism.

## Nordic relevance

The Nordic countries have gained a reputation as world leaders in corrections and are favored destinations of international practitioners and policymakers interested in first-hand experiences with prison reform. Importantly, neither the one-time visits nor the more long-term international collaborations have been central in Nordic research, and our understanding of what these international collaborations mean to the people and institutions involved remains scarce.

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This project seeks to bridge this knowledge gap by taking an interdisciplinary and mixed methods approach to understanding the perspectives and experiences of numerous stakeholders at all phases of the process.

## Recommendations

- Both researchers and practitioners should be cautious in assuming that seemingly disparate correctional systems are too different to inspire growth and development in each other – even “penal outliers” like the US and Scandinavia can be environments for actionable reform.
- Nordic correctional services contribute meaningfully to prison reform abroad. In light of current resource demands in the Nordic region, it would be advisable to prioritize collaborations that may lead to actual change abroad and are supported by independent research efforts.

*Based on feedback from Nordic participants, future international collaborations should ideally be:*

- Bilateral and beneficial to Nordic participants.
- Evaluated, with results being communicated back to staff and incarcerated people at the involved facilities.
- Focused on broad staff engagement and “bottom-up” approaches in the planning phase.

- Based on peer-to-peer interaction and practical, applied learning opportunities for all parties in the practical phase.

- Directly supported by international partners to avoid draining resources from daily operations and creating conflicts of interest between international collaboration and other work.

- Managed equitably, within the Nordic agencies and collaborating nations.

## Outputs

Academic output from the project has thus far focused on international collaboration and staff perceptions. Select publications include:

Chanenson, S. L., J. M. Hyatt & S. N. Andersen (in press). Embracing Dignity: Pennsylvania’s Experiment with Scandinavian Correctional Principles. In Eisen, L.-B. & W. J. Brennan (Eds.) *Punitive Excess*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Horowitz, V. L., E. R. Greberman, P. E. Nolan, J. M. Hyatt, C. Uggen, S. N. Andersen & S. L. Chanenson (2021). A Comparative Perspective on Officer Wellness: American Reflections from Norwegian Prisons. *Criminal Justice Studies*, 34(4): 477-497.

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Hyatt, J. M., S. N. Andersen, S. L. Chanenson, V. Horowitz & C. Uggen (2021). «We Can Actually Do This”: Adapting Scandinavian Correctional Culture in Pennsylvania. *American Criminal Law Review*, 58(4): 1715-1746.

Hyatt, J. M., S. N. Andersen, V. Horowitz & H. G. N. Lopez (2023). Correctional Officers, the Carceral Environment and Reentry: Perspectives from the U.S. and Scandinavia. *Advancing Corrections Journal*, 15: 101-114.

Outside of academia, the reform effort has been the subject of a three-part documentary series produced by the Swedish national public broadcaster (SVT). The documentary, which is known (in English) as “Prison Project: Little Scandinavia”, has aired (or will air) on all the Nordic public broadcasters beginning in 2023.

A trailer for the documentary is available on Youtube. The Swedish series is available on [DR](#), [NRK](#), [SVT](#), and [YLE](#).

The project has also attracted substantial media attention both in the US and the Nordic countries. Select newspaper articles featuring the project include:

[As San Quentin prison vows to transform, its residents ask: is change possible?](#) In the Guardian.

[A local experiment in Scandinavian justice.](#) In the Philadelphia Citizen.

[California to transform infamous San Quentin prison with Scandinavian ideas, rehab focus.](#) In Los Angeles Times.

[Prisoners Today, Neighbors Tomorrow.](#) In New York Times.

[«Lille Skandinavia»: Et lite stykke Norge i amerikansk fengsel.](#) In VG.

[How Norway Is Teaching America To Make Its Prisons More Humane.](#) In the Huffington Post.

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## Knowledge gaps and future research needs

Three main knowledge gaps need to be addressed in future research:

1. The processes that link international visits by policymakers and/or practitioners to actual and actionable change. How many of the hundreds of visits to Nordic prisons and probation services lead to actual change abroad or domestically? What is the nature of this change, and what are the formal and informal barriers to reform?

2. The impact of any Nordic-inspired reform efforts implemented abroad. What is the impact on the first-hand experiences of people living and working in prison, prison culture and climate, budgets and cost/benefit ratios, and post-sentence outcomes such as reoffending, health, and labor market participation?

3. The impacts of international collaboration on Nordic partners. How do these projects impact the experiences of people who work and live in prison here, and what are the costs and benefits – social, cultural, and financial – of engaging in international collaborations?

In sum, addressing these knowledge gaps would both strengthen Nordic criminology and support policy development.

### The author

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### The project

'Nordic Correctional Exceptionalism in a Non-Nordic Context: Building the Foundations for Actionable Penal Reform' is a personal research grant funded by the Nordic Research Council for Criminology (NSfK).

### NSfK

The Nordic Research Council for Criminology serves to promote criminological research in the Nordic region, and provides the governments with assistance in criminological matters and information on Nordic criminology.

## Research grants from 2017 continue to bear fruits

The research grants allow researchers to gather data and conduct analysis that may result in research articles and other outcomes years after the project is formally completed.

For example, NSfK funded the project 'Working Group Meeting on Nordic Homicide Data Cooperation' in 2017, followed by the research project 'Nordic Homicide from Past to Present: Explaining Stability and Change in Lethal Violence' in 2018. Findings were presented at the NSfK research seminar in 2019.

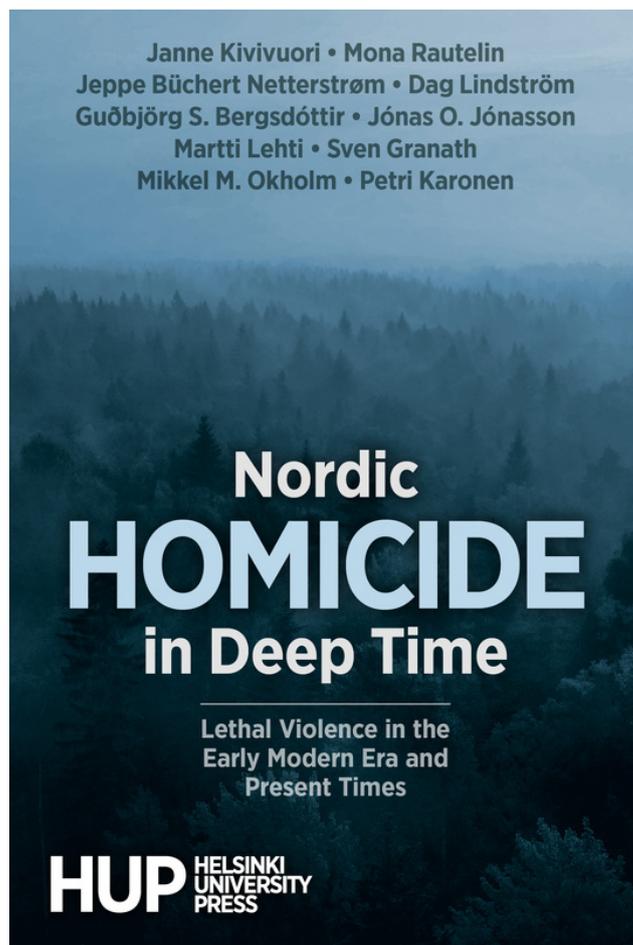
Recently, the book "[Nordic Homicide in Deep Time](#)" was published, based on findings from the research. The book draws a unique and detailed picture of developments in human interpersonal violence and presents new findings on rates, patterns, and long-term changes in lethal violence in the Nordics.

The project has facilitated several publications including:

Salomaa, Anilla (2023). Helsingin Sanomien uutiset historiallisen kriminologisen henkirikostutkimuksen lähteenä. *Kriminologia*, 3(1), 26–38. (In Finnish, English abstract: The newspaper Helsingin Sanomat as a source for the historical homicide research) <https://doi.org/10.54332/krim.122311>

Lindström, Dag (2021). Dråparen kom ledig och fri åter från tinget på sin fria färd: Om flykt, fri lejd och böner om nåd i svensk rättskipning under 1640-talet. *Historisk tidskrift*, 141:2, 173–200. (English Summary: The murderer left the court freely: Escape, safe-conduct, and pleadings for mercy in Swedish judicial practice during the 1640's).

Kivivuori, Janne & Rautelin, Mona & Bergsdóttir, Guðbjörg S. & Granath, Sven & Jónasson, Jónas O. & Karonen, Petri & Koskivirta, Anu & Lehti, Martti & Lindström, Dag & Büchert Netterstrøm, Jeppe, & Okholm, Mikkel M. (2020). *Historical Homicide Monitor 2.0. General Instructions and Coding Manual*. Research Briefs 40/2020. Helsinki: University of Helsinki, Institute of Criminology and Legal Policy. <http://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-951-51-0673-5>



Kivivuori, Janne & Lehti, Martti & Rautelin, Mona & Lindström, Dag, & Büchert Netterstrøm, Jeppe (2020). Time cycles of homicide in the early modern Nordic area. *Nordic Journal of Criminology*, 21:2, 152-169. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/2578983X.2020.1766283>

The book has also led to book reviews, conference papers, working papers and and a master thesis.

**Read more at the project website:**

<https://blogs.helsinki.fi/historicalhomicidemonitor/project-2/>

# Research activities

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# NSfK 61st Research seminar

Hämeenlinna, Finland

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## Keynote speakers

**Kaisa Tammi (FI)**, Director of Hämeenlinna Prison and Probation Centre, on: The care of female prisoners in Finnish prisons – From the margin to the mainstream?

**Synøve Nygaard Andersen (NO)**, Postdoctoral Fellow, University of Oslo, on: The Promise and Pitfalls of Recidivism Research.

**Thomas Ugelvik (NO)**, Professor, University of Oslo: The role of interpersonal trust in desistance processes.

**Lars Højsgaard Andersen (DK)**, Research Professor and Head of Research in marginalised groups, The Rockwool Foundation, on: Lessons learned from 30 years of “smart” sentencing reforms in Denmark.

**Tove Petterson (SWE)**, Professor, Stockholm University, on: Young offenders in youth custody. Re-offending and need of support after the sentence.

## Award ceremony

Thomas Ugelvik was the winner of the Nordic Journal for Criminology's Best Article Prize 2022. For this, he was awarded by Editor-in-Chief Sébastien Tutenges.

The article was titled “Three burglars, a friendly police inspector, and a vegetarian fox: Scandinavian exceptionalism, children’s literature, and desistance-conducive cultures”



# Nordic Conference of Criminologists discusses the future of punishment

By Riikka Kostainen (FI)\*

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The annual seminar of the Nordic Research Council for Criminology (NSfK) was held in Hämeenlinna in May. The overarching theme of the seminar was the future of punishment, and the range of perspectives on the topic was comprehensive. Dozens of presentations were mainly divided into three simultaneous working groups. The three-day seminar was attended by about 80 researchers and representatives of the judicial administration. The presentations and discussion conveyed the similarity of problems and solutions in the Nordic countries and concern about the effects of tougher criminal policy.

The opening main lecture of the seminar was given by Kaisa Tammi, Director of the Hämeenlinna Criminal Sanctions Centre, and the topic was the development of women-specific work in prisons. She talked about a study she conducted in 2020 on the situation of women prisoners and how its recommendations have been implemented in Finland.

The main findings of Tammi's study were that women's units operated in accordance with models developed for men, the supervision of the units was not systematic, there were many kinds of attitude problems, little was known about the needs of women prisoners, and an illusion of equality presided.

The report included recommendations on the organisation and management of women's prison work, staff training, the establishment of women's prisons and units for women prisoners, and the services needed by women.

'Training has been organised for employees and management in the criminal sanctions sector. Mixed open prisons have been abandoned, women's wards in prisons have been renovated, and new ones have been established. However, the objectives have not been fully realised. Some employees have refused training, training information in general has not yet become practice, female prisoners are a sensitive topic even in internal discussions in the field, and the male norm is still strong in prison services,' Ms Tammi summed up.

In Ms Tammi's view, the short-term challenges of women's prison work include increasing trauma awareness, taking into account the needs of transgenderism and sexual minorities and, for example, identifying and helping victims of human trafficking.



Kaisa Tammi (FI)  
Director of the Hämeenlinna Criminal Sanctions Centre

## Open prison focuses on rehabilitation

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As an alternative, the seminar programme included a visit to Vanaja Women's Open Prison. At the facility, Deputy Director Tuija Muurinen and Criminal Sanctions Worker Anna-Leena Suomela talked about the operations of the prison, the needs of women prisoners, and the activities of the family unit. Vanaja has 47 places of imprisonment. On weekdays, most prisoners are outside studying or working. Co-operation with the City of Hämeenlinna is intensive in organising rehabilitative activities and services. Prisoners are encouraged to take responsibility for their lives and do things independently, as well as learn self-respect. These are important issues in rehabilitation.

A family unit has also been established in connection with Vanaja Open Prison, which is a special child protection unit under the National Institute for Health and Welfare and works in close co-operation with the employees of the facility. There are ten places for prisoners and their children under 2 years old; fathers are also sometimes placed there with small children.

'The family unit provides a safe, homelike environment. The employees are social work and health care professionals, and the work focuses on unpacking the parents' trauma. The best results are achieved when the investment period is long enough to work on the problems. The effort also involves taking other family members into account and collaborating with many parties outside the prison. Children are often the biggest motivation for rehabilitation,' Ms Muurinen explained.



## Recidivism is studied from many perspectives

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Norway is known for its low recidivism rates. Postdoctoral researcher Synnøve Nygaard Andersen from the University of Oslo talked about the challenging nature of the study. Depending on who is being investigated, what counts as a new offence and what the follow-up period is, Norway's recidivism rate is somewhere between 9% and 53%. In general, research into recidivism simplifies criminal careers, emphasises failure rather than success, and underestimates the impact of punishment on other aspects of life, such as health – especially mental health – as well as on employment and housing. However, it is possible to conduct high-quality recidivism research in the Nordic countries because the official registers are good, and the methods of quantitative research are mastered and supported by strong qualitative exit research with regard to offences.

A report on the prevention of recidivism and the transmission of intergenerational problems was presented by Senior Researcher Åsa Norman from Karolinska Institutet. She has studied the effectiveness of the parenting support programme used in prison services in Sweden. Empirical results indicated that intervention in prison had positive impacts on the quality of the parent-child relationship and interest in committing crimes. According to Norman, promoting healthy relationships can influence criminal behaviour and reduce recidivism.

In Finland, a register study has been launched to examine the impact of a parent's prison sentence on a child's life. The research was presented by doctoral student Ilona Nissinen from the University of Helsinki. The first results concern the background information concerning the parents and children. Later in the study, the connection between a parent's prison sentence and the child's criminal behaviour will be investigated.

Professor Fred Markowitz from Northern Illinois University has studied the relationship between homelessness and crime from a community perspective in Finland. He has collected data from 261 municipalities over a period of 13 years. Although Finland has succeeded in reducing homelessness considerably, a significant number of offenders experience homelessness. Research shows that homelessness is associated with increased violent crime, property crime, and public peace violations while intoxicated. The findings suggest to Professor Markowitz that reducing homelessness is very important not only to improve the offender's rehabilitation and living conditions, but also to increase the safety of the local community.



Synnøve Nygaard Andersen (NO)  
University of Oslo

## New penalties developed specifically to tackle juvenile delinquency

Many presentations emphasised the importance of studying the effectiveness of criminal policy reforms. Professor Lars Højsgaard Andersen from the Rockwool Foundation studied the impact of the introduction of electronic surveillance in Denmark in 2000. According to Professor Andersen, such “smart” punishments are cheaper and less intrusive in the life of the convicted person and his family than imprisonment, but are nevertheless hefty punishments. Electronic surveillance has proven to be an effective but at the same time unfair punishment in preventing recidivism. Evidently the same reasons that allow the convicted person to be suitable for punishment contribute to coping with life even after sentencing. Unfit people are required to serve their sentences in prison. However, Professor Andersen pointed out that imprisonment also has its advantages, and rehabilitation is possible.

In 2019, Denmark introduced a policy reform introducing court-like procedures for minors: Cases of young people aged 10 to 17 who have committed violent and other serious crimes are heard by juvenile crime boards, and a new juvenile sanction “youth service” was created. The reform has received strong cross-party support and aims to tackle serious crimes committed by young people as well as prevent young people from drifting into criminal careers. Before the reform, child welfare measures were used to react to offences committed by those aged 10–14, whilst offences committed by those aged 15–17 could also result in either conditional or unconditional incarceration. Senior Researcher Britt Østergaard Larsen from the Danish Centre for Social Research presented the impacts of the reform in the light of statistical data. In 2019–2021, a total of 2,555 cases ended up being handled by juvenile crime boards. The number of those aged 10–14 in the juvenile delinquency system has been substantial, about 400 cases per year, which is almost as high as that of those aged 15–17. On average, 600 cases per year were assigned to youth services.

The new youth service with its supervisory functions and interventions is a highly intensive sanction and binds a lot of young people's and parents' time. The municipalities are forced to organise services for young people and families that may have been difficult to obtain before the crime. Researcher Theresa Dyrvig Henriksen shared the results of interviews with children who participated in the hearings of the mandatory Criminal Offences Board. The children felt that the system was complex and that their own possibility of influence was non-existent. Youth service was seen as punishment rather than support.

Professor Tove Petterson from Stockholm University spoke about her research on Swedish institutions for offenders aged 15 to 17. Between 1999 and 2017, 70% of those placed in the facility had previous convictions. Sentences imposed to these institutions were mainly for serious violent crimes. Two years after sentencing, 60% of the young people had committed a new offence, but over time crime decreased. Those sentenced to a juvenile institution would need considerable support both during and after their sentence. The young people interviewed themselves estimated that the most important thing in avoiding crime would be to move elsewhere and leave their old friends, whilst education and employment were also regarded as important. The desire to stop committing crimes was great immediately after sentencing, and this time frame must be utilised. Professor Petterson stressed the need to see that these children are in danger rather than being dangerous children.

## The central importance of pre-trial detention must be seen in criminal policy

Much discussion was sparked by two interesting studies. The first was a study by Emelie Lönnqvist, a doctoral candidate at Stockholm University, on the use of pre-trial detention in the Nordic countries. During pre-trial detention, prisoners' rights are limited and participation in activities is not possible due to separation requirements, for example. From 1983 onwards, the use of pre-trial detention increased in all other countries with the initial exception of Finland. Since 2010, the trend has been declining in Norway, stable in Finland, and rising again in Denmark and Sweden after a short decline. Finland has the lowest use of pre-trial detention and Denmark the highest. However, there are major differences in its length: although Finland has the lowest number of people in pre-trial detention, it has been clearly longer than in other countries. An increasing proportion of the sentence is served in pre-trial detention. Ms Lönnqvist stressed the importance of keeping pre-trial detention as short as possible and taking better account of fundamental rights.

Along with her colleagues, Marina Hiller Foshaugen, a doctoral student at the University of Oslo, conducted a study on Google geotags estimates concerning Norwegian prisons between 2017 and 2021 (total 214). Most of the reviews reflected stereotypes about prison life such as "A five-star hotel with no escape", "A nice break, free accommodation and food". There were also seemingly genuine comments from former inmates and staff, and they were usually critiques of the system. This sort of debate also has its own significance in terms of criminal policy.



Maja Vestad, Marina Foshaugen and Rose Boyle (NO)  
University of Oslo

\*In the aftermath of the research seminar, Riikka Kostainen from the Finnish Ministry of Justice wrote the seminar report above, which was published both in Finnish and English.

# PhD Network Seminar

Oslo, Norway

The University of Oslo hosted the highly anticipated Nordic PhD seminar organized by the Nordic Research Council for Criminology (NSfK) on 9-10 November, 2023. Drawing inspiration from [the success of the 2022 event held in Lund](#), this year's seminar attracted [an unprecedented 40 PhD fellows](#) from Finland, Denmark, Sweden and Norway.

The 2023 seminar featured group discussions on contemporary criminological topics, theories, and research methodologies. Attendees engaged in lively discussions, interactive group work, and took advantage of numerous networking opportunities that may shape the future of criminological research in the Nordics.

Day 1 commenced with a warm welcome from Helene Gundhus, head of the Department of Criminology and Sociology of Law, and Heidi Mork Lomell, chair of NSfK. Gundhus highlighted the department's history, while Lomell emphasized the crucial role of research collaboration in fostering a community of Nordic criminologists.

Participants then engaged in focused group discussions, delving into the specifics of their individual PhD projects. These sessions provided a platform for in-depth exchanges of ideas and insights across countries, languages, and national criminal policies. A dinner at Sagene lunsjbar added a celebratory touch to the seminar's first day.

Day 2 saw participants splitting into groups to discuss methods, theories, and topics related to their projects. To finish, the hosts encouraged the exploration of potential themes for next year's seminar and other collaborative activities across the countries.

Marina Hiller Foshaugen, NSfK's contact secretary in Norway, emerged as a driving force behind the 2023 seminar. Her working group consisted of Elisabeth Neuhaus, Maja Vestad, Jan Christoffer Andersen, Rose Boyle, Pernille Nyvoll and Ingeborg Sandbukt. Having participated in the 2022 event, their dedication and planning were instrumental in ensuring the seminar becomes an annual fixture on the Nordic criminology calendar.



The two-day seminar is indeed quickly becoming a tradition for PhD fellows in the Nordics. Serving as a platform for networking and idea exchange, the event facilitates vibrant discussions within an informal setting, fostering collaboration among young criminology scholars from the region. We are grateful to the NSfK for funding this great networking opportunity and for their dedication to young scholars, and we look forward to next year's event!

*Maja Vestad (NO), on behalf of the working group*

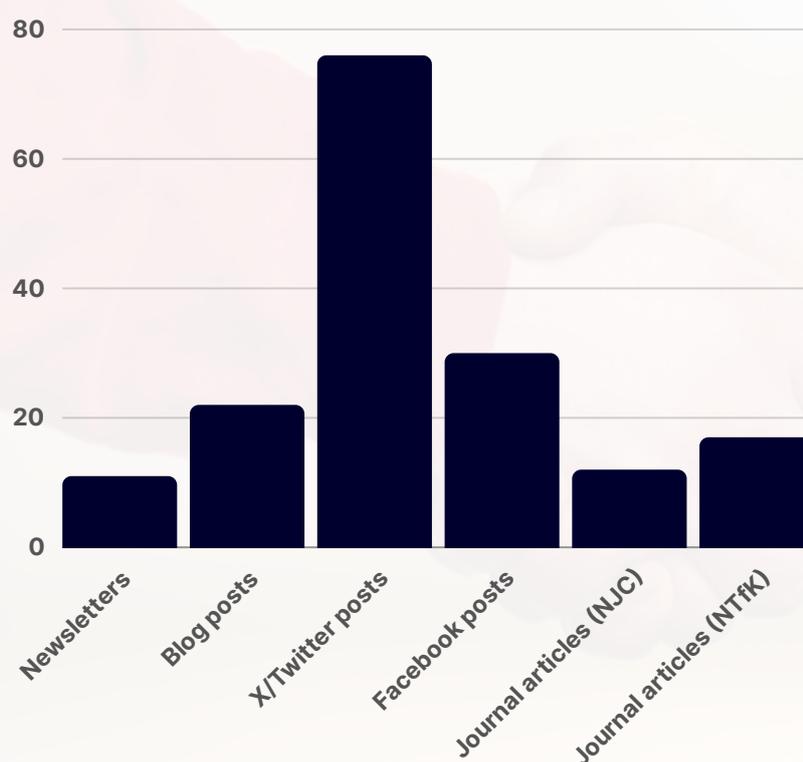
A close-up photograph of two hands shaking in a firm grip. The hand on the left is wearing a red sleeve, and the hand on the right is wearing a blue sleeve. The background is a blurred indoor setting with warm, yellowish light from ceiling fixtures.

# Communication and dissemination

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## Spreading criminological knowledge

A key responsibility of NSfK is to disseminate information and knowledge about Nordic criminology and criminal justice policy as well as about the activities of the organisation. The communication is first and foremost directed towards Nordic criminal justice researchers, governing bodies and relevant organisations, but also aims to reach the general public.



The main communication platform is nsfk.org. The website is updated monthly with news, blog posts, and newsletters. The organisation is also present on several social media platforms.

In addition, NSfK supports two Nordic journals, namely *Nordic Journal of Criminology* and *Nordisk Tidsskrift for Kriminalvidenskap*.

# Communication platforms

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## Newsletter - Nordic Criminology

The newsletter provides the recipients with information about the activities of NSfK and about international conferences and events, as well as reminders of application deadlines. In addition, the letter contains national developments relevant to criminologists and criminal justice professionals in the public and private sector in all of the member countries. The information is provided by the national Contact Secretaries.

The newsletter reaches a large audience and is sent out each month to 935 subscribers as of December 2023.



Sign up for the newsletter at [nsfk.org](https://nsfk.org).

## Blog posts

The Nordic Criminology Blog is a joint initiative of *Nordic Journal of Criminology* (NJC) and NSfK. Our ambition is to publish high quality insights into Nordic criminology. We encourage discussions on topics including – but not limited to – contemporary criminology, new empirical studies, criminal policy, crime prevention, and advances in criminological theory.

At least three blog posts are published on the website each month, and we have an open call for blog contributions.

## Social media

NSfK is present on three social media platforms: Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. In 2023, the organisation was the most active on Twitter and Facebook. On both platforms, the followers receive updates on the research funded by NSfK and general information about NSfK activities. This includes sharing the blog posts and content from the newsletter, and reminders of events and application deadlines.



### NSfKorg @X

The account currently has 897 followers and aims to reach academics and politicians.



### Nordic Research Council for Criminology @ Facebook

The account currently has 1002 followers and aims to reach practitioners and students.

## Blog post by Katrine Antonsen (NO)

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### The export of an 'exceptional' penal system

The Norwegian prison system has long been considered exceptional and one of the most humane in the world. The supposedly low reoffending rates, good material conditions, as well as the ambition to “turn prisoners into good neighbours” have attracted and astonished researchers, journalists and civil society organisations worldwide.

But what happens when one attempts to export Scandinavian penal practices to countries with completely different tolerances, societal conditions, and political contexts? Can the Scandinavian penal system be replicated outside of the Scandinavian welfare state? And what does Norway gain from such efforts?

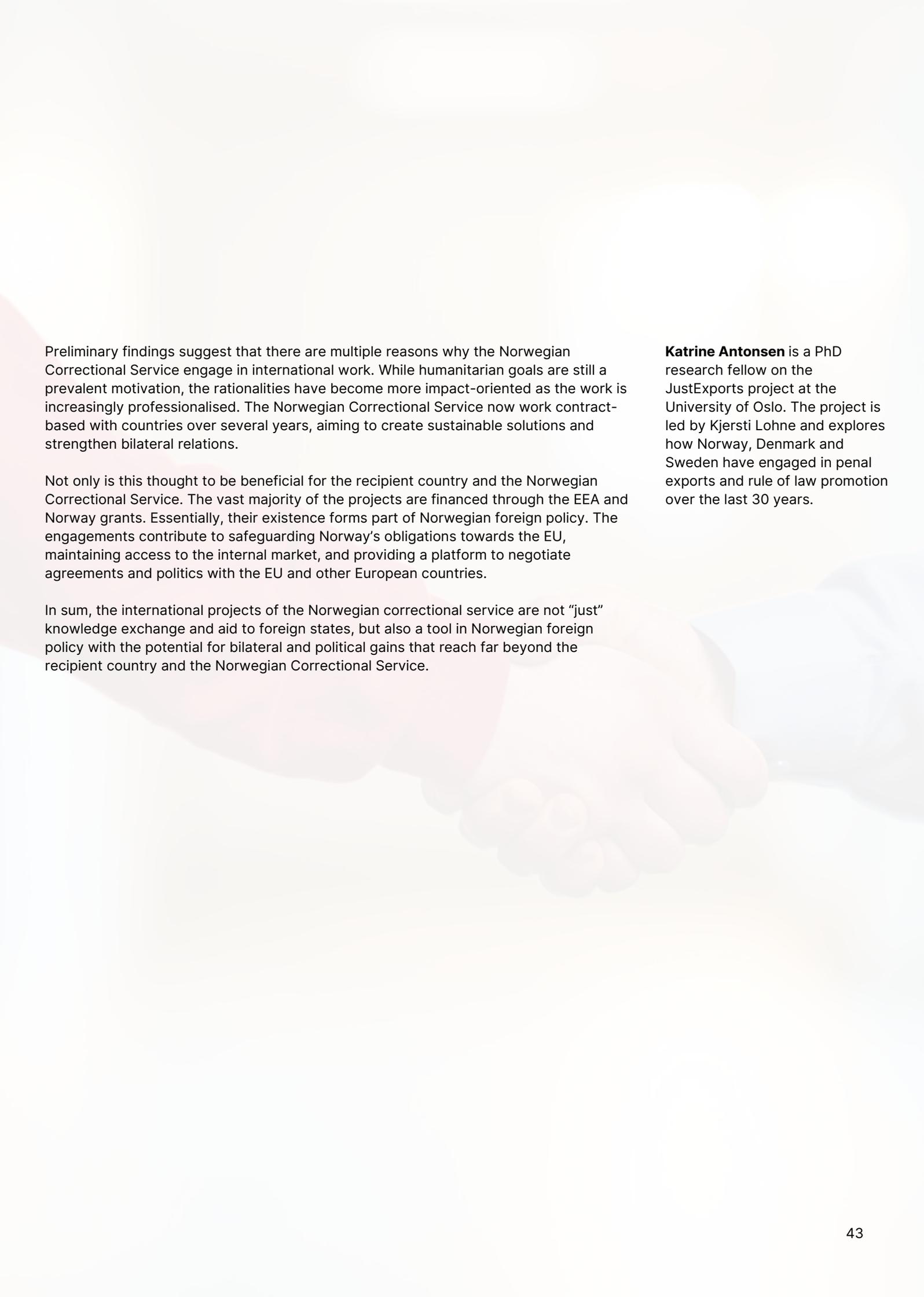
In the ongoing research project [JustExports](#), we explore the concept of Scandinavian penal exports, including how and why penal practices and values are “exported” to foreign countries through the international engagements of the Norwegian correctional services. Drawing on policy documents and interviews with key actors in the international projects, we investigate the mechanisms at play when Norwegian punishment ‘goes global.’

The Norwegian Correctional Service has been involved in international work for decades. To begin with, the engagements resembled more of traditional humanitarian aid, such as providing Russian prisons with blankets and food during the financial crisis in the 90s. Over the years and as the Norwegian prison system became a “global phenomenon”; the efforts have advanced significantly, in the objectives, scope, budgets and professionalism.

The projects of the Norwegian Correctional Service now involve comprehensive capacity building in several Eastern European countries and American states. The projects include technical training and modernising of IT infrastructure, education on the Nordic penal values, and the building and rehabilitation of an extensive number of prisons. For example, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs aimed to finance the building or upgrading of about 4000 prison beds through the current EEA programme period alone, which equals more than the total number of prison cells in Norway.



Katrine Antonsen



Preliminary findings suggest that there are multiple reasons why the Norwegian Correctional Service engage in international work. While humanitarian goals are still a prevalent motivation, the rationalities have become more impact-oriented as the work is increasingly professionalised. The Norwegian Correctional Service now work contract-based with countries over several years, aiming to create sustainable solutions and strengthen bilateral relations.

Not only is this thought to be beneficial for the recipient country and the Norwegian Correctional Service. The vast majority of the projects are financed through the EEA and Norway grants. Essentially, their existence forms part of Norwegian foreign policy. The engagements contribute to safeguarding Norway's obligations towards the EU, maintaining access to the internal market, and providing a platform to negotiate agreements and politics with the EU and other European countries.

In sum, the international projects of the Norwegian correctional service are not “just” knowledge exchange and aid to foreign states, but also a tool in Norwegian foreign policy with the potential for bilateral and political gains that reach far beyond the recipient country and the Norwegian Correctional Service.

**Katrine Antonsen** is a PhD research fellow on the JustExports project at the University of Oslo. The project is led by Kjersti Lohne and explores how Norway, Denmark and Sweden have engaged in penal exports and rule of law promotion over the last 30 years.

# Blog post by Sofie Amalie Poulsen, Anders Lachenmeier, and Anna Thomsen (DK)

## Unfulfilled educational potential in Danish prisons

Incarcerated people in Danish prisons and remand prisons are requesting better educational options. However, the lack of educational options – especially above ground school level – place limitations on meeting the educational requests of the incarcerated people, leaving a large unfulfilled educational potential in Danish prisons.

This is one of the major conclusions of the recently published report “Uddannelse til indsatte” (“Education for incarcerated people”) by the educational think tank Perspektiv. 39,4 % of all incarcerated people in Danish prisons and remand prisons participated in the research that was conducted in 2022 constitutes the basis for this report. The report is based on 1730 survey responses across 29 prisons and remand prisons and 41 interviews, and it presents the requests, barriers, experiences, motivations, critiques and thoughts concerning education from the point of view of the incarcerated people.

When asking the incarcerated people who are not currently participating in education about their educational interest, 78,4 % expresses that they would like to participate in education. Furthermore, there is a discrepancy between the requested and the current ongoing types of education. Vocational education and secondary school are the two most frequently requested types of education. The most frequent ongoing types of education are ground school level even though 86,0 % of the incarcerated people report that they have finished ground school.

The report also shows some central motivational factors among the incarcerated people for participating in education, such as seeing education as a meaningful way of spending time or to acquire skills and attributes that are useful after release. When elaborating on this forward-looking dimension it is connected to a wish for being active and contributing members of society. As a part of this, many incarcerated people request types of education that can qualify them for a job after release such as vocational and higher education. These two types of education are some of the least ongoing types of educations inside the Danish prisons.



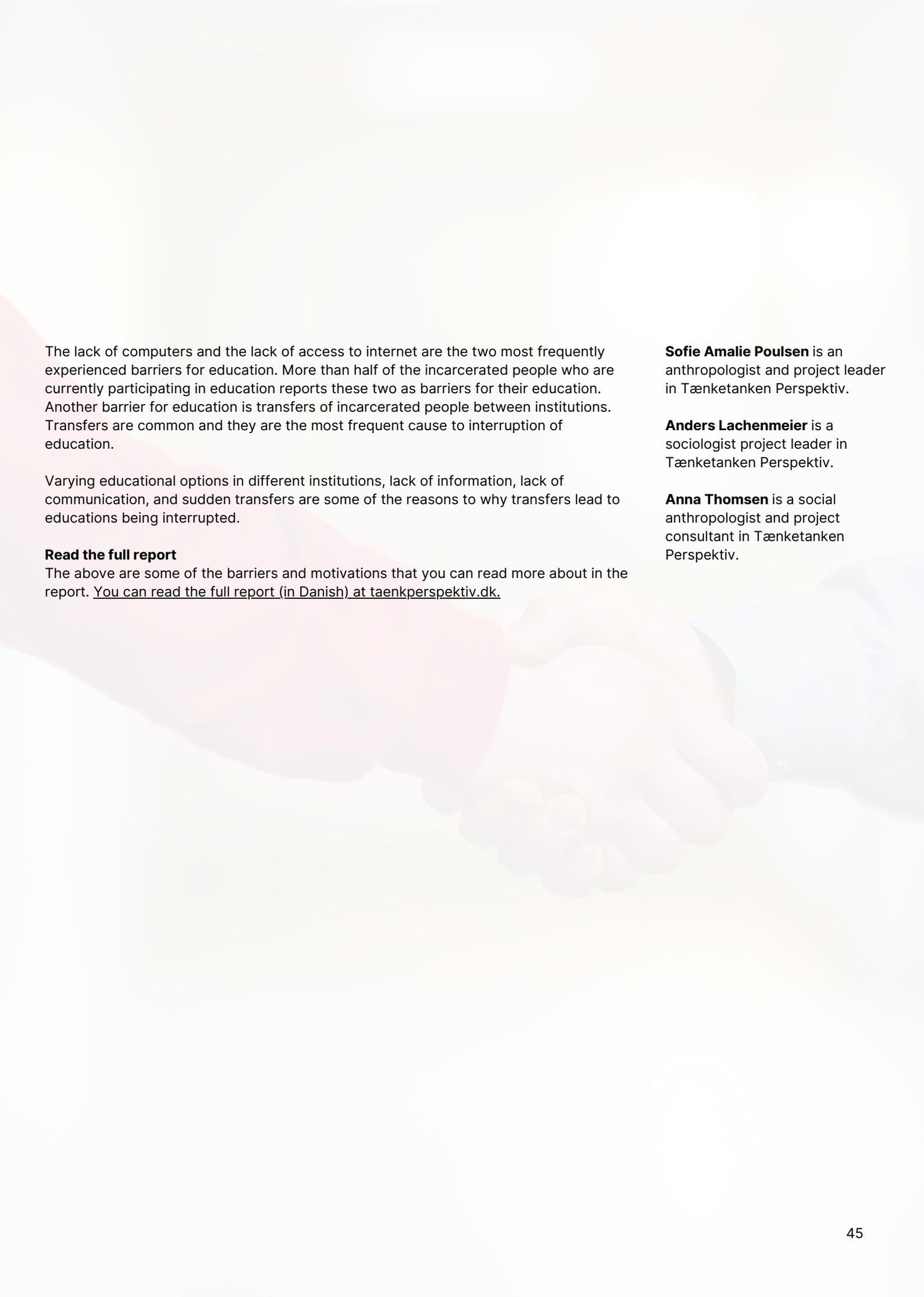
Sofie Amalie Poulsen



Anders Lachenmeier



Anna Thomsen



The lack of computers and the lack of access to internet are the two most frequently experienced barriers for education. More than half of the incarcerated people who are currently participating in education reports these two as barriers for their education. Another barrier for education is transfers of incarcerated people between institutions. Transfers are common and they are the most frequent cause to interruption of education.

Varying educational options in different institutions, lack of information, lack of communication, and sudden transfers are some of the reasons to why transfers lead to educations being interrupted.

**Read the full report**

The above are some of the barriers and motivations that you can read more about in the report. [You can read the full report \(in Danish\) at taenkperspektiv.dk.](http://taenkperspektiv.dk)

**Sofie Amalie Poulsen** is an anthropologist and project leader in Tænketanken Perspektiv.

**Anders Lachenmeier** is a sociologist project leader in Tænketanken Perspektiv.

**Anna Thomsen** is a social anthropologist and project consultant in Tænketanken Perspektiv.

# Nordic Journal of Criminology

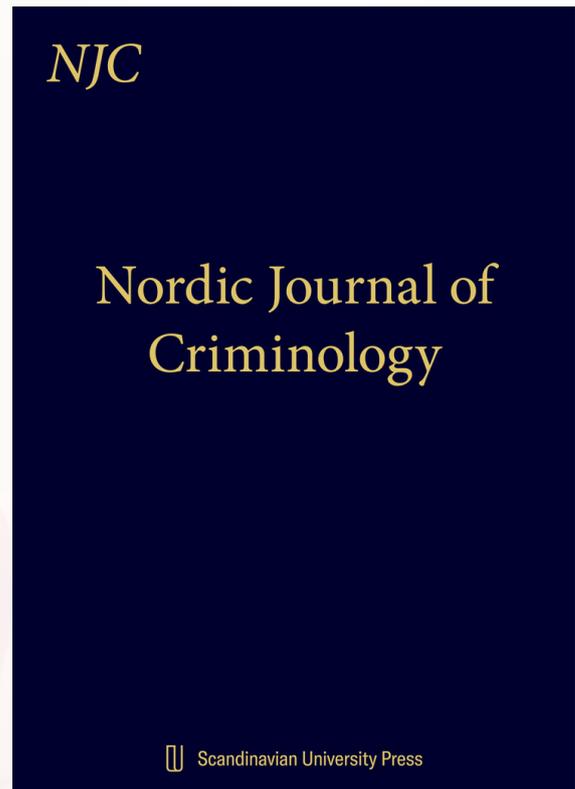
*Nordic Journal of Criminology* (NJC) is an international, peer-reviewed journal publishing original research articles in the field of criminology and crime prevention.

The journal provides a forum for criminological research across a wide range of disciplines and methodologies. Priority is given to research with a Nordic relevance, such as studies based on Nordic data.

Scandinavian University Press offers diamond open access, meaning that all journal content is published online with immediate free access. NJC articles were from 2023 solely published online. Moreover, old NJC articles can now be found for free on [the new website](#): no less than 24 years of back issues available after a few clicks.

## Highlights and key figures

- NJC aims for a fast and thorough feedback. In 2023 the average number of days that articles was in the hands of reviewers was 26 days.
- In 2023 NJC published 12 articles.
- The number of followers on X has grown from 700 in 2019 to 3035 in 2023.
- During 2023, a total of 22 blog posts were written.



# Nordic Journal of Criminology provides free access to 24 years of back issues

**The Nordic Research Council for Criminology has taken a monumental step** towards promoting accessibility and knowledge sharing of Nordic criminology by making 24 years of back issues of our journal open access. This move comes as a part of Nordic Journal of Criminology's transition to the Scandinavian University Press.

For decades, the Nordic Journal of Criminology and its predecessors have published pioneering research addressing the complexities of crime and criminal justice. In a move that reflects the evolving landscape of academic publishing, the journal has in 2023 found a new home at the Scandinavian University Press (Universitetsforlaget), a publisher with a commitment to open access principles. The released archive, spanning the years 2000–2023, is now available to scholars, students, and the public free of charge.

## **Sébastien Tutenges, Editor-in-Chief of NJC, explains:**

'The archive is a treasure trove of criminological insight. It contains a wealth of studies that can help us understand not only how crime and crime control looked like in the Nordics in the past but also how we can become better at tackling the problems facing us today. Sexual violence, drug dealing, gun violence, you name it! All these social problems and many more are thoroughly dealt with in the now freely available back issues of NJC.'

## **Continuing a proud heritage**

The earliest incarnation of the NJC was the book series Scandinavian Studies in Criminology, which ran from 1965 to 1999. In 2000 the Journal of Scandinavian Studies in Criminology and Crime Prevention was established, and in 2019, the journal changed its name to Nordic Journal of Criminology.

The journal's move to open access was motivated by a desire to expand the reach and impact of NJC, enabling a broader audience to engage with its high-quality research. The change in publishing model will not only broaden NJC's readership, but also enhance its impact and relevance.



Photo: [C M](#) via [Unsplash](#)

Heidi Mork Lomell, Council Chair of the Nordic Research Council for Criminology, elaborates:

'The purpose of NSfK is to further criminological research within our member countries and advise the Nordic governments and the Nordic Council on issues related to criminology and crime prevention. Making our publications available and free of charge is a prerequisite to fulfil this purpose.'

This milestone emphasizes NSfK's dedication to expanding the accessibility and impact of criminological research, making our journal an essential hub for researchers, policymakers, and the general public in the Nordics.

[The full NJC archive can be found here.](#)

## Interview: Winner of the NJC Best Article Prize 2022

The NJC Best Article Prize is awarded annually for the best article published in the previous year's volume of NJC.

The prize recognises excellent research and scholarship that engages with current and emerging issues in Nordic criminology.

Thomas Ugelvik was the author of the award-winning article of 2022:

“Three burglars, a friendly police inspector, and a vegetarian fox: Scandinavian exceptionalism, children’s literature, and desistance-conducive cultures”.

**Congratulations, Thomas! In the article you bring up two children’s books to say something about criminology. What is this about and what made you write this particular text?**

– Many thanks, I was very pleased to learn that my article had won the NJC best article prize. In a sense, a need to write this article grew in me slowly and over several years as I read these books to my children, again and again, sometimes multiple times in a single day. We’re talking about two absolute classics of Norwegian children’s literature, Claus Climbermouse and the other animals in the Huckybucky Forest and When the Robbers came to Cardamom Town, both written and illustrated by Thorbjørn Egner in the 1950s, and both very much alive and important parts of Norwegian culture to this day.

– Small children like repetition a lot, and after reading a book let’s say more than 20 times, one’s mind starts to wander a bit. And as I sat there reading to them, I started thinking about how both these books are stories of desistance from crime; about how bad people might, if given a second, or third, or fourth chance, change and become valued members of their local communities. In Huckybucky, Marvin Fox starts out as a homicidal highwayman and bully and ends up as a hero after being instrumental in the rescue of little Bruin Bear. In the beginning of Cardamom Town, the three robbers are living parasitically off the inhabitants of Cardamom, stealing what they want with impunity. At the end, after a short stint in prison and a bit of heroism, they are fully integrated members of the village community. And I started to think about what it says about Norwegian society that these two desistance stories are so popular, 60–70 years after their publication. This curiosity led me to write the article.



Illustration: Torbjørn Egner and Cappelen Damm

**The nominees for the Best Article Prize of 2023 are:**

- Thomas Friis Søgaaard & Marie Højlund Bræmer: *Law-abiding criminals: Young adults’ drift into and out of recreational drug sales.*
- Anja Emilie Kruse, Hannah Helseth, & Sibel Korkmaz. *Callous Lovers and Frightening Victims: How emotional contradictions affect young people’s navigation of sexually abusive relationships.*
- Emelí Lönnqvist: *Prisoners of process: The development of remand prisoner rates in the Nordic countries*



Illustration: Torbjørn Egner and Cappelen Damm

# Nordisk Tidsskrift for Kriminalvidenskab

*Nordisk Tidsskrift for Kriminalvidenskab* (NTfK) is a scientific journal aimed at researchers and other professionals with an interest in criminal law or criminological subjects.

NTfK also fulfils a criminal policy function in a common Nordic context. NTfK publish in Danish, Norwegian, Swedish and English languages. NSfK has supported the journal as well as the research providing its content for years. NSfK became co-owner of NTfK in 2022.

The journal's content since 1949 can now be accessed through the [online archive](#) of NTfK. In 2023, the journal published 17 articles.

**Did you know that NTfK is one of the oldest and most prestigious Nordic and international journals within criminal justice and criminological studies?**

NTfK has been published under the name *Nordisk Tidsskrift for Kriminalvidenskab* since 1949. In the period 1913 -1948 the journal was published under the name *Nordisk Tidsskrift for Strafferet*.

In 1949 the name was changed into *Nordisk Tidsskrift for Kriminalvidenskab*. And since then NTfK has been the member-journal for all Nordic Associations for Criminalists.

However, the journal has an even longer history starting in 1878 with *Nordisk Tidsskrift for Fængselsvæsen og praktisk Strafferet*, which was published up til 1912 (for a period under the more precise and detailed name: *Nordisk Tidsskrift for Fængselsvæsen og øvrige penitentiære Institutioner: Organ for den nordiska Penitentiærföreningen*).





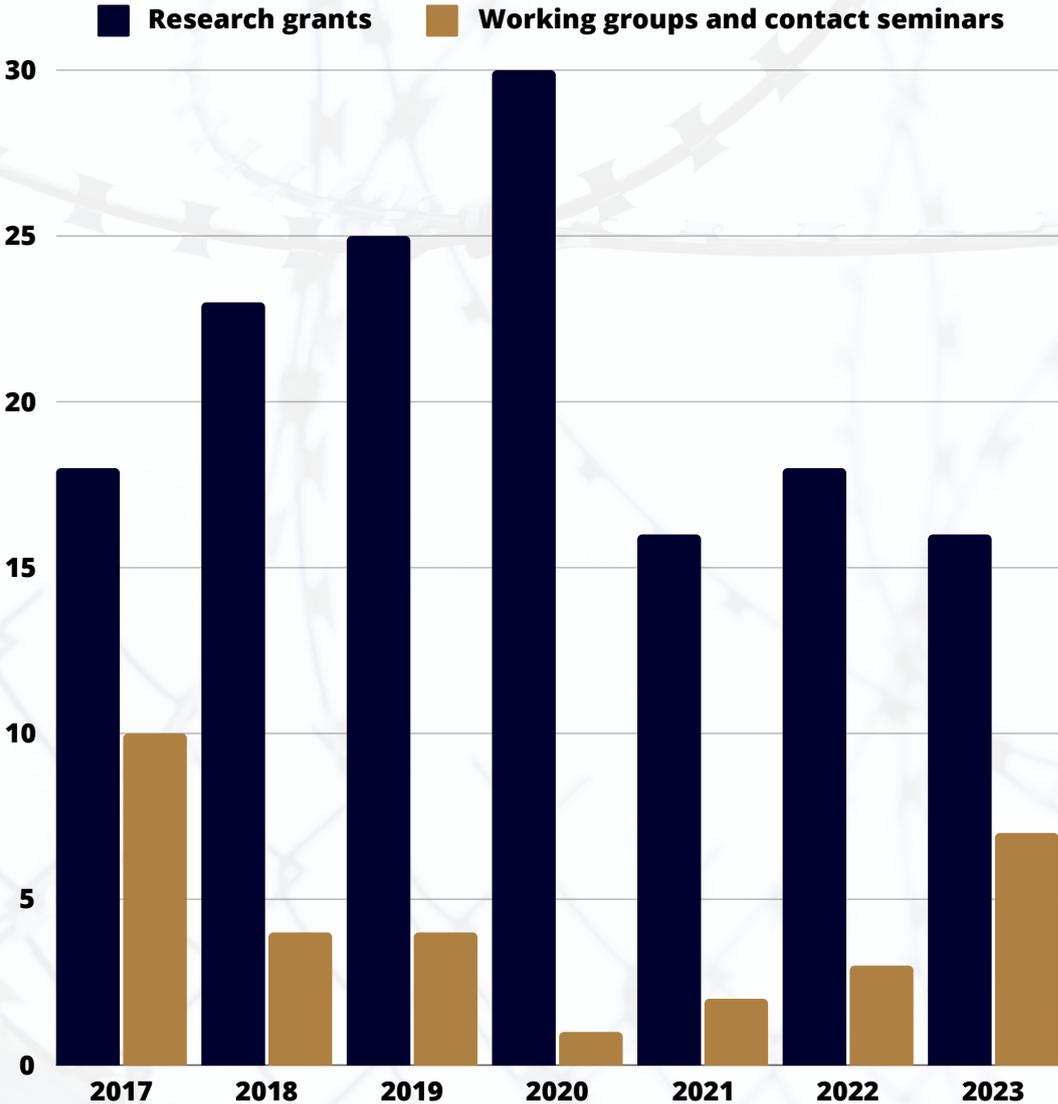
# Facts and figures

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### **Total amount granted 2017–2023**

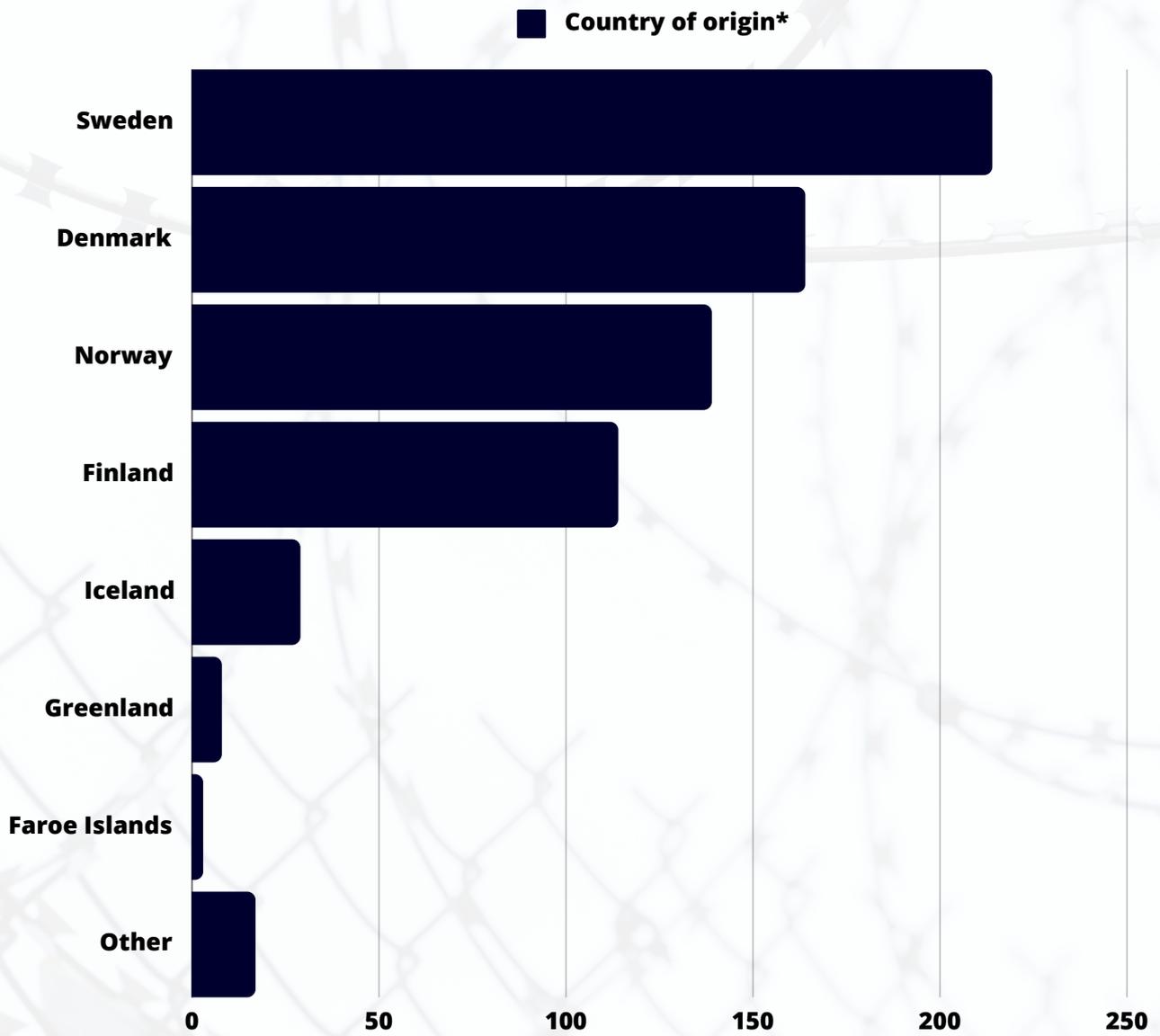
Research grants: approx.:	30,000,000 NOK to a total of 36 projects
Travel grants:	800,000 NOK for a total of 106 trips
Working groups/contact seminars:	1,800,000 NOK to a total of 25 WG/CS

# Applications - 2017-2023



\*The total number of applications received, 2017–2023.

## Applications by country of origin - 2017-2023



\*All application types, 2017-2023.

# Financial statements

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# NSfK accounts 2023 (NOK)

	Budget 2023	Accounts 2023
<b>Incoming Balance</b>	<b>5 391 617</b>	<b>5 391 617</b>
Incoming balance NSfK*	5 077 796	5 077 796
Incoming balance NTFK	313 821	313 821
<b>Income</b>	<b>5 632 975</b>	<b>5 589 441</b>
Government contributions	5 632 975	5 632 976
<b>Expenses</b>	<b>7 296 864</b>	<b>8 030 306</b>
<b>Grants</b>	<b>4 000 000</b>	<b>4 263 608</b>
Research Grants (Call)	3 300 000	4 168 115
Working Groups (Call)* invoices received 2024	300 000	
Working groups/Contact Seminars (Council)	300 000	46 005
Travel Grants	100 000	49 488
<b>Annual meetings</b>	<b>680 000</b>	<b>1 089 005</b>
Council meeting	80 000	57 432
Research seminar	600 000	1 031 573
<b>Administration</b>	<b>1 298 761</b>	<b>1 512 489</b>
Chair	329 292	405 101
Secretariat *	919 469	1 103 271
Administration - operating costs	50 000	4 117
<b>Communication</b>	<b>305 000</b>	<b>268 882</b>
Web pages, Email services & Grant application portal	80 000	122 694
Contact secretaries	125 000	125 731
Other communication costs	100 000	20 457
<b>Other Costs</b>	<b>300 000</b>	<b>192 991</b>
PhD meeting	200 000	156 735
Establish and prepare new secretariat		
Scandinavian Studies in Criminology- Digitazation and OA		
<b>NJC</b>	<b>623 103</b>	<b>613 331</b>
Publishing fee (yearly cost + language editing) NJC	326 875	326 875
Editor-in-Chief (Tutenges) NJC	162 478	162 480
Editorial assistant / Co-Editor (Boethius) NJC	83 750	83 351
<b>NTfK * see separate budget</b>	<b>90 000</b>	<b>90 000</b>
NSfK contribution to NTFK	90 000	90 000
<b>Balance</b>	<b>3 727 728</b>	<b>2 950 752</b>

\* Error in budget for 2023. In 2022 the cost was 1 020 689, budget should have been 1 120 000 same as budget 2022 and 2024.

\* Error in budget for 2023, Incoming balance for NTFK included twice.



