

# PUNISHMENT AND WELFARE: CORRECTIONS IN NORWAY

Thomas Ugelvik

Professor

Department of Criminology and Sociology of Law

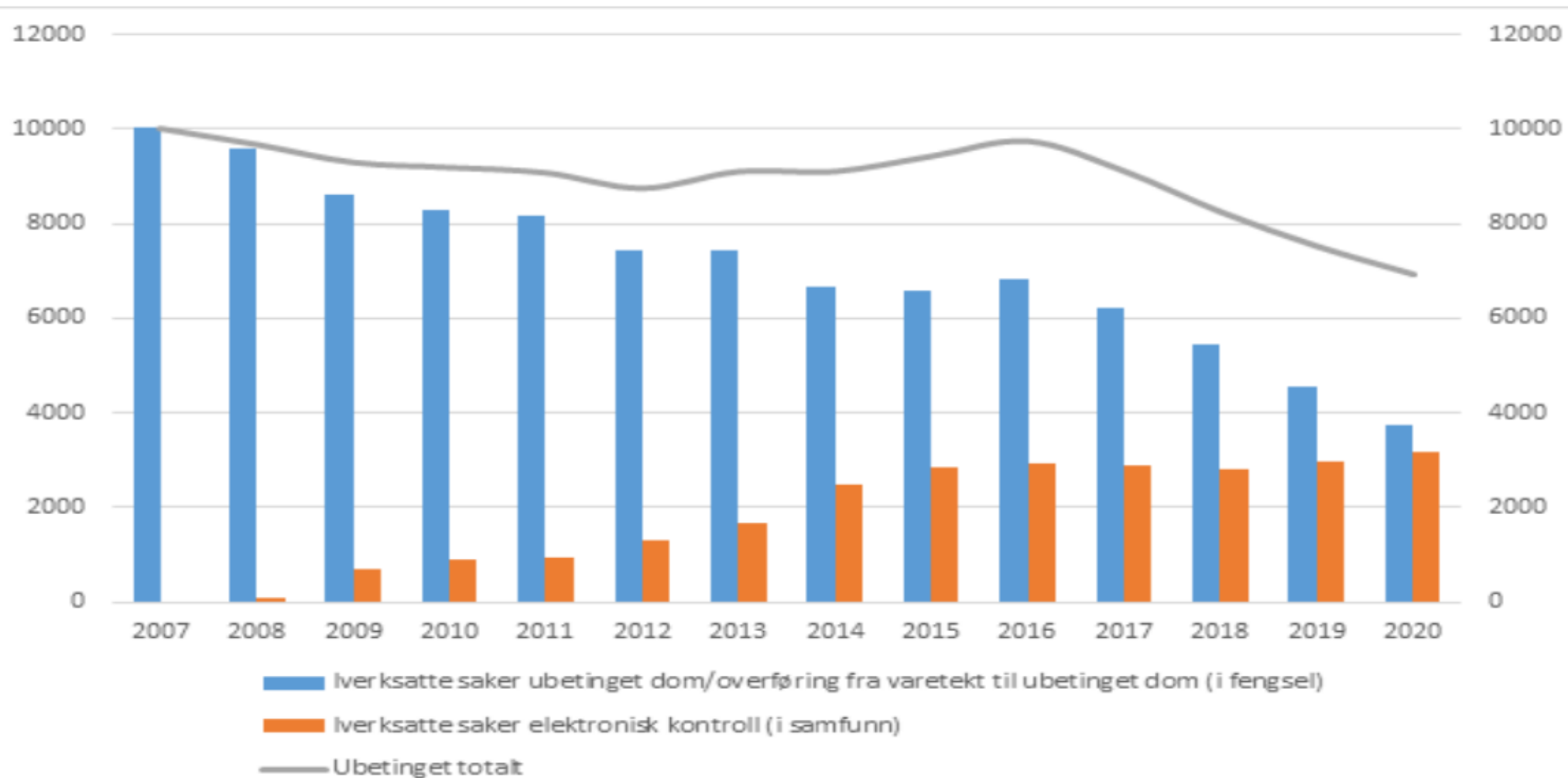
University of Oslo

## KEY FIGURES

- Total population: 5,4 mill
- March 2022: 3169 total prisoners; 58 prisons; (33 administrative units)
  - 70 % high security
  - 20 % on remand (pre-trial)
  - 24 % foreign national citizens
  - 5,6 % women
  - 146 individuals on preventive detention
  - 6 individuals aged 15-17
  - Average system capacity: 86.1 %

<b>Year</b>	<b>Prison population total</b>	<b>Prison population rate (prisoners per 100 000 inhabitants)</b>	<b>Prisoners – new arrivals to prison throughout the year</b>
<b>2000</b>	2 548	57	
<b>2002</b>	2 832	62	
<b>2004</b>	3 028	66	
<b>2006</b>	3 250	70	12 078
<b>2008</b>	3 387	71	12 648
<b>2010</b>	3 624	74	11 678
<b>2012</b>	3 591	72	10 306
<b>2014</b>	3 717	72	8 926
<b>2016</b>	3 850	73	9 808
<b>2018</b>	3 425	65	7 248
<b>2021</b>	2 905	54	

**Sources: Prison population totals and rates taken from World Prison Brief ([prisonstudies.org](https://www.prisonstudies.org)), new arrivals taken from Prison and Probation Service annual reports ([kriminalomsorgen.no](https://www.kriminalomsorgen.no)).**



# PRISON SENTENCE LENGTH

- Average time spent in prison on a prison verdict: 173 days (2016, has gone up from 90-120-140)

Of all prisoners released in 2016:

- 24 % (1537) released within 30 days
- 57 % (3671) released within 90 days
- 72 % (4623) released within 6 days
- 87 % (5619) released within one year
- 12 % (759) released after 1 to 5 years
- 0,7 % (43) released after 5 to 10 years
- 5 individuals released after 10 to 15 years

# HOW EXCEPTIONAL ARE NORWEGIAN PRISONS?

Pratt (2008): Scandinavian exceptionalism 1.0:

- Scandinavian prisons and «anglophone cluster»: Systematic differences between *imprisonment rates*
- Scandinavian prisons and «anglophone cluster»: Systematic differences between prison *conditions*

Pratt and Eriksson (2013): Scandinavian exceptionalism 2.0:

- Nordic prisons tend to be smaller
- officer/inmate relations are better and more egalitarian
- the quality of prison life is better (the quality of the food provided, the hygienic conditions, the amount of personal space and the quality of visiting arrangements are all superior in the Nordic prisons)
- prison officers are better trained
- prisoners in the Nordic countries are more likely to be involved in education or vocational training programmes that are more often directed at preparing them for life after release.

## PRATT: SCANDI EXCEPTIONALISM

1. Punishment oriented prisons/systems: High imprisonment rate, focus on security and coercion
2. Welfare oriented prisons/systems: Lower imprisonment rate, focus on support, change, rehabilitation and return to society

## NUANCE...

- There are substantial differences between scandinavian prisons.
- There may be substantial differences between prison units even within a single prison
- The Scandi exceptionalism model is necessarily a model with many exceptions
- Perhaps it makes sense to say that Scandinavian prisons in general are more welfare oriented and prisons within the «anglophone cluster» are more punishment oriented?



# WELFARE ORIENTED PUNISHMENT

- The principle of normality
  - Rights
  - «Normal lives»
- The importation model
  - Free access to universal welfare services, including
    - Education
    - Healthcare
    - Cultural service (public library)
    - Social services (housing, work, etc)

## SMITH AND UGELVIK: A THIRD OPTION

1. Punishment oriented prisons/systems: High imprisonment rate, focus on security and coercion
2. Punishment/welfare hybrid: Focus on punishment as an arena for welfare interventions, welfare oriented but elements of both coercion and governance through incentives. Paternalism.
3. Welfare oriented prisons/systems: Lower imprisonment rate, focus on support, change, rehabilitation and return to society