How Far does Prison Punishment Extend? Re-entry Processes in the Digitalised Society

Gudrun Brottveit[1] · Elisabeth Fransson[2,3]

Abstract

This article questions how far punishment extends in a digitalised society, focusing on the complexities in relation to prison release and re-entry processes for people who have served a long prison sentence. Drawing on Gilles Deleuze's concept of "societies of control" and Nils Christie's concepts of "dense and loose societies," the article discusses re-entry within the context of the Norwegian digitalised society. Through person-centred, multi-site field-work, the analysis identifies three types of complexities regarding re-entry processes. The first is how small and unforeseen events can reset the time of release from prison. The second is how digital gatekeepers in public welfare services create obstacles in the re-entry process. The third is how the possibility of online tracking and monitoring provides new forms of social control and pain after release, which creates an environment where a person's criminal past affects his or her everyday life. This article challenges binary scientific understandings between the inside and the outside of prison and provides insights into the processes of how digital punishment and new forms of control occur in digitalised society. In this way, the article analytically contributes to the discussion of how the normative demand of being a free person after completing sentences in Norwegian criminal policy has been further complicated in a digitalised society.

✉ Gudrun Brottveit
   gudrunbr@hiof.no

✉ Elisabeth Fransson
   Elisabeth.fransson@vid.no

1   Departement of Welfare, Management and Organisation, Faculty of Health, Welfare and Organization, Østfold University College, P.O. Box 700, 1757 Halden, Norway

2   Faculty of Social Studies, VID Specialized University, Diakonveien 14, 0370 Oslo, Norway

3   University College of Norwegian Correctional Service (KRUS), Solheimsgata 21, 2001 Lillestrøm, Norway

Scientific Understandings of Re-entry Processes in Penology—An Introduction

Re-entry processes[1] may be studied from various scientific approaches. In this chapter, re-entry processes will be connected to penology. Penology comes from the Latin word *poena*, which means "to punish," and from the Greek suffix *logia*, which means "the study of." Therefore, penology means the study of punishment. This research field is internationally defined as a subcomponent within criminology; in Norway, penology is connected to law and sociology.[2] Penology has been studied in various academic disciplines and represents different scientific epistemologies and methodologies across various fields of research. It is important to distinguish between research traditions. In research traditions with roots in empiricism, it is important to identify groups of criminals, make risk assessments, and provide research-based tools related to forecast and recidivism tools.[3] Other types of research traditions are rooted in hermeneutics and various forms of social constructivist positions and studies that are inspired by poststructuralism and posthumanism. The latter two are more social-philosophical and oriented towards social materiality and the body. They are concerned with examining spaces of control and punishment in society and how various forms of prison architecture, design and affect bodies (Moran, 2015; Fransson and Brottveit 2015; Brottveit 2018; Fransson et al., 2018; Turner and Knight, 2019; Moran et al., 2023; Johnsen et al., 2023). Drake et al. (2015) characterises the development within the penological research field below:

> "After a long period in which the field of penological research internationally was characterized by a quantitative structure, there have recently been key contributions which in turn highlight qualitative penological research. Here, it is especially encouraged to go in depth on challenges and insights related to ethnographic prison research and develop a humanist-oriented ethnography". (Drake et al. 2015).

Release from prison is connected to concepts such as re-integration, resettlement, gap zones, or desistance. These concepts share one common problem: a binary understanding between the inside and the outside of the prison, or what Parker (2009:584) calls the "seductive charm of the border." Sharp border constructions may lose the link between the individual and society in instances regarding complexities in relation to border work such as re-entry into the digitalised society. In *The Prison Boundary*, Turner (2016) underlines that boundaries can be understood both as a hard line and a symbolic construction relating to everyday border work (Turner 2016: 54). In this article, we are inspired by elements in this literature regarding "inside", "outside" and "everyday border work".[4]

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[1] We use the term re-entry processes rather than re-integration and resettlement. This is to underline that people may not have been integrated or settled before they were imprisoned. Additionally, moving out of prison is a process and a person's position after imprisonment is not the same as before. In this article, we focus on the transition out of prison and the challenges related to the actual release and the time immediately after.

[2] Aubert (1981) *Sosiologi*. Oslo: Universitetsforlaget.

[3] Koehler, Rothschild-Elyassi & Simon (2018) https://doi.org/10.1093/OBO/9780195396607-0245

[4] See also Fransson & Giofrè in Turner (2016).

The digital revolution has transformed society (Grabosky and Smith 1998; Giddens and Sutton 2017), introducing new technologies in prisons,[5] streamlining supervisory probation routines (Graef 2001), and making it even easier to check people's criminal history (Corda 2016). This digital development has led to unintended consequences where criminal records can be traced and becomes an important part of a person's public identity that is visible to potential employers, landlords, neighbours, and partners (Corda 2016: 2–3). This makes it important to study symbolic prison borders, such as how far the prison reaches in the digitalised society and how it affects the body.

In this article, we study re-entry processes inspired by the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze`s (1925–1995) "Postscript on the Societies of Control" (1992) and the Norwegian criminologist Nils Christie's (1928–2015) theories of control in "dense" and "loose" societies (1977, 1981, 1982). Deleuze's analysis of the society of control (1992), as a form of fragmented power of control, can be positioned within a post humanistic scientific approach. We regard Christie's control theories (1977, 1981, 1982) as examples of hermeneutical and humanistic phenomenological knowledge positions. Together, Deleuze and Christie's theories provide fruitful concepts and refreshing perspectives of re-entry processes in the digitalised society.

Re-entry and Punishment Inspired by Gilles Deleuze and Nils Christie

In the essay, "Postscript on the Societies of Control," Deleuze (1992) suggests that we have gradually moved from a disciplinary society, where the human body was the subject of surveillance and from an individualising form of disciplinary power (see Foucault 1977) towards a society of control. The powers of control appear fragmented and divisive in the sense of breaking down and dividing individuals into smaller and adjustable parts, which may include several properties that are possible to observe and control separately, such as:

> "(…) modulation, like a self-deforming cast that will continuously change from one moment to the other, or like a sieve whose mesh will transmute from point to point" (Deleuze 1992:4).

Deleuze (1992) argues that confinement, which constitutes the core of disciplinary power, has been replaced by a set of new techniques that constantly adapt to societal conditions and goals and form an important foundation in the control-power. The power of control differs from disciplinary power in that it is not individual-oriented but fragmented, continuous, and independent of time and space:

> "(...) what is important is no longer either a signature or a number, but a code: the code is a password, while on the other hand disciplinary societies are regulated by watchwords (as much from the point of view of integration as from that of resistance). The numerical language of control is made of codes that mark access to information or reject it. We no longer find ourselves dealing with the mass/individual pair. Individuals have become "dividuals," and masses, samples, data, markets, or "banks." (Deleuze 1992: 5).

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[5] https://www.kriminalomsorgen.no/getfile.php/4888894.823.ijuubwissujnwu/KDI_strategibrosjyre_TRYKK_FINAL2_Engelsk.pdf

Seen from a criminological perspective, Deleuze's concept of "societies of control" illustrates societies where control exercised by humans has increasingly been replaced by newer codes and forms of registration, for example, through computers or other technological devices (Deleuze 1992). This means that persons can be tracked and monitored digitally nearly anywhere and at any time. Information that they have given in one context can be stored and become relevant in another setting.

While Deleuze is oriented towards control in post-modern society, where relations between bodies, both humans and non-human bodies, are the focus, Christie approaches social control from a humanistic criminological perspective where the person is at the centre. However, even in putting people in the centre, Christies' analytical approach in his philosophy of control is that every society has its own types of crime and ways to control, punish, and inflict pain on people. He distinguishes between "dense" and "loose" societies and their various forms of social control and conflict resolution models (Christie 1977, 1981, 1982).

An example of a dense society is a small town or a settlement where people are close, dependent, and visible to each other. The social control exercised between people in dense societies is primary or also referred to as informal control. The ideal model of a dense society is a society where people try to find common solutions to problems without involving professionals. A loose society, on the other hand, can be exemplified as a modern society, such as a large city. In a loose society, people do not know their neighbours and live more disconnected and independently of each other and conflicts are brought out of their contexts and solved by professionals. Christie (1982: 29) denotes this as secondary or formal control because it is administered and carried out by professionals who are not part of the conflict themselves. A key point in Christie's (1982) theory of the dense society is precisely that personal knowledge, visibility, closeness, and interdependence between people can more easily facilitate common solutions and prevent people from controlling each other in negative ways. Such a conflict resolution model presupposes that mutual recognition and respect exist and that there are no major formal or informal inequalities of power between the members of a society. In loose societies, where people live more separately from each other, the threshold for interpersonal conflict resolution is higher, and the limit to inflicting pain on each other is lower (Christie 1972). Both Deleuze's theory of control societies and Christie's philosophy of control and punishment in dense and loose societies have been fruitful in developing new ways of understanding the pain and complexities connected to prison release and re-entry processes in the digitalised society.

A Person-Centred, Multi-Sited Fieldwork

We followed Knut's re-entry process (from 2013 until 2020) from high security prison to a low security prison, into transitional residence, back to a high security prison and then outside prison as a "free man." Visiting and following Knut over seven years gave us unique access to study how Knut crossed multiple prison borders, such as high and low security, the border between the inside and outside of the prison, and blurred boundaries regarding how he lives his everyday life as "a free man" but struggles with his former position as a prisoner. We classify the method as person-centred, multi-sited fieldwork (Bartoszko 2021) since we followed Knut across various sites inside and outside of prisons and in various social arenas, such as seminars and co-teachings.

Through meetings, telephone calls, and access to his diary, we followed his ups and downs within prisons, his fear for sanctions, and his encounter with working life and gained insight into his pain and silence during a period when he was too sick to speak with us. Through our meetings with Knut, we were introduced to and had interviews with one of his teachers and people in a voluntary organisation that became important to him in his re-entry process. We attended seminars together and co-taught with Knut about his experiences from prison life. After release, Knut was open in speaking about his dilemmas, his problems in seeking employment, and issues in interpersonal relationships. He showed us texts and letters and talked about his experiences in meeting with social workers. The field-work mirrored various contextual frames of how re-entry processes are closely related to other people and prevailing discourses through how ex-prisoners are understood in various contexts (see also Bartoszko 2021: 119).

The analytical topics that are reflected in this article have grown over time through long-lasting contact with Knut and repeated readings of his texts. A weakness in this article is that its empirical data are exclusively based on our contact and relation to Knut. However, this may also be considered a strength in that we had the opportunity to closely follow Knut's re-entry process across multiple settings.

Ethically Sound Research

As researchers in the social sciences, we adhere to the Guidelines for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities from 2022. [6] To have continuous contact with Knut required that we adhere to the national guidelines for research ethics of voluntary participation, informed consent, and confidentiality, ensuring that the relationship was built on human dignity and privacy. Informed consent was obtained from Knut, given freely without external pressure or constraints. This ensured that he understood what he was asked to participate in, what types of issues and questions the study was based on, and potential consequences of his participation. All information used in this article is anonymised. We also provided Knut with explicit information about the aim of the study and stressed that this article was solely based on his experiences and narratives. Since our collaboration continued across several years, including through difficult periods, we accommodated his needs for space and distance. For us, ethically sound research meant prioritising issues and events that were important to Knut and creating room for meeting and talking as free of power relationships as possible, allowing delicate situations to be collaboratively interpreted and written.

In our meetings with Knut, we were inspired by experience-hermeneutics (Nerheim 1995), which emphasises the importance of a close interaction between us as researchers and Knut, both in the construction of the field of research and in the production of knowledge (Brottveit 2018). We were especially concerned about exercising reflexivity and safeguarding Knut's integrity to maintain ethical and fair research procedures in our interpretations of the data material. Reflexivity also implies an awareness of how we relate to the research participants, our theoretical positions, and the way in which we place ourselves into the research field methodologically and ethically (Lazard and McAvoy 2017). Ramazanoglu and Holland (2002: 118) emphasises that reflexivity:

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[6] https://www.forskningsetikk.no/en/about-us/our-committees-and-commission/nesh/guidelines-nesh/

"(…) covers varying attempts to unpack what knowledge is contingent upon, how the researcher is socially situated and how the research agenda/process has been constituted."

As reflexive researchers, we were particularly concerned with how we as fellow human beings interacted with Knut in our interpretations and co-constructions of the research data (Brottveit 2018). From the first time we met him, he wanted our conversations to be open, allowing us to ask him about "everything." This forced us to be both direct and sensitive in our way of asking questions. We often met with Knut to discuss things that we had discussed prior and how we could understand and create meaning together with regards to his texts and experiences, both in a present and retrospective perspective. The continuous contact and collaboration with him also made it possible to discuss difficult and embarrassing situations that we experienced together. For instance, after a seminar, Knut was accused by a seminar participant of not being trustworthy because he was a prisoner. Our conversations and joint discussions of texts and events, as well as the opportunity to share experiences in meeting with different people who know him, gave us a rare opportunity to study some of the complexities connected to re-entry into digitalised society. As researchers, we are ultimately responsible for the final selection and the presentation of the material, including choosing the analytical framework through which Knut's experiences are interpreted. We will now turn to the analyses.

The Sports Bag as a Small and Unforeseen Event: A First Complexity in Relation to Re-entry

Knut's re-entry started several years ago and was a long and turbulent process back and forth between higher and lower security prisons. Knut writes:

Suddenly the day is here—now I'm moving to a transitional residence. So, thank all of you for seeing how difficult the prison system is at times and doing the little extra so that we who must be here manages to keep our heads above water. It's not easy. Now I move on and I'm just one step away from being a completely free man. My punishment is not over, but I'm soon on my way and looking forward to it. Now I'm going to feel my city every day, hear the noises and smell exhaust. I'm going to stroll around the city, flirt and enjoy myself. I will meet my children, but the most important is to live (From Knut's diary).

Knut's re-entry process was not linear, and after a short time in transitional housing, a small event—the sports bag—changed it all and reset the time of release:

One of the most difficult periods in my imprisonment began after I moved into the transitional housing. While I was there, I lent a sports bag to a roommate who used it to smuggle drugs. I had nothing to do with it. But because they found biological material and my fingerprints on the bag, I was summoned for several interrogations. The police believed in me when I told them that it was not me who had smuggled. I had to be completely honest about who had borrowed my bag to avoid trouble and suspicions against me. As consequence of my honesty, I was threatened by the other inmates. For my own security and to get protection,

I was put in a high security prison for four weeks where I was locked up for 23 h daily. The reason was that there was no free space in the low-security prison I was in earlier. After four weeks, I returned to the low-security prison to be protected there. This was a clear setback in my imprisonment, and this unforeseen event delayed my release by several months. (Conversation with Knut).

We read the sports bag incident as an event that destabilised the order of things (Kapferer 2010) and contributed to resetting his release. The sports bag is analytically interesting because it illustrates how small events within the re-entry process can suddenly have huge, unexpected consequences. Lending his bag to a roommate changed Knut's position from almost being a free man to again being locked up in solitary confinement in a high security prison. The lending of the bag was interpreted negatively "from a carceral perspective," where distrust of inmates and focus on safety and security are central, in contrast to outside of prison, where people can help each other without such concerns. In this case, Knut was "punished" for trying to help out a "friend." As we see, the distinction between inside and outside of the prison is something Knut actively had to face. Being placed inside a high security prison again gave him the feeling of regressing several steps back.

Digital Gatekeepers in Public Welfare Services and Working Life: A Second Complexity in Relation to Re-entry

One year later, he faced new challenges, this time outside prison when encountering the digitalised society:

Society is completely different now from when I was imprisoned, and I no longer know how to deal with things. I am digitally handicapped after sitting inside for eight years. I have never had a digital mailbox, bank ID, smartphone, or payment apps before. I was supposed to park in a parking garage and pay with an app but couldn't do it (Conversation with Knut).

During the years that Knut was imprisoned, although Norwegian society had undergone extensive technological development where more services are being digitalised, technological skills were not part of inmates' training programme. Knut's experiences illustrate how quite ordinary everyday activities, such as withdrawing money from the bank, can complicate re-entry for someone who has been in prison for a long time:

Just before my release, I was told that my bank card had expired and that I had to have a passport to withdraw money and to obtain a new bank/visa card, but my passport had also expired. They could not help me because I did not have a valid ID and a driver's licence is not a valid identification. Then, I had to go to NN (city) on my next leave to arrange to get a passport. Only after that I could apply for new bank cards. It took about 8 weeks to get a passport and one year to get a regular bank card. Such things take a longer time for us who are in prison because they need to check out the risk for escaping. The bank employee said that everything would have gone more

quickly if someone from the prison staff had been together with me to confirm that I was me and that there was no risk of escape. But the prison has no resources to follow up on such things (Conversation with Knut).

The practical problems connected to re-entry continued in different ways. Knut's experience, just before release, shows how different types of obstacles, combined with security considerations and unclear cooperation routines across municipalities and between prison and services outside, complicated his re-entry process:

I got leave from the prison, just before release, to visit social services (NAV). When I walked in the door and went over to the counter, I was met by three security guards who told that I had to log on a machine and send a message online. I didn't know where to press and gave up. I told the security guards that I only had six hours leave that day and needed help to deal with the system. The guards just stood there and could or would not help me. Their task was only to guide people to the machine. I met a machine instead of a person I could talk to. Many of us, who have been in prison for a long time, do not know how to register on a computer or use digital tools to get in contact with social services. I therefore went back to the security guards, left my phone number, and said that NAV had to contact me. They did after three days. When I spoke with the employee, I was told that I did not belong to NN municipality where I served my sentence but had to contact the social services office in the municipality where I lived before I was arrested. I was in despair and told the caseworker that I already had gotten a job near the prison and only needed financial support for one month before I started working. After I insisted that I would visit them again after release and stay there until I got help, it worked out. We should get training on how we use digital devices and technology before re-entry to be more prepared for all the societal changes. (Conversation with Knut).

Societal changes as a result of the digitalisation of society was something many prisoners that we interviewed between 2013 and 2014 were worried about. They saw digitisation of services and societal functions as an obstacle in their re-entry processes. Here, we note how imprisonment may have consequences for life outside. In addition to all the practical problems, Knut also experienced how his criminal past followed him in new ways after release.

Not Knowing When the Past Will Catch Up With You: A Third Complexity in Relation to Re-entry

I got a job in a service industry business and was open and honest and told them about my past. I also said that I could tell them what I had atoned for, but it was not necessary for those who interviewed me. They said that the company was open for people who had a past. They knew I had been in prison, but they did not need to know why. I worked there about 6–7 weeks in daytime. Just before I was to receive the permanent contract, I was contacted by a voluntary aid organisation for former inmates and asked to participate in a television program about inmates' re-entry into society. I told my leader about the program. He asked if I was going to talk about my workplace and

said that if I talked about this, I could refrain from returning to work the next day. I assured him that I would not talk about my job. But since it was not okay for the employer that I participated in such a program, I dropped it (Conversation with Knut)

When the past is connected to criminality, it becomes a burden that must be negotiated in relational meetings with others. In Knut's story above, we see how "the weight of the past" (Fransson 2009) is negotiated during the job interview. In the interview situation, his problematic past was normalised, and the employer was open to hiring people *with a past.* It was enough to know that Knut had been in prison without going into detail. When Knut expressed that he was positive about participating in a television program and about the re-entry of former inmates, he exceeded the company's tolerance limit. Corda (2016:3) emphasises that "the relevance and effects of criminal history information have dramatically changed over time (…). A person's criminal history is one of the most important elements of her public identity. It is routinely scrutinized by potential employers, landlords, and universities, and often by neighbours, acquaintances, and partners."

The weight of the past (Fransson 2009), as a cultural burden, may come into play when least expected and is therefore something that needs to be negotiated again and again in various situations:

The next day, I was summoned to a meeting with my leader and the company's chief executive officer. The meeting lasted for 10 min, I was fired there and then and went straight back to nothing again. My leader joined me down in the locker room when I went to pick up my things. When I handed over the keys, he said that they were very satisfied with me and that he thought this was sad. He said, "You shall get the best recommendations from me, and I can be a reference for you when applying for other jobs". But in meeting with the executive officer, he said nothing. I think he had been given a muzzle before the meeting. The reason for the dismissal was that the company serves rich people. If it was rumoured that they had an employee who had been in prison, it would be easy to track me, and it would have consequences for the company's reputation (Conversation with Knut).

This experience is an example of how Knut became positioned into a broader cultural discourse that a criminal past could threaten a company's reputation when it became "frontstage" (Goffman 1968). His criminal past became a discussion of whether a company that had employed an ex-convict could be trusted by their clients. After a period, he got a new job and experienced his past coming back again to haunt him, this time through colleagues' tracking him via the internet:

The weeks between the two jobs were a tough downturn, and I was very depressed. The business owner at the new job met me three times before I got a final offer to work there. Later, he said that these meetings were about finding out more about who I was and whether it was prudent to hire me or not. I thrive in the new job; I get to use my education, and my boss is very happy with what I do. But there were a couple of colleagues who were curious about my background after they had googled me on the internet. One of them asked me straight out where I had got my education. I replied that I had got it in prison. Nobody said anything more about it there and then, but I realised that several colleagues knew something about me and did not like that I worked there because of my background. My manager told me that one of my colleagues had come to him and asked about my past. He con-

firmed that I been in prison and said to my colleague, "You can just ask Knut about everything, and he will answer you honestly." Afterwards, my colleague was completely disarmed (Conversation with Knut).

The previous example illustrates how Knut became subjected to a formal control measure from the leadership in the sense of losing his job because of the employer's fear that rumours about his past would damage the business's reputation. Knut experienced that the manager at his last workplace supported his wish to meet his colleagues' scepticisms of his past in an honest way. The manager's handling of this situation turned out to be protective regarding his position as an employer in this company. According to Lageson and Maruna (2017), this is an example of how information about former inmates can easily be spread through the internet:

> "A simple Google search for someone's name might yield mug shots and arrests, archived on blogs, social media, and low-cost background check vendors. This digital trail documents any and all contact with the justice system (not only convictions), spreading easily found labels that are difficult to ever remove. (…). Critics, on the other hand, warn against the devastating impact of online criminal records in increasingly broad aspects of life." (Lageson and Maruna (2017: 118)

The authors warn against the devastating impact of digital information and criminal records, which increasingly affect various aspects of social life. Not least interpersonal relationships and the way people live and interact (see also Giddens & Sutton 2017). As time went on, Knut experienced that the crime became an extended part of himself:

> I must live on with what I have done, and that I have been in prison, for the rest of my life. Others can always track me down, if they want to. But I would rather be honest from the start and tell people about things by myself, rather than others suddenly finding out things or that rumors about me comes from people who don't know me. I don't think I can ever be a completely free person. Even though my case is back in time, you can still find out things if you have a name, a case number or know what the case is about. Everything is stored online; the town is small, and everyone knows each other. If something unpleasant happens when I am out, the focus will in any case be directed against me. One morning someone had written "offender" in the snow on my car. I ask: Who should I introduce myself as when I meet new people. It is problematic being honest, for example if someone asks where I have lived before? I met a guy at a private dinner while I was still in prison. He asked where I lived, and I replied that I was in NN prison and said: "If you are curious and want to know more about me, we can meet another day and I can tell you my story". I did not hear more from him. People are still skeptical towards what I have done and it's strange to think that I may be confronted with my past all my life. I feel that I'm still labelled as criminal.
> Previously, I could enter a room, being somebody and be looked up to as a result of my previous profession. But now it is the opposite, I am down and need to build myself up and be careful not to get into situations that can be misinterpreted. I'm afraid of getting everything in my face again. The humorous and joking part of me is gone. I feel I must be calm and show that I am serious (From Knut's Diary).

Before imprisonment, Knut had a profession that is often associated with masculinity, strength, courage, and trust, but he experienced how others' perception of him dramatically changed during the release and re-entry process. When he talks about feeling "down" and the need to appear "calm" and "serious," we read him as using his energy to avoid situations that can be associated with prison. He is experiencing his position in the social hierarchy as a human being, a man, and an employee as threatened. He also talks about "building himself up," which we connect to his self-work (Fransson 2009) to mobilise inner strength to prepare himself for what may come. The experience of being constantly tracked and monitored online, both in formal and private contexts, has affected Knut's everyday life in many unpredictable ways.

Re-entry Processes in Digitalised Society: An Extension of Prison Punishment

This article illuminates two important issues connected to re-entry processes in the digitalised society. The first issue relates to scientific approach, knowledge traditions and the concept used when we as researchers study processes related to moving "out" from prison, here understood as re-entry processes. Concepts are important for what we see and how we understand the phenomenon of re-entry, and we must be aware if we think within the inside/outside binary which has preoccupied critical border studies within human geography (see Moran 2015:102). To understand re-entry processes, it is important to analyse the relation between individuals and society and select concepts that help us grasp and understand this relationship. Studies of relapse are mainly concerned with the numbers of persons who go out and in and their movements and behaviour after imprisonment. Desistance is a concept that covers studies with quite different scientific approaches. Some of these studies may be accused of responding to society's need for certain types of knowledge by focusing on individual narratives and turning points, more than critically studying basic structures and core values in penal policy. This article can be read as a critical contribution that ruptures the inside/outside binary focus on re-entry processes in digitalised society.

According to Christie (1981), imprisonment steals time from the inmates by placing them in closed rooms where they do not have the opportunity to keep up with life outside and societal development. Knut's experiences with re-entry also show how growth "in societies of control" (Deleuze 1992) has changed central services in society, society's ways of exercising control, and the way people interact and control each other in dense and loose societies (Christie 1982).

In this connection, we read Deleuze's concept of societies of control as an extension of Christie's (1982) loose society, where new forms of digital technology have increased the social distance between people and helped to take over central control mechanisms in society. Both primary and secondary forms of control were previously exercised by humans.

People are no longer dependent on word of mouth to obtain the information that they want or need. As a result, digital control-power contributes to weakening primary control, which naturally develops from human interaction and togetherness. Today, all people, including persons who do not hold a professional role or a formal position in society, can obtain information online and freely spread it to others. The public's access to information has contributed to a digital form of social control in dense societies.

When the opportunity to obtain personal information, both of private and confidential character, becomes unlimited, the boundaries between primary and secondary forms

of control (Christie 1982) become more fluid and both forms can exist simultaneously. This is well illustrated through Deleuze's analyses of societies of control (1992). He wrote his essay in 1992, and during the last 30 years, the growth of control power has been formidable. A distinguishing feature with digital control-power is precisely that it can be present everywhere, often in unpredictable, invisible, and ambiguous ways, and affect people's lives in both the present and future. For people with a criminal past, digital control power can maintain and prolong the experience of the possibility of infliction of pain (Christie 1981) and contribute to a feeling of being in a place between freedom and punishment after imprisonment.

According to Deleuze (1992), digital forms of social control give opportunities to track human activity regardless of time and space. In practice, this means that people will have an ongoing risk of being tracked and monitored in digital society, which this article has shown can have significant consequences for people with a criminal past. The place where Knut lives is socially transparent because "everyone knows each other," as according to Knut. In the transparent network around him, there also existed a ubiquitous invisible control power that appeared when he least expected it. This contributed to increased scrutiny of his own behaviour, where it is up to society to judge Knut's position and whether he is seen and treated as a free man. Knut's experiences speak to how digital tracking of information can contribute to new informal forms of social control in the sense of social exclusion from the local community to more formal control sanctions from people in public enterprises, such as in working life. By confronting people with their criminal past, society can continue to control them after release, both in direct and indirect punitive ways. According to Jones (2000), this can lead to experiences of new forms of punishment outside prison.

Jacobs (2015) discusses the issue of a "never-ending punishment" and whether people with a criminal past may be exposed to it. The often unpredictable and varying consequences people with a criminal history may face have led to what Corda and Lageson (2020) denote as "disordered punishment." This implies a privatisation of punishment that is difficult for both government and individuals to regulate because it takes place outside carceral spaces and the formal control system. According to Lageson (2020), this type of punishment can be read as a form of digital punishment.

Our analysis shows how Knut's experiences with digital forms of communication and services and the way he was controlled online both in public and private contexts affected him and contributed to the process of becoming a traced and monitored person when he encountered the digitalised society. We understood the embodied pain Knut experienced by constantly being seen as criminal as a form of digitalised crime control, which aroused emotions such as social anxiety, resentment, and contempt for his past (see also Lageson and Maruna 2017:113). When a digitalised control-power is in play and affects both formal and private interpersonal relationships, dense societies become looser in that the primary control is replaced by a formalised form of control, which can exist next to and independently of human presence and interactions. Loose societies can be experienced as socially denser through the opportunity for online tracking and the use of detailed information about people's private matters and past in more formal contexts. In Knut's case, the experience of digital punishment (Lageson 2020) started immediately after release by virtue of online tracking and monitoring of his past, which put his life on hold. For Knut, it is unclear whether or when it will end because the opportunity for online tracking and digital control gives him the feeling of still being in a prison-like situation. This means that the experience of punishment can exist far beyond the prison's borders, which implies a clear violation with the rule of criminal law that one is a free person after serving time.

Closing Remark

This article illustrates how the increasing growth of digital control in society contributes to the emergence of new forms of primary and secondary control that affect the re-entry process. The answer to the initial question—how far prison punishment extends in a digitalised society—is that the borders between life inside and outside of prison seem to have become more fluid. This is not because contact between prison and outside society has become more open. However, because punishment continues beyond the prison's borders as a consequence of an increasingly more fragmented, continuous, and independent control power, this can give the experience of being in a digital prison. There are no quick solutions that can better safeguard inmates' rights and needs for privacy related to re-entry into society, but we want to stress the importance of privileging reforms to progressively humanise the penal system. It is important to open up the prison space, especially through prison architecture and design, to soften the physical and symbolic borders between prison and society. For people who serve a long sentence, it is essential that they are well prepared for their re-entry process. That they know how to use digital aids and services, are prepared to face the risk of being monitored and tracked and are aware of how to deal with this if it happens. We see a clear need to prevent criminalisation, limit the possibilities of unjustified digital control and tracking of former inmates, and develop new and better routines to protect their human dignity. More stringent security procedures should be developed for what kind of sensitive information is posted online and for clearer regulations of who has access to this information.

The knowledge we produce through research has an impact on criminal policy and people's opinions regarding punishment and the willingness to give inmates a chance to live their lives in freedom outside of prison. In a scientific context, it is important to be critical regarding what concepts and methods we use when we study the process of leaving prison and what kind of knowledge our research produces regarding people who have served a prison sentence.

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