

Preface

Why does a person start performing criminal acts? The working title of the project on which this book is based was “Ways into Criminality.” The aim was to understand why and how young people in Norway, whether with Norwegian, immigrant or refugee background, became criminals and members of gangs. Is adolescence for immigrant youth a more vulnerable time than for youth with ethnic Norwegian background? Fifty inmates in five Norwegian prisons were interviewed. In addition, the book is based on insights from a number of projects that the author has conducted on gang criminality. Prison guards, pastors, imams, parents and relatives of inmates were also interviewed, some more than once. The project was conducted at the National Centre for Violence and Traumatic Stress Studies (NKVTS).

As the research proceeded, I began to be interested in structure and values within criminal environments. I thought about questions such as: The way into what? What does it consist of, the world this way moves toward? What is the structure? What do violence and narcotics trade mean, is this life marked by trauma, and how is violence connected to trust? These are problems that this book will also elucidate.

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