



*Confronting State sponsored suffering:
The case of the women's prisons*

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Institute of Criminology Public Seminar Series

Wednesday 18th October 2017, 5.30pm

**Seminar Room B3, Institute of Criminology,
Sidgwick Avenue, Cambridge, CB3 9DA**

A drinks reception in the basement foyer will follow this seminar for attendees

Based on a decade of field research, Barbara Owen will discuss her co-authored book *In Search of Safety*. The authors argue that intersectional inequalities and cumulative disadvantages are at the root of the gendered harms that both mirror women's pathways to prison and constrain their experience while confined. Within prison, these gendered harms are cast as a form of state-sponsored suffering. Women must negotiate these inequities by developing forms of prison capital—social, human, cultural, emotional, and economic—to ensure their safety while inside. This talk will focus on these forms of capital women develop to survive and sometimes thrive in confronting these intersectional inequalities, through both “positive programming” and subterranean hustles. The authors argue that these forms of capital are also distributed unequally in the prison community and are the source of conflict of violence in this community. This state-sponsored suffering also results from human-rights violations inside the prison that occur within the gendered context of substandard prison conditions, inequalities of capital among those imprisoned, and relationships with correctional staff. *In Search of Safety* proposes a way forward—the implementation of international human-rights standards – The Bangkok and the Mandela Rules-- for all women's prisons.

Barbara Owen PhD is an international expert in the area of women and imprisonment. In the US, her research has informed the pathways perspective on women's offending, the gender-responsive strategies approach to operational practice, and gender-based standards for sexual safety. Internationally, her work involves implementing human rights protections in women's prisons with the Thailand Institute of Justice. A Professor Emerita of Criminology at California State University, she received her PhD in Sociology from UC Berkeley in 1984.

This seminar is open to all interested in attending, with no ticket required.
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