

PhD Thesis

Gendered institutions: discourses and practices on gender in Italian prison system

Abstract

In Italy correctional officers cannot work with prison inmates of opposite sex, while many other countries do allow for this possibility. The assumptions of this project are that binary categories of gender are social constructs produced by prevailing discourses and techniques of power, and that the gender-based allocation of correctional officers within prisons contributes to the construction and naturalization of these categories. Drawing on the existing literature, the research aims at exploring how sex segregation enables gendered prison regimes that are involved in the production of specific forms of masculinity and femininity, among workers and prisoners as well. Finally, the project seeks to demonstrate whether the organization of the Italian prison system reproduces and exacerbates gendered practices. In this regard, my hypothesis is that gendered practices own to an overall prison system model, rather than masculine-like or feminine-like models.