Do prisons make people angry, alienated and dangerous?

28. November 2019, 14:15
Hauptgebäude, Hörsaal 201, Hochschulstrasse 4, 3012 Bern

Fakultätsgastvortrag mit Prof. Dr. Alison Liebling, Universität Cambridge (in englischer Sprache)

This presentation outlines the findings from 3 consecutive studies of a single high security prison over 20 years, and a linked recent exploration of the location and building of trust in 2 other contrasting high security prisons. In an attempt to avoid studying ‘radicalisation’, due to the limitations inherent in this term, we developed some quality of life dimensions grounded in prisoners’ experiences of, for example, trust, distrust, hope and hopelessness, and personal development, and tested their relationship with ‘political charge’. The lowest trust prisons generated the highest levels of political charge, or anger and alienation, among prisoners. Higher trust prisons, deploying this ‘intelligently’, could lead to ‘ethical self-development’, on the other hand. The paradoxical problem of trust in prisons presents serious challenges for penal policy, prison management, and our understanding of risk.