



At Work in the Iron Cage

Dana Britton

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When most people think of prisons, they imagine chaos, violence, and fundamentally, an atmosphere of overwhelming brute masculinity. But real prisons rarely fit the "Big House" stereotype of popular film and literature. One fifth of all correctional officers are women, and the rate at which women are imprisoned is growing faster than that of men. Yet, despite increasing numbers of women prisoners and officers, ideas about prison life and prison work are still dominated by an exaggerated image of men's prisons where inmates supposedly struggle for physical dominance. In a rare comparative analysis of men's and women's prisons, Dana Britton identifies the factors that influence the gendering of the American workplace, a process that often leaves women in lower-paying jobs with less prestige and responsibility. In interviews with dozens of male and female officers in five prisons, Britton explains how gender shapes their day-to-day work experiences. Combining criminology, penology, and feminist theory, she offers a radical new argument for the persistence of gender inequality in prisons and other organizations. *At Work in the Iron Cage* demonstrates the importance of the prison as a site of gender relations as well as social control.

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