

# **Ghana's prisons: Subject to state power**

**Reform and Rehabilitation**

# The Politics of Prisons

- **Absence from politics?**
  - Foucault
  - Everyday State
  
- **Little on African Prisons**
  - Central to colonial control
  - Focus on other branches of legal system

# Methodology

- **Interviews – Ghana and Nigeria**
- **Get at ‘public’ discourses within the prison**
- **Broad general questions about the purpose of the prison, and what was done to achieve this.**

**How is the reform  
and rehabilitation  
of prisoners,  
understood within  
Ghanaian  
prisons?**

# 'Something doing'

- **Rehabilitation frequently understood as work skills development**

**“Then a trade we give you trade training, trade, you don't have a trade we will give you a trade.” – Prison Officer Ghana**

- **Success on release: Getting a job...**

**“Prison officer becomes happy when he sees a prisoner from his custody who is industrious, who is maybe a pastor, maybe imam, who is maybe now in a position that everyone respect. .”  
– Prison Officer Ghana**

# God as reformer

- **Church (and Mosque) central role in prison**
- **Prisons role in this process.**

**“...so we take you through these religious these things and trough that you become a new person.” – Prison Officer Ghana**

# **The soul?**

**It is a question of situating the techniques of punishment- whether they seize the body in the ritual of public torture and execution or whether they are addressed to the soul....**

# What of 'the state'?

- **Religion and the State?**
- **Absence?**
  - Unseen – neglected
  - Personalised
  - Competitive bureaucracies
- **What does it tell us about the nature of state's power?**