

2013

Cultivating Resistance: Food Justice in the Criminal Justice System

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Recommended Citation

Watkins, Caitlin M., "Cultivating Resistance: Food Justice in the Criminal Justice System" (2013). *Pitzer Senior Theses*. Paper 32.
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**Cultivating Resistance:
Food Justice in the Criminal Justice System**

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In partial fulfillment of a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Environmental Analysis

2012-2013 Academic Year

Pitzer College

Claremont, CA

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Acknowledgements

First, I would like to thank the women of Crossroads for their valuable assistance in the completion of this project. This thesis would not have been possible without their honesty and openness in the interview process. It has been truly an inspiration to work with each and every Crossroads woman, and I am honored to have their input incorporated into this thesis.

I would also like to extend my gratitude to my readers, Susan Phillips and Nancy Neiman-Auerbach. Their feedback and support has been invaluable not only in writing this thesis but also in my academic and community engagement work. I am so lucky to have worked with such powerful change-makers in the field. I want to give a huge thanks to Brinda Sarathy for her constant guidance and affirmations throughout the writing of this thesis.

I would also like to acknowledge the thesis support group of EA 197. Every one of them inspires me with their remarkable wit, intelligence, and desire to make a meaningful positive impact on this world. Finally, I want to thank my friends and family for inspiring me to persevere throughout the writing process. I could not have done it without them.

Abstract:

This Senior Thesis in Environmental Analysis seeks to explore the ways in which certain food-oriented programs for incarcerated women and women on parole critically resist the Prison Industrial Complex and the Industrial Food System by securing social and ecological equity through the acquisition of food justice. It focuses on three case studies: the Crossroads' Meatless Mondays program, Fallen Fruit from Rising Women: A Crossroads Social Enterprise, and Cultivating Dreams Prison Garden Project: An Organic Garden for Women in Prison. Each project utilizes food as a tool to build community, provide valuable skill sets of cooking and gardening, and educate women about the social, environmental and political implications of the Industrial Food System. Overall, the goal of this thesis is to prove the necessity of food justice programs in the criminal justice system in counteracting the disenfranchisement of certain populations that are continuously discriminated against in the industrialized systems of prison and food.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE INDUSTRIAL FOOD SYSTEM AND THE PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

Personal Statement

Throughout my education at the Claremont Colleges, I have become increasingly involved in programs that seek to reform the criminal justice system in conjunction with the industrial food system. My community engagement with organizations such as Crossroads, Cultivating Dreams, and Prototypes has given rise to a passion for securing food justice for individuals in the prison environment, and in turn has fueled the writing of this thesis.

Initially, the statistic that spurred my interest in this subject matter was the fact that there are now, for the first time in history, more prisoners than farmers in the United States. Currently, there are 2,213,080 people in United States' prisons and jails (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2013). Simultaneously, there are only 960,000 individuals who claim farming as their principal occupation and a similar number of farmers that claim an off-farm job as their primary occupation, according to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. There are about two million farms in America, and of these farms, only a small number are not dedicated to industrial farming systems. In other words, the majority of farms in America solely produce industrial monocultures like corn and soy rather than fresh produce (Hauter 2012, pg. 12).

The aforementioned statistic took me very much by surprise, but most of all, it made me angry. It ignited in me a desire to do something that might reverse this scenario. It also made me question the state's influence on exactly which individuals are confined in United States' prisons and jails, who gets access to quality, nutritionally-balanced foods, and why low-income communities and/or people of color are disproportionately impacted by the ills of

the Industrial Food System and the Prison Industrial Complex.

Overview

The Globalized Industrial Food System (IFS) and Prison Industrial Complex (PIC) both disenfranchise low-income people and communities of color in the name of neoliberalism. Neoliberalism is a brutal form of market capitalism in which corporations seek profit and social control through deregulation and privatization (Giroux 2005, pg. 2). In doing so, it has continuously exploited the planet for its natural resources and humans for their potential and labor, extracting every ounce of value from these sources to sell in the global marketplace. These neoliberal tactics have played out in American correctional institutions and in the mass incarceration of people of color in relation to the provision of industrial food.

In recent years, there have been waves of social activism that proclaim that this type of exploitative capitalism has gone too far. Through establishment of movements like Environmental Justice, Food Justice, and Prison Reform, individuals are actively resisting the neoliberal agenda. What I am seeking to do in this thesis is to explore the social inequities and injustices that occur due to these two complex systems of oppression and to illuminate the need for the dual reform of the prison and food systems via people-powered social movements. In order to focus my research, I will look at the state of California's criminal justice system, specifically prisons for females. I will investigate what the Prison Industrial Complex and the global Industrialized Food System have in common. I will argue that the inequity in the food system plays out in the nation's prisons.

Although thorough academic research has been conducted and theory extrapolated

from both the PIC and the IFS, there has been a complete lack of scholarly material on the confluence of the two industrial mega-entities. Even though I will be focusing on California's prison and food systems, the application of food justice in the criminal justice system has a broader applicability in the national and international sphere. In exploring the alternatives to these systems in terms of institutional programming and non-profit organizations' projects, I will prove how food justice activism will reduce the rates of crime and recidivism. There is a definite need for this research due to the lack of transparency in these two structures of power. The food system and the criminal justice system have a lot in common, and the inadequacies of both systems are worth pointing out in order to mediate what neoliberalism has done to destroy our liberty and autonomy in this country. It has limited consumers' choice, continuously disenfranchised the most vulnerable of populations, and concentrated money and power into the hands of the few.

After thoughtful and thorough research, it is clear that there are a number of successful programs that turn the tables within these interlocking systems of oppression, which are fervently advocated for by social justice activists. The programs I will explore in my case studies include Cultivating Dreams Prison Garden Project, the Crossroads Food Justice Program, and Fallen Fruit from Rising Women, a social enterprise for formerly incarcerated women. These programs, however effective, must also be met with the necessary broad-based institutional change in order to even attempt to solve the problems of the PIC and the IFS.

Unlike the Prison Industrial Complex, many of these programs purposefully utilize principles of rehabilitation by encouraging social wellbeing, psychological health, and

ecological sustainability rather than perpetuating the cycle of violence and thus mass incarceration in this nation. Mass incarceration is a “larger web of laws, rules, policies, and customs that control those labeled criminals both in and out of prison” (Alexander 2010, pg. 12). This rehabilitation is accomplished through a variety of programs that are actively aiming to achieve food justice in the criminal justice system: horticultural therapy, employment opportunities, and vocational horticulture training, to name a few. I will go further into depth about some programs in California that are seeking change in this way and discuss exactly how they resist the Prison Industrial Complex and the Industrial Food System simultaneously. In doing so, I will examine specific case studies of programs or projects that are attempting to secure food justice for those who are incarcerated.

I began writing this paper with three primary questions in mind, and in my analysis, I hope to answer these questions in order to find solutions to the often-unseen injustices that occur in the production of food and in the incarceration of approximately one percent of the American population:

1. How does the Prison Industrial Complex compare to the Industrial Food System?
2. How do the interconnected, industrialized systems of food and criminal justice affect incarcerated individuals' lives?
3. What are the alternatives to the oppression experienced in these industrial systems, and how can they be accomplished most effectively?

In the rest of Chapter One, I will continue to describe the negative impacts of the

Industrial Food System by analyzing the commercialization of food and farming in the United States and its relationship to the marginalization of targeted populations, most specifically low-income communities and communities of color. I will also explain the background of the Prison Industrial Complex by examining its history of oppression of an astounding one percent of the American population. One in every 100 adults is currently incarcerated, and people of color disproportionately experience this confinement. In 2008, one in every 36 Hispanic adults was incarcerated, and one in every 15 black adults was held in captivity (Pew Center on the States 2008). These eye-opening figures not only demonstrate the relevance of this issue in the national sphere, but also point out the racial discrimination present in the criminal justice system and in our nation.

After explaining the origins and definitions of the Prison Industrial Complex and the Industrial Food System, I will compare the two systems in order to demonstrate the interlocking systems of social, environmental, and economic oppression at play in the American criminal justice system, which will further prove the necessity of alternative programs in prison that address these structural inequities.

Bridging the Industrial Food System and the Prison Industrial Complex

The Prison Industrial Complex (PIC) and the Industrial Food System (IFS) have a lot in common in that they both run on similar destructive pathways. First and foremost, they are industrial systems that disproportionately impact marginalized populations for profit. Both systems take place in rural, disenfranchised areas seeking an economic boost. The oppression of the PIC and the IFS occurs twofold inside prisons and results in the prisoner population's

decline in public health. In this way, these industrial systems perpetuate the disenfranchisement of already overburdened populations through the use of food as a means of deprivation and punishment. This is accomplished through neoliberal tactics that seek to commodify life and liberty itself – in this case, freedom and justice. In counteracting this exploitation and thus resisting the foundation of neoliberalism, individuals and communities must organize to lift each other up and proclaim their sovereignty.

In her book Are Prisons Obsolete?, Angela Davis writes, “Today, the growing social movement contesting the supremacy of global capital is a movement that directly challenges the rule of the planet – its human, animal, and plant populations, as well as its natural resources – by corporations that are primarily interested in the increased production and circulation of ever more profitable commodities” (Davis 2003, pg.44). This statement by well-renowned prison abolitionist and scholar (who also happened to be incarcerated at California Institution for Women) perfectly applies to the PIC and the IFS, which both deplete the environment and destroy communities for corporate gain without acknowledging the rights of humans to live, work, and play in a safe and clean environment. Additionally, these two capitalistic systems are intended to meet the needs of people, but both systems fail to do so in a number of ways, which I will continue to elaborate on in this chapter.

First, I will explain the Industrial Food System in terms of its history as well as its social, environmental, economic, and cultural impacts according to scholarly research. Next, I will analyze of the Prison Industrial Complex according to its impacts in order to demonstrate the similarities of the two systems of oppression. Finally, I will briefly compare these two systems to show the impact of incarceration and industrial food on specific populations of low-income or

minority status.

The Industrial Food System (IFS)

There are numerous environmental, social, economic and cultural repercussions that result from the industrialized food system. First, industrial agribusiness has wreaked havoc on the ecosystem, especially in terms of contamination of viable sources of air, water, and land. This environmental destruction has subsequently spurred a variety of public health effects caused by commercialized food and farming, including both diet-related diseases such as obesity, diabetes and heart disease, as well as environmentally caused illnesses like cancer and asthma (Hauter 2012 pg. 12). These diet-related diseases attributed to environmental toxicity disproportionately affect the same communities that are slated to enter United States' prisons and jails, which disproportionately are people of color.

The impacts of the Industrialized Food System also have dehumanizing effects on those who are involved in the production of food that have also been historically, socially, and ecologically downtrodden. For example, farm workers, factory workers, and other laborers in the food supply chain are underpaid, under acknowledged and overworked, and similar to the inmates inside federal and state penitentiaries, these workers are predominantly people of color. The disenfranchisement of these individuals is largely executed by a small number of corporations that have control over the majority of the global food supply.

Wenonah Hauter, Director of Food and Water Watch, describes these corporate food monopolies as “Foodopolies.” The consolidation of power in America's industrial food system deeply affects every the entire corporate food chain, but the rise of agribusiness most

directly hurts farmers and farmworkers who are trying to nourish their communities.

There are political and economic reasons why the number of prisoners has far surpassed the number of farmers in this nation. In 1935, over half of the American population claimed farming as their full-time occupation. Currently, less than a one-half of one percent can claim farming as their primary job (Hauter 2012, pg. 12). This substantial decrease in the number of farmers can be attributed to policies that were in favor of the monopolization of food and farming and therefore prevented the success of the small family farms that were the lifeblood of rural towns in terms of employment and food security.

In this case study, I am examining the food system and criminal justice system within the state of California. California provides one third of the food on American plates, so it is important to understand the economic implications of the agro-food system in the Golden State, especially when comparing it to the Prison Industrial Complex (Patel 2007, pg. 7). The concentration of money and power falls into the pockets and hands of the few, while simultaneously the burden of toxic chemicals from industrial agriculture accompanied by poor wages and labor conditions affect the powerless. This is especially true for women, who are predominantly confined to food production both domestically and industrially.

Culturally, the Industrial Food System affects women in a multitude of ways. In “Women in Food Chains: The Gendered Politics of Food,” Allen and Sachs explain the role of women in the food system in terms of women's historically oppressive relationships with food. They state that the women interact with food in three different ways: in the home or domestic sphere, in the labor market, and in their own personal relationships with food. All of these interactions can be oppressive based on normative gender roles. In this way, food is not

only a source of energy and survival but is also associated with feelings of pleasure or even with deprivation, punishment, or lack of control. The same is true for women in the prison environment (Smith 2002). Typically, poor women of color are subordinated to the production and/ or preparation of foods. The authors call for a feminist resistance in reaction against the neoliberal globalization trends that occur as a result of the agro-industrial system. It is important to assess these oppressive histories when creating programming for women in prison who are disproportionately women of color originating from poor backgrounds.

Prison Industrial Complex-

In a similar demeanor to the Industrial Food System, the Prison Industrial Complex creates an unprecedented number of costly environmental, social, cultural, and economic impacts. Social historian Mike Davis first used the term Prison Industrial Complex (PIC) in the 1990's to bring to light the skyrocketing increase in prison construction in rural California and its subsequent warehousing of people of color for corporate profit (Gilmore 2010). He argued that the purpose of the newly built prisons was economically motivated because it rivaled the major business of industrialized agriculture and major land development (Davis 2003, pg. 84-5).

To this day, prison reform activists and scholars continue to question the intentions of the California state government in the wake of prison construction because even during the rise of the PIC, crime and unemployment rates had decreased. The prison construction boom was a result of corporations, the mass media, politicians, and state correctional institutions conferring to maximize revenues for all those involved, besides the prisoners who are

disproportionately people of color (Sudbury 2004, pg. 12). Since 1984 in California, there have been twenty-three new prisons built at a cost of \$280-350 million dollars per facility. This number does not include community corrections facilities, prison camps or mother-prisoner facilities, which brings the total up to 90 facilities (Gilmore 2007, pg. 7-8). Not surprisingly, California is the leader in correctional spending in the entire United States, spending \$8.8 billion on their correctional budget in 2008 (Pew Center on the States 2008, pg. 11).

The Prison Industrial Complex originates from the term “military industrial complex,” which Dwight Eisenhower used to describe the corrupt partnership between the military and corporations (Sudbury 2004, pg. 12). Ironically, the military industrial complex and the industrial food system also overlap: scientific innovation for the military has been utilized to increase food production, including the use of ecologically destructive pesticides and herbicides in industrial farming systems. As ecologist Kenneth Gould states,

Covering the Earth in chemical biocides, genetically modified organisms, and strontium 90 are the combined results of the military and corporate application of these high-risk technologies, and it is a mistake to view the corporate and military applications as separable. The contaminants resulting from the production of weapons of mass destruction are some of the most persistent pollutants (Gould 2007, pg. 332).

The industrial systems of agriculture, prison, and the military all take advantage of people and the planet in order to boost the economy without recognizing the astronomical impacts of their exploitation.

In the San Joaquin Valley, where the majority of the nation's vegetables and fruit are produced, a geography that also happens to be known as Prison Alley, the toxic contaminants that are spread across fields of monoculture also affect the prisoners in nearby institutions

(Braz & Gilmore 2006, pg. 97). As Angela Davis stated about the nature of the prison industrial complex, all three systems (the military industrial complex, the industrial food system, and the prison industrial complex) “generate profit from processes of social destruction. Precisely that which is advantageous to those corporations, elected officials, and government agents who have obvious stakes in the expansion of these systems begets grief and devastation for poor and racially dominated communities in the United States” (Davis 2003, pg. 88). These systems are not ecologically, socially, or economically sustainable in the long term because they destroy communities, devastate families, and decimate the ecosystem, all while failing to meet the purpose of the criminal justice system of rehabilitating the most vulnerable of populations and protecting the broader society.

The issue of mass incarceration is parallel to the concept of the Prison Industrial Complex, which has been investigated most recently in Michelle Alexander's The New Jim Crow (2010), is defined as “a system that locks people not only behind actual bars in actual prisons, but also behind virtual bars and virtual walls – walls that are invisible to the naked eye but function nearly as effectively as Jim Crow once did at locking people of color into permanent second-class citizenship” (Alexander 2010, pg. 12). Like many critics of the criminal justice system before her, she makes evident the racial discrimination that exists in our nation's criminal justice system by comparing the current criminal justice system to the age of the Jim Crow laws. These laws were statutes enacted in the legalization of segregation between blacks and whites in the South.

Alexander argues that to this day, institutional racism is perpetuated through “the old forms of discrimination-- employment discrimination, housing discrimination, denial of the

right to vote, denial of educational opportunity, denial of food stamps and other public benefits, and exclusion from jury service” (Alexander 2010, pg. 2). Basic constitutional rights are denied to those who have been through the system, which is similar to the way African-Americans were discriminated against in the age of segregation. These same rights are what also allow formerly incarcerated individuals to break the cycle of incarceration and build better lives for themselves beyond the confines of the penal system. Securing proper housing, education, food, and healthcare are vital for successful re-entry back into society from prison, and the laws in place do not allow for the success of an individual after serving time.

Beth Richie elucidates a concept parallel to mass incarceration, known as the prison nation, which she describes in her most recent book, Arrested Justice: Black Women, Violence, and America's Prison Nation. She articulates, “The notion of a prison nation reflects the ideological and public policy shifts that have led to the increased criminalization of disenfranchised communities of color, more aggressive law enforcement strategies for norm-violating behavior, and an undermining of civil and human rights of marginalized groups” (Richie 2012, pg. 3). However the racism within the criminal justice system is labeled, as the Prison Industrial Complex, the Prison Nation, or mass incarceration, every reference implies that the penal system targets low-income people and people of color. Additionally, the arguments behind each of the terms are parallel in that they call for the reform of a racially discriminatory system that continues to marginalize individuals based on their backgrounds.

California is an interesting case to consider in analyzing the criminal justice system because the Golden State, despite its liberal leanings, is home to one of the most oppressive prison regimes. This is made clear in the statistic that California's prisons have grown at almost

twice the rate of the national average during the past generation. Braz and Gilmore (2006) attribute this growth to “the state's proclivity to send parolees back to prison, especially those without new convictions. At a rate of 70 percent, California returns parolees to prison at twice the national rate” (Braz and Gilmore 2006, pg. 107). In other words, the cycle of incarceration is extremely hard to break because the system is designed to make individuals who fit the description of the targeted population within the system fail every time, increasing the rates of recidivism and thus mass incarceration in American prisons and jails.

Recidivism is especially pertinent to women who are affected by incarceration because they encounter many obstacles that may not allow them to return to their communities and families. In 2008, there were over 216,000 women incarcerated in American prisons and jails, which is roughly ten percent of the overall United States prison population (Mallicoat 2012, pg. 464). Even though this may seem like a small percentage in comparison to the male prison population, the increasing number of women in prison is cause for both concern and reform. The incarceration of women is extremely detrimental to their children, especially if their mothers are not receiving the proper services while doing time and therefore have a higher risk of recidivism post release.

Since 1980, women have been incarcerated at a much higher rate than men. African-American women are being imprisoned at the highest rate of anyone in the country, before black men and white females (Sudbury 2005, pg. 164). This increased imprisonment is directly linked to an increased out casting of poor communities of color. For example, studies indicate that women of color are 'over-arrested, over-indicted, under-defended, and over-sentenced' as compared to white women (Chandler 2003, pg. 42). This statement reflects the apparent

injustices in the criminal justice system. The fact that low-income women of color are imprisoned at the highest rate attests to the blatant racism that continues to exist in the United States. Twenty-four percent of the American population is Black or Latino, while 63% of incarcerated women are women of color (Mallicoat 2012, pg. 464). Poverty is another distinguishing factor found in women in prison. Of the women behind bars, approximately half of them were unemployed before committing their crime. As a result of being raised in impoverished communities, women in prison often do not have access to higher education before and during their incarceration, which perpetuates prison re-entry (Mallicoat 2012, pg. 464).

The Prison Industrial Complex also has severe environmental effects on the surrounding ecosystem, which is another case that prison abolitionists and reformists use to argue against the construction of new prisons and the demolition of existing correctional facilities. According to Ruth Wilson Gilmore, the construction of these prisons leads to the “prisonization” of the rural environments and landscapes, and that prison expansion is a “concrete manifestation of urban-rural competition and conflict” (Gilmore 2007, pg. 22). The majority of inmates originate from urban cores, thus there is an inherent tension in the siting of prisons in rural areas far from the homes and communities of those incarcerated, which also makes it difficult for families to visit their loved ones who are in prison.

Angela Davis also critiques the urban-rural division created by the construction of prisons. She asserts, “California's new prisons are sited on devalued rural land, most, in fact, on formerly irrigated agricultural acres... The state bought land sold by big landowners. And the state assured the small, depressed towns now shadowed by prisons that the new, recession proof, non-polluting industry would jump-start local redevelopment” (Davis 2003, pg.14). This

assurance was stated under false pretenses because there has been absolutely no proof that there are fiscal benefits to prison towns in these correctional developments (Gilmore 2007, pg. 23). The construction of prisons causes ecological destruction in water sources, specifically in local aquifers, which has a detrimental impact on the nearby agricultural lands that surround prisons located in rural regions (Braz & Gilmore 2006, pg. 101). Additionally, the prison construction boom drastically worsens air quality due to the increased amount of traffic as well as the other petrochemicals used to construct and power the actual structures. Essentially, prisons are extremely detrimental to the environment because they destroy ecosystems to build concrete structures that are constructed to keep nature out rather than incorporate natural elements into their design.

The Prison Industrial Complex and the Industrial Food System are, by their very nature, similar in that they are both socially and ecologically destructive. They also continuously plunder low-income people and communities of color for profit. Now that the origins, impacts, and similarities of the Prison Industrial Complex and the Industrial Food System have been introduced, I will go on to frame alternative programs that exist according to the literature available in the fields of environmental analysis, food studies, sociology, and psychology.

In Chapter Two, I will review three social movements that have addressed the inequities within the prison and food systems: the Environmental Justice Movement, the Food Justice Movement, and the Prison Reform/ Abolition Movement. Even though there are currently no coalitions built between these three movements, there is an enormous potential for social and ecological justice if these movements were to be informed by one another. Highlighting the intersectionality between all three of these movements will unify them, which might bring about

social and institutional change in new and innovative ways. In addition, my description of successful models of social justice activism will set the stage for effective, change-making alternative food movements within the prison environment and for those who have done time.

In the third chapter, I will go into depth about the primary research I conducted with women at Crossroads, Inc., a non-profit organization in Claremont, California that serves the needs of formerly incarcerated women transitioning back into society from long-term sentences in prison. The ten interviews conducted revealed the specifics of the food inequalities in California's female correctional facilities. In analyzing these injustices, I will analyze related themes around the topics of food, community, and the built environment as well as the social and ecological impacts that it has on the women inside. In doing so, I will argue for the viability of alternative food programs that would improve social, ecological and food justice within the American penal system.

In Chapter Four, I will explain the mechanisms by which women in California's prisons obtain nutrition as well as the cultures and relationships that develop in opposition to the food served in the prison setting. In Chapter Five, I will describe and demonstrate the importance of a number of community and food-related programs that assist women who are either serving time or who are formerly incarcerated, including Cultivating Dreams Prison Garden Project, Fallen Fruit from Rising Women, and the Crossroads Food Justice Program.

Chapter Six concludes this thesis with further research possibilities and their significance in the Food Justice movement, the Environmental Justice Movement, and the Prison Reform/Abolition Movement. Now, I will delve into the three social movements that frame the importance of the alternative food movement inside American prisons and jails.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW:

SOCIAL MOVEMENTS TOWARD CRIMINAL AND FOOD JUSTICE

In framing Food Justice in the criminal justice system, there are three social movements that are relevant to its theoretical and technical application: the Environmental Justice Movement, the Food Justice Movement, and the Anti-Prison Movement. Within these three social movements, there is a great deal of interconnectedness between ideologies and motivating factors that has yet to be explored in an academic context, yet there is a lot to extract from the trials, tribulations, and successes from each individual social movement. Moreover, the unification of these three justice-oriented movements would lend itself to new and improved ways of campaigning for equity across race, class, and gender in the criminal justice system. At this time, none of the movements have addressed the issue of Food Justice in the penal system directly. There is a definite absence of literature about food justice in prisons, especially from the perspective of prisoners, because it is an inaccessible population to study. Moreover, the small amount of research that does exist does not address prison food in terms of social, environmental, or food justice principles or rhetoric. In contrast, this thesis seeks to employ a justice-oriented approach to food in the California criminal justice system and beyond based on the experiences and opinions of those who experience incarceration and whose voices are rarely heard in academic dialogues.

This chapter will explore the interconnectivity of the social movements in order to clarify their potential for collaboration in an effort to improve social justice. First, I will describe the

history and background of the Environmental Justice Movement to frame the birth of the Food Justice Movement and to demonstrate its similarities to the Prison Reform movement. Then, I will discuss the formation and defining principles of the recent Food Justice Movement to prove the relevancy of its application in the criminal justice system. Finally, I will explain the Prison Reform/ Abolition Movement and detail the potential for Food Justice in this movement. I will compare the movements and their accompanying ideologies for the improvement of social justice in both the penal system and the industrial food system.

Environmental Justice Movement

The Environmental Justice Movement, known informally as EJ to its movers and shakers, began in the late 20th century as a backlash against toxic waste sites in low-income communities, specifically in the birthplace of Environmental Justice, Warren County, North Carolina. The movement itself began due to the disproportionate impact of environmental destruction on and “systematic exclusion” of poor communities and people of color from policy and decision-making within their communities by mainstream environmentalism and environmental regulatory agencies like the Environmental Protection Agency (McGurty 1997, pg. 302). To this day, there is a tension between the mainstream environmental movement, which is predominantly said to be ruled by middle-class, educated, white, male conservationists who come across as elitist and racist, and the Environmental Justice Movement, which tends to be organized and delegated directly by the communities themselves, often by women of color.

Ironically, now there is an Office of Environmental Justice within the EPA that advocates for the “fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color,

national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies” (www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice, 2012).

According to this office, residents of an Environmental Justice community must be classified as either low-income or a minority group.

That being said, the collision of environmentalism and the Civil Rights movement has continued to play out in the Environmental Justice Movement in a term coined “environmental racism.” The term was born after the Warren County incident by the former head of United Church of Christ's Commission on Racial Justice, Benjamin Chavis. He defined environmental racism as “racial discrimination in environmental policy-making and enforcement of regulation and laws, the deliberate targeting of communities of color for toxic waste facilities, the official sanctioning of the presence of life-threatening poisons and pollutants for communities of color, and the history of excluding people of color from leadership of the environmental movement” (Chavis, 1994, pg. Xii). Clearly, institutional racism has extended into one of the most progressive social movements of environmentalism, and the EJ movement seeks to dismantle this discrimination through the empowerment of environmental justice communities so that they may begin to reverse the damage caused by environmental racism. In tackling these injustices, the movement has begun to focus its scope on a number of issues, including food, public health, and the built environment. Environmental racism and mass incarceration have many similarities, and one is outstandingly clear: they are both driven by racial inequity and lead to the oppression of people of color.

According to EJ literature, environmental degradation is most concentrated in low-income areas, including the areas where prisons are built and the communities from which

prisoners originate (Braz & Gilmore 2006). Prisons are most often constructed in rural areas where the economy is weak and the people disenfranchised because the populations in these regions are not likely to protest according to the Cerrell Report, which examined communities that are least likely to resist LULUs, or “locally unwanted land uses.” This issue is also relevant to another Environmental Justice term, NIMBY, which stands for “Not In My Back Yard.” Both of these terms refer to the citing and the location of undesirable land uses in and around certain targeted neighborhoods that are less likely to organize in campaigning against the construction of LULUs in their backyard. These land uses are potentially toxic and detract from the overall aesthetic and environmental quality of a region in close proximity to homes or communities.

Needless to say, the citing of prisons has been a major conflict among citizens, government, and big businesses in California. Some of these populations ache for boosted economies, which they believe might come in the form of jobs from local prisons, but in reality, the construction of mega-prisons over the last 30 years has decimated rural livelihoods (Braz & Gilmore 2006, pg. 96).

Similar to the Environmental Justice movement, the Food Justice movement has spurred a proliferation of passion for and motivation to transform the dominant paradigm of the neoliberal agenda, which disenfranchises low-income communities and people of color.

Food Justice Movement

Food Justice is the social movement that empowers communities by exercising their right to produce, sell, and consume foods that are “fresh, nutritious, affordable, culturally appropriate, and grown locally with care for the wellbeing of the land, workers, and animals” (Alkon &

Agyeman 2011, pg. 5). The movement itself is an extension of the Environmental Justice movement in that it arose out of the seventeen principles of Environmental Justice, which were established in 1996 at the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit (Braz & Gilmore 2006). A similar set of principles were later developed in 2012 for Food Justice at the conference “Food + Justice = Democracy” (Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy 2012).

In the same way that Environmental Justice calls for procedural justice and environmental equity, the principles of Food Justice demand increased food access and the development of food sovereignty (Alkon & Agyeman 2011, pg. 8). *Food access* is a community's ability to grow and eat healthy food, while *food sovereignty* goes further to encompass a “radical ethics that derives from the commitment to the defense and resurgence of already existing local, slow, and deep food practices in marginalized communities” (Mares & Pena 2011, pg. 202). In declaring food sovereignty and resisting the exploitation insinuated in neoliberalism, communities are claiming food sovereignty under the guise of the Food Justice movement. This allows communities to propel themselves out of the systems of oppression that harm the planet and its people.

The authors of Cultivating Food Justice explain the parallel trajectory of both the Food Justice and the Environmental Justice movements due to their emphasis on anti-racist organizing principles. In comparing these two movements, it is apparent that marginalized communities bear the burden of a toxic environment, which includes the production and ingestion of certain industrially processed foods that are proven to have adverse health consequences. The unjust reality is that low-income communities of color are disproportionately harmed by the ills of the

inequitable food system.

Robert Gottlieb, a well-renowned scholar who recently penned the book, Food Justice, started writing about this concept in the late nineties after the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit. The article, entitled “Community Food Security and Environmental Justice: Searching for a Common Discourse,” was co-authored with Andrew Fisher, the founder of the Community Food Security Coalition, which was based in Los Angeles until its recent demise in 2012. They argue that the Community Food Security movement and the Environmental Justice movement should create a unified front due to their “parallel goals, a potential common language, and intersecting agendas” (Gottlieb & Fisher 1996, pg. 23). The combination of these two movements would eventually become the Food Justice movement that is so popularized today. Similar to the scholarly establishment of the Food Justice movement, I am proposing to incorporate the Food Justice movement, which evolved from the Environmental Justice movement into that of the Prison Reform movement because they both have parallel anti-racist, anti-classist, and anti-sexist underpinnings; a comparable common language; and intersecting social justice agendas.

Scholarship and activism in all three individual movements is well underway; however, despite their intersectionality, there has yet to be an academic connection between Food Justice and criminal justice reform, but because they both affect similar populations, the discourse is well on its way. According to the authors of Cultivating Food Justice: Race, Class, and Sustainability, “Food Justice serves as a theoretical and political bridge between scholarship and activism on Sustainable Agriculture, Food Insecurity, and Environmental Justice” (Alkon & Norgaard 2009, 289). In this way, Food Justice calls for the strengthening of principles similar to

those established in the Environmental Justice and Community Food Security movements in Sustainable Agriculture. This would lessen the disproportionate impact of environmentally destructive, industrially processed foods on populations who would not ordinarily have access to healthy foods, largely due to the lack of food outlets providing fresh produce in low-income neighborhoods. It would also make sustainably produced food more accessible and commonplace in these communities where inhabitants experience high rates of diet-related illnesses.

At this point in time, buying into the concept of Sustainable Agriculture is neither economically feasible nor geographically accessible for the majority of the American population, especially in low-income urban neighborhoods. Scholars and critics call this disinclination of supermarket chains to locate in urban areas *supermarket redlining* (Eisenhauer 2001, pg. 125). Historically, redlining refers to the racial discrimination in mortgage home loans for African-Americans in the 20th century (Eisenhauer 2001, pg. 125). Since its inception, the term “redlining” has been used to describe a number of racially and spatially discriminatory practices, including the relevant issues here of food access and prison construction. Essentially, the Food Justice movement strives to erase this redlining in order to make foods that are considered healthful, ecologically sound, and socially acceptable more accessible to everyone regardless of their race, class, gender, and/or ethnicity.

The Food Justice movement challenges the Sustainable Agriculture movement to take their efforts one step further by addressing the difference in levels of food security in low-income communities. As emerging young leaders, often representing their own communities, food justice activists “tackle issues of race, class, gender, and the huge disparities and negative

economic, health, environmental and social consequences associated with the dominant food system.” In other words, those involved in securing food justice in these at-risk communities are “providing a civil rights lens to food system transformation” (Gottlieb and Anupama 2010, pg. x). However, there are a number of critiques about whiteness in alternative food institutions that claim the problematic nature of white activists imposing their ideals on low-income communities without being socially or racially engaged (Guthman 2008; Slocum 2006).

Clearly, Food Justice acts as an amalgamation of a number of social movements, including the Environmental Justice Movement, the Community Food Security Movement, the Sustainable Agriculture Movement, and the Civil Rights Movement. If the Food Justice movement were to also encompass the criminal justice system, which would include one of the most vulnerable populations experiencing food injustice, then they could assist in the simultaneous dismantling of the food and prison systems. However, due to the fact that the Food Justice movement is in its infancy, there is relatively little unifying direction in the movement.

Although there is a relatively minute amount of literature about food justice in the prison environment, scholar Avi Brisman, in his article “Food Justice as Crime Prevention,” discusses food justice projects as a way to deter and prevent crime in historically vulnerable inner-city neighborhoods. This scholar proposes linking Food Justice initiatives to crime prevention initiatives and criminological theory to ultimately reduce the rates of recidivism and to prevent incidences of crime in urban regions. By exploring how the built environment gives rise to offender motivation through the concept of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED), he proposes that designers can prescribe certain design elements that would promote social cohesion and connectivity among its residents and ultimately make communities safer,

healthier, and more sustainable. This argument can be traced back to Jane Jacobs' Life and Death of Great American Cities in which she argues that socially and economically viable cities are those that actively create networks of engaged citizens that watch out for one another and keep the streets safe through surveillance. The analysis of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design should also be applied to prisons and jails so that the environment behind bars is rehabilitative rather than promoting of violence.

Brisman (2009) also discusses the topic of diet-related illnesses experienced by low-income individuals, which the Food Justice movement often attempts to combat with their rhetoric of health and wellbeing. He claims that “reducing the disproportionate prevalence of obesity in low-income, minority populations necessitates conceptualizing the problem as more than just one of weight and body mass or even public health, for that matter. It demands conceiving of obesity as a symptom of structural oppression that results in racial and economic justice, as well as 'food injustice'-- 'unequal access to foods that are good for both you and your body, and that help to sustain life'” (Brisman 2009, pg. 7). This explanation is vital in the explanation of poor health among incarcerated women because the majority of women in prison have been oppressed racially, socially or economically throughout their lives (Young 1996, pg. 441). In analyzing women's experiences about food and health in prison, it is vital that this institutionalized oppression is taken into account before arriving at any conclusions that blame the individual.

This argument is similar to that of Julie Guthman, a Community Studies professor at UC Santa Cruz, who criticizes the Food Justice movement in her recent book, Weighing In: Obesity, Food Justice, and the Limits of Capitalism. She argues that the Food Justice Movement often

utilizes the obesity epidemic as a way of preaching ideals of healthy food through nutrition education. She problematizes this method because it does not resolve the crisis of obesity in our nation. Rather, it isolates individuals based on their access to quality foods and champions others who seek to consume healthy, seasonal, local fare regardless of their income. She does not endorse the ills of the industrial food system but instead points out the inadequacies of the Food Justice movement in attempting to solve the obesity epidemic through integrated garden and nutrition or other food justice initiatives that falsely represent obesity as a problem attributed to the energy balance model and personal choice.

Guthman (2011) also critically assesses the impact of the toxic environment on bodily ecologies. She critiques the missionary-like interventions of a number of Food Justice activists, including her students, who hope to impose their healthist values on “downtrodden” populations (Guthman 2011, pg. 157). This analysis proves that there is an ideological conflict between the Food Justice movement and the alternative food movement in terms of class difference. This issue is discussed in another article by Guthman (2007) humorously titled “Can’t Stomach It: How Michael Pollan et. al. Makes Me Want to Eat Cheetos.”

While the food movement urges its followers to stop consuming “edible food-like substances,” as coined by celebrity author and “real food” activist, Michael Pollan, women in prison do not have the choice nor the agency to gain access to particular fresh, local, organic, or, in other words, what are considered to be “healthy” foods that the food movement encourages (Pollan 2008). Terms like “vote with your fork” may be alienating to these women because they are unable to vote for the duration of their time in prison until they have completed parole.

Women in prison also do not have much choice in the foods that they eat due to physical

and economic barriers, which is akin to the concept of a food desert (Reisig and Hobbis, 2000, pg. 138; Shaw 2006, pg. 231). A food desert is when certain communities do not have access to healthy and nourishing foods, so in essence, a prison can be classified as a food desert. The incidence of diet-related health problems escalates in these so-called food deserts, and the quality of the food served in prison contributes to the high rates of diet-related illnesses, which are largely preventable through a proper diet.

Another component of food injustice is the lack of accessible land for cultivation by racially marginalized communities. The number of farmers has declined rapidly in the past century due to the United States Department of Agriculture's denial of loans and subsidies for smaller family farms. Further, the USDA discriminated against African-American farmers by denying them loans and thus depriving them of “a source of wealth and access to economic and environmental benefits” (Alkon & Norgaard 294). This institutional racism allowed white Americans to dominate the agricultural sector because they were able to purchase machines to increase crop productivity and therefore accumulate wealth. This is similar to the aforementioned concept of “redlining.” Essentially, racism has penetrated the two major industrial systems of food and corrections over time, and this institutionalized racial oppression plays out in the modern Prison Industrial Complex and Industrial Food System.

In an effort to equalize the racialized health disparities experienced in prison, The World Health Organization is working to build an international network health improvement programs in a campaign they call “Healthy Prisons,” whose aim is to reduce the health divide among the most vulnerable populations who are affected by incarceration and environmental racism (Smith 2002, pg. 198). Due to the fact that those from lower socio-economic backgrounds and those

who are otherwise marginalized are over-represented in the prison population, it is vital to assess their health needs to bring justice to those who are behind bars.

Interestingly enough, there are other unacknowledged connections between the Prison Industrial Complex and the Industrial Food System, especially in the fight for farmworker's rights in the field, which has become a major component of Food Justice. The large majority of the American produce is grown in the Central Valley of California by (im)migrant farmworkers, who are facing extreme exposure to pesticides, poor working conditions, and low wages. They are also threatened by the criminal justice system in two ways: the risk of detainment and the construction of socially, economically, and ecologically hazardous mega prisons. It has been stated that "over half of the state's new mega-prisons have been built in the Valley; its counties rank among the highest in the state in incarceration rates. And Valley towns are subject to frequent and often brutal raids and dragnets by US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and other law enforcement agencies targeting the sizable immigrant populations" (Braz & Gilmore 2006, pg.96). The same geographical areas that are targeted for toxic waste sites are also redlined for the construction of prisons. The vast agricultural acres of California's Central Valley are the prime area for the siting of these facilities because they are home to rural, vulnerable communities who are not likely to protest to the attempted reversal of economic stagnation.

Even though mega-prisons and farms are concentrated in this region, it has allowed citizens to rise up, organize, and protest against the prisonization and therefore the decimation of their political, cultural, and social geography. Fortunately, "the proximity of vigorous Environmental Justice activism to California's Prison Alley has helped activists from both movements see the similarities in [their] fights. Foremost among them has been the state

sanctioned imposition of toxic threats on the poor, people of color, and the immigrants" (Braz & Gilmore 2006, pg. 98). The connections between the Industrial Food System of California's San Joaquin Valley and the Prison Industrial Complex of California's "Prison Alley" are quickly being recognized through the social and Environmental Justice activism that is occurring in these rural communities, which allows for the dual empowerment of traditionally disenfranchised communities that experience both environmental injustice and incarceration.

Anti- Prison Movement

The movement for prison reform argues that the Prison Industrial Complex (PIC) is obsolete and disproportionately targets people of color and low-income individuals. Further, prison abolitionism fights to completely deconstruct these institutions in order to create more effective alternatives that will save the state billions of dollars in governmental spending and actually rehabilitate those who are incarcerated. Meanwhile, the Environmental Justice (EJ) Movement asserts that environmental injustices are disproportionately targeted at similarly disenfranchised communities.

Only in recent years have these two movements coalesced in a combined Anti-Prison Organizing and Environmental Justice Activism convergence. The first discussion around coalition-building and campaign-planning among activists from both the Prison Abolition and Environmental Justice movements occurred in 2001 in Oakland, California at a conference called "Joining Forces: Environmental Justice and the Fight Against Prison Expansion." The organizations present sought to "explore how prisons constitute environmental racism and injustice, how... [to] use strategies from the environmental and economic justice movements to

stop new prisons, and what are real economic development alternatives to prisons for rural communities where most new prisons are sited and urban communities from which most prisoners are taken” (Braz & Gilmore 2006, pg. 99). This convergence allowed for active members of each movement to coalesce and strategize about the future of the movement in the specific locale of the San Joaquin Valley or Prison Alley, yet they had not incorporated the Food Justice movement into the discourse, which could address the third topic of economic development alternatives to prisons. Food Justice initiatives in rural and urban areas alike could assist in the establishment of sustainable food systems that are more equitable to the ecosystem, the farmers and farmworkers, as well as the communities in close proximity to what would otherwise be LULUs.

There remains a lack of research that links all three social movements together through shared experiences, tactics, and measures, while highlighting their potential to reinforce each other. By building a community and united front of scholars and activists, they could illuminate concrete solutions for dismantling the Prison Industrial Complex and the Industrial Food System, or, at the very least, reassessing these systems of oppression in order to make them more equitable and ecologically balanced. In this way, the collaboration between these three social movements of Environmental Justice, Food Justice, and Prison Reform/ Abolition would lead to increased social and environmental justice in both the food and corrections systems. In the following section, I will detail the specific ways in which these injustices affect incarcerated women.

CHAPTER 3: THE INDUSTRIAL FOOD SYSTEM INSIDE THE PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

In this chapter, I will examine the impacts of the Industrial Food System on individuals who experience incarceration. First, I will explain the methodology by which I was able to gather this information from women on parole. According to these interviews, I will establish and clarify the problems with the food system in prison, which alienates individuals from each other while worsening health symptoms caused by lack of access to fresh foods. Finally, I will assess a number of the diet-related illnesses discussed by the Crossroads women in their interviews.

Methodology-

Historically, actual inmates' voices were silenced in the study of the penal system; however, recent trends in prison studies make known the multitude of personal narratives of those who have experienced incarceration in their lifetime (Smith 2002, pg. 200). The following interviews were collected from women who have served time in what were California's three state women's prisons: Valley State Prison for Women (VSP), California Institution for Women (CIW), and Central California Facility for Women (CCWF). As of January of 2013, Valley State Prison was converted to another men's prison. Women from VSP in Chowchilla, California were transferred either to CCWF, which is across the street from VSP in Chowchilla; or CIW, located in Corona. The conditions of overcrowding are extreme in these two prisons: there are currently 3,900 women living at CCWF, which is a prison built for 2,000, so the prison is at approximately 200% of its capacity (Correctional News 2013). Now, the total number of women's prisons in the state of California is 2, and the number of men's prisons is 33 (www.cdcr.ca.gov).

Each of the women interviewed are former or current residents of Crossroads, Inc., a non-profit organization that acts as a transitional facility for previously incarcerated women. It is a certified drug and alcohol program located in Claremont, CA, designated for women who would benefit from “housing, education, support, and counseling in a homelike environment.”

Crossroads' ultimate goal is to empower women to take control of their lives and to help them step out to the revolving door of prison and jail” (crossroadswomen.org). The notorious “revolving door” of the criminal justice system refers to the high rate of recidivism, which according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, “is measured by criminal acts that resulted in the rearrest, re-conviction, or return to prison with or without a new sentence during a three-year period following the prisoner's release” (Bureau of Justice Statistics 2013).

Crossroads, Inc. has had great success in reducing the rate of recidivism among the women who have graduated from the program. The average rate of recidivism in California from 2004-2007 was a staggering 57.8% (Pew Center of the States 2011, pg. 10). On the other hand, 86% of Crossroads graduates are self-sustaining after 6 years, so the likelihood that a woman who graduates from Crossroads will return to prison is virtually flipped compared to a woman who does not go through the program. Crossroads attributes this reduction in recidivism to the goals outlined in their mission: “developing a healthier lifestyle through participation in drug and alcohol counseling/ education, life skills sessions, and healthy living sessions; and becoming an independent, contributing member of society by finding full-time employment, opening a savings account and saving a minimum of 75% of each check, and learning independent living skills for managing her own home and finances” (crossroadswomen.org).

Personally, I have been working in conjunction with the program for several years,

focusing on the Food Justice program, which consists of three central projects that connect Claremont College students with women at Crossroads: Meatless Mondays, a communal meal from locally donated produce and workshop about issues surrounding food politics; Saturday gardening workshops; and the social enterprise, Fallen Fruit from Rising Women. By providing employment, valuable skills, and job experience, all of these Food Justice programs seek to contribute to Crossroads' goal of reducing the rate of recidivism among women in the program.

The interviews were collected from women who are or were current Crossroads clients or from recent graduates who live in the vicinity. In approaching each individual candidate, I explained my interest in further understanding the women's relationship with the built environment, food, and community. Before every interview, I presented an Institutional Review Board-approved consent form that outlined specific procedures, including the risks and benefits of being in the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and the various measures to ensure confidentiality. In summary, the women *are not* personally identified in this thesis for their protection. I recognize that this is a particularly vulnerable population, and I do not want to include anything that might potentially put the women involved in this study at risk in any way. That being said, I do not include anything in my thesis that may be harmful or incriminating to any participants involved. As stated in my consent form, I will use pseudonyms for all participants when necessary in order to protect their identity.

Risks and Benefits

From the beginning, I anticipated that this would be a highly beneficial project due to the fact that there is only a small amount of research available about Food Justice, much less about

how food justice functions inside prison. Additionally, there is very little scholarly writing completed about incarcerated individuals' perception of horticultural therapy in prisons or even on social enterprises involving the formerly incarcerated. This primary research will contribute to an up-and-coming field, which will broaden and deepen the academic knowledge about the Food Justice and the Prison Reform movement.

For the participants in the research project, the interview was a space for open expression about their experiences with food and community throughout their lives, especially in prison. Instead of it being a cut-and-dry interview process, the dialogue was more of a conversation that lead to different interpretations of the questions asked, so I was able to more fully comprehend the women's opinions about the criminal justice system in relation to food and public health. This reflection may be beneficial to them in transitioning back into society from a traditionally marginalized population, in an often-unseen environment without access to or acknowledgement from the broader outside world. There were no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this interview process besides those encountered in one's day-to-day life.

Research Questions:

There were four primary research questions that guided the interview process:

1. How have the Prison Industrial Complex and the Industrial Food System contributed to the disenfranchisement of specific targeted communities? How has this influenced individuals' experiences in prison?
2. In what ways has food and the built environment influenced the participants' emotional, physical, and spiritual wellbeing in prison?

3. How has gardening or food-based education contributed to rehabilitation in the prison setting?
4. How has the food justice program at Crossroads changed the participants' perspective about food, community, and the built environment?

In order to answer these specific and directed research questions, I asked a series of interview questions that the women answered according to their experiences and perception of food and community during their time inside prison. They were not required to answer if they did not feel comfortable with what was being asked, but for the most part, the questions were answered in depth. All of these interview questions are listed in Appendix A.

Interviews with Crossroads' women

In total, I conducted ten interviews with Crossroads women. Every woman interviewed had served a life sentence in which they observed and internalized the evolution of food in prison over decades of time. The following critical analysis of the current foodways in the prison system is divided up thematically to address the three aforementioned social movements: Environmental Justice, Food Justice, and Prison Justice.

Maria Cross, co-author of Nutrition in Institutions explains that food in prison was historically utilized to deprive and starve inmates of power and agency. The routine of eating every meal in a communal area without much choice about the quality or quantity of the food on behalf of the inmate often spurred aggressive behavior and even riots in prison. Henceforth, food provisioning had a heightened importance in keeping the peace in correctional institutions, where

food has been used as a tool “of condemnatory miserliness intended to punish, debilitate, and degrade” (Cross 2009, pg. 277). Mealtimes also punctuate the entire day in the prison setting, which allows the inmates to look forward to the “possibility of pleasure” (Cross 2009, pg. 275). The history of prison food, however, has not always applied to women's institutions, which were developed after men's prisons, and therefore took on many of the qualities of male correctional facilities without regard for women's variable physical requirements. Catrin Smith points out in “Punishment and Pleasure: Women, Food, and the Imprisoned Body,” that food in prison represents not only pleasure, but also discipline, rebellion, resistance, and freedom of choice. She explains that the role of food in women's prisons gains a tremendous importance laden with political, economic and social meaning beyond even what food symbolizes in the free world. All of this evidence points to the fact that there are a number of unacknowledged problems within the food available in correctional institutions.

The Problem with the Prison-Industrial Food System-

Throughout the interview process, there were several recurring themes that the women discussed at length. They were quick to point out the obvious inadequacies of the food served inside the prison system, but they were also very insistent that there are viable alternatives to the current state-controlled food procurement process in California. In this discussion, many of the women also insinuated that there are important underlying issues that must be addressed in attempting to remediate the injustices of the criminal justice system, including providing access to higher education and employment training opportunities.

From a broader perspective, it is clear that the prison environment is not adapted to rehabilitate prisoners due to the state's neoliberal motivation to incarcerate individuals for profit. To this end, many programs involving food, nutrition, or gardening have been cut or are highly discouraged by the bureaucracy of the prison system, and therefore women are unable to break the cycle of incarceration through the power of food because they do not have access to the basic services necessary to transition from prison back into society. This includes food security, employment skills, and/or adequate education.

One woman, who served twenty-seven years, described this phenomenon perfectly when she said that prison is “not a place for rehabilitation at all. It's not a place where one can remain healthy or let's say, eat healthy” (Participant 4). Prison, as it currently functions, acts as a place of retribution rather than a place of rehabilitation. Food is used primarily as a tool for punishment in the penal system, and it is reinforced both by the staff and by the institutions themselves. This injustice can be attributed to the fact that food laws, for the most part, do not apply to the prison population (Naim 2005). In other words, the numerous state-regulated agencies in place that control food production, distribution, consumption and overall service are not utilized for the regulation of prison food, so the system is not efficiently structured or accountable to any particular governing agency. The free market approach to food procurement in prisons has lead administrators to control their own institutions how they see fit, and they are rarely met with complications. This is because institutions are only held responsible for not violating the United States constitution. The amendments applicable to these injustices are the First Amendment, which is the right to freedom of religion and the Eighth Amendment, the ban on cruel and unusual punishment (Naim 2005).

Still, innumerable lawsuits have been filed against the institutions on behalf of the prisoners themselves claiming a violation of the Eighth Amendment due to complete deprivation of food for days at a time. Participant 4 continues to elaborate on the quality of the food in relation to the treatment of prisoners: “It's going to take mass media, mass media to expose what's going on. Then and only then will they change it, then and only then. We can fight all day long; we have a lot of strong women in prison... It would just blow your mind. Outstanding women, outstanding. But their hands are bound” (Participant 4). Even though there are a number of women in prison who are actively seeking change inside California's state women's prisons, their voices are not heard by those in control. Whatever the reason is for this silencing, the women are led to believe that they are sub-human because they are continuously oppressed, both before prison and throughout their terms inside. The sense of hopelessness she expressed is a result of the endless subordination she felt throughout her time in prison, even as a member of the Women's Advisory Council (WAC), which is a committee of inmates that acts as “the liaison to warden from general population.” By “meeting with all the division heads, each department in the prison setting, and taking note of the actual needs of the people,” she acted as a leader by reporting their needs to the governmental officials in charge. She explained their opposition in providing for the needs of the general population: “there's no such thing as collaboration...They say that want to collaborate with us, but they don't because if you wanted to collaborate, then you wouldn't be trying to figure out how to get it up and moving” (Participant 4). The WAC meets monthly with the warden to try to negotiate and get the needs of the general population met by the institution. The wardens would deny the majority of their proposals because they would state

that the projects were not necessary. This demonstrates that the inmates have very little power in the choice of their foods, thus limiting their ability to eat healthfully.

In the interview, she was quick to retort to the opposition she received as if she was talking directly to the warden, “Well, you don't live here. You go home and you eat wonderful broccoli and whatever you want to eat.” She said that they would respond by stating, “You should have never come to prison.” Based on her statement, it is clear that the institution is failing to meet the needs of the general population, especially in relation to healthy food, which exemplifies the lack of attention paid to the individual's physical and emotional requirements for rehabilitation. This can be directly attributed to the moneymaking scheme that is the Prison Industrial Complex.

The countless other women like Participant 4 in American prisons and jails are in a very similar position of disenfranchisement due to a number of factors limiting their access to healthy lifestyles. The first and perhaps most problematic issue is that 57% of women in prison experienced sexual and/or physical abuse prior to incarceration (Little Hoover Commission 2004). Participant 9 attributes many women's suffering to “a long history of abuse from when they were children.” She is relieved that there is finally more comprehensive scholarly research being completed than ever before about the connection between abuse, addiction, and crime. She explained, “Hurt people hurt people, so until you teach the people how to not be hurt anymore, then they don't know how to stop hurting. It's very basic, very simple, but as long as you have people who are making money off of it, then you'll continue to have the problem” (Participant 9). This cycle of violence and hurt is what lends itself to the high rate of recidivism in our criminal

justice system. In the California penal system, it seems that the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation is no longer paying mind to the rehabilitative component.

Even further, a number of women stated that being in prison worsened the behavior of the inmates because they were forced into criminal behavior, especially in relation to food.

Participant 4 describes the cycle of recidivism from her point of view, someone who has witnessed it first hand:

Some people succumb to the criminal behavior, the people that the ones with the recidivism rate, they are deviant; they are deviant because they are illiterate! They're deviant because who's going to hire them? You see how hard it is for us to get a job... These people that don't have the support, they are going to go right back to what they know. And that's selling drugs, prostituting, robbing, whatever it is that they do. And right back they come, right back they come.

She attributes the revolving door of the prison system to the ineffective nature of the prison industrial complex and the lack of rehabilitation that actually goes on inside. She would have liked to see more educational and vocational opportunities for whom she calls her "sisters," and she wants to continue to advocate for justice in the system after she graduates from Crossroads.

This continuous exploitation was echoed in one woman's story: "I was a lost child, a lost soul. I had bad experiences when I was growing up, before I went to prison. It left me with issues that I hadn't dealt with until I went to prison, so my eyes were closed to the beauty of life, the beauty of people, bad and good, I didn't see all of that. Now I can see." After being in and out of solitary confinement for 15 years, Participant 8 chose to make the change in her life in order to break the cycle of violence. She attributes her own personal transformation to a choice that she was able to make in a program available to her in prison. She explained that rehabilitative programs like Alcoholics Anonymous were the most effective use of her time in prison and thus

the most effective use of the system's funds. There is a concerted need for treatment programs in prison that address the issues like scarring childhood experiences from the root of the problem, and the incorporation of horticultural therapy and other food-justice related programs could facilitate this rehabilitation, which would ultimately reduce the rate of recidivism in the California state criminal justice system.

Growing up- Food Production and Consumption in Childhood

For a lot of the women interviewed, their experiences in childhood influenced their relationship to food, community, and the environment. Factors like rural or urban living had a large impact on the way they view the source of their sustenance and their connection to it. For example, Participant 4 grew up in urban Los Angeles, yet she was heavily influenced by her grandmother who “believed in growing everything, from oranges to apples to figs to avocados, so [she] grew up around a lot of vegetables and fruit.” In her own words,

She taught me to be self-sufficient... Grow it yourself and then you just go out there, if you're ever hungry, you go and get it, and it's better. My grandmother always taught me that. She said it's better than canned foods. Canned food has too many preservatives; it's not good for you... So my grandmother always taught me to be self-sufficient in that your own food that you grow, it's better for you because you know what you put in the ground (Participant 4).

The sense of food security that this woman speaks of is reminiscent of more recent urban agriculture projects that have sprung up in the last decade, which will be described in depth in Chapter 5 in relation to prison garden projects. The influence of her grandmother caused this particular woman to be concerned about her own health as well as the health of others in the prison setting. She is passionate about eating well for her wellbeing and wants to spread this

knowledge and wisdom to others, especially those who have experienced incarceration. Her investment in this particular way of life demonstrates the need for food-based educational programming in institutions like schools and prisons because becoming familiar with ecological values as well as the knowledge of growing and cooking food is vital for the development of healthy relationships with food and the planet. However, food corporations would rather individuals be destitute and powerless instead of food sovereign because dependence on systems like the Prison Industrial Complex and the Industrial Food System produce large amounts of revenue over time.

Even though many women in prison may have not received Environmental or Food Justice education in their childhoods, there is tremendous potential for this type of programming in prisons because the majority of these women have children, so their acquired knowledge could benefit the children once their parents are released from prison. Children with incarcerated parents are more likely to quit school, commit acts of delinquency and subsequently become incarcerated themselves, so food justice intervention could do a lot to prevent the cycle of familial incarceration (The Sentencing Project 2009, pg. 1).

Most of the women who were interviewed did not grow up with an agricultural background, but there was one woman who was the outlier in this scenario:

My growing up years, I never ate anything out of a store. We made our own butter, our own cheeses, cottage cheese. Everything was made on that farm. When I came to California is when I was subjected to margarine, meats packaged like they do in processed foods. We didn't have that. Everything we ate was freshly done and properly done. Like meat, we raised meat... and you feed them proper; you are not going to get a diseased animal. Today, you don't know what you are eating, because most of the time you don't know what it is, not really. You don't know what's in the hamburger (Participant 3).

The Industrial Food System had a huge personal impact on her way of life once she moved to California from the Midwest, and she did not view the industrial system as positive or beneficial in any way. The processed foods she was exposed to in prison also had a huge impact on her health: she is relatively immobile due to a number of diet-related diseases that she has acquired over her years in prison. She kept using the word “proper” to describe her agricultural roots, when everything was done by hand. She continued to make the connections about the diseased animals and their impact on diet –related diseases among women who, like her, spend extended periods of time in prison.

Personal Food Choices

Personal food choices evolve from prior knowledge and past experiences that inform an individual's relationship to and perception of their food consumption patterns. Participant 9 acknowledged her history when she stated, “When I committed my crime, I forfeited my choice, and I get that, but at the same time, food being such a necessity, not even a want, it's a necessity to survive, and studies show that how you eat affects your health.” In other words, even though Participant 9 committed a crime, she proclaims that she still deserves to eat nutritionally balanced foods because access to healthy food is not only a human right but also a necessity for personal wellbeing. Without these kinds of foods, there is the possibility that women in prison will not have the energy necessary to rehabilitate themselves because the quality of the food is so poor. This statement also demonstrates that prison food is detrimental to these women's relationship to food as well as their emotional, physical, and mental health.

According to the interviews, food choices are extremely limited in the prison setting, so some women's eating habits change drastically when they become incarcerated. Participant 9 stated that “upon incarceration...I was surrounded by junk food, and while the prison did their best to provide healthy meals, by the time it got through the whole process, in order to feed 4,000 people, some of the integrity of the food was lost, and so therefore it's not the sort of food that I was brought up with, so my eating habits changed.” Personal food choices were inhibited by the selection available in the prison environment. The dining hall solely offered the same exact foods every week, so there was very little variability in the types of foods served. Additionally, there are very few options available for personal food procurement in the canteen and catalogues, and the types of food that are available are highly processed and extremely expensive. This caused many women to lack satisfaction not only with the food that was served but also in the entirety of the prison experience because they depended on food for pleasure and relaxation.

Other women's food choices are heavily influenced by what they have or have not had access to during their period of incarceration. Participant 5 described her aversion to canned mixed vegetables, which she now associates with the oppression she recalls from her experience inside. Decades behind bars influences individuals' relationship to food drastically because in prison, food becomes a commodity rather than a source of energy or nourishment. Another woman, Participant 4, spoke extensively about her food choices after being released from prison:

I'll eat junk every now and then, that's if I'm hungry and I can't get to food that I want to eat. If I have a choice, I am going to always eat healthy. I'm very conscious of what I eat. Because I am getting older, and so that plays another part in it for me. It's like, no I can't be eating all that because it's hard to get the pounds off now, so I gotta watch it. And then, you know, diabetes, high blood pressure, and I have high blood pressure, so I really want to watch what I eat, I really want to try my best to do what I need to do to protect me.

This woman is particularly conscious of her food choices because she strives to eat well for her personal health. She, like many of the women interviewed, are trying to lose weight and maintain or improve their health; however, after being released on parole, it can be extremely difficult to gain access to what are considered “healthy” foods due to the limitations of state-sponsored benefit programs for felons. Henceforth, the Industrial Food System, together with the Prison Industrial Complex, negatively impacts individuals who serve time because they do not have the ability or the power to advocate for access to healthy food. This is especially true in institutions' dining facilities.

Mess Hall-

At California Institution for Women, some refer to the general population's eating area as the mess hall, others as the Village Cafeteria or VC, and others as simply the dining hall. Whatever it is called, every woman interviewed despised the food. In years past, the quality of the food was higher, but due to recent budget cuts, the quality and quantity of the food has decreased immensely. This affected the overall health in the prison setting and worsened the existing diet-related illnesses in the prison setting.

Participant 4 described her experience in what she calls the chow hall. She remembered, “we line up like little animals...the staff holler and talk to us like little animals. It's getting in line like everybody else... It's the way they talk to us there. They talk to us bad, real bad. Just terrible. I had to put up a mental block. I am not going to allow this to penetrate me and that's how I was able to not hear it. They abuse you at will.” The ill treatment experienced in prison in addition to the horrible quality of the food caused this one woman to equate the environment of the prison

dining hall to that of a Concentrated Animal Feed Operation (CAFO) in which animals are force-fed industrially processed commodity food items like corn and soy. She expressed that beyond feeling dehumanized, she felt like an animal in confinement because she was treated so poorly by the correctional officers and staff. An article in the *Journal Critical Animal Studies* sheds light on the “eerily similar trajectories of the Prison Industrial Complex and factory farms. Both institutions sprouted up separately in rural communities and proponents heralded them as job-providers for impoverished communities. Both institutions serve as transformative spaces that encourage physical displacement, limit mobility, and create exiled individuals. Both institutions forge identities, shape relationships, and take lives” (Shields & Thomas 2012, pg. 4). The comparison between these two industries explains why Participant 4 felt as though she was being treated like an animal in the prison food setting. Further, it explains how these systems are designed to encourage docility in living beings by limiting food security.

Food Security

The issue of food security in prison is an overarching concern for those who are spending years behind bars; however, it is relatively neglected from critiques of the criminal justice system. Food security is defined by the World Health Organization as “existing when all people at all times have access to sufficient, safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active life. Commonly, the concept of food security is defined as including both physical and economic access to food that meets people's dietary needs as well as their food preferences” (World Health Organization). The WHO also defines three distinct pillars of food security. The first is Food Availability, which means that there is a sufficient amount of food consistently and reliably

available. The second is food access, or having sufficient resources to obtain the appropriate foods necessary for a nutritious and healthful diet. The third is food use, which is the appropriate use of food based on knowledge of basic nutrition and care, as well as adequate water and sanitation. According to the data retrieved from the interviews, none of these pillars of food security are satisfied in the prison system in California's state women's prisons.

“For people that was in there that didn't have money they couldn't shop and buy they own food or get boxes or anything, of course they ate in there, they had no other choice. They wanted to eat, but for people that had choices we didn't eat in there half the time” (Participant 8).

There is a definite lack of literature regarding food security in the prison system due to the fact that there is little transparency within the prison system. One would question the humane treatment of offenders in this context and liken it to the previously mentioned comparison of the factory farm or CAFO to the federal and state prisons. From the interviews, it is easy to ascertain that there is little access to fruits and vegetables while inside prison, especially those that are organic or even fresh. According to one woman, there “was hardly ever a fresh vegetable. It was frozen, and when they cooked it, they started cooking for dinnertime at 11 am, and you didn't eat until 6 o'clock. So these vegetables are in a steamer for that many hours” (Participant 1). She continued on to say that being in prison, “made me want more fruits and vegetables because everything they cooked there is so over cooked or no flavor and you crave what you don't have.” She was insistent that there should be “vegetables with flavor and nutrients” because it would have increased the consumption of healthful food as well as the satisfaction among inmates, but they were not afforded this opportunity.

Participant 1 said there was a label on the fruit boxes that said, “Do not sell to public.”

When asked how it made her feel to be eating food not meant for the public, she stated, “It's very demeaning... It makes you feel less than, like we are not good enough to have food that somebody else would eat. That they wouldn't take it home and feed their children that, but they feed us that” (Participant 1). Not only was the treatment in the dining facilities in prison dehumanizing, the food itself made the women cooking and eating in the mess hall feel as though they did not deserve food that they considered “good” in that it was grown and made with care for the environment and humans.

Many of the women I interviewed used to work in the central kitchen, which was supposed to provide food for the general population; however, there were many women who stopped going to the dining hall due to the terrible quality of the food. Of the ten women interviewed, four women worked in the central kitchen during the duration of their time in prison.

Working in the kitchen-

Of the women who were employed in the kitchen, all of them had a general distaste for the food that was served. Even though they had more of an investment in the product due to the time and energy spent working there, they recognized the poor quality and lack of nutritional value of the food served in the mess hall. Participant 1, who worked in the central kitchen for 13 years, on both the morning and night shifts, stated,

If you let me work in there, then the food was gonna turn out good because I'm gonna season it the way I want to, but then they started getting strict on the seasonings you can use because not everyone can eat everything, so the food became more bland. Prison food really sucked. I like to cook. I didn't mind working in the kitchen; the only thing I minded is that it's nasty.

Even though this specific woman enjoyed the process of cooking regardless of the taste, she was

highly disappointed with the outcome, and was more than happy to describe what she would have done differently had she been in control. It wasn't as if the women working in the kitchen wanted to serve bad-tasting food to the inmates; they simply did not have enough agency to change the kind of food ordered and delivered or even the way they were allowed cook it. Due to the limitations implemented by their bosses from higher up, the women had no choice in the matter: they were simply hired for less than a dollar an hour to feed the masses of people eating in the cafeteria. Based off of the interviews, the women who worked in the kitchen interviewed lack a sense of pride about the food that was served in the dining halls because they recognized the poor quality and meager quantity as well as the systematic problems caused by the bombardment of rules and regulations that do not necessarily seem to have a purpose.

Participant 2 boldly stated, "If I was a food inspector walking into a place and trying out their food or taking a tray with me to see what all was in what, I think that I would probably fail them as a restaurant." This statement attests to her distrust in the institution as a whole. She continued, "They don't get inspected by the health department. The warden comes down, once every couple of months, and has a meal, and we always had a great meal that time. Seriously, the food even turns out decent, you know, but they know he's coming" (Participant 2). Even though there may not be a lack of care put into the food on behalf of the female inmates on kitchen duty, there is a lack of flavor in the dishes. She goes on to mention the lack of cleanliness of the kitchen area due to the negligence of the state-employed food managers. Women who worked in the kitchen stated that there was not a proper system in place for washing dishes, so when women would go to dinner, breakfast would still be on the tray, which detracts from an environment that fosters healthy relationships with food. If the women already struggle with

negative associations with food due to prior traumatic experiences, then prison will undoubtedly cause more trauma without rehabilitating the individual.

In order to incorporate rehabilitation into the prison agenda and halt the oppression of women and their health situation around, the institution could provide vocational training courses in the kitchen that could ultimately reduce the rate of recidivism among females serving time while also empowering them through the production and consumption of food.

Vocational Training

Vocational training in the kitchen would give women the ability to expand their knowledge of food and cooking while building valuable job and entrepreneurial skills. Participant 9 explained that her boss in the kitchen was attempting to transform the kitchen into a program that might even reduce the rate of recidivism among female inmates in Central California Women's Facility. She reasoned that women's "innate desire to cook," which she said is influenced largely by gendered social upbringing and norms, would have provided a launching point for a successful program. She detailed that more structure in the central kitchen would not only improve the food served in the dining hall, but it would also assist in the rehabilitation of vocational employees and ensure future career opportunities for them once they are released. Participant 9 stated, "the majority of us will get out, and the first place we will work is in a fast food place. And there's no telling where it could go from there." There are many potential employment opportunities available in the Culinary Arts and food service, and there is also joy and solace found in the kitchen for some women, especially those in the otherwise hostile environment of the prison.

Working with food provides a connection to the earth and to the outside world, both of which prisoners are isolated from during their time in prison. She went on to say, “if you are really trying to encourage rehabilitation, then the staff who are working in the dining rooms need to help foster that rehabilitation and help people who are at a point in their lives where they don't care because they feel so low about themselves and show them how to care where their food comes from, teach people how to be respectful about where they eat their food and how to prepare their food (Participant 9). In other words, the dynamics of the prison must also change so that the programs emphasize rehabilitation rather than retribution. This would require program directors to treat inmates in a way that would promote respect, dignity, and integrity in the workplace, which would allow the participants to gain a sense of confidence in the kitchen and eventually in their future careers. A program like this one could also improve the food in the dining facilities because they would have more agency in what was cooked as well as how it was handled and served.

There were a number of suggestions by the women that were aimed at improving the quality of food in the dining hall. Participant 1 spoke about reducing the quantity of the food purchased which would allow for an increase in the quality of the food for the same cost. She explained, “If you would feed a better quality, people would clean their plates. They wouldn't complain that it's a small portion because they're actually getting something out of everything that's on the plate. I would have done things that were a little different to accommodate people and to make them satisfied.” Feeding inmates higher quality food would eliminate enormous amounts of food waste, which would also cut down on greenhouse gas emissions; it would also reduce high rates of diet-related illnesses among the incarcerated; and finally, it would make the

prison population more satisfied with the availability and accessibility of better foods.

Salad bar-

Regardless of their institutional affiliation, every single woman interviewed mentioned the salad bar in the mess halls of all three state women's institutions only years ago. It acted as a main source of nutrients for women because it was the only way they could receive their vegetable intake throughout the day. Unfortunately, the salad bar was taken out due to budget cuts, but the women still remembered it fondly as the best aspect of the dining services. Many women described losing the salad bar as an act of punishment. They were never told exactly why it was being taken away, but as Participant 3 stated, the prison officials “really didn't give us an answer. It's just one thing they felt that they wanted to take. If they say no more, there's no more...they just felt they needed to take it for whatever reason, and they did, and people lived on that salad bar.” As evidenced here, the women also depicted the lack of high quality food as continuous punishment for their crimes. However unfortunate, the lack of fresh produce cannot be considered cruel and unusual punishment under the Eighth Amendment.

Participant 1 claimed that the salad bar satisfied her craving for veggies and fruit, which she didn't have an appetite for before her incarceration. As she stated, “going to a place that makes you appreciate what you have out here, it makes you more flexible as to trying new things.” For example, she learned to appreciate the taste of tomatoes while in prison because they were extremely rare to find inside prison. She recalled the difference in the taste of the tomatoes from the garden that were in the salad bar for consumption from those she had tasted before. She even said, “I started to like tomatoes, and I never liked those as a kid.” Participant 1's experience

with food inside demonstrates that the right kinds of food could provide positive eating experiences, for she treasured the salad bar because it offered fresh produce that she never had access to before incarceration.

Another admirer of the salad bar, Participant 4, described its contents at length. There was “fresh broccoli, fresh carrots, fresh cucumbers, fresh celery, we would have fresh radish; we just had a magnificent salad bar. Everything was fresh, very good. Quality.” She emphasized the freshness in every item because the value of fresh food is at a premium because the majority of fruits and vegetables are dehydrated and freeze-dried. She went on to say that the prison cut the salad bar, like they have cut many other rehabilitative programs, due to operational costs, but she did not understand their reasoning behind this particular budget cut because it has a direct correlation with the healthcare costs in prison, which come at a high cost for the state and federal government. Participant 4 asserted,

You can afford to give me cookies, you can afford to give me potato chips, you can afford to feed me two pieces of bread in the morning, two pieces of bread for lunch, and some bread at dinner, you can afford to give me that much starch, plus potatoes or macaroni and cheese. The health care is going to be extensive. I am one of those ones who cost them a lot. Because I didn't get the food that I needed, high blood pressure set in for me, so it was left up to them to come up with something to do with me because I cannot eat the food that you have.

This personal anecdote is extremely common in the prison system, where programs are often cut for little to no reason at all. Overall, every woman interviewed in this study claimed that the food there were fed in the prisons' dining hall either caused or worsened their health because they were not being served an adequate quality or quantity of food. This results in a high concentration of diet-related illnesses occurring in the prison setting.

Diet-Related Public Health Issues in Prison

As a result of poor diet and healthcare, there are high rates of diet-related illnesses in prison. This is especially true for women who have served or are serving life sentences because their bodies accumulate toxins from industrially processed, nutritionally unbalanced foods and polluted water over extended periods of time. Additionally, they are disproportionately exposed to other environmental toxins from nearby waste facilities and sites of industrial agriculture. There is relatively little research completed about the incidence of these diet-related illnesses in correctional facilities; however, the high rate of reported occurrence among inmates could be attributed to a number of factors. Statistically, women who are entering prison are less likely to have had access to healthcare before their incarceration because there is minimal access to quality, affordable healthcare in low-income neighborhoods, where the majority of women are coming from (Young 1996, pg. 440). Another reason women in prison are predisposed to diet-related illnesses is that the highly processed foods that they have had access to before and during their incarceration are nutritionally inadequate: they do not provide sufficient vitamins and minerals for maximum health. Yet another reason that women in prison disproportionately suffer from poor health is that incarcerated women have high rates of substance abuse upon entering prison, and often this translates to an addiction to sugar and other substances (van den Bergh, Gatherer & Moller 2009, pg. 406).

The women interviewed spoke extensively about their own personal experiences with diet-related illnesses during their incarceration as well as that of their peers. Every woman interviewed experienced one of the illnesses caused by poor diet and nutrition, including, but not limited to: cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure, obesity, malnutrition,

and dental issues. Although the issue of diet-related illnesses, particularly obesity, is debated among scholars as a problematic entryway into Food Justice activism, it is important to assess the negative health impacts of the Industrial Food System on this particular population because the entirety of what they are being served or consuming is controlled by the government and not themselves. In this way, the prison population is an Environmental Justice community that experiences food injustice. In detailing the women's experiences with diet-related diseases caused by toxins in the food and the built environment, I will address the need for Food Justice intervention in hopes of securing more environmental and social equity for those who experience incarceration.

Obesity

Women repeatedly noted that they had struggled with their weight during incarceration due to the limited access to quality, affordable food in the prison setting. As Participant 5 put it,

The food is really low quality. There's no nutrition. Everybody would come out of the cafeteria hungry an hour later because one of the things your body needs is nutrients, and if you're not getting enough nutrients, then you're gonna be hungry. You're body is telling you that you are hungry, but it's really not. You have food in there, but it's not getting any minerals or anything you need to sustain you.

Even though there are nutritional guidelines in correctional institutions, women felt perpetually dissatisfied with what was available for them to eat because they reported all the food lacked nutrition. In other words, they solely have access to highly processed foods in the quarterly boxes and canteen and overcooked, tasteless foods in the dining hall. This hunger is a result of a carbohydrate-heavy diet, which does not provide lasting satiation because carbohydrates quickly become sugar once they are ingested (Geiselman & Novin 1982).

In order to treat the large population who were acquiring these diet-related diseases, they recently initiated a “heart-healthy diet,” in the year 2003, which limited the women to 1500-2000 calories per day (California Prison Health Care Services 2003). However, they were still primarily served carbohydrates and heavily processed foods but with limited portions, which was neither satisfying nor healthy for the women affected by diet-related health conditions.

Participant 8 pointed out that the changes in the menu caused more women to cook their own meals “because half the time the meat wasn't cooked or the vegetables were either overcooked or undercooked.” Overall, there was a large sense of disgust revolving around the food served because they reported lack of variability and nutritional balance. Participant 8 continued, “we didn't get that many vegetables for them to put us on this diet.... A lot of people accumulated health problems” (Participant 8). As a result of the heart healthy diet, women's health worsened because they reported that were not being fed enough calories to perform their jobs adequately due to hunger and lack of protein.

Many women argued for the importance of prison food reform as a result of the food injustice experienced by those inside. Participant 9 was particularly engaged in this issue, both inside the prison as a cook and outside through her personal research into the prison food system.

She summarized her research:

If the prisons were to feed the prisoners healthier, then they may cut down the medical costs, which is part of what's costing California at least billions of dollars a year, just because of the food. They mostly serve carbohydrates instead of fresh fruits and fresh vegetables, so carbohydrates turns to sugar. The sugars mess with the mind and the blood and everything else, so you're breeding sick people by feeding them carbohydrates three times a day.

The amount of carbohydrates was something that every woman interviewed pointed out. They

said that their diet largely consisted of carbohydrates and very little protein because the institution “wanted to fatten you up and make you full because they want to make it look like you're not starving to death.” Participant 5 continued on to say, “There was a girl in there, she was a lifer that paroled out of there, she was way overweight, but when she went to the doctor, they said, 'You are suffering from malnutrition,' at her weight, malnutrition because her vitamin level was way off.” This can be directly attributed to the lack of fresh vegetables and fruits that the women consume on a daily basis. While the rates of obesity are high in the prison setting, women remain malnourished either because they choose to forgo food entirely or because they have low vitamin and mineral intake. Participant 4 exclaimed that women in prison do not have a choice: “Either they lose weight or they gain weight.”

For example, Participant 9 gained weight while in prison, but since her release over a year ago, she has lost fifty-five pounds without even limiting her consumption through dieting. She is hoping to reverse some of the health conditions she acquired during the twenty years she spent in prison by regaining a healthy relationship with food because she finally has a choice about what she eats. Even so, Participant 9 stated that the physical repercussions of such low quality food are apparent: her fingernails have “big old ridges in them, they split and peel.” She voiced, “That's all from not having decent vegetables. We lived on pasta and cheese and dehydrated beans, is what we lived on just to try to not have that hungry feeling. I think there was a lot of overeating. People that were acting like they were starved, and that's the carbohydrates, so there was a lot of overeating because your brain, even though you just ate, your brain is telling you, 'I'm hungry.’” This caused women to develop abnormal relationships with their nourishment because the sense of food insecurity was so heightened. As a result of this

manic feeling, many women stated that once they were released from prison, they had to re-conceptualize their learned behavior that made them act like they had never seen food before.

In 2008, California spent \$2.1 billion of its \$8.8 billion budget on healthcare (Pew Center on the States 2008, pg. 11). This is the largest amount spent on correctional healthcare out of every state in the nation. If the prisons were to serve higher quality food perhaps even produced in the prison itself, then they could not only prevent the majority of diet-related illnesses experienced by inmates, but they could also diminish the prison healthcare and reallocate these funds to improving other programs that prevent crime in the first place.

The next chapter will outline various methods of procuring food in prison that build community and self-confidence among inmates. Instead of destroying self-esteem and diminishing emotional and physical health through state-sanctioned measures to eradicate marginalized communities, these systems rely on the power of personal choice in an environment that highly discourages individual agency and success.

Chapter 4- ALTERNATIVE METHODS OF COOKING AND BUILDING COMMUNITY INSIDE THE PRISON ENVIRONMENT

The next two chapters are a continuation of primary research conducted with the women at Crossroads. I will explore alternatives to the broken food and criminal justice systems by examining the current critical resistance to these industrial systems, both inside and outside of the prison system. First, I will discuss the alternative food options for those experiencing incarceration. This will include cultures that revolve around the canteen, the quarterly box system, stingers, and the act of foraging. I will argue for their importance in providing sustainable, affordable, and healthier food options for those who are incarcerated as compared to what is currently available for people in prison.

According to the women I interviewed, there is a community built around food in the prison setting that is in direct opposition to the dominant paradigm. Participant 4 detailed her own definition of community, which was greatly influenced by twenty-seven years of incarceration at CIW: “Community comes from people that are going the same way you're going. You have a common denominator, common interests. And so I found community with the people that were advocates. With ... the underdogs... loners, and I see myself in them. So I build community with them to teach them to go build community with somebody else.” Her observation about how community functions perfectly parallels the alternative systems of food outlined in this thesis. Instead of perpetuating fear about those who have committed crimes, which might ultimately increased the rate of recidivism due to increase hostility towards these individuals, a more sustainable prison food system calls for rehabilitative programs that aim to achieve social justice for those who are incarcerated.

Participant 4 went on to describe that she found community in prison in two ways: “through food and just interaction from human being to human being.” Food is at the root of how humans connect with other people. It is a life-source, a constant connection to the planet. It represents viability and success because it is central to human relationships. On the other hand, it can also be one's demise, a threat, a punishment, or a slow death. The canteen, the stinger, the boxes, and the act of foraging are the methods by which women in prison are able to consume food while defying the status quo that is mandated by the state of California's prison system. Still, there are problems within these food procurement strategies that limit the women's ability to consume nutritionally dense, culturally and ecologically appropriate foods.

Canteen-

The canteen is a convenience store inside the prison walls where inmates can buy goods like processed foods and personal hygiene products at the end of every month. Unfortunately, even though the canteen supplies much needed and desired products to the general population, the prices are exorbitantly high, especially for prison wages. In this way, the canteen is neither accessible nor affordable for the majority of women inside. Depending on their job, “women are earning anywhere from 12 to 27 to maybe 56 dollars a month,” but as Participant 3 noted, “you can't buy yourself nuts and tuna and stuff like that with that amount of money and still be able to buy your hygiene. It's just impossible, so we just barter and trade and cook for each other.” The system of bartering and trading is anti-capitalistic by nature, which is, in their own perhaps unintentional way, allowing prisoners the freedom of making their own food choices in the prison environment, where everything is state-controlled and manipulated. Additionally, the fact

that these products are so unaffordable to the consumers, who happen to be prisoners in this case, brings to mind a typical food desert, which is defined as whole neighborhoods or communities that are afflicted by a lack or inaccessibility of food shopping options. In this way, the prison system is replicating capitalistic food systems within its walls.

Interestingly enough, food deserts can be found both in urban and rural settings, in low-income urban neighborhoods and rural agricultural communities alike. In food deserts, basic food items are largely procured at what scholars call “fringe retailers.” Fringe retailers include “convenience stores, corner groceries, drug stores, gas stations, liquor stores... that rarely offer fresh fruits, vegetables, and meats, and when such items are available, they are frequently of limited quantity, poor quality, and grossly overpriced (Brisman 2009, pg. 10-11). The canteen resembles a convenience store or another type of fringe retailer in that the food available is at least twice the cost of purchasing the same item outside of prison, and they do not offer fresh fruits or vegetables. Essentially, women with the financial security to shop at the canteen are able to buy what they want to cook, while women who do not have money in their personal account from either their jobs or from their families are unable to purchase their choice of food.

Often, women choose to purchase items from the canteen instead of going to the dining hall because they would rather cook for themselves than consume the low quality food that is served in the cafeteria. For example, Participant 2 remembered, “Everything was just overcooked, and if you chose not to go in the dining hall and eat, you bought food off the canteen.” Although the food available at the canteen was not deemed desirable because the options largely consisted of freeze-dried and dehydrated foods, it was still a better option and more gratifying than the monotony and endless starches found in the cafeteria. The act of

cooking outside the institutionally-controlled dining hall demonstrates that there is a community built around cooking and food that is in direct opposition to the mainstream dining experience, which is thought of as oppressive by the women themselves.

Even so, some women could simply not afford to regularly purchase items from the canteen. Participant 9 experienced this for a large portion of her incarceration: “I still tried to eat as healthy as I could, but because I was pretty indigent for the first 15 years of my incarceration. I didn't have the luxury of buying what I wanted to buy, so I ate what was provided for me.” A majority of women who are entering prison are low-income or destitute due to the cycle of poverty, which often results in incarceration (Wilson & Anderson 1997, pg. 343). Lack of education has a direct correlation with unemployment, and this is especially apparent in women in prison: sixty-four percent of women who enter prison have not earned either their GED or high school diploma (Mallicoat 2012, pg. 464). This education level translates directly to employment inside prison where there is such a demand for paid jobs. If an inmate has education prior to entering prison, then they are more likely to have a higher paying job.

As a result, the continued marginalization of low-income individuals in the prison setting occurs through the food that they have access to, which is especially true in relation to the canteen. The effects of the highly processed diet were realized in the prison's health care facility, so the general population was placed on what the institution coined a “heart healthy diet,” which is classified by a reduction in sodium and fat. The heart healthy diet, as mentioned in Chapter 3, was problematic for the women who were interviewed. It had a negative impact on their emotional and physical health because they felt as though they were being subjected to a regime of deprivation. Participant 2 identified that the prison “would cut back on the portions of food

they would give people and say they were being 'heart healthy,' but yet people are starving, they are hungry, and if you couldn't afford the food on the canteen, then you went without." Her statement indicates the lack of nutritionally balanced foods served in the dining hall as well as the discrepancy between individuals with the financial means to buy canteen foods and those who do not. Regardless of the trade-and-barter system that many partake in, there is still a hierarchical class system when it comes to the ability to purchase and cook food that is considered desirable.

Another reason that the canteen can be compared to a fringe retailer is the lack of variety of foods available, especially for women who are suffering from diet-related illnesses. Participant 4 was told by her doctor to alter her diet to be healthier, but she was frustrated with the options available for her to do so. She exclaimed that she brought her doctor the canteen list to show her the options of what she could eat to counteract her high blood pressure. The doctor was appalled by the lack of health-producing food items available in the canteen. At that, she responded, "Okay, so the things that I do eat, this is the result...We can't win. It's designed to set us up to fail every time." The highly processed foods available in the canteen also have the potential to cause a multitude of diet-related health problems much like the foods available in the mess hall. In this woman's case, she suffers from high blood pressure, which prohibits her from doing a lot of physical activity and being outside for extended periods of time. Essentially, even though the canteen allows women to cook for themselves, which for some, is an extremely gratifying and community-oriented experience, there simply are not enough quality, unprocessed foods available at the canteen to provide an affordable, balanced diet for women in prison. The quarterly box system is another way to acquire alternative sources of food in prison, which also

facilitates community among those incarcerated, even through the heavily processed industrial foods available in the catalogues.

Boxes--

Boxes are quarterly packages that inmates receive four times a year consisting of food ordered through catalogues administered by prison officials. Each of them cannot exceed thirty pounds per quarter. Family and friends used to put them together; however, that has recently changed due to illegal activity associated with the boxes. Participant 4 claimed they discontinued families and friends' boxes because drugs were being hidden inside and transported into the prison. She stated, "Now, our families can't send us things because certain people came in here, short-termers that come in and out of prison, was getting drugs in the boxes, so that's what caused the boxes to stop." Even though this rule is completely out of the inmates' control, they could no longer get access to fruits and vegetables and their other favorite foods, so the level of food security decreased dramatically because they were unable to obtain culturally and nutritionally appropriate foods from their friends and family.

In the same vein, women used to be able to eat healthfully during family visits, when they would be able to spend three days reuniting with their families, but the institution took away that privilege as well. Participant 4 also claimed that the institutions "stopped every lifer in the state of California from having a family visit, so our healthy eating went out the door there. There was no healthy eating, none at all. People were getting more vegetables than they probably ever could imagine when we had our family visits." Now, inmates have to purchase their quarterly food supplies through vendors, which is governed by state employees, so the women have no choice

about what kinds of foods are provided to them. As one woman succinctly described, “We are at their mercy as far as what they will or will not offer us” (Participant 3). From the women's point of view, they understood the regulation of providing pre-approved food items for the boxes, but they were upset and angered that there was nothing available that was “of essence” to them. As one woman put it, “You've taken the boxes, what are you going to give us?” (Participant 4). Essentially, the contents of these boxes are similar to the items found in the canteen: highly processed, non-perishable foodstuffs.

Participant 4 stated that the catalogues contain “nothing but candy, starches, empty calories. In prison, everything is carbs, lots of bread, lots of potatoes, lots of cookies, lots of crackers... All the vegetables are canned, so we are not getting anything of any nutritional value” (Participant 4). The boxes were reminiscent of the canteen in that they can only be ordered during certain times of the year, they were heavily monitored by the state, and they lacked in providing a balanced, healthy diet. The families of the inmates are still able to pay for boxes, and women can also put money from their accounts toward the purchasing of these food items.

When asked about her relationship to food in prison, Participant 6 claimed, “I mostly got boxes and tried to live out of the boxes. I ate as little as possible. There was so much food I couldn't eat. I ate the beans and the beans were government supplied. Beans and rice together is a perfect protein, so I ate a lot of beans and rice.” This woman really tried to eat healthfully in order to restore her health, but it was extraordinarily difficult for her to do so when she did not have access to the foods she was used to on the outside. Consequently, her health deteriorated. This woman in particular was diagnosed with cancer during her time in prison, and she claimed that the lack of fresh fruits and vegetables made the symptoms of her illness even worse,

especially while she was going through treatments of chemotherapy and radiation.

Although the prison-industrial food system is designed to set these women up to fail, they are actively reaching out to each other and creating alternative systems of support that the state is failing to provide through adequate food procurement and healthcare. The women who serve life sentences, called “golden girls” by the women inside, were especially tight-knit because they have been in prison for such an extended period of time together. In this vein, Participant 2 stated, “We always did something, all the time. My community, my family. We were always being creative, trying to find a way to build community, to love on one another, to help each other find food to eat.” This is another form of community building that is associated with disease prevention. In essence, these women would support, monitor, and advocate for one another in maintaining their health. These little acts of kindness and consciousness enrich their lives and communities, especially for those who are spending multiple decades in this environment where deprivation is normalized.

Women in prison also held each other accountable by educating and watching out for each other’s health. For example, Participant 2 said that she would ask her friends, “How you feeling today? You gotta get your vitamins. Don't worry, I got a whole bunch of vitamins. Take these until you get yours, and then when you get yours, just get me the bottle back.” Many women pointed out that the cost of the vitamins available to purchase were at least twice the cost of vitamins outside prison, so the women would find other avenues of getting their daily supply of vitamins and minerals. Either they would share the expensive vitamins or they would forage for food on the property of the prison. In this way, the women were also viewing food as preventative medicine.

Both the canteen and the quarterly box system provided a means for the women to obtain food that they could cook and eat for themselves with something called the stinger, which was outside of the dominant system of food provisioning overseen by the institution.

Stinger-

The stinger, more commonly known as an immersion heater, is a cooking apparatus that inmates use every day for cooking. Every woman raved about the potential of the stinger and its amazing capabilities not only of creating feasts but also of fostering community through communal cooking. The reason women utilize the stinger as their primary tool for sustenance is largely due to the utter disillusionment with the food served in the dining hall. Overall, the women interviewed barely went to the dining or mess hall in the last decade of their time in the institution due to budget cuts in the prison system that caused the quality of the food to plummet greatly. Participant 1 explained, “I think the last five years I was there I went into culinary maybe, and I'm pushing it, 5 times. I wound up eating in my room more than anything else because the food was so terrible, I would get mad walking in there, because I would walk out hungry; the portions are so small.” The worsening quality of the food may have had an exponentially negative effect on some women, especially those with histories of abuse. As stated before, food is often a reminder of the oppression that battered women felt in their lives before prison (Smith 2002). When food is already associated with violence, the ability to create healthy habits around food is limited. In order to break the cycle of violence around food and cooking, it is vital to have programming or alternative food programs like vocational job training that facilitate healthy relationships with food and rebuild a sense of self-confidence in the kitchen.

Additionally, it is arguably not cost-effective for the institution to procure as much food for the dining hall to feed the entire prison population because a large number of women are not interested in consuming the food served there. The amount of waste produced in the dining hall was described at length by the women who worked in the kitchen, and many of them mentioned alternative systems like composting or reducing the amount of food purchased for the institution in order to remediate the situation of excess food waste.

That being said, the women were proud of the food that they were producing from the stinger. Participant 8 even told her mother that she could have started her own restaurant out of her cell. She elaborated, “To see the dishes we made up in there with the stinger, you would have thought we had a stove in our room. Seriously, we made everything, and it was good, seasoned.” This sentiment demonstrates that the women were empowered by their ability to cook their own food because they could share the process and finished product with others, all while not being controlled by prison officials.

In order to procure the items that they would cook with, they would buy or trade items from the “kitchen girls,” or women who worked in culinary. Another woman explained how it worked, “You'd get food girls, they'd steal out of the kitchen and bring home onions or potatoes or cucumbers, or vegetables and stuff, some girls would do meat, but eggs, things that you could cook in your room with a stinger and you'd wind up making your own meal” (Participant 5). Even though they knew they were aware of the implications and potential consequences of taking food from the kitchen, which is technically considered criminal activity, they justified the action and redeemed themselves by saying that they were essentially saving it from being put to waste. In the process of cooking and sharing, they were also able to build community, which has

been shown to reduce rates of recidivism.

As Participant 2 stated about the community built through cooking, “Everything is so centered around the kitchen in a home. Even in prison it was, and our kitchens were in our living rooms in our bedrooms, because it was all in one big square room. It's the same thing in a home. The heart of a home is still in the kitchen.” Maintaining a positive attitude while in prison is essentially a survival mechanism, and the ability to think positively can rest on the quality and quantity of the food consumed by the individual. Another participant, a particularly inspired cook, made the claim that the stinger acted as a hearth because “everything revolved around the stinger in prison” (Participant 9). Much like how the kitchen is the nucleus of the American home, providing warmth and nourishment to every member of the family, the stinger is the at the epicenter of the “home” or community that the women have created for themselves in their living situation. The importance of this family is under-recognized as a whole in prison studies literature. This system of support built through cohabitation and relationship building is essential for and central to the process of rehabilitation.

Cooking with the stinger can also be cathartic or empowering to certain individuals because it represents independence and self-sufficiency. Participant 9 goes on to say, “It's one of my passions, I love cooking. There's not too many things that bring me more joy than cooking for other people and for myself, but I'm more likely to cook something if it's for someone else. There's a lot of camaraderie and intimacy when it comes to food and the preparation of it and the enjoyment of it.” In an environment that is especially hostile and stressful, the stinger acts as a source of relaxation because nourishing food and the warmth of loved ones is a reminder of home. Many of the women found it too difficult or too expensive to cook for themselves, so they

would have a rotating schedule with hall mates or roommates, which would make the obligation more time and cost-effective.

Some felt as if they were able to build friendships based off of the interaction that was facilitated by the stinger. For example, Participant 9 stated,

I enjoyed cooking so much for other people, that it really helped me to develop relationships that I would not have otherwise had, just based on that stinger. Being able to make a meal for somebody...and giving it to somebody that most people would just pass by, and end up building amazing relationships just based on that.

After decades of incarceration, women learn to build and sustain a sense of security and emotional stability over time. The stinger allows women to not only feed themselves but to also make connections with other women that might be suffering in similar ways.

Further, once the community was established, multiple interviewees stated that these close relationships gave them a reason to keep on living; otherwise, the situation would in prison often be too bleak for them to continue, so this ingrained sense of community became a survival mechanism. At VSP, this camaraderie was especially tight-knit:

It was always such a community of cooking in our rooms because there were at least eight of us in the room most of the time. So even with our very unhealthy food, we would always have a community surrounding us. And we would have big birthday parties and we'd make big spreads of food, and you know so there were always really big community gatherings around food in prison, because that's all we really had (Participant 2).

Celebration through the act of cooking and eating became a vital aspect of the restorative community that women build for themselves in prison. This is especially true during holidays like Thanksgiving and Christmas, when the women would gather together and make delicious meals for each other with the stinger. This gave the women something to look forward to

because often mealtimes broke up the long and arduous days filled with stress and labor.

Most women mentioned the celebration of holidays when asked about the particular rituals around food in prisons. Christmas, Thanksgiving, and the Fourth of July are the only holidays observed by the state prisons, so they were particularly festive occasions. As one woman from VSP explained,

Christmas was always the biggest because we'd have a full unit party. People would organize it and they would go room to room, and they'd go, "What are you going to cook? What are you going to bring to it?" Everybody would just make the mountains of food... everything would be surrounded by this meal, and we would all sit, like 200 and some people are in a unit, so we would have these big tables out in the day room and people would be serving, and everybody would be sitting around eating and having a good time and just really enjoying everybody's company, and everybody would be getting along! (Participant 2).

The units coming together to cook large spreads of food represents a semblance of peace inside the prison that is unlike any other time of year. It brought an immense sense of joy for women in prison to celebrate holidays in order to normalize their existences inside. In addition, major holidays gave the women something to look forward to throughout the year because the environment is normally defined by fear. Even though the foods they are cooking and consuming are highly processed, they would make dishes that resembled and tasted similar to foods typically served during holidays in the free world. Considering that the meals served in culinary on holidays is meager, these potlucks provided an alternative to the oppressive environment of the dining hall while also facilitating a space for celebration and the building of community.

Even if there is not a particularly special occasion like a holiday or birthday, women in prison often cook for each other. Participant 5 in particular made it a weekly habit: "I used to make homemade soup when we used to get the vegetables we used to you know, procure, take

some celery from the salad bar to make soup... We used to always make a lot because we knew that people were gonna wanna come over and have some.” The concept of “stone soup” plays out in this ritual in which community is built through communal cooking: often, passersby would smell the soup down the hall and flock to share a bowl with others. Even though this may seem like a simple act for those who are not incarcerated, it is exemplary of the ways food promotes community, especially in stressful situations where competition and anxiety is heightened.

Crossroads' recent publication, Stinging for their Supper: How Women in Prison Nourish their Bodies and Souls underscores the creativity put into the meals cooked with the stinger. For example, they would make tamales with corn chips; craft orange chicken with tang and pork rinds; create shish kabobs with sticks and wild spinach; deep fry chicken or fish; and bake cheesecakes, cakes, and cookies. The publishing of this book is an act of resistance in itself because it seeks to educate the public about the food available inside prison and the ways in which incarcerated women nourish themselves and each other through food and community building. Raising awareness through education is also empowering for Crossroads women because their creativity and resilience is being realized after years of under-recognition.

Foraging-

A host of the women mentioned foraging for food on the grounds of the prison. This is the ultimate resistance to both the Prison Industrial Complex and the Industrial Food System because the women were consuming outside of the dominant paradigm for their health and wellbeing. Additionally, many individuals involved in the gathering of food in the prison yard were simultaneously building community, as described here: “I found a sense of community

through food when we would go out picking our garlics, and we would go out picking our greens and stuff. I found a sense of community there because it's a handful of us. They go out and look for different things. We'd say, 'Don't go in my section! That's where my stuff is growing!' And so we'd laugh and if we want something from one another, we respect our little areas” (Participant 4). Instead of partaking in the consumption of food in the dining hall or the purchasing of food in the canteen, they were utilizing the bounty already available on the prison grounds. This foraging behavior may have been rare in the overall prison population, but half of the women interviewed mentioned gathering their food from the yard on a regular basis.

There is a large diversity of fresh, wild foods available for cultivation on the prison yard.

According to avid forager, Participant 4,

We have milk thistles by the dozen; they just grow all over there. Wild garlic, we have wild spinach; we have greens. They're just wild greens, they're growing out the ground, so that's what everybody is trying to find and just eat it, eat it, eat it, as much as you can just to get whatever we can get in our bodies, and it's sad. If you could watch women walking around looking, and you are thinking, what the heck are they doing that for? They're looking to see if they see a little plant or little bushel of something growing so that they can get it (Participant 4).

It is clear that there is definite competition over the limited natural resources available for foraging; however, according to this participant, women have claimed their territories and respect each other's space for the most part. Again, these women are utilizing the availability of foraged wild foods as a means of preventative health care. For example, one woman found mint growing across the yard at CIW, and she would make tea out of it to soothe her digestive problems. Still, the act of foraging was highly discouraged by the correctional officers, like every other program or action that could be rehabilitative for those inside.

Even though trees are rare inside the boundaries of the prison, there happened to be one

tree that was especially appreciated for its fruit: “We had a walnut tree there...I said, well if we are eating these, then we know we are doing good. That's all we need right here. We'd put a couple in our salad, and that's how we'd survive!” (Participant 4). The women consider the simple act of harvesting produce to use in food a delicacy. She continued her statement with a realization: “I would make so much sense to have fruit orchards in there because there is so much unused space. It is so vast, just vast, nothing.” A number of women suggested the implementation of fruit orchards in the prison yard due to the fact that there is plenty underutilized space inside the cyclone fences. This project could serve as a vocational program inside the prison while also providing produce for the dining hall. There is an immense potential for urban community forestry in the prison setting. As evidenced by non-profit organizations operating in the free world, urban tree planting has a tremendous positive impact psychologically and physiologically on the individual (Lewis 1995, pg. 36). In many ways, urban community forestry parallels community gardens in the capacity to strengthen community ties and facilitate food sovereignty. These two concepts have and should be readily applied in correctional facilities in order to achieve similar results in a highly contested space.

These types of programs also provide much needed access to nature. Many of the women spoke about their relationship to nature before and after incarceration. Participant 2 stated, “Nature was definitely there, you just had to look for it.” The implementation of programs and the installation of orchards and gardens would also provide better access to nature in prison so that incarcerated individuals are able to utilize the beneficial healing qualities of nature towards their rehabilitation.

Many women described what Richard Louv calls Nature Deficit Disorder, or the impact

of being without what is typically viewed as the natural environment. For the majority of responses, this constituted trees and plants, foliage that represented a purview into the outside world. Participant 4 compared her experience of nature during prison and after prison. She recalled, “There's so much more of nature since being out. There's more animals; there's more trees. We were so deprived of trees in our prison.” The deprivation of the food in prison extended over to the strict absence of what women understood as nature. Even if they were exposed to the natural elements on the yard, the stark surroundings of the prison setting were viewed as punishment. Participant 4 continued,

When they first opened the prison, we did have some small trees, and then we were forced to take them out, which was very heartbreaking. Just on a whim, they didn't want us to have trees anymore. There was one tree left in the garden after they tore it down, and it was oak tree, so there was one big tree that was left, and so when I came out here and saw all of the trees, it was like nature sensory overload. So green and so beautiful, and to see all the fruit trees.

The lack of nature in prison environments can largely be attributed to increased security measures. According to Ulrich, who studied the biophilia hypothesis, there is a survival advantage acquired from contact or even views of nature. Even though his examinations occurred in the hospital setting, exposure to scenes of nature is proven to reduce stress and improve the period of recovery for patients in the hospital setting. This hypothesis can also be readily applied to the criminal justice system and proves the effective use of natural landscapes inside correctional institutions.

Another theory, similar to Nature Deficit Disorder, is the attention restoration model studied by Kaplan and Kaplan (1989). Certain exposure to fascinating nature scenes can be restorative and cause reduction in rates of mental fatigue, which allows for increased attention

and concentration (Wener 2012, pg. 218). Additionally, access or, at the very least, views of nature, have been found by Kaplan (1993) to reduce frustration, increase levels of satisfaction, and prevent self-reported ailments (Wener 2012, pg. 219). Thus, the necessity of nature in correctional environments is clear: the incorporation of environmental design into the landscapes of punishment inside prisons and jails can lead to improved concentration, attention, satisfaction, psychological functioning, and physical health among inmates in the United States criminal justice system. I will continue to elaborate on the subject of restorative landscapes in the next chapter.

The production and consumption of food grown with social and environmental justice in mind allows for powerful change-making opportunities that promotes the value of social capital around food systems that nourish the planet and its people. In examining ways to simultaneously dismantle the oppressive systems that perpetuate social and environmental injustice,

CHAPTER 5: DISMANTLING THE PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX AND THE INDUSTRIAL FOOD SYSTEM THROUGH FOOD JUSTICE ACTIVISM

In this chapter, I will discuss three case studies that aim to secure prison food justice and examine the potential for their expansion to the entire criminal justice system. These three programs critically resist the dominant paradigm of the Industrial Food System and the Prison Industrial Complex by providing job training, employment opportunities, educational experience, and the potential for community building and personal growth for those who experience incarceration. These small-scale projects are models for prison reform and the future of the criminal justice system. By realizing alternatives to the industrial systems of agriculture and corrections, these food justice initiatives may begin to dismantle the environmental and institutional racism, sexism, and classism that currently exists in this era of mass incarceration.

First, I will explain the benefits and drawbacks of prison garden projects like Cultivating Dreams inside California Institution for Women while also examining similar projects across the country that successfully address food justice in the Prison Industrial Complex. I will then explain the Crossroads Food Justice program, which includes Fallen Fruit from Rising Women, the Crossroads social enterprise; Saturday gardening; and Meatless Mondays in order to demonstrate the potential for similar holistically-minded programs that attempt to counteract the exploitation of the Prison Industrial Complex and Industrial Food System.

It is important to distinguish the ways in which the public may become involved in dismantling these corrupt systems in order to raise awareness about the plight of those who are incarcerated while humanizing inmates by community building through the mechanism of food. Food has the ability to bring people together from diverse backgrounds and experiences by

uniting individuals with the common bond of nourishment; however, food is wrought with emotional and physical meaning, and therefore must be approached with ultimate care and compassion, especially in communities where food may represent harsh feelings of deprivation and abuse. Some of these community-oriented programs, like Cultivating Dreams Prison Garden Project, bring in people from the outside to interact with those on the inside, which is intended to foster community and break down the perceived barriers of incarceration.

The impact of these programs is evident in a quote from Participant 2, who stated, “There's so many people out there who aren't willing to give people like us a chance like that and to be so unconditional with your friendships, your knowledge, and your love; it is heartwarming for us.” The mere existence of programs that seek to empower incarcerated peoples through food justice is an act of resistance to the Prison Industrial Complex and Industrial Food System in itself.

Prison Garden Projects

The history of prison farms in the United States goes back to post-Civil War era in the American South, after slavery and the use of a type of involuntary servitude called “convict leasing” (Wener 2012, pg. 219). Although some historical scholars state that these prison farms were aesthetically and psychologically beneficial, there is a history of racial and social oppression tied up in the land where these farms once resided. Since then, most prison farms have been demolished to construct tighter security units, yet modern proponents of prison gardens still advocate for horticulture programs so that inmates have greater access to nature and therefore are able to increase their capacity for healing and rehabilitation. In this section, I will

describe the purpose, benefits, drawbacks, and critiques of these programs by referencing programs that seek to build equity and sustainability within the prison food system.

The application of horticultural therapy, which is the use of gardening for an intended therapeutic treatment, is essential for the successful implementation of socially and ecologically sustainable prison garden projects. It assists inmates in channeling aggression that may have caused their imprisonment in the first place, including anger, traumatic stress, substance abuse, and depression (Jiler 2006, pg. 34). Recent research has connected the presence of nature to improved behavior, mood, and overall health: access to or views of nature reduce depression, anxiety, blood pressure, stress, and even aggressive behavior (Wener 2012, pg. 218). In this way, gardening can be mentally and physically restorative and therefore have an overall positive effect on the prison population. Many programs, most notably The Garden Project in San Francisco, incorporate meditation and other active forms of emotional decompression into their missions and programmatic schedules. Prison horticulture is also known to soften the harshness of the otherwise hostile prison setting while also producing food for the facility itself or other communities, and promoting health and wellness among the inmate population.

More recently, garden projects have been incorporated into prison regimes across the country to produce much-needed fresh produce for inmates who would not ordinarily have access to fruits and vegetables. This increased food security is intended to diminish the criminal behavior associated with obtaining in prison because they would have increased access to fresh produce for their own consumption.

Even though there is an immense potential for prison garden projects that has been realized over the years in various American prisons and jails, the concept of cultivating food

inside correctional facilities has never been applied to the rhetoric of the Food Justice movement. In this analysis, gardening inside prison is similar to food justice in urban environments due to the mere density of the population inside the barbed wire fences and the small amount of land available for cultivation. The productive use of the “yard” could have many positive effects on the inmate population because it is proven that access to nature is highly beneficial. This is especially true for inmates in solitary confinement who solely have access to the outdoors for one hour per day. In addition, it provides an outlet for inmates to utilize their sense of creativity while distracting them from the monotonous life inside, which is rare in such an all-encompassing setting. Another positive component to the implementation of these programs is exercise and fresh air, which can also be a healthy outlet for stress and productive living (Lindemuth 2007, pg. 90).

Socially, such garden programs have the potential to ultimately change the way those who are incarcerated are viewed by the entire society, especially if there is a community outreach component. Not only that, prison garden projects have the ability to change the way prisoners view themselves and their futures. This sense of confidence and community, however immeasurable, does reduce rates of prison re-entry through increased self-esteem and supportive networks. Studies show that human's interaction with plants and exposure to nature is transformational both during and after incarceration (Lewis 1995, pg. 31). Although the transformative power of nature may be unquantifiable, a renewed sense of self and a positive outlook may ease the difficult transition from the stressful prison environment to life on parole.

Although there is not a plethora of academic research conducted about sustainable food production inside prisons, there are a number of non-profit organizations implementing programs

that seek to rehabilitate prisoners through horticultural therapy and produce healthy food for the inmates. This includes the GreenHouse project of the Horticultural Society of New York at Riker's Island, where all of New York City's jails are located (Jiler 2006, pg. 9). Their landscaping classes have proven effective in training inmates for horticultural careers upon their release from prison. Inmates, who either serve short-term sentences there or are awaiting trial, are selected to participate in the program, and when they are released, they may apply to work for the GreenTeam, which is a transitional employment opportunity and vocational training program in New York City (Jiler 2006, pg. 147).

Transitioning out of prison can be more successful if incarcerated individuals receive vocational training in prison because they are released with more skills and confidence than they had when they were sentenced. It could also lead directly to employment opportunities, which significantly reduces rates of recidivism among people on parole. The use of education in the form of Master Gardener certification or other similar educational horticulture courses could also provide an incentive for inmates to pursue further education after their release because it contributes to positive community development and growth (Migura, Whittlesey, & Zajicek 1996). Providing people with skills and knowledge about how to secure food sovereignty, beautify the natural landscape, and improve their own psychosocial wellbeing will ultimately influence program participants and perhaps even transform the communities they call home.

There are also many other positive impacts of agriculture in the prison environment, including dietary knowledge and practice. Although discussion surrounding nutrition and dietary choices is heavily ridiculed by scholars like Guthman, especially in a place that has very little access to fresh food, it is arguably vital knowledge for every individual once they are released,

considering this field of knowledge and practice is not taught in the modern educational system. The majority of women in prison happen to also be mothers, and it is a vital feed one's family well for optimum wellbeing because it reduces overall healthcare costs and improves community health (van den Bergh, Gatherer, & Moller 2009, pg. 406). This is especially true considering that a large percentage of the women originate from disenfranchised communities vulnerable to food insecurity (Grella & Messina 2006, pg. 1842). Healthy food consumption is central to self-care, both inside and outside of prison, and it has been proven that gardening projects increase the intake of fruits and vegetables among farmers as compared to those who do not grow their own food (Bellows, Brown, & Smit 2004, pg. 3). Prison agriculture would also reduce the amount of spending for fruits and vegetables in the budget so that the funding could be utilized elsewhere, whether it is intended for better quality food in the dining hall for the inmates or for the improvement of other prison education programs that would also reduce the rate of recidivism among parolees.

Landscaping Classes-

Similarly, landscaping programs are conducted inside correctional institutions in order to reduce the rates of recidivism by providing educational and vocational opportunities to those who are incarcerated. The hope is that those who participate will not only receive valuable horticulture and employment skills but also enhance their sense of self-esteem both in the workplace and in themselves. Horticulture programs could be fiscally responsible over time because education has been proven to reduce the rate of recidivism in United States' prison and jails (Wilson & Anderson 1997, pg. 343). Essentially, a vocationally oriented education program

accomplishes the feat of putting a lock on the “revolving door” of the criminal justice system. Additionally, a Master Gardener certification program would enhance the potential of reducing the rates of prison re-entry in California, where 61.1% of people leaving prison return within three years, which is far above the national average (PEW Center on the States, 2011, pg. 10).

A study titled “The Effects of a Vocational Horticulture on the Self-Development in Female Inmates” was conducted at a female federal prison camp in Texas, and the researchers concluded that after the completion of the Master Gardener program, women's levels of self-confidence and life satisfaction were greatly improved, especially for those with histories of substance abuse (Migura, Whittlesey, & Zajicek 1997, pg. 299). This study demonstrates the effectiveness of programs with strict curriculum that are aimed toward vocational goals. In order to earn the privilege of participating in such programs, prisoners must model good behavior, which might provide an incentive for prison officials to approve such programs. All in all, prison garden projects and vocational landscaping programs, in order to be time and cost effective, must be voluntary, merit-driven, and job-oriented.

At Valley State Prison, Central California Women's Facility, and California Institution for Women, there has been landscaping classes that provided women with vocational training in landscape design, including edible landscaping and landscape maintenance. Unfortunately, the programs were recently eliminated due to state prison budget cuts. Still, the programs were well received by inmates when they did exist. Participant 2 described the benefits of the landscaping vocation:

I really came to know that I just loved being, you know, in nature. I have always been like a nature lover, but was never able to spend a whole lot of time in it as I became a teenager, but putting the plants in the ground, the seeds, and the seedlings, and watching them grow was just so amazing to me because we were able to grow food for a little

while in there, so I did have my own garden plot... I had a bunch of different vegetables and then I had a section for flowers, and to be able to maintain that and watch it grow, that is where I really found my peace while I was in prison. And I still love it, to this day. I don't have enough time to do it. It is something that is just very connected to my soul now is the earth, so I really am grateful to have this chance to be able to do it.

It is obvious from her statement that she developed a deep connection to nature through the process of learning to landscape and garden. For her, this rootedness in the earth was echoed by her dedication to the Wiccan tradition. Even though the prison experience was very difficult due to the isolation and absence from family life, spending time outside in her own personal garden gave her a combined sense of solace, independence, and ownership that isn't typically available in any other prison setting. Her statement demonstrates an enormous potential for Horticultural Therapy in prisons and jails that can be attributed to this connection to the outside world and hope for a new life after release.

This particular woman did not have experience gardening prior to being incarcerated, yet she was able to leave prison with marketable skills and a work ethic that could potentially lead to employment opportunities in the future. Vocational job training in prison is extremely common due to the presence of prison labor; however, a lot of the jobs inside are not translatable to steady, well-paid jobs outside the prison walls due to the fact that parolees are less likely to find employment. Green collar jobs are all the rage in the national agenda for many reasons, the most important being job creation. Van Jones, the leader in this concept, defines a green-collar job as blue-collar employment that is socially and ecologically sustainable (Jones 2008, pg. v). Orange-collar jobs, or prison labor, are typically manual labor jobs that offer extremely low wages which is typically highly exploitative in that they require little to no education and they mostly require manual labor. In this framework, it is economically and ecologically productive to train inmates

for green-collar jobs for the duration of their sentences because it would improve the overall economy, reduce rates of prison re-entry, and better the environment.

One woman talked about the value of having her own space for cultivation. She noted “it was nice to be able to have such an awesome creative outlet in that class” (Participant 4). In spending an extended period of time in prison, where there is a limited capacity for upward mobility and creativity, it is a privilege to have access to a designated plot for cultivation. It also provides an incentive for women to complete the landscaping certification, which could ultimately provide valuable job opportunities post-release. Participant 2 also stated that the landscaping classes were limited in information because they did not focus on the nutritional or political components of the food they were growing, so there was not an emphasis on food justice. Instead, there was more attention paid to plant identification and other botanical knowledge rather than knowledge about horticultural therapy, food sovereignty, and the application of horticultural knowledge and skills in the free world. She would have liked to receive more educational materials to supplement what they were being taught, but there is also relatively limited access to books and other forms of research in the prison environment.

A Master Gardener certification program would greatly benefit individuals inside California state prisons. In order to complete this University of California Agriculture and Natural Resources extension program, inmates would have to complete at least fifty hours of classroom education over an average of sixteen weeks engaging in topics from composting to integrated pest management (IPM) and sustainable landscapes (Become a Master Gardener 2013). This certification program could also assist in the reversal of the statistic that there are currently more than twice as many prisoners than farmers in the United States because in order to

maintain Master Gardener certification, there are required continuing education volunteer hours, fifty hours in the first year and twenty-five hours in the following years. This requirement would allow the spread of beneficial agricultural knowledge to communities that are most in need of urban revitalization and greening.

Like many of the programs in prison, the funding for the landscaping program was eliminated due to state cutbacks. Cutting a relatively small budget for these programs can be detrimental to both the prisoners' sense of community and self-confidence while also wasting taxpayer dollars in the process. The same woman explained her reaction to the destruction of the space she had spent years cultivating:

They said they didn't have the funding for it any more, so they bulldozed it over. I put so much work in that garden. I designed and laid out a whole big dry creek bed with big rocks and stuff and I laid a crush granite pathway through the whole thing with the tractor, and I had to watch them till it over and just cried because there was so much work, not just by me, but by so many women, and they just loved it so much. And to have that basically ripped away from them was just so sad because anything positive, they ended up getting rid of. If the women showed too much interest in it, you know the administration was like we gotta get rid of that.

This is a common experience of incarcerated individuals who dedicate themselves to programs for years, only to find out that their budget has been cut and the program no longer exists without their knowledge or input. Participant 4 had a similar experience with gardening in the prison yard. Before Cultivating Dreams was established as an organized garden project, women at CIW started a garden for themselves. She became extremely invested in the space they were starting to cultivate, but it became a problem because it was facilitated by the women inside, not as a collaboration between the institution and an outside organization or vocational program. She explained the series of events:

We had gotten seeds, we got staff to get us seeds, we had our families to bring up seeds and just donate them. And when they saw, we sectioned it off, we had potatoes, we had corn, we had a whole section that wouldn't obscure the view of the institution... not big long ears of corn, but small. We had green peas, we had lots of spinach, lettuce, cabbage, we had everything.... even a flowerbed. Beautiful Flowers. We had flowers all over the place.

She said that when the officials saw it, they immediately ordered the guards to destroy the flowers and the food. She claimed that it was because they did not want them to grow their own food or make the landscape more presentable. She went on to say that they shouldn't have to hide something that benefits them personally in their physical and emotional health. Additionally, it could minimize state budget expenditures due to its therapeutic and economically productive properties. Participant 4 also added that they are not seeking joy in planting and cultivating a garden; rather, they are attempting to nourish themselves, to eat healthful foods and to feel better. After the destruction of this garden occurred, Cultivating Dreams Prison Garden Project was established, and unfortunately, it reached a similar fate.

Cultivating Dreams-

Cultivating Dreams was an organic garden inside California Institution for Women started in 2008 by a Scripps College student, Hannah Segal, when she was awarded a Strauss Foundation Scholarship to work with incarcerated women at CIW about women's issues pertaining to health and the environment. They started the garden after coordinating with the women inside and the institution itself to manage and sustain the program over time. Since then, Claremont College students have formed a five-college student organization that operates the logistics in attempting to keep the project afloat. The students had been going to the prison every

Sunday morning to garden with the women for about five hours.

Organized garden projects have proven successful a variety of contexts, including urban jail inmates (Rice & Remy 1994), correctional youth (Flagler 1995), juvenile offenders (Cammack, Waliczek, & Zajicek 2002), and substance abusers (Richards & Kafami 1999).

Unfortunately, there have been many complications that have limited the programming potential of the project, especially due to prison budget cuts and supervisor complications. Speaking to the interviewees about the project, it is clear that there are both benefits and the drawbacks to such a program because there are a number bureaucratic obstacles involved. In April of 2013, during the completion of this thesis, the garden was mowed over with very little notification because the program was not as successful as they wanted it to be.

One woman remembered that Cultivating Dreams started out really strong because the student interns were able to go to the prison every week on Sundays to garden. She was very fond of the project, saying “it was the talk of the town when the garden came. We were really excited about that. We'd say, 'Oh my god, we are going to start growing food!’” Understandably, after being so deprived of fresh produce for many years, the women were excited to finally be able to grow the food that they had been either foraging for or secretly growing amidst the landscape of the prison yard. Subsequently, the Claremont College students also started a Friday night workshop to educate the women about food politics and other issues related to the environment and public health, especially those pertaining to women in prison.

The same woman then commented that she was really disappointed when the college interns stopped coming inside as regularly. A similar sense of discouragement was echoed when the women were told that they could not eat the food directly from the garden; instead, all of the

food was to be donated to the dining hall for the salad bar or to the prison's intensive care unit. While questioning the purpose of the project, she asserted, "When they told us we couldn't eat it, it discouraged us. 'What do you mean we can't eat the stuff we are about to grow?'" This sense of disillusionment deterred people from continuing to attend the garden for its weekly meetings. Participant 4 reflected, "we started with a bunch of people, then all of a sudden, it just dwindled down when they saw that we couldn't eat the food. People were happy about going over there. A lot of people were like, 'Oh my god, some vegetables. We're finally gonna eat some stuff.'" This situation demonstrates the utter deprivation of healthful food available to those incarcerated as well as the limitations that the bureaucratic system had in place.

Another complication associated with Cultivating Dreams is the supervisor-imposed policies that, to the inmates, did not seem to have a purpose. Specifically, there is a rule that the gardeners could only eat the food directly after its harvest. Everything is cut up into small pieces and shared amongst the group, and the women are not allowed to bring any of the food back with them to their rooms. This severely limits the types of fruits and vegetables that can be grown because they all must be eaten raw. It is policies like these that make healthy food inaccessible in prison and thus limit the possibility for food justice. Another restriction is the fact that the garden can only be accessed once a week during Sunday morning when the supervisor is present. Even then, the supervisor could cancel the program for the week at any given time, so women were less likely to return to the garden because it was a disappointment to see hours of labor wasted without any reward of food or nourishment. These complications could have been avoided if the program offered a vocational component that allowed the women to work for extended periods of time while being able to harvest and eat what they grow.

Another critique of the program was that Cultivating Dreams may have fostered further criminal behavior in the same way that the central kitchen does. This is because people were so desperate to eat food that was nourishing for their bodies, so they took food to fill that void. She articulated,

I remember when people would jump the fence and steal tomatoes because tomatoes was a commodity up in prison and we didn't have them for a long time. When they planted those tomatoes they couldn't wait for them to grow, but whatever was grown, we never seen it. We'd never see what was growing in that field. I thought y'all had a connection with VC [Village Cafeteria], the kitchen, to get so many vegetables for us for the salad bar, and we never did see it, so I don't know what happened with that (Participant 8).

Clearly, there was a disconnect between what was being grown and harvested in the garden and what was available in the cafeteria for the general population to consume. Instead of it being a farm-to-table experience, which is commonly acknowledged in the alternative food movement, the women did not know where the food was being sent after they grew it, so there was little continuity in the process of the garden project. This may have been a result of the supervisor not allowing food to be sent to the cafeteria unless there was enough quantity to serve the entire population of approximately 5,000 people. Oftentimes, due to pest infestations from the ground squirrels at CIW, there was only certain varieties of produce that were able to grow in the half-acre space, which also limited the amount of food that the garden.

There has and continue to be a multitude of political complications with the Cultivating Dreams Prison Garden Project due to the bureaucracy of the prison officials that have control over the programming inside. The rules and regulations they put on the women in the program are also highly discouraging to them because being a part of the garden program is a privilege as well as a choice. If they are not receiving any benefits and instead are being scolded by the

supervisor, then there is no incentive for them to be a part of the program. In order to attend the program in the first place, one must have a reputation for good behavior, so that limits the amount of people who are eligible to come to the prison garden and perhaps for those who need horticultural therapy the most. Additionally, those who do retreat to the garden are choosing to spend time there instead of being a part of other activities on Sunday morning, including religious services.

However well intentioned the Claremont Colleges students are, there must be institutional support to implement such food justice programs in prison environments. Although there are undoubtedly inherent bureaucratic hurdles that exist within the criminal justice system, both systematically, in the California Department of Corrections at large, and locally at individual institutions, there must be system-wide support for the implementation and sustainability of these programs. As many of the women mentioned in their interviews, this would allow the prison to save millions of dollars of healthcare on the exorbitant medical costs, which are a result of the poor quality of food that is being served to the women and men inside.

According to the women interviewed, the implementation of these food-oriented projects is undoubtedly worth the time and investment because it builds social capital and hope among inmates. Participant 9 welled up with tears when she spoke about programs like Cultivating Dreams; she felt as though,

There's such a message that is given to those who are incarcerated when they see that you are willing to fight, that your cause means so much to you that you are willing to fight for it, tooth and nail, despite what you face. There's such a message that's sent in to women who would say, 'oh, well, okay, they gave up, so I'll give up.'

There is a sense of hope that is instilled when the women are acknowledged by the outside world

because they do not ordinarily have access to that privilege. This is especially true in the educational programs inside prison. Many colleges and universities cycle through to teach higher education courses, but it is rare that the same institution perseveres for very long due to the bureaucratic systems already in place that make it difficult to gain access to the prison.

She went on to express that it's extremely difficult to fight for justice in the criminal justice system, especially when you are enveloped in it. She revealed, "incarcerated individuals may think it's easier to fight from out here, but it's equally as hard to fight from out here when you are fighting such a big system. It's huge, and it's so corrupt. Corruption begets corruption and violence begets violence." In other words, the Prison Industrial Complex is exploitative, corrupt, and lacks transparency, so therefore it is difficult to deconstruct, especially for those who are serving time because there may be severe consequences for activist behavior. This propels and perpetuates the cycle of corruption and violence in the criminal justice system, so the system itself breeds repetitive criminal behavior, which is not necessarily the fault of the culprit. With a glimmer of hope in her eye, the woman went on to say, "Most importantly, love begets love."

Another important component when establishing a prison garden is the potential toxicity of the land intended for cultivation. This is particularly true because prisons are primarily constructed in rural areas with heavy concentrations of toxic contaminants resulting from industrial agriculture. Participant 9, who spent a life sentence at CCWF, explained, "There's a lot of controversy about the land specifically in Chowchilla because there's some bad spores or something, and the Valley fever, so I don't know if that land would be good to grow crops on, even though it's the largest agricultural area in the world. If it wasn't contaminated, there's so much land that could be used for gardening, it's insane." Soil toxicity is an issue of

Environmental Justice, and in this case, it limits the prison from establishing garden programs because there is an immense health risk in cultivating food on land that is contaminated. A major dilemma that is not normally discussed in Food Justice discourse is the acquisition and use of land.

Inside the prison, the landscape is a highly controlled, supervised and monitored at all hours of the day and night, and it is rare that any unapproved behavior goes unnoticed, including growing and foraging for food. In an ideal fair, just, and sustainable food system, all people would have access to produce and procure culturally appropriate and nourishing foods; however, this situation will likely never occur inside correctional institutions because there are too many security risks at stake. Instead, there must be alternatives that allow inmates to sustain themselves, maintain food sovereignty, and promote their own health and wellbeing by growing their own food if they choose to do so. It will not only save the state large sums of money in their correctional budget, it will also help to create food justice in the criminal justice system.

From this analysis, it has been established that gardening in prison has many benefits for those who are incarcerated. It is equally as important to have similar therapeutic outlets for those who are transitioning from prison to the free world. The garden program at Crossroads seeks to provide such an environment that is both productive in its production of fresh, pesticide-free produce and its therapeutic effect on those who participate in the program.

Food Justice Program at Crossroads--

The Food Justice Program at Crossroads is three-pronged. The program includes Meatless Mondays; Saturday gardening; and Fallen Fruit from Rising Women, a Crossroads

social enterprise. All three programs are required aspects of the Crossroads program and attempt to rehabilitate women through the healing power of food and community.

Gardening at Crossroads--

On Saturday mornings, the women at Crossroads participate in gardening with Claremont Colleges' interns at two of the program houses, on Harvard Avenue and San Jose Avenue. The food goes directly to each of the two houses, which reduces food costs for the non-profit organization. The other purposes of the Crossroads gardens are to provide valuable horticultural skills training and a community-building opportunity for both college student interns and Crossroads clients, so in that vein, the mission is similar to Cultivating Dreams Prison Garden Project. Even though Saturday gardening is a mandatory practice, it is relatively well received by the women, who may or may not have prior agricultural experience. For most, it is resoundingly positive to be able to interact with the garden interns because many women feel as though the students have an unparalleled vivacity and energy for life. Many of the women went into prison during their early twenties, so many interviewees mentioned that it is beneficial to see the alternative path of higher education. It is common that Crossroads women pursue or continue their college degrees after graduating from the program, so this exposure was helpful to many of the women who were interviewed and interested in higher education for themselves.

For others, gardening at Crossroads is a reminder of their childhoods spent growing food. For example, Participant 9 noted, "Me and my mother do not have a spectacular relationship, but she did give me a lot of basic values and principles that I carry with me every single day of my life, and it came from cooking in the kitchen and from gardening in the garden, and to be able to

have that experience again is priceless, it's just priceless.” Although remembering the past can be a traumatic experience, in this case, it gave her a sense of peace. She even said that gardening with her mother was one of the fondest memories that she has of her childhood. She continued by connecting the weekly practice of gardening at Crossroads to a more politically-minded explanation for her appreciation of gardening and the Food Justice movement more broadly by saying that it shows “that there's still hope for this world that is crumbling down before us as far as food is concerned, I think it's a wonderful movement... that needs to be world-spread.” She was so moved by the program that she chose to incorporate the principles of Food Justice into her own career as a chef at a Catholic school.

Participant 2 reminisced about the therapeutic and spiritual impact of being in nature and becoming a part of the cycle of life that was facilitated by this organized garden project. She stated,

I have always been a nature-loving person, and for me, the universe is just so connected to everything, and there is just such life in the earth. I love to watch things grow, I love to be a part of things growing, and when I have my hands and feet in the dirt, I feel very grounded. When I can find 5 minutes to come out here and do some weeding or just sit out here by myself, it's just meditative for me. Nature is just a very big part of my life. I want to be able to be outside because that's where my spirituality comes into play. It's just so connected outside.

She speaks of the garden as a place of relaxation and connection to the earth, which is very important in the transition from prison to society because having an outlet for the stress and confusion encountered in day-to-day life can be healing and restorative. For Participant 2, gardening was integral to her rehabilitation, much like it was for Participant 6.

Gardening has the same relaxing and therapeutic qualities even for women that did not have fulfilling experiences in nature prior to coming to Crossroads. Participant 6 noted, “I think

getting your hands in the dirt, even if you have gloves on, is very therapeutic...I really like gardening. I don't know too much about it, but I enjoy it. I am learning.” Even though this woman is just starting to learn the basics of gardening, she is invested in the outcome of the space because she enjoys spending time outside.

Participant 7 started going out into the garden everyday to water the plants because it provided solace during the ordinarily busy schedule: “Last week and the week before I've been gardening all by myself. I water every morning. I am just learning how to garden, and it's very relaxing” (Participant 7). She was proud to report this sense of independence that she felt by putting her newly acquired knowledge and skills to use in the garden setting. This is sometimes difficult in the transition process from prison back into society after serving a life sentence because everything appears overwhelmingly new. This relaxing space provides time away from the rush of the day and also a place to reflect in a natural environment. This concept has a great potential in reducing stress levels among formerly incarcerated individuals while also providing food security for Crossroads clients.

Although there are numerous benefits to the garden program at Crossroads, there are also drawbacks for some women because the space is not as accessible for them. Participant 3 said, “I can't work in the garden right now at Crossroads because of my disablement, but I sit there and say, give me a hoe! Give me something! Well, let me water. I push my little cart around and there's some things, they're little, but it makes me feel like I've given something.” There are a number of alternatives available for those who are disabled which can be readily incorporated into the Crossroads gardening program, including raised beds. This mechanism is often utilized in the hospital setting or in retirement communities for those who have limited mobility so they

are in wheelchairs or walkers. A more accessible gardening system would allow women who would like to participate to learn and build the same skills as the other women in the program because according to Participant 3, there is a desire to be a part of the gardening program.

On another note, participant 2 spoke about the “healthy respect for food” that the gardening program provided her. She explained that it motivated her to try new types of foods that she ordinarily did not have access to or chose to not eat. She closed by saying, “I just love vegetables, I love them. I love being able to come out here and be able to pick the lettuce that I planted, or you know the little herbs that we have growing...it's so gratifying to be able to produce your own food” (Participant 2). The notion of food sovereignty is the ultimate goal of the program because it provides women with the skills to produce their own food if they choose to do so after they graduate from the program. A number of women said that they would utilize this knowledge once they move out of the Crossroads house into their own apartment or home.

Meatless Mondays-

Meatless Mondays is a nationwide public health campaign that promotes awareness around the environmental and health impact of meat consumption. Historically, Meatless Mondays and Wheatless Wednesdays were campaigns established in the era of the first World War to reduce the amount of commodity food items consumed by Americans in order to ration them out to soldiers fighting overseas. This concept has recently been reclaimed to create awareness about the social, environmental, and physical consequences to meat production and consumption.

Since its establishment in 2009, Crossroads Meatless Mondays has become a food justice

community between students from the Claremont Colleges and women from Crossroads. It consists of a weekly communal meal in which both students and Crossroads women cook a seasonal vegetarian meal from food items that are donated by local farms and gardens. In doing so, they are defying cultural norms by incorporating women from two distinct backgrounds: those who have access to higher education and those who have been incarcerated. In this way, there are power dynamics at play, yet there is an intention on both sides to understand the other's perspective, and in that, open up new worlds of understanding between people with different levels of racial and educational privilege. In engaging in this dialogue around food politics, they are defying the patriarchy and hegemony that they experienced during incarceration while also deconstructing women's relationships with food and power.

The fact that these women are gathering together over food that is donated and largely not purchased from major food retailers demonstrates the anti-capitalistic intention behind the program. In many ways, this program resists the social and political norms of the Prison Industrial Complex and the Industrial Food System and reverses the oppressive patterns of food that the women experienced in the prison setting. The food is prepared in a two hour period in which college interns and Crossroads clients defy the capitalist paradigm by cooking produce that is donated from the Claremont Farmer's Market and other local farms, including Amy's Farm, thus reducing waste and creating ties within the local community. Afterwards, the meal is shared around a communal table, where Crossroads women and Claremont College students converse and get to know each other through the power of food. Finally, there is a two-hour workshop in which the students and Crossroads women learn from each other about issues pertaining to Food Justice.

Many of the women interviewed thoroughly enjoyed the program because they loved getting to know the college interns around issues of food, community, and politics. Participant 3 commented on her appreciation for the college interns, who receive class credit or volunteer hours for their time at Crossroads. She explained that sitting down to a meal with the students and listen to their conversations is to experience the joy and zest for life that awaits the future of the world. Witnessing this “zest for life” made her realize that the young students have the ability to make the difference in the world, especially in relation to the inadequacies of the food system. In the same vein, Participant 4 asserted that the most positive aspect of the program is having new energy infused in the house “because we learn from each other. And we get so much out of having you guys share your knowledge with us” (Participant 4).

Similarly, Participant 9 discussed Meatless Mondays in terms of community building. In describing the impact of the program, she noted,

I think that there's a community built around food. I think that's something that food represents, is community. No matter what community you're in, no matter what environment, and you are going to make do with what you have. You're going to take whatever food that you have and build a community around that food. What's amazing about the community at Crossroads specifically is that we have you interns who are teaching us so many things about food and the different ways to prepare it specifically during Meatless Mondays. It's just a pleasure to see that young people are so enthusiastic about teaching anybody, let alone a bunch of old crotchedy women that just got out of prison and have all these mindsets and learned behaviors about food, that you're so willing to teach us something different. I don't think there's one person that can say that they've participated and Meatless Mondays and their minds haven't changed about food, and in particular about vegetables because you guys come in with some pretty wild ideas, and it's amazing. I think it's so creative and it's so endearing and it's special. Meatless Mondays is special and the bonds that are created, not just with the Crossroads clients to the interns but the clients among themselves, I think they learn each other on a whole new level on Meatless Mondays.

Her perspective on Meatless Mondays was resoundingly positive, as were the majority of other women’s opinions about this portion of the Food Justice program. This overall satisfaction can

be attributed to the community built the women and the interns alike during the cooking sessions, communal meal, and workshop. The educational opportunity definitely goes both ways, however. From the perspective of a college student, I know that I have learned immense amount about myself as both a woman and an activist through the Crossroads women's stories and about the application of Food Justice in my community engagement work.

In conclusion, the Crossroads Food Justice Program also affected women's health in relation to food after their release from prison. They addressed the physical, emotional, and spiritual aspects of food before and after prison. Overall, there was a drastic change in the women's health since being out of prison, which they attributed to the change in women's diets after being released. For example, Participant 2 explained, "food-wise, my energy level is so much better, you know, I feel healthier, because I've been out six months now, and I can definitely tell a difference, you know. I've lost weight by just eating different foods, and it just makes you feel better." The increased access to food transformed their perception of the food they consume and their bodily habitus. Participant 2 made comparison between the lethargic feeling she has when she eats a Big Mac while she is working at McDonald's and the fresh produce she consumes during Meatless Mondays or in the garden. She said that the burger makes her lethargic and want to go to bed afterwards, but when she eats food during the communal meals at Crossroads, she feels much lighter and more energetic. Again, this sense of docility that is caused by highly processed foods is the purpose of prison food as described by Michel Foucault.

Participant 2 came to the realization that "the mind and the body just go hand in hand with the food. It's almost like with prison food you are left in a fog, and out here, eating more of

the vegetables, healthier, home-cooked meals, everything's a lot clearer.” This mental clarity that allows for self-empowerment is viewed as a liability by the institution because it could cause institutional upheaval in the prison. However, after their release, the food that was available to consume was directly correlated to a renewed sense of self-confidence and thus empowerment.

This experience is demonstrated by a story that Participant 2 told:

One of the first things that I wrote a couple of my best friends when I got home was how the sounds of the silverware on the plates, the clinking of it what an amazing sound that was. You can imagine the response I got because nobody had ever thought about putting that kind of detail into that. And I was like it was just the most amazing sound to have the clinking of the silverware on the glass plates; we had been so deprived! You know, sporks and plastic trays are what we've eaten off of for 20+ years and now to just have regular glass plates and silverware is just, it's a gift!

She hints that it was not just the deprivation of quality, tasteful food that caused their abhorrence of prison food; it was also the entire dining experience that perpetuated their poor associations with food and thus their negative relationships with their own bodies and the planet. She points to the effectiveness of the Crossroads program, which requires every client to be at the dinner table by 6 pm everyday to share in a communal meal together.

Fallen Fruit from Rising Women: A Crossroads Social Enterprise

Fallen Fruit from Rising Women is a social enterprise that was born out of the Food Justice program at Crossroads. Social enterprises are defined by certain key characteristics according to Pearce (2003): a social enterprise must have mission or purpose for the common good through the production of goods or services. The profit from these marketplace transactions is directed toward further social and environmental purposes to benefit the broader society.

In preserving seasonal, donated produce from backyard fruit trees, the social enterprise makes a profit by selling value-added products back to the local community in family-owned marketplaces and community venues. The idea for the social enterprise was born in 2009 when the program had an excess amount of produce, and since then, it has flourished due to the combined efforts of Crossroads, Professor Nancy Neiman Auerbach, and Claremont College student interns. Current products include marmalades, bath salts, citrus salts, hairclips, candle votives, and kombucha. They are sold in local marketplaces including the Claremont cheese cave, seasonal festivals, and the Claremont farmer's market, which builds community ties around a common mission of empowering formerly incarcerated women.

Social enterprises for people on parole have made their mark across the country in recent years. Non-governmental organizations like Homeboy Industries is especially well renowned for its work in Los Angeles by prescribing to the motto, "Jobs not Jails." A record number of people are being released from prison due to recent legislation, including [sources], so it is vital that there are opportunities to provide employment for those who would otherwise be discriminated against for their personal history.

The ultimate goal of the social enterprise Fallen Fruit from Rising Women is to provide

employment for women who have graduated from the Crossroads program. This opportunity of employment is extremely important in not only reducing the rate of recidivism but also in empowering women to be independent after their release from prison. As Participant 2 exclaimed, “It's such a gratifying experience to be able to write my friends still in prison and say, 'You know what? I'm making it, and there's hope.' It's emotional because it's so scary to think about how much the economy sucks, and who's going to want to give somebody who has just done twenty, thirty years in prison a job?” This realistic sentiment is one that is experienced endlessly in women who are on parole. They are statistically more likely to prevent their likelihood of returning to prison if they find employment opportunities or if they have a chance at an education. Opportunities for employment are hard to locate due to the social stigma surrounding people who have been convicted of a crime. At Crossroads, they seek to assist women in finding employment by providing interview assistance, resume building workshops, and other interpersonal skills, and the majority of women succeed in gaining sustainable employment.

Participant 4, who has been extremely invested in the outcome of the social enterprise, expressed, “I think it is so important for the women to have this social enterprise because it's just is going to open so many doors for us and to be a part of that from the beginning is a huge privilege” (Participant 4). She would like to see Fallen fruit from Rising Women act as a launching board for women's individual talents and dreams so that the social enterprise is constantly evolving both seasonally with the produce available and with the needs and desires of the women in the program. Similarly, the culture and dynamic is always changing among the Crossroads women as they transition out into society after the six months of the program, so the model of the social enterprise can be readily adapted to fit the interests and skills of the

Crossroads clients. The work behind Fallen Fruit from Rising Women has become very incorporated into the daily lives of women who are in the Crossroads program, and the desire to engage in the work must be there in order for the entire social enterprise to be successful.

The importance of enterprises like Fallen Fruit from Rising Women is to not only develop on-the-ground experience in the workplace but to also build confidence within every individual. So often, women who come to Crossroads after being released from decades in prison are disheartened because they have been consistently repressed in the prison environment, especially in the realm of prison labor and food. Participant 9 clearly stated, “People are so used to being kept down and oppressed and they don't really have the motivation that is needed to be successful in life.” The hope is that the social enterprise will transform the way they view themselves in the workplace and beyond in the world outside of the prison fences, so that they may be successful in life, both at home and at work.

These programs, Cultivating Dreams Prison Garden Project, Crossroads Food Justice Program, and Fallen Fruit from Rising Women, all demonstrate that there are viable alternatives to the industrialized systems of prison and food in which the power lands in the hands of traditionally marginalized people who are able to plant seeds for a brighter and more just future by cultivating resistance and harvesting peace and hope.

Chapter 6: CONCLUSIONS ON CULTIVATING RESISTANCE

In exploring the Industrial Food System and the Prison Industrial Complex, it is clear that there are social and environmental justice issues at play in these two complex industrial systems that continue to discount human rights by subjugating racial minorities and/ or low-income individuals. In attempting to resist such exploitative institutions and thus dismantle institutional racism within these behemoth concentrations of power, social movements must take a unified route to positive social change. This includes collaborating organizationally across initiatives by locating a specific mechanism for change and capitalizing on that through one unified campaign that will allow for direct small-scale projects as well as policy changes on the institutional level.

The issue of Food Justice in the Criminal Justice System could be further researched and expanded beyond the depth of this thesis in a number of ways. First, exploring Food Justice as a means of preventing crime is a field that must be expanded on through both qualitative and quantitative research because the growing rates of incarceration in this nation prove that there is a desperate need to overhaul the confinement of people in the endless revolving door of the prison system. Preventing crimes and convictions can be accomplished through mechanisms of environmental design and community organizing that restore trust within communities, provide employment as well as education, and beautify the landscape.

The broken systems of the Prison Industrial Complex and the Industrial Food System are a result of the suffering education system in America. In order to counteract this decline in the educational system and the success of future generations, Food Justice initiatives have been incorporated into schoolyard education. Long-term studies that analyze quantifiable data including high school retention, crime prevention, and other statistics can be conducted in order

to prove the importance of food justice in paving the way for a more socially and ecologically just society. In doing so, these programs could also assist in the dismantling of the school to prison pipeline, which is a disturbing phenomenon that occurs in the American education system wherein children are funneled from the public school system into the juvenile and criminal justice system.

In the same vein, studying quantitative outcomes from specific programs would prove that food justice projects focused on incarcerated individuals reduce rates of recidivism among those involved. These studies should be conducted in a universal manner so that they are both consistent and easy to comprehend; that way, studies may be recognized as coherent and readily applied in the penal system. Essentially, examining the empowering qualities of food sovereignty and access in low-income urban neighborhoods, which disproportionately experience high rates of incarceration, could not only reduce the epidemic of mass incarceration in this nation, it could also reduce significant governmental spending that could be reallocated to a more productive education system that seeks to instill knowledge and power. Participant 9, who now works at a school, stated that it would be fascinating to conduct further research on Food Justice in the American public school system as a means of preventing incarceration. She explained,

I know that it's inevitable that out of this year's group of kids, there's gonna be a certain percentage of them that have the potential to go to prison, and I could probably pick them out. Just from watching their behavior, from that little bit of time that I see them coming through the chow line, or the lunch line, and if I could reach even just one of them and spread that love to them rather than the same old thing that they get throughout their lives, then my whole experience has been for naught. Through food. There's something to be said about reaching people through their stomach. Man or woman, it doesn't matter, especially when it's good food, good healthy food, cooked with love.

Participant 9 believes that the production and consumption food has the power to transform individuals' lives, especially those who are suffering from psychological trauma and/

or disorders. These initiatives could ultimately reduce high rates of incarceration among youths by providing employment skills and horticultural training while also educating about food-oriented approaches to social justice, thereby preventing the existence of a prison nation in future generations.

Another valuable field of exploration is the extremely opaque process of food procurement in the prison setting. Due to the fact that there are now a number of “ecological prisons,” it could be valuable and fruitful to engage in research around their effectiveness as holistic institutions of rehabilitation and thus social change rather than retribution and social decay. More specifically, it would be beneficial to examine how ecological prisons incorporate sustainable food practices into their agenda, and the ways in which the health care budget and inmate rehabilitation changes or fluctuates through more sustainable and equitable food purchasing.

There is tremendous significance in deconstructing these institutions through further academic scholarly research and analysis and community engagement work because these initiatives can be applied directly to improve individuals’ lives that have experienced marginalization and disenfranchisement. This thesis in itself can be utilized as a tool to assist in the transformation of these interlocking systems through active and critical resistance to the oppression of marginalized peoples for profit.

There are only a few things that I would have changed about the process of writing this thesis. First and foremost, my analysis would have greatly benefitted from more interviews with Crossroads women because they had such powerful their stories and lived experiences to share. At the same time, I am grateful that I was able to focus specifically on this small group of

women because it allowed me to get to not only spend more time getting to know the women personally, but to also engage in a critical dialogue about their lives because our correspondences were so fruitful and illuminating. What I truly wanted to portray in this thesis was the women's lived experiences through the lens of food, which I did to the best of my ability; however, there is always more research to be done and data to collect, especially from such rich sources that are rarely accessed or studied in the academic realm.

Overall, the incorporation of food justice into the criminal justice system would allow for the reform of the penal system entirely. Horticultural therapy and vocational job training would reduce high rates of recidivism among formerly incarcerated inmates, which would surmount to reduced prison expenditures. Healthier, more nutritious eating would reduce astronomical spending on healthcare for diet-related illnesses, and a more natural environment would benefit the psychosocial wellbeing of incarcerated individuals, thus decreasing the detrimental impacts of the landscape of punishment reinforced by the Prison Industrial Complex.

Cultivating Dreams Prison Garden Project and Crossroads' Food Justice Program are two programs that cultivate resistance to the Prison Industrial Complex and the Industrial Food System, and their existence demonstrates the power of food to create and sustain communities that advocate for a more environmentally, socially just world for the benefit of all people.

APPENDIX A:

The following are interview questions that were asked in the following order:

- Did you grow up on a farm, or did your family grow their own food?
- How have your experiences inside prison influenced your relationship to food?
- Could you tell me a little about the food that was served to you in prison?
- Were you satisfied with the food that was served?
- What was your experience like cooking in prison?
- Did you share meals with others, or were there any particular rituals associated with food that stand out to you?
- How were holidays and special events celebrated through food?
- Since you got out, have you noticed a change in your health?
- Do you feel as though there is a community built around food at Crossroads? Explain.
- Do you enjoy working in the garden at the Crossroads houses? Why or why not?
- Has gardening changed your view of the outdoors or nature?
- Do you enjoy cooking meals for yourself or others? Why or why not?
- Has your perception of the environment changed since being out of prison?
- What are some of your favorite aspects of the Food program at Crossroads?
- If you could add or change anything about the Food program, what would it be?
- How has Meatless Mondays influenced you? What's your favorite part about Monday nights?
- If you were at CIW, did you participate in Cultivating Dreams garden? If so, can you tell me about the most successful aspects of the program? The least successful?

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