

2013

Coalition for Abolition: Strategic Alliances and Antiprison Activism in California's Central Valley

Ethan Buckner

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalwindow.vassar.edu/senior_capstone

Recommended Citation

Buckner, Ethan, "Coalition for Abolition: Strategic Alliances and Antiprison Activism in California's Central Valley" (2013). *Senior Capstone Projects*. 247.

http://digitalwindow.vassar.edu/senior_capstone/247

This Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Window @ Vassar. It has been accepted for inclusion in Senior Capstone Projects by an authorized administrator of Digital Window @ Vassar. For more information, please contact library_thesis@vassar.edu.

**Coalition for Abolition: Strategic Alliances and Antiprison Activism in
California's Central Valley**

Ethan Buckner
Independent Program
May 2013

Senior Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Bachelor of Arts degree in the Independent Program.

Advisor, Carlos Alamo

Advisor, Lawrence Mamiya

Abstract

There are currently over 3 million people locked behind bars in United States prisons, jails, and detention centers. In this era of mass incarceration, prison abolitionists envision a world entirely without prisons. The politics of abolition are complex, and the vision for abolition is long-term. Activists seeking to operationalize abolitionist politics must navigate pragmatic strategic questions of issue framing, leadership, campaign planning, and coalition building. This thesis addresses issues of abolitionist strategy by examining the work of the California Prison Moratorium Project, a small yet highly successful antiprison organization based in Fresno, at the heart of the San Joaquin Valley. Drawing from a short series of interviews with CPMP staff, advisory board members, and allies, along with news clippings, organizational publications, and scholarly research, I analyze the effectiveness of CPMP's campaigns. Ultimately, I argue that CPMP's broad-based coalition building strategies are a powerful example of effective abolitionist organizing.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	4
Introduction: Birth of a Mass Movement?	5
Chapter 1: Incarceration Nation.....	13
Chapter 2: Roots of Resistance	22
Chapter 3: Prison Expansion and Resistance in the Central Valley	39
Chapter 4: The California Prison Moratorium Projects	46
Chapter 5: Building Coalitions, Building A Movement	60
Conclusion: Moving Forward	74
Bibliography.....	79

Acknowledgements

I am grateful for the continued loving support of my parents, my sisters Heather and Rachel, and my brother Matthew.

Many thanks to Carlos Alamo for your patient and thoughtful guidance throughout my research and writing process. And to Larry Mamiya, for your mentorship and leadership these past four years. Your commitment to collective liberation is embodied in your life's work and inspires me as a student and activist. I also extend gratitude to my ever-supportive formal and informal advisors, Tim Koechlin, Bill Hoynes, and Susan Blickstein.

Finally, a special thanks to Johanna Fernandez, for helping me believe that radical transformation is possible.

Introduction

Birth of a Mass Movement?

On a warm spring evening in April 2012, dozens of hopeful organizers crowded into the softly lit Skylight room in the CUNY Graduate Center. Gathered together were occupiers, students, community organizers, educators, faith leaders, and formerly incarcerated individuals, as well as former members of SNCC¹, the Black Panthers, and the Weather Underground, among others. Though incredibly diverse in age, race, gender, sexual identity, and affiliation, the group was linked by a call for a *Liberation Summer*. Stirred by the creative momentum of Occupy Wall Street, invigorated by the murder of Trayvon Martin, and inspired by movements for Black and Brown liberation in America's past, organizers of Liberation Summer sought to build "a united front that will challenge the carceral state in all of its dimensions" (Liberation Summer 2012). As the 7pm scheduled start time neared, the stirring crowd welcomed the arrival of professor, writer, and activist Angela Y. Davis, who opened the evening by highlighting the connection between Occupy Wall Street, capitalism, and prison abolition.

"This is a very important historical juncture," she said with conviction, "The Occupy Wall Street Movement helped change the terrain of political discourse, made it possible for us to talk about capitalism in a different way" (Liberation Summer 2012). To Davis, Liberation Summer presented "an opportunity to address difficult

¹ The Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) was a youth-run organization that played a significant role in the Civil Rights Movement in the American South in the 1960s.

issues... to raise questions about abolition."

Throughout the rest of the gathering, attendees divided into small groups to offer feedback on the Liberation Summer vision and develop a common strategy for moving forward. Organizers posed the question: What would coordinated resistance to mass incarceration look like? How would a massive coalition of activists - this idea of a united front - function? Ideas brewed and bounced around the room, ranging from mass public education campaigns to locally situated Cop Watch initiatives to a national convergence of activists to launch a SNCC-like organization. Visioning and planning continued for hours, until the building manager announced that he needed to close down for the night. Before ending, the group attempted to reach consensus on next steps. But with all the excitement and energy in the space, the group was unable to decide on a common strategy.

After the April 27th meeting, Liberation Summer fizzled. The core organizing team, flooded with diverse feedback from the meeting, was unable to pull together a cohesive strategy and harness the momentum of the coalition meeting. Throughout the rest of the spring, organizers splintered to work on a variety of local campaigns. The core team, comprised mostly of young organizers without strong roots in New York's racial justice movement, was uncommitted to any particular direction. The team dispersed. By the time June rolled around, the Liberation Summer coalition was no longer meeting.

As a core organizer for the Liberation Summer initiative, I was constantly preoccupied with the delicate task of coalition building. Developing Liberation

Summer while attending to the goals, agendas, and needs of all the individuals, affinity groups, and organizations involved was akin to navigating a half-constructed sailboat through choppy waters. Concrete questions around strategy and next steps were interwoven with deeper questions about our politics: what does abolition really mean? Which aspects of the system do we challenge and engage through our work? Which groups belong in our 'united front'? How do we choose a single target for action while drawing the connection to the entire system of mass incarceration? All of these inquiries spurred enriching and lively discussion in our meetings and on our list serv. Yet partly as a result of lack of focus and consensus around these questions and partly due to lack of capacity, trust, and commitment among young coalition organizers, our effort collapsed.

The unfulfilled potential of Liberation Summer begets the core question I explore in this thesis: *what makes effective abolition organizing?* As a social justice activist, I am compelled to respond to the consistent calls of abolitionist scholars and organizers for a mass movement, akin in size and scope to the civil rights movement of the 1960s that challenges and ultimately dismantles the prison industrial complex. Yet, despite focused resistance to mass incarceration by a multitude of activists since the 1980s, abolitionists have yet to ignite such a broad-based social movement. Why not?

This thesis engages critical practical questions for activists and scholars concerned with mass incarceration. What are effective organizing strategies for implementing an abolitionist framework? I argue that a core ingredient for a mass

movement against the prison industrial complex is cross-issue coalition building. Because the politics of abolition demands a systemic critique of the prison industrial complex, stakeholders concerned with a wide variety of issues can work together to fight prisons. Rather than inhibit collective action, diverse perspectives and interests among allies can lead to creative strategies, resilient coalitions, and transformative growth for everyone involved.

To explore alliance formation in anti-prison organizing, I focus on the California Prison Moratorium Project (CPMP), an example of an abolitionist organization that has successfully built coalitions across issue lines. I place CPMP's work in dialogue with social movement theory literature about coalition building, in hopes of cultivating lessons for activists seeking to expand the scope of the anti-prison movement. How is coalition building utilized as a vehicle to address systemic injustice? Engaging abolition organizing within social movement literature also offers broad lessons about social movement strategy that are applicable to other movements for social, environmental, and economic justice. I conclude by offering ideas about strategy for the prison abolition movement moving forward. I agree with Ruth Wilson Gilmore as she states in her introduction to *Golden Gulag*, "where scholarship and activism overlap is in the area of how to make decisions about what comes next" (R. W. Gilmore 2007, 27). My intention for this thesis is to offer ideas and raise questions for activists seeking to end mass incarceration and create more just and equitable communities.

To investigate the organizing strategy of the California Prison Moratorium

Project, I conducted a series of informal interviews with five key actors and partners in the organization, past and present. These interviews were conducted via Skype, and ran between a half hour and two hours. During each interview, I asked a series of questions about the framing, strategy, and implementation of CPMP's campaigns, and discussed perceptions of prison abolition, reform, and movement building. I asked interviewees to describe the significance of CPMP's coalition work and describe the dynamics of such alliances.

With more time and resources, I would have conducted much more in-depth interviews with community members, coalition partners, and local leaders in Fresno. Given the relatively small number of interviews I was able to secure, this representation of CPMP's work is likely incomplete. However, my interviews offer a powerful window into antiprison activism in California's Central Valley. Aside from interviews, I draw material from organizational publications, coalition partners, and published research to analyze CPMP's work.

The first chapter of this thesis begins with a snapshot of the prison crisis in the United States. Staggering incarceration statistics buttress my analysis of the historical, economic, and political forces that gave rise to mass incarceration. I highlight how structural racism, industrial capitalism, and state manipulation gave rise to the prison industrial complex.

In Chapter 2, I situate various threads of resistance to the prison system throughout history within a framework for analyzing abolitionist organizing. I propose that direct resistance to the criminal justice system, the development of

viable alternatives to incarceration, and organizing around broader issues of social and economic justice all fit into an experimental definition of abolitionist organizing. To navigate the conflict between reformist and abolitionist approaches to antiprison organizing, activist efforts must be evaluated based on whether campaigns are *progressive* (moving towards abolition) or *regressive* (further fortifying the prison industrial complex). Chapter 2 introduces the analytical framework for evaluating CPMP's campaigns.

Next, I outline the political, economic, and geographic history of California's Central Valley. In Chapter 3, I highlight how concurrent agricultural centralization and urban deindustrialization facilitated the exploitation of migrant labor and widespread impoverishment. Coupled with the Reagan's War On Drugs and state backlash to the radical organizing of the 70s, these geopolitical and economic developments set the stage for the Golden State's historic prison buildup. I explain how the state manipulated economically devastated towns in the Central Valley with false promises of economic progress that would supposedly result from prison construction. I conclude Chapter 3 by highlighting the tradition of coalition activism in the Central Valley, most notably through the United Farmworkers struggle in the 1960s. These dynamics set the stage for antiprison organizing in the region.

Chapter 4 introduces the California Prison Moratorium Project (CPMP). I begin by highlighting how groups such as Critical Resistance and the Mothers of East Los Angeles inspired the strategic development of CPMP. I then briefly outline the organization's structure, history, and campaigns. I particularly focus on CPMP's

diverse coalition building work.

In Chapter 5, I draw from relevant social movement theory on cross-movement coalition building, political opportunity structure, and issue framing to evaluate CPMP's work. CPMP built antiprison coalitions by framing prison issues in ways that resonated with potential allies. These diverse alliances between community organizations, landowners, unions, health agencies, and environmental justice activists leveraged expertise, experiences, and resources to implement successful campaigns against prisons.

I conclude by identifying important lessons that CPMP offers to activists seeking to build a more powerful movement to abolish prisons in the United States. I ultimately contend that CPMP's broad-based coalition organizing was flexible, inviting, and strategic. CPMP's short-term campaigns were situated within a long-term vision for abolition. The organization's work was informed by – and therefore held accountable to – people most directly impacted by the prison system: the incarcerated, formerly incarcerated, and their families, and residents of prison towns. In order to spark a mass movement against the prison industrial complex, abolitionists should seek to build strategic coalitions with unlikely allies and ensure that the most marginalized voices take leadership front-and-center.

I must disclaim that in this short analysis, I cannot cover all dimensions of mass incarceration, prison abolitionism, environmental justice, and social movement theory. I encourage scholars, students, and activists to critique, challenge, and expand upon the ideas I postulate in this paper, in service to the development of

a more robust and effective movement to abolish prisons.

Chapter 1

Incarceration Nation

Before discussing prison abolition as a political position, ideological vision, and strategic goal, it is critical to understand the scope and impact of mass incarceration in the United States, as well as the historical trajectory that has led to our current crisis. Fully detailing the complex roots of mass incarceration would require volumes of text. In this chapter, I begin with a brief overview of the prison industrial complex. I then discuss the structural, historical, economic, and political roots of mass incarceration. Finally, I introduce an abolitionist analysis of history that informs anti-prison activism.

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, as of 2011 there are 2.3 million people incarcerated in the United States prisons, jails, and military detention centers. Factoring in those caught up in "the system" (parole and probation), this figure swells to nearly 7 million (Glaze and Parks 2012). The number of people under correctional supervision amounts to 3.2% of the total population, or 1 in every 31 adults. The United States incarcerates a greater percentage of its population than any country in the world, by a vast amount. To put this in perspective, the U.S. contains 4% of the global population, yet boasts 25% of the world's prison population (NAACP 2013).

The penitentiary in the United States extends back to the establishment of prisoner trade during the initial colonization of the Americas (Christianson 2000).

Angela Davis' (2003) analysis illuminates that retributive justice and prisons are structurally embedded within the history of US political, social, and economic development. Yet despite America's long prison history, the staggering incarceration rates that hallmark the US as the world's top prison nation are a relatively recent phenomenon. The numbers speak for themselves: between 1900 and 1970, the number of people incarcerated in US jails and prisons remained relatively stable, increasing (with mild fluctuations each decade) from 112,362 to 338,029. Between 1970 and 1990, that figure skyrocketed to nearly 1.5 million, and has continued to increase to the approximate 2.3 million incarcerated today (Justice Policy Institute 2000).

The racial dimensions of mass incarceration are staggering, and add credence to claims that the purpose of prisons in the United States is to systematically oppress people of color. African Americans comprise 12.6% of the total US population; yet represent 38.2% of the incarcerated population. People of Hispanic origin comprise 16.3% of the US population, yet represent 20.7% of the incarcerated population. Whites, on the other hand, constitute 56.1% of the US population and only 34.2% of the incarcerated population. Pacific Islanders, Native Americans, Alaska Natives, Indigenous Hawaiians, and other non-white populations are also disproportionately incarcerated compared to white Americans (Greenman, Sabol and West 2010). Although young men of color are by far the most likely to be incarcerated in the US, African-American women are the fastest-growing segment of our continuously expanding prison system (Arriola, Braithwaite and Treadwell 2005). These statistics do not include the dramatically rising number of people held

in immigrant detention centers throughout the country – in 2011, over 429,000 immigrants were held in over 250 facilities, a new US record (American Civil Liberties Union 2013).

The consequences of mass incarceration are complex and manifold. Prisons fragment families and communities, exacerbate mental illness², perpetuate violence³, and intensify social inequality⁴. Formerly incarcerated men and women often face nearly insurmountable obstacles to community reintegration⁵. Discrimination and stigma has buttressed the development of complex structural barriers that limit access to adequate housing, employment, food, and health care for the formerly incarcerated and their families.

Study after study demonstrates that incarceration neither reduces crime nor 'rehabilitates' those in prison (Davis 2003; R. W. Gilmore 2007). In fact, an overwhelming percentage of those incarcerated in the United States are serving time for nonviolent offenses, mostly drug related (King and Mauer 2002). Race-, sex-, and gender-based discriminatory sentencing laws and policing practices compared

² The Sentencing Project (2002) report *Mentally Ill Offenders in the Criminal Justice System: An Analysis and Prescription* highlights that mental illness in prisons has reached crisis proportions. The number of incarcerated men and women suffering from mental illness was reported at 283,000 in 1998, a figure believed to be a low estimate due to underreporting.

³ McCulloch and Scraton (2008) highlight how violence permeates the policy and practice of incarceration both in the US and abroad. In addition, the notion of *structural violence*, or the ways in which systems and institutions manifest violence through inequality, accounts for the compounding impact of incarceration on communities in the United States.

⁴ Pettit and Western (2010) detail the compounding social and economic impacts of mass incarceration in the United States. The authors demonstrate that inequality associated with incarceration is cumulative, intergenerational, and concentrated in communities of color.

⁵ Alexander (2010) discusses the confluence of structural factors that have created a permanent underclass in American society, comprised of formerly incarcerated men and women who have lost access to voting rights, public housing, welfare, food stamps, and have tremendous difficulty accessing employment and education.

to demographic statistics on drug use and sale bear evidence to the illusory and popularly constructed link between crime and punishment (Davis 2003). In addition, as Michelle Alexander points out, "violent crime rates have fluctuated over the years and have little relationship to incarceration rates - which have soared the past three decades regardless of whether violent crime was going up or down" (Alexander 2010, 101). So what is the purpose of locking up so many people?

Scholars point to a confluence of factors, including structural racism, state reaction to revolutionary activism, economic inequities, and the rise of global capitalism to explain the dramatic increase in prisoners in the US over the past forty years. In the following section, I outline historical and structural analyses of the prison system that inform abolitionist politics. Abolitionists maintain a systemic critique of capitalism, racism, state domination, and other historical forms of social oppression that necessitates complex considerations when developing organizing strategies for anti-prison activism.

Abolitionist scholars have debunked the mythological conception of the prison as a logical response to crime. Davis' (2003) conception of the prison industrial complex demands that "economic and political structures and ideologies" are taken into account, as opposed to "focusing myopically on individual criminal conduct and efforts to 'curb crime'" (85). The notion of the prison industrial complex considers the relationship between racism, state power, the media, and global capital. Noting the prison boom of the last half-century, Davis describes "prison construction and the attendant drive to fill these new structures with

human bodies" as primarily "driven by ideologies of racism and the pursuit of profit" (84). As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the prison system neither reduces crime rates nor improves public safety and welfare; prisons *break down* the social fabric of communities. Yet through the 'war on drugs' and the 'war on crime', the state utilized rhetoric of law and order to justify its policies and practices, and to infuse fear into mainstream discourse on public safety (Parenti 1999). Abolitionist politics challenge the dominant narrative on crime and punishment by exposing the historical, social, political, and economic roots of the Prison industrial complex.

Parenti (1999) details how the United States Government responded to social and economic crises by manipulating the public and jumpstarting a massive expansion of the state's criminal justice apparatus. Through the *War on Drugs* and economic restructuring, the government developed its program of mass incarceration to "restore sagging business profits" and "manage rising inequality," a policy that has had a disproportionately devastating impact on the poor and people of color (xii). Beginning in the late 1960s and accelerating under the Nixon and Reagan presidencies, the Federal Government facilitated the militarization of America's police departments and prisons. The initial buildup was launched in response to the militant resistance movements that challenged state authority during the mid to late 1960s. The state, fearful of insurrection, responded with force to the revolutionary spirit espoused by radical Civil Rights organizers, the emergence of the Black Panther party, anti-Vietnam protests, the Free Speech movement, and the urban race riots of the mid-1960s (Parenti 1999; Alexander 2010). To maintain social control, the federal government launched massively

expensive programs to militarize, reorganize, equip, and train local police forces throughout the country (Parenti 1999). These efforts, along with new community relations programs, reflected a "buildup in law enforcement's social-psychological as well as material" arsenal to "reimpose racial and class control" in America's cities (26). These efforts contributed to the social and political construction of repression and incapacitation as the necessary response to crime.

Parenti (1999) contends that "police repression requires a carceral component. Cops alone cannot manage the cast-off classes" (168). In the 1980s, the Reagan Administration facilitated another massive criminal justice buildup, but this time focused on the infrastructure of incarceration. During this time period, neoliberal economic policies and the globalization of capital created "seismic changes" in the US economy, leaving "those residing in the ghetto... isolated and jobless" (Alexander 2010, 50). In response to "increased poverty and the social dislocations of deindustrialization" that presented "threats to order," the Federal Government bolstered prison construction nationwide and granted incentives to states to implement harsher sentencing laws (Parenti 199, 167). Politicians spewed racist rhetoric to diffuse criticism of neoliberal policies by framing poor people of color as the cause of society's social ills. Parenti describes this process as "social pathology" that "justifies state repression and the militarization of public space, sews fear, and leaves poor communities - that might have organized for social justice - in disarm, occupied by police and thus docile" (Parenti 2009, 169). The purpose of the criminal justice system is no longer public safety, but rather "the management and control of the dispossessed" (Alexander 2010, 188).

In Chapter 3, I discuss how neoliberal economic restructuring and concurrent agricultural centralization caused economic devastation in the rural areas of California's Central Valley. The US Government responded to the surplus populations in inner city America by creating structures for systematic repression and social control, and using the prison expansion project as supposed economic stimulus for the equally suffering rural America. Understanding the interconnected structural impacts of deindustrialization and globalization on urban and rural communities and how the state's response to social and economic crises gave rise to mass incarceration is critical for activists seeking to build coalitions for effective resistance.

Historical forces of capitalism and racism undergird a system deeply embedded in the US political economy. Corporate interests ranging from private prison companies to construction, health care, and food service providers have a profound economic stake in the continuous expansion of the prison system. The scale of prison labor is astounding: it is estimated that "nearly a million prisoners are now making office furniture, working in call centers, fabricating body armor, taking hotel reservations, working in slaughterhouses, or manufacturing textiles, shoes, and clothing, while getting somewhere between 93 cents and \$4.73 per day" (Fraser and Freeman 2012). Prisons also offer well-paying employment opportunities, and are seen by proponents as an economic development strategy. In 2010, public correctional facilities employed 493,100 correctional officers at a median salary of nearly \$40,000 per year (Bureau of Labor Statistics 2012). These statistics don't include private prisons, which constitute a fast-growing sector of the

US economy. The Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) is the largest private prison company in the United States. In 2011, CCA generated \$1.7 billion in total revenue, with CEO Damon T. Hiniger earning a fat \$3.7 million salary (Lee 2012). Corporations such as CCA, Geogroup, and the Wakenhut Corporation profit from rising incarceration rates, immigrant detention and deportation, and the militarization of law enforcement (Kirkham 2012). Over the past decade, CCA has spent \$17.4 million lobbying for lucrative government contracts, harsher sentencing laws, and partnerships with law enforcement (Lee 2012). Such powerful business interests interface with a government that is informed by historically racist policies and practices, prison guard unions that are keen to protect relatively well-paying jobs, and sensationalist media outlets that perpetuate oppressive misconceptions of crime and prisons.

The role of racism in the perpetuation of mass incarceration cannot be overstated. Michelle Alexander (2010) traces threads of structural racism through America's past, claiming that mass incarceration is just the latest form of racial caste in the United States, preceded by the post-reconstruction Jim Crow Laws and chattel slavery before that. Alexander analyzes the criminalization and incarceration of young African American men in the context of America's history of racial hierarchy. She highlights the functional similarities between Jim Crow and mass incarceration, citing "familiar stigma and shame" combined with "an elaborate system of control, complete with political disenfranchisement and legalized discrimination in every major realm of economic and social life" (Alexander 2010, 191). Yet in today's context, she argues, the racialized nature of mass incarceration is masked by "the

absence of overt racial hostility" (202). Such supposed "colorblindness" empowers politicians, media outlets, corporate representatives, and the public to "label people of color 'criminals' and then engage in all the [racist] practices we supposedly left behind" after the Civil Rights Movement (2).

The call for a mass movement to resist mass incarceration stems naturally from a political analysis that draws historical connections between abolitionist struggles of the past and the needed social response to present systemic injustices. Activists interested in combating prisons must address the compounding impact of structural racism and global capitalism. The notion of the prison industrial complex complicates the political strategies of abolitionist organizers, who must consider all of the stakeholders and interconnected agents that drive mass incarceration. In the following chapter, I outline a brief history of resistance to mass incarceration and propose a general framework for understanding and analyzing abolition organizing.

Chapter 2

Roots of Resistance

The prison industrial complex has deep and complex historical roots. However, as long as prisons have been around, there has been organized resistance to their existence. In this chapter, I succinctly describe important foundations of abolitionist resistance. I then identify key features of an abolitionist approach to antiprison organizing. The rest of the chapter situates the history of struggle within continuing debates about the definition of abolition as a political vision and strategy. Discourse around the tension between working for reform (short-term policy goals) and the complete abolition of the prison industrial complex (long-term visionary goals) is central to the framing and strategy of the antiprison movement.

To navigate this debate, I offer the following framework for analyzing abolitionist organizing: First, I delineate *direct resistance* to criminal justice institutions from *indirect resistance* to broader social, political, and economic systems that perpetuate mass incarceration. I then show how both types of organizing can serve to either further fortify the prison system (what I call *regressive action*) or move towards abolition (*progressive action*). I will later apply this framework to analyze the work of the California Prison Moratorium Project and identify insights and prospects for the abolition movement moving forward.

This idea of prison abolition can seem fantastical and far-fetched to many when they first encounter it. Davis (2003) argues that prisons have become so

engrained in American society that it has become extremely difficult to imagine a society without them; to most Americans, prisons are an "inevitable and permanent feature of our social lives" (9). Political discourse on crime and punishment as well as media representations of the prison reinforce the seeming immutability of retributive justice and perpetuate the criminalization of people of color, the poor, and the mentally ill. Abolitionists challenge the underlying ideology behind the prison industrial complex, and ask bold questions that beg for creative strategies to address conflict and build just, safe, and equitable communities.

As a political posture, prison abolition can be understood in many different ways. Upon first hearing the concept, many people assume that prison abolitionists advocate for *an immediate and complete end to prisons*; that we should just open up the prison doors, let everyone out, and prison abolition will be accomplished. When I discuss the prison industrial complex, I am not only referencing the physical walls that currently confine over 2.3 million people in the United States, but also the web of institutions, policies and practices that facilitate and perpetuate mass incarceration. Included in the politics of the prison system are corporations that profit from doing business with prisons; police departments that terrorize American inner cities through brutality, racial profiling, and constant surveillance; inequitable schools that funnel poor youth of color into the criminal justice system, historical segregation and discrimination in housing; inequitable access to health care and employment; and the corporate media that perpetuates racist and fear-based ideologies on crime and punishment. As I discuss in Chapter 4, this expanded understanding of the prison system creates wide-ranging possibilities for coalition

building among activists concerned with any of the aforementioned issues.

Prison abolitionists do envision a world without prisons. Yet given the above definition of the prison system, the politics of abolition must encompass a much more holistic and comprehensive vision for society that addresses structural inequities within the social, economic, and political systems that buttress the prison industrial complex. Because such a radical transformation of American society is a long-term goal, operationalizing abolitionist politics in the short-term can be a difficult task. Craig Gilmore of CPMP proposes, "abolition is a set of political goals and ideals that are enlivened by a sense of political experimentation" (C. Gilmore 2013). Emphasizing "trial and error," Gilmore explains, "Do we really want this utopia [a world without prisons] to exist? Yes! Do we know how to get there? No!" Indeed, my exploration of abolitionist organizing demonstrates that there is no generic formula for abolition activism. There are, however, *principles* that guide abolitionist organizing. Below, I identify three unique characteristics of the abolitionist perspective that informs strategies for resistance:

- 1) *Long-term vision*: Prison abolitionists situate campaigns firmly within the visionary goal of creating a society that without prisons. Abolitionists are not naive; rather, this long-term vision presents a framework to evaluate the effectiveness of any given short-term strategy.
- 2) *Strategic analysis of reform*: Abolitionists are wary of prison reforms that serve to further entrench the prison system in the American political, social, and economic landscape - even if in the short-term such reforms appear to be

positive. Reform victories, although important, are cast within a trajectory ultimately leading to the abolition of the prison industrial complex.

3) *Systemic Activism*: Whereas reform-oriented activists often focus organizing energy solely on the institution of the prison, abolitionists recognize the myriad of structural factors that perpetuate mass incarceration. Therefore, activists understand that in order for prison abolition to be possible, massive transformations in American society must occur. Abolitionists see the connection between economic inequality, environmental injustice, the foreclosure crisis, inequitable access to education, health care, and employment, and prisons. A critique of capitalism is deeply connected to this posture. As put by Hartnett (2011), "Working toward abolition means creating structures that reduce the demand and need for prisons" (5). When organizing prison reform campaigns, abolitionists tend to frame their work within a systemic political analysis.

A Framework for Prison Abolition Organizing

Scott Christianson's *With Liberty For Some: 500 Year of Imprisonment in America* details the evolution of the prison system – as well as parallel movements for penal reform - throughout US history. Christianson's historical account highlights the rich diversity of antiprison activism, from emergence of the radical Quaker Friends and antislavery organizing to resistance to the convict lease system and the prisoners' rights movement (Christianson 2000). However, the history of resistance to the prison industrial complex is fragmented, and there are few

historical accounts that fully capture the breadth and depth of antiprison activism in the United States. Despite this limitation, I attempt to highlight various forms of resistance and offer some historical examples. To analyze different historical and contemporary antiprison activism, I will use a framework that distinguishes various forms of resistance to the prison system. My categorization of antiprison strategies is not intended to be uniform. Given the experimental nature of abolitionist activism, the line between reform and abolition is often fluid and contentious. I primarily use this framework for purposes of organization. I discuss what I call *Direct Resistance* and *Indirect Resistance* to the prison system, and then explicate how resistance can either be *progressive* (moving towards abolition) or *regressive* (strengthening the prison system).

Direct Resistance

Direct Resistance refers to activism that targets the criminal justice system, including prison construction and expansion, prison conditions, police, the courts, and policies and practices related to crime and punishment. I also include community-based alternatives to incarceration and restorative justice efforts within this categorization. Historically, there have been many forms of direct resistance to prisons. Some forms of action that I define as direct resistance include:

Prison Revolts

An often overlooked but pivotal aspect of antiprison activism in the United States has come from within prisons themselves. Barber and Pallas (1973) describe

three distinct types of prison struggle between 1950-1971. The first were prison riots of the 1950s, characterized by "largely spontaneous uprisings against intolerable living conditions" (239). Over 50 riots broke out across the US, and the early fifties became known "as the worst period ever for American prison administration" (239). These riots rarely resulted in tangible improvements in prison conditions, but were seen as precursors to "organized political rebellion, for the inability of the system to respond to [prisoners'] demands created the conditions in which more radical ideas could take root" (239). The second phase of prisoner resistance was carried out by black Americans through the Nation of Islam. The Black Muslims' goals were less political and far more religious; however, their emphasis on black consciousness, discipline, and collective action had a profound impact on prison organizing. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, a more radical resistance movement emerged in US prisons that coincided with the rise of the Black Panther Party and the Black Power Movement. In a "spiral of challenge and retrenchment, of revolution and repression," activists developed a sophisticated analysis of racism, imperialism, capitalism, and state violence, and developed strategies based on these analyses, "thus providing models of revolutionary theory and practice, and a general atmosphere of confrontation for prisoners" (249). This culminated in a number of prison revolts, including a takeover of the Long Island branch of the Queens House of Detention in October 1970, a nonviolent prisoners' strike at Folsom Prison the following month, and the infamous revolt at Attica in 1971.

In September 1971, over 1,000 of 2,200 incarcerated men at Attica

Correctional Facility seized the prison yard, taking several guards hostage. The prisoners issued demands centered on “rights to organize politically and economically, and on living and working conditions” (Barber and Pallas 1973, 254). Once prisoners took over, “leadership was chosen from the [Black] Panthers, Young Lords, radical whites, and other groups” (255). After days of failed negotiations, New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller ordered state troopers and the national guard to take over the prison. The assault became an ugly and bloody massacre, leaving hundreds injured, 29 prisoners and 10 hostages dead (PBS 2013). During the revolt, “the crucial development” was “the overcoming of mistrust and hatred between black and white prisoners” (Barber and Pallas 1973, 256). Attica offers a powerful example of resistance led by people most impacted by mass incarceration, prisoners themselves. The revolt is also a potent example of a diverse coalition that emerged in the unlikeliest of situations. In Chapter 5, I discuss the importance of coalition across identities and backgrounds in anti-prison organizing.

The Pelican Bay Hunger Strikes is the most recent example of organized radical prisoner resistance. On July 1st, 2011, dozens of incarcerated men at the Secure Housing Unit (SHU) of Pelican Bay Prison in Crescent City, CA submitted a list of demands for improved prison conditions, ending solitary confinement, and more access to adequate health care and education programs (Prisoner Hunger Strike Solidarity 2012). Nearly 7,000 incarcerated individuals participated in a first round of strikes, which lasted four weeks. After a brief respite, in which it became clear that the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) would not acquiesce to negotiated demands, the strike began again in September

2011, engaging over 12,000 prisoners throughout the nation. This mobilization was unique because, like in the case of Attica, "organizing overcame existing divisions among inmates" both within and across carceral institutions (Saed 2012).

Prison Conditions Reform

A significant thread of criminal justice reform has focused on prison conditions reform. These efforts seek to end abuses in prisons and make incarceration more humane and bearable for those who endure it. Contemporary examples of prison conditions reform are campaigns to end solitary confinement. The practice of solitary confinement is widespread in the United States today, isolating an estimated 80,000 people each in steel cages for 23 hours a day, often for months or years at a time (Kysel 2013). Incarcerated people subjected to solitary confinement often suffer physical abuse, mental torture from sensory deprivation, and restricted access to education and health care (AFSC 2013). The practice is an internationally recognized form of torture (United Nations 1997).

Campaigns to limit and/or end solitary confinement are active at local, regional, and national levels. The Jails Action Coalition (JAC) is a "coalition of activists that includes the formerly incarcerated, currently incarcerated, family members and other community members working to promote human rights, dignity, and safety for people in New York City jails" (NYJAC 2012). JAC is part of an "informal coalition of prisoners' rights groups and civil liberties organizations has formed to fight for change at the state level" (Casella and Ridgeway 2012). The National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT), the American Civil Liberties

Union (ACLU), and the American Friends Service Committee are three among many organizations fighting solitary confinement on a national level through "research, grassroots organizing, public education and policy advocacy" (AFSC 2013).

Sentencing Reform and Decriminalization

Civil rights organizations and advocacy groups have campaigned for more equitable sentencing laws and decriminalization of various non-violent offenses, mostly drug related. A prominent example is the Drop the Rock Coalition that targeted draconian Rockefeller Drug Laws in New York State. Through education, grassroots organizing, and public policy advocacy, the coalition successfully pressured New York Governor David Patterson to pass "significant reforms marking the beginning of the end" of the laws, which included mandatory minimum sentencing for possession of small amounts of drugs (Correctional Association of New York 2013). Reforming such laws reduces incarceration rates and works towards dismantling racist policies and practices within the criminal justice system.

Political Prisoners

Antiprison activists have organized to highlight the ways in which incarceration is leveraged as a political tool to censor powerful and radical advocates for social transformation. One prominent effort, the global campaign to free former Black Panther and prominent radio journalist Mumia Abu-Jamal has gained support from civil and human rights organizations, unions, international government bodies, Nobel Laureates, and heads of state (Free

Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition 2013). The campaign is spearheaded by the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Fighting Prison Expansion and Construction/Decarceration

Whether combating prison construction and expansion projects or organizing to shut down existing facilities, activists at the front lines of the prison industrial complex have worked (and continue to work) throughout the country to dismantle the physical infrastructure of the prison system. The work of the California Prison Moratorium Project falls under this category of resistance, which I will explore more deeply in the chapters that follow.

Alternatives to Incarceration and Restorative Justice

A critical element to antiprison organizing is the development of and advocacy for alternatives to prisons. This wide diversity of work includes community sentencing projects, alternatives to incarceration programs, restorative justice practices, and more. In California, a group of activists, law students, legal professionals, and city government officials led by Fania E. Davis created Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth (RJOY), a widely successful violence prevention program. RJOY targets "tragic cycles of youth violence, incarceration, and wasted lives" by "promoting institutional shifts toward restorative approaches that actively engage families, communities, and systems to repair harm" (RJOY 2013). Initiatives such as RJOY create viable alternatives to incarceration and demonstrate that there are healthier and more equitable means to address

community conflict.

Indirect Resistance

Work that challenges the social, economic, and political systems that perpetuate mass incarceration all fall under the categorization of *indirect resistance*. Understanding mass incarceration as an assault on people of color and the poor, I also include work that builds social, economic, and political power within these marginalized communities within this framework. The diversity of such work is tremendous; below I can only include a sampling of relevant activism.

Community Re-Entry

As noted in the first chapter, barriers to community reintegration are tremendous, and often insurmountable, for the recently released. Community re-entry programs support the formerly incarcerated with the arduous reentry process, including assistance finding housing, employment, health care, and education. The aim of such efforts is to reduce recidivism and support sustained community development. One example is the Osborne Association in New York, a pioneer of re-entry programming that offers "a broad range of treatment, education, and vocational services to more than 8,000 people each year" (The Osborne Association 2012). These programs empower formerly incarcerated people to reclaim their lives, challenging a system designed to fail them.

Fighting the School-to-Prison Pipeline

The link between inequities in the United States education system and mass incarceration is widely documented. The school-to-prison pipeline refers to the "disturbing national trend wherein children are funneled out of public schools and into the juvenile and criminal justice systems" (ACLU 2013). Inequities in education funding, punitive zero-tolerance policies, militarization of school buildings, and high-stakes testing all contribute to this trend. In response, community groups throughout the United States are organizing to end the pipeline. One effort is Dignity in Schools, a national campaign that "challenges the systemic problem of pushout in our nation's schools and advocates for the human right of every young person to a quality education and to be treated with dignity" (Dignity in Schools 2011). The effort targets zero-tolerance policies and advocates for access to quality educational resources for marginalized youth in communities throughout the United States.

Fighting for Economic Justice and Access to Social Services

As previously referenced, mass incarceration is directly related to economic inequities, particularly in poor communities of color. Therefore, struggles for access to employment, higher education, and critical social services such as public housing and health care are all linked to antiprison activism. The efforts help weave a stronger social and economic fabric within communities targeted by the criminal justice system. From grassroots advocacy for health care access and union jobs to tenant organizing, this diverse range of work addresses the systemic inequities that buttress the prison system. In Chapter 4, I discuss how the California Prison Moratorium Project built alliances with labor unions, economic justice groups,

health professionals, and environmental justice activists its campaigns. These coalitions were made possible because CPMP helped draw attention to how the state was willing to spend hundreds of millions of dollars on prisons while cutting critical social services.

Arts, Education, and Empowerment

Another strategy to resist mass incarceration is through creative expression and education. Activists draw the connection between incarceration and education, oppression and empowerment, voicelessness and creativity. In the compilation of essays, *Challenging the Prison Industrial Complex: Activism, Arts, and Educational Alternatives*, editor Stephen John Hartnett (2011) argues that abolition "cannot be successful until the nation begins to experience an even more fundamental change in consciousness" (8). The book highlights a number of creative efforts to *remake democracy* through transformative pedagogy. This approach aligns with the political and pedagogical philosophy of Paulo Freire. Critical Resistance, an abolitionist organization founded in 1998, engages in consciousness-raising around the prison industrial complex. Through popular education, Critical Resistance brings "a consciousness and liberatory politics about all the main pillars of the system... into our daily work around specific issues" (The CR10 Publishing Collective 2008).

Reform or Abolition? Shifting the Debate

A critical debate that has profoundly impacted historical and contemporary resistance to the prison system in the United States is that of reform or abolition.

Questions of abolitionist strategy, mass movement building, and issue framing are all interwoven into debates about prison reform. As mentioned above, abolitionists situate their short-term work within a long-term vision for revolutionary change. Abolitionists understand that the prison industrial complex cannot be dismantled overnight. Given this, the line between reform and revolution is blurred. Pragmatically, both "reformists" and "abolitionists" pursue tangible changes in the criminal justice system. A more productive discourse begs the question of whether or not reforms align with long-term abolitionist goals.

I define *progressive* action as the pursuit of change in institutional policy or practice that harm the prison industrial complex. Such reforms might facilitate decarceration, remove barriers to economic sustenance and political agency for the formerly incarcerated, and decriminalize mental illness, poverty, and immigration, along with other goals. Essentially, progressive action challenges the legitimacy of the prison system and moves one step closer towards abolition. I later argue that the California Prison Moratorium Project's campaigns to fight the expansion of the California prison system exemplify direct and progressive challenges to mass incarceration. By stopping the system from growing, CPMP has harmed the system and created potential openings to shrink it.

Regressive action bolsters and cements the prison system. Some abolitionists argue that a vast majority criminal justice reform in the history of the United States has been regressive in impact. Reforms that *make the prison system more efficient* serve to further cement the prison industrial complex in the United States'

social, political, and economic structures. Indeed, the institution of the penitentiary itself emerged through early reform efforts by activists appalled at the injustice of corporal punishment. The establishment of incarceration "was a vast improvement over the many forms of capital and corporal punishment inherited from the English" (Davis 2003, 27). In the eyes of many, the prison "was generally viewed as a progressive reform, linked to the larger campaign for the rights of citizens" (27). However, the history of crime and punishment in the United States shows that incarceration perpetuates social, economic, and political hierarchies based on race and class - just as slavery and Jim Crow did. This history warns abolitionists to be wary of reforms that replace one form of social domination with another. The chart below outlines the aforementioned framework for analyzing abolitionist organizing:

Framework for Abolition Organizing

Abolitionist	Not Abolitionist
<p>Progressive, Direct</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Aligns with abolitionist vision</i> • <i>Challenges legitimacy of the prison system</i> • <i>Presents viable alternatives</i> • <i>Damages the PIC</i> 	<p>Regressive, Direct</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Makes the prison system more efficient</i> • <i>Affirms prisons as necessary</i> • <i>Reforms within the criminal justice system</i>
<p>Progressive, Indirect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Aligns with abolitionist vision</i> • <i>Challenges systems, institutions, and cultural norms that perpetuate mass incarceration</i> • <i>Generates capacity for communities to build power and organize</i> 	<p>Regressive, Indirect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Reforms outside of prison system</i> • <i>Perpetuates racist, classist, or otherwise socially oppressive hierarchies</i> • <i>Erodes capacity of communities to build power and organize</i>

Building a Mass Movement

Activists seeking to transform the terrain of justice in the United States have clearly achieved many victories. Prison projects have been halted, existing prisons have been shut down, draconian laws have been repealed, conditions have been improved, alternatives have been experimented with, and thousands of people have found their voice and sense of power in the process. Yet, despite this rich array of resistance, activists have yet to ignite a mass movement, akin in size and scope to the civil rights movement of the 1960s that could catalyze a true systemic shift in the American justice system. Activists and scholars have continuously called for such a movement to emerge; yet thus far, efforts have been fragmented. Why? What lessons can be cultivated from previous abolitionist efforts? How could abolitionist efforts be more effective?

Identifying the Gaps

In *Kind and Usual Punishment: The Prison Business*, author and civil rights activist Jessica Mitford (1973) notes "the movement for prison reform developed almost simultaneously with the prison itself" (31). Yet despite over 200 years of attempts at reform, prisons have only become more immutably engrained in American society. The authors of the report 1971 *Struggle for Justice* note that "the criminal justice system has a phenomenal capacity to absorb and co-opt reforms" (155). Writing for the American Friends Service Committee, one of the oldest and largest organizations working to transform the criminal justice system, the authors recognize that "many specific abuses have been halted or diminished. But the

system grinds on inexorably" (155). Mitford's book and the *Friends* report highlight many specific examples of well-intentioned reforms that have only bolstered the power and permanence of prisons.

I agree that "the construction of a just system of criminal justice in an unjust society is a contradiction in terms. Criminal justice is inextricably interwoven with, and largely derivative from, a broader social justice" (American Friends Service Committee 1971, 16). Abolition recognizes "the impossibility of achieving more than a superficial reformation of our criminal justice system without a radical change in our values and a drastic restructuring of our social and economic institutions" (Mitford 1973, 273). Yet through this broad framework, it is often challenging for abolitionists to actuate movement strategies that reflect the radical and systemic nature of their political analysis. In the chapters that follow, I draw lessons from coalition building efforts in California's Central Valley that have successfully navigated tensions between reformist and abolitionist approaches to construct powerful and successful campaigns to fight the prison system. I propose that in order for a mass movement against the prison industrial complex to emerge, activists engaged in various forms of direct and indirect resistance need to form creative coalitions that engage diverse perspectives as a source of strength rather than division.

Chapter 3

Prison Expansion and Resistance in the Central Valley

California's narrative is emblematic of American history, from colonial conquest to the industrial revolution to globalization. Today, California has the largest economy in the United States; in fact, the Golden State ranks among the largest in the world in GDP (R. W. Gilmore 2007, 30).

California is full of contradictions. The state's history includes some of the most extreme examples of exploitation and oppression in the United States. From Japanese internment camps during World War II and widespread exploitation of migrant labor to rampant police brutality in the state's major cities and the country's first "supermax" prisons⁶, California certainly has many dark spots on its record. At the same time, the Golden State has birthed some of the most radical and powerful examples of social movement organizing in US history. From the San Francisco General Strikes and the United Farm Workers movement to the Berkeley Free Speech Movements and the emergence of the Black Panther Party, California has generated a tremendous diversity of radical and innovative organizing models for social and economic justice that have informed and inspired activism around the world. Given California's prototypical positionality in US social, economic, and political life, examining antiprison activism in California's context can offer salient

⁶ Supermax prisons are lockdown facilities designed to "hold the putatively most violent and disruptive inmates in single-cell confinement for 23 hours per day (Mears 2006). Alcatraz, a now-closed penitentiary in San Francisco Bay, was established in 1934 "as a prototype" for supermax prisons, with "punishment, deterrence, and incapacitation as its goals" (Garrett 1999).

lessons for resisting the prison industrial complex throughout the country.

The history of the prison industrial complex in California - and radical resistance to it - offers important insights to advocates of abolition. The California Prison Moratorium Project, the focus of my study, is based in Fresno, in the heart of California's Central San Joaquin Valley. In this chapter, I briefly introduce the political, economic, and geographic history of California's Central Valley. I then contextualize the Valley's development within broader social, economic, and political developments in California and across the country. California's Prison Boom - and the ways in which it shaped the relationship between urban and rural, developed complex economic relationships between the state and impoverished towns in the Valley, and created the space for resistance - serves as the backdrop for CPMP's coalition politics.

The Central Valley

The Central Valley - divided between the Sacramento Valley in the North and the San Joaquin Valley in the South - boasts some of the world's most productive farmland. In all, the 40-60 mile-wide Central Valley stretches approximately 450 miles from Redding in the North to Bakersfield at the Valley's southern tip, (Fresno Historical Society 2013). Early in the 20th Century, the Valley's rich soils and temperate climate attracted migrant farmers from across the United States and beyond. Donald Pisani (1984) describes how small family farms flourished in the early 1900s, yet soon gave way to massive consolidated operations owned by "wealthy, nonresident land barons" who exercised monopoly over the Central

Valley's vast fertile acreage (277). Particularly during the great depression, the "gulf between landownership and the act of tilling the soil" widened greatly, a division "symbolized by the plight of migrant farm workers" (278). Over the years, mechanization, new irrigation techniques, urbanization, and the rising cost of land and water made small-scale farming increasingly untenable.

The rise of agribusiness industrial farming in rural California coincided with the industrialization – and subsequent de-industrialization – of the Golden State's cities. Migrants forced by economic necessity to pursue work in urban centers found plentiful industrial jobs during the war-time boom of World War II, which sparked high levels of growth in manufacturing that carried the state through the 1950s and 60s. (R. W. Gilmore 2007, 35). In the 1970s, economic restructuring – characterized by a shift towards high-technology industry – resulted in devastating unemployment; in all, approximately 1 million workers lost their jobs between 1979 and 1984 (Shapira and Teitz 1989, 12). Throughout this process, the State's policies perpetuated and exacerbated economic inequities along racial lines (R. W. Gilmore 2007, 43).

The Valley's history of agricultural centralization and industrial development goes hand-in-hand with the exploitation of migrant labor. This dynamic reflects "how the domination of nature, especially the domination of water supplies, can lead to the domination of some people by others" (Parsons 1986, 375). Vast productive capacity was required to create and sustain California's agricultural, mining, and industrial infrastructure, and "the common denominator" for capitalists

was “the availability of cheap labor” (Estrada, et al. 1981). Throughout the past century, migrant laborers have been subject to poor working conditions and wage theft, with little to no protection from the State (Bittman 2012).

The Valley today is the product of this history of agricultural centralization and deindustrialization, in large part made possible by the rapid globalization of capital (R. W. Gilmore 2007, 179). The Valley’s largest metropolitan areas – Fresno, Modesto, and Bakersfield-Delano – are all ranked among the poorest in the nation, despite the Valley’s booming agricultural production (Wozniacka 2012). That statistical clash tells a simple story: in the Valley, the rich (corporate agribusiness) get richer, and everyone else gets poorer. These economically depressed communities, along with other struggling Valley towns, became key targets for society’s ‘undesirable elements’ such as toxic dumpsites, incinerators, and prisons (Braz and Gilmore 2006). Connecting the dots between incarceration, economic devastation, and pollution is a key aspect of CPMP’s coalition work.

The California Prison Boom

The complex social, economic, and political dynamics of the Central Valley, cast alongside changing statewide and national trends towards mass incarceration, set the stage for California's historic prison boom.

Beginning in the 1980s, California embarked on "the largest prison building program in the history of the world" (R. W. Gilmore 2007, 88). In *Golden Gulag*, Ruth Wilson Gilmore describes how "the California state prisoner population grew nearly

500 percent between 1982 and 2000, even though the crime rate peaked in 1980 and declined, unevenly but decisively, thereafter" (7). The Golden State's twenty-three new megaprisons, all constructed since 1984, boasted a price tag between \$280-\$350 million dollars each (7).

The mass expansion of the prison system in California, as with the rest of the nation, coincided with Ronald Reagan's infamous "War On Drugs." Aligned with national policy trends detailed in the previous chapter, the state and federal government facilitated the militarization of police departments in California's major cities, orchestrated drug raids, passed draconian sentencing laws, and began constructing and filling new prisons (Parenti 1999).

In order to fill these new prisons, the state utilized numerous strategies to lock more people up for longer periods of time. The state assembly passed numerous laws framed to the public as "reducing violence in communities," yet the intended and achieved result was to criminalize and incapacitate more poor Californians of color (R. W. Gilmore 2007, 107). Through the criminalization of drug possession and use, sentence enhancement, and new laws targeting alleged gang members, the state vastly increased its capacity to incarcerate and effectively incapacitate tens of thousands of people, mostly young African-American and Latino men.

In 1994, the California voters approved the ballot initiative Proposition 184, otherwise known as the "3-strikes law" (Brown and Jolivet 2005). This draconian law had a similar impact in California as the Rockefeller Drug Laws did in New York,

facilitating extended sentences for nonviolent crimes and dramatically increasing incarceration rates of people of color (Alexander 2010). In 2012, the three-strikes law was repealed through Proposition 36 – in large part due to advocacy and activism throughout the state (Sankin 2012).

In terms of demographics, California's incarcerated population follows the national trend. An overwhelming majority of the incarcerated in California state prisons, jails, and detention centers are people of color - roughly $\frac{2}{3}$ - and approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ are not US citizens. Geographically, the state's prison population primarily is sourced from urban centers (namely Los Angeles), and most prisoners were struggling to meet their basic needs upon arrest. As Gilmore concisely states, California "convicts are deindustrialized cities' working or workless poor" (7).

The geographic placement of California's prisons was strategic, targeting rural, deindustrialized, vulnerable communities. The Golden State's new prisons were constructed "at the edge of small, economically struggling, ethnically diverse towns in rural areas" (R. W. Gilmore 2007, 7). These towns were often promised economic prosperity and job creation by state officials, which often didn't come to pass. Yet, the prison boom, alongside deindustrialization and the centralization of agricultural land, developed conditions for rural towns to become economically dependent upon these new megaprisons. This created a complex geographic dynamic between economically depressed rural prison towns and oppressed communities of color in California's inner cities, where most of the state's incarcerated population comes from. The strategies CPMP used to navigate this

dynamic is one element of coalition building I focus on in the following chapter.

The United Farm Workers and the Valley's History of Resistance

California's Central Valley has a unique and rich history of radical collective action, embodied most fully by the United Farm Workers struggles. Cesar Chavez, Dolores Huerta, and Gilbert Padilla organized a mass movement for social justice and equity out of Delano, California – the same town that CPMP fought their first major campaign nearly a half century later. The work of Chavez, Huerta, and their comrades brought together Mexican and Filipino migrant laborers, church groups, and student activists throughout the country to support workers' strikes and a national boycott of table grapes (Tejada-Flores 2004). UFW's presence in Delano imbues the region with a powerful history of coalition organizing, a tradition that CPMP continued beginning in the late 1990s.

Continuing the Struggle

This chapter highlighted key historical developments that led to California's prison boom. In response to structural racism, economic crises, and globalization, California's Central Valley became "prison alley," as it's known colloquially (R. W. Gilmore 2007). The people of the San Joaquin Valley are not merely 'recipients' of historic injustices; the Valley's rich history of resistance shows that residents of the region are powerful actors in an ongoing struggle for justice. In the next chapter, I introduce the California Prison Moratorium Project, an organization embedded in (and contributing to) the Central Valley's social and political history.

Chapter 4

The California Prison Moratorium Project

Thus far, I have analyzed the current crisis of mass incarceration through the abolitionist perspective. In chapter two, I traced various threads of resistance to the prison system in the United States, and proposed a framework for approaching abolitionist organizing. In the previous chapter, I outlined the political and economic history of California's Central Valley in the broader context of California's prison boom. The history of mass incarceration and antiprison activism sets the stage for exploring the campaigns and strategies of my case study, the California Prison Moratorium Project. In this chapter, I introduce CPMP's organizational history and campaigns. In Chapter 6, I will analyze CPMP's work using the framework proposed in Chapter 2 along with relevant literature on Social Movement Theory.

The California Prison Moratorium Project

The California Prison Moratorium Project (CPMP) arose at the tail end of California's prison construction craze. Born out of a series of informal conversations among four friends and colleagues, CPMP emerged in 1998 under the broad strategic idea that in order to even consider beginning to dismantle the prison industrial complex, the prison *growth* had to end. Since its formation, CPMP has engaged in numerous campaigns to challenge the expansion and construction of prisons in the Central Valley. In this chapter, I outline CPMP's organizational history and campaigns and analyze the role of coalition politics in their work.

Critical Resistance: The Beginnings of the Project

In 1998, abolitionist activists hosted a historic conference in Oakland, California, entitled “Critical Resistance to the Prison Industrial Complex”. Prior to this conference, Craig Gilmore, Ruth Wilson Gilmore, Michelle Foy, and Peter Jakes – all antiprison activists – were inspired by the Prison Moratorium Project in New York and decided after a series of informal meetings to create a similar project in California. The New York Prison Moratorium Project and California’s initiative were never formally connected. Based in Brooklyn, New York’s Prison Moratorium Project has since been transformed and renamed the Center for Nu Leadership on Urban Solutions, under the leadership of Eddie Ellis. The NY PMP offered inspiration and support in CPMP’s first few years, but CPMP’s strategic development was much more heavily influenced by other antiprison activism organizations in California, such as the Mothers of East Los Angeles (see section below).

Without any real idea of what CPMP would ultimately look like, the four founders formally launched their initiative by tabling at the 1998 Critical Resistance conference with an invitation to an opening meeting. The conference itself drew “3,500 activists, academics, former and current prisoners, labor leaders, religious organizations, feminists, gay, lesbian and transgender activists, youth, families, and policy makers from literally every state and other countries” to challenge the Prison industrial complex (Critical Resistance 2013). In ensuing years, autonomous Critical Resistance chapters emerged in the Northeast, Midwest, and South. In 2001, Critical Resistance was established as a national organization with the mission “to build an

international movement to end the Prison industrial complex” (Critical Resistance 2013). CPMP and the Oakland chapter of Critical Resistance have worked closely together on campaigns throughout CPMP’s history.

Organizational Structure

CPMP’s first formal meeting drew over 100 attendees, most of whom had received the invitation at the Critical Resistance conference. From there, CPMP’s founders developed an organizational strategy to fight prison expansion in California based on their research and outreach in California’s Central Valley. From its founding in 1998 until 2004, CPMP was an all-volunteer organization. In 2004, CPMP hired its first organizer, a part-time staffer based in a Fresno office. Today, CPMP runs small volunteer-run chapters in Los Angeles and Oakland. Despite a small budget and relatively few institutional resources, CPMP has undertaken a tremendous diversity of efforts throughout its 15-year history. Before discussing more about CPMP’s campaigns, I introduce some of the organization’s strategic influences.

The Inspiration: Mothers of East Los Angeles

In the early 1980s, California Governor Deukmejian proposed a prison construction project in East Los Angeles. In response, a group of Latina mothers who were members of the Church of the Resurrection in East Los Angeles founded the Mothers of East Los Angeles (Swart 1992). MELA became a militant organization that employed diverse, creative, and powerful action strategies, including weekly

street rallies, vigils, and political and legal action to build community support and pressure the state to acquiesce to their demands (Sahagun 1989). After a 9-year campaign, the Mothers of East LA (MELA) successfully fought off the proposed \$100 million prison.

In the midst of the antiprison campaign, the Mothers also realized that the state was planning to site environmental hazards in their community. Using the same organizational base and many of the same tactics, MELA fought off numerous environmental threats, including an oil pipeline, an oil refinery, and an incinerator – all sited by the state in various predominately Chicano communities of East Los Angeles. The state’s assumption was that little opposition would come from “lower socio-economic... minority, uneducated communities” (Swart 1992, 41). However, MELA proved such presumptions hollow, building a militantly committed, strategic, and demonstrably powerful organization.

The Mothers of East LA offers a powerful example of abolitionist politics that initially inspired the strategy of the California Prison Moratorium Project. MELA built coalitions with environmental justice and women’s groups throughout California and catalyzed those relationships to expand the scope and scale of their work (Swart 1992). The Mothers of East LA naturally connected the dots between environmental racism, economic devastation, and incarceration: “the prison and the refinery were both threats to their kids” (C. Gilmore 2013).

The Strategy: Fighting Prison Expansion

CPMP's prison resistance strategy emerged from Ruth Wilson Gilmore's doctoral research on California's prison towns. CPMP's founders identified a number of important reasons to orient their strategy around fighting prison construction and expansion. Gilmore's findings illuminated the deceptive and exploitive prison siting tactics of the state. As previously noted, economically struggling rural towns in the Central Valley were led to believe that prison construction would serve as a business-inducing savior, creating jobs and bringing wealth to the community. Residents of the towns often assumed that with "a hundred million dollar-a-year payroll, of course it's going to benefit our town" (C. Gilmore 2013). This sentiment played a significant role in the dramatic expansion of the California prison system that began in the 1980s. Yet, Gilmore found that these towns were almost universally harmed economically and socially by the existence of a prison (R.W. Gilmore 1999).

CPMP's founders also realized that there had been "isolated instances in the State of California where local residents had stopped a prison from being built" (C. Gilmore 2013). To learn more, five organizers toured Kern and Tulare County, speaking with residents who had successfully fought off a prison in their town. The people they met "tended to be fairly conservative people" and "didn't tend to think of themselves as political organizers or activists" (C. Gilmore 2013). Insights from this tour, along with findings from Ruth Wilson Gilmore's research, illuminated that an absolutely critical frontline in the fight against the Prison industrial complex

were proposed prison towns in the Central Valley. Past anti-prison campaigns also exemplified that within these towns brewed the enormous potential for effective resistance against the expansion of the prison system. CPMP's founders recognized that community members within these prison towns could organize, successfully build a base of support, and mobilize to successfully fight prisons.

Finally, CPMP organizers understood that the engine of prison expansion had “created a few political players, particularly the prison guards union who had a political stake in the system continuing to expand” (C. Gilmore 2013). Although ultimately the vision of CPMP's organizers was to dismantle the prison industrial complex, they realized that they first needed to stop the expansion. When CPMP started, the founders “were not even thinking about trying to shrink the system,” the core question instead was “how can we keep it from growing?” (C. Gilmore 2013).

Delano: The First Fight

CPMP's first major campaign emerged in 1999 after California's recently elected Governor, Democrat Gray Davis, resurrected a previously abandoned plan to construct a new \$365 million prison in the Valley town of Delano (Braz and Gilmore 2006). The new prison, to be entitled “Delano II”, was to be California's 23rd prison constructed over only two decades. The powerful California Correctional Peace Officers Association (the prison guards union) backed the plan; notably, the union had donated \$1 million to Governor Gray's run for office in 1998 (100). Although construction on Delano II ultimately was completed and the prison opened in 2005, CPMP's efforts successfully stalled the effort for 6 years (C. Gilmore 2013). More

important than the campaign's result were lessons learned from the process; CPMP experimented with a myriad of strategies that ultimately led to the development of long-lasting coalitions that continue to fight prisons in the Central Valley and beyond. In fighting Delano, activists utilized a flexible range of campaign strategies, ranging from legislative action, litigation, community organizing, and cross-movement coalition building.

In the wake of Delano II's initial approval, CPMP, together with Critical Resistance, "regrouped to map a coordinated strategy of litigation, coalition building, media reports aimed at shifting public opinion and public policy, and grassroots organizing based largely in Delano" (100). Shortly after launching the campaign, organizers linked the prison fight to environmental issues. The connection was made "entirely by chance," according to CPMP co-founder Craig Gilmore. At an informal dinner with CPMP co-founders Craig and Ruth Wilson Gilmore, Critical Resistance staffer Rose Braz, and a few of her friends who happened to be environmental lawyers, conversation turned to political activism. Upon hearing about the Delano campaign, one of the environmental lawyers promptly inquired about the proposed prison's Environmental Impact Report (EIR) (C. Gilmore 2013). CPMP organizers researched the matter, and realized that the California Department of Corrections (CDC) had not completed a legal environmental review for Delano II. CPMP and Critical Resistance successfully sued the CDC, further delaying the project (Mohan 2001).

Joining Forces

In 2001, building off the momentum of the lawsuit, CPMP organized a conference that brought environmental justice and antiprison groups together. The conference, entitled “Joining Forces: Environmental Justice and the Fight Against Prison Expansion,” was cosponsored by a variety of Environmental and Social Justice organizations, including

Critical Resistance, the California Prison Moratorium Project, the Southwest Network for Environmental and Economic Justice, the United Farm Workers, the Center on Race, Poverty, and the Environment, Fresno State Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlan (MEChA), the Fresno Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom, Green Action for Health and Environmental Justice, and the West County Toxics Coalition. (Braz and Gilmore 2006, 110)

According to conference organizers, “Joining Forces” was “the first statewide gathering designed to explore the place of prisons in the environmental justice movement and the ways that antiprison activists can learn from environmental justice examples” (98). A flier advertising the conference describes the goals of the conference:

Together, we will explore how prisons constitute environmental racism and injustice, how we might use strategies from environmental and economic justice movements to stop new prisons, and what are real economic development alternatives to prison for rural communities where most new prisons are sited and urban communities from which most prisoners are taken. (Braz and Gilmore 2006, 99)

The “Joining Forces” conference was the first conference held by a new coalition called the Central California Environmental Justice Network (CCEJN). An outgrowth of the Bay-Area and Fresno-based Center on Race, Poverty, and the Environment,

CCEJN “works to educate and empower communities” to resist environmental racism and serve as “the hub of environmental activism in the Central Valley” (Central California Environmental Justice Network 2012). Since “Joining Forces”, CCEJN became a central platform for coalition building between environmental and antiprison groups in the Central Valley.

The keynote speaker at the conference was Juanita Gutierrez, co-founder and president of Mothers of East Los Angeles. Gutierrez shared MELA’s story of struggle and highlighted the connections between environmental racism and prison siting (Braz and Gilmore 2006, 98). Another speaker at the conference, USC geography professor Laura Pulido, discussed the groundbreaking nature of this alliance building. “What we’re seeing today – the coming together of environmental justice and antiprison forces” – she began, “ is a fundamental moment in the struggle for both social and environmental justice” (Pulido 2002). She continues,

I think what we’re doing here today is expanding the definition of the environment, of justice, of environmental justice... we need to consider prisons as part of the landscape of everyday life. Prisons are not something that are out there, far away, removed. Even though they might be in rural communities, they involve all of us. (Pulido 2002)

Pulido’s comments highlight the ways in which attendees at the CCEJN conference were challenged to see prisons as an environmental justice issue. Referring back to Benford and Snow (2000), the conference was an exercise in deploying collective action frames. Taking the framing idea further, I contend that this conference – and CPMP’s Delano strategy in general – effectively *transformed* and *expanded* the salience of issue framing for both environmental and antiprison activists.

For youth at the CCEJN conference, the connection between “the ‘three P’s’: police, pollution, and prisons” came naturally (Braz and Gilmore 2006, 96). Young people from Los Angeles and the Central Valley drew the connection between police brutality in LA County and Fresno, the systematic targeting of their communities for hazardous waste sites, and prison construction. By bringing together a racially, geographically, and politically diverse participation for the CCEJN conference, CPMP created space for communities to learn from each others’ struggles and analysis.

Diversifying the Strategy

Alongside the EIR litigation – which could legally only slow (but not stop) the construction of Delano II – CPMP utilized a diversity of other strategies to fight the new prison. Organizers toured California, holding forums to shift public opinion and identify more allies in the campaign. Politically, CPMP and Critical Resistance realized that the most viable strategy to block the construction of Delano II was through legislation, specifically targeting California’s crises-laden budget. Working with Rose Braz from Critical Resistance, Craig Gilmore attended countless budget hearings in Sacramento. Through this work, the two organizers connected with “people who were budget advocates for Unions and for Social Service Advocacy Groups, like groups for building public housing, providing public health services,” and more (C. Gilmore 2013). The various stakeholders Braz and Gilmore met were competing for limited funds and fighting imminent budget cuts in times of economic crisis. To build allies, Braz and Gilmore chose to highlight that they were “the only people [at the hearings] who want to give AWAY, we’re the only people who actually

want this hearing to result in a budget CUT for a particular program” (C. Gilmore 2013). Through creative advocacy and directed outreach, Gilmore and Braz were able to engage other stakeholders in the campaign, including labor unions and other service providers. Pressure mounted, and the campaign was nearly successful. Yet in the end, funding for Delano II was approved (Braz and Gilmore 2006).

Bittersweet Victory

One week before Delano opened in 2005, Rod Hickman (chief of the California Department of Corrections at the time) announced that the prison would “be the last prison that California would build, thus announcing an end to a 25 year run of runaway prison construction” (Harris 2012). As Gilmore recounted in our interview, “we felt like we'd lost the battle but maybe won the war” (C. Gilmore 2013).

Farmersville

Supporting an extremely brief but successful campaign, CPMP helped residents of the Valley town of Farmersville fight off a private prison proposed by the Wackenhut Corporation in early September 1999 (Fauvre et al. 2006). After learning on a Thursday that the Farmersville City Council was to approve Wackenhut’s proposed facility the following Monday, the local United Farm Workers Union contacted CPMP for support (Reyes 2013). In yet another powerful example of coalition building,

Two venerable and classically contradictory groupings – Tulare County

family ranchers and farmworker families under the UFW flag – agreed from a number of perspectives not only that a prison would fail to solve economic problems, but also that it would create new problems. (R. W. Gilmore 2007, 177)

Overwhelmed by broad-based community opposition to the project, the City Council voted to block the prison and even went on to pass an additional resolution permanently preventing prison construction in Farmersville (Fauvre et al. 2006, 23).

Mendota

In 2004, CPMP organized a campaign to fight a proposed Federal prison in Mendota, one of the Central Valley's poorest towns (Barnes 2012). Like in Delano, community organizers utilized a variety of strategies to resist the prison. Organizers built a strong community base through workshops, meetings, and informal gatherings such as Barbeques in the local park. CPMP petitioned the entire town, held rallies and marches, lobbied city council, and eventually even attempted to recall several uncooperative council seats. Through the campaign, CPMP Central Valley Coordinator Debbie Reyes, along with other organizers, focused on broad-based coalition building. Focusing on the need for investment in employment and education over incarceration, the coalition was able to draw broad support from the community. In the end, CPMP had built an alliance of community activists, farmworkers, area ranchers, and concerned parents to fight the prison. On August 24th, 2004 over 500 Mendotans delivered 1,200 petitions – in a town of only 8,000 – to the city council (Sun Mt. Chronicles 2004). Although they ultimately failed to prevent the prison from being built, CPMP and local organizers galvanized

momentous community support for the campaign (Reyes 2013).

Building Broader Coalitions: CEPS and CURB

In 2004, CPMP helped establish two prominent antiprison coalitions in California, the Coalition for Effective Public Safety (CEPS) and Californians United for a Responsible Budget (CURB) (Kelley 2007). According to the CPMP website, “CEPS is a coalition of labor and advocacy groups who push for state investments in the infrastructure that truly makes our communities safer – increased health care, social services, education, worker’s benefits” (California Prison Moratorium Project n.d.). CURB “is a broad-based coalition of over 40 organizations seeking to CURB prison spending by reducing the number of people in prison and the number of prisons in the state” (CURB 2013). Both coalitions work towards reform of the prison system and the implementation of alternatives to incarceration through legislative action and collaborative campaigns geared at generating social and political power towards decarceration. A powerful political player, CURB “helped defeat over 140,000 new prison and jail beds proposed since 2004” (CURB 2013). Although both coalitions have successfully fought off new prison beds, the reformist nature of both coalitions potentially limits more dramatic action in the future. These considerations will be discussed in the next chapter.

Connecting Urban and Rural: Slowing Convictions in Los Angeles

In 2004, CPMP helped launch the No New Jails Coalition (NNJ), an effort to defeat Proposition A in Los Angeles. The proposed measure would have increased

sales taxes in order to add 1,000 officers to the Los Angeles Police Department (CPMP 2012). By taking an active leadership role in the coalition, CPMP extended their work beyond the Central Valley to connect with urban communities that feed the expanding prison system. Through grassroots mobilization, CPMP and NNJ were able to successfully defeat Prop A, thus preventing further expansion of the police apparatus that supports the prison industrial complex. Since CPMP co-launched the coalition, NNJ has since “continued to work to oppose the expansion of the LAPD and the LA County Jail system and to oppose police sweeps, saturation policing and ICE raids in LA's Skid Row, Pico-Union and in South and East LA” (CPMP 2012). The No New Jails Coalition marks another example of CPMP’s creativity and innovation.

A Constant Experiment

Through incredibly diverse coalitions and campaigns, CPMP has openly and actively engaged in the political experiment of abolition. The organization has mobilized rural communities to fight prison expansion; built coalitions to resist police brutality; developed unlikely alliances with unions, environmental justice groups, health care agencies, and wealthy landowners; and brought groups with different interests and perspectives to learn from each other and work together. In the next chapter, I more deeply analyze CPMP’s coalition building processes.

Chapter 5

Building Coalitions; Building A Movement

The coalition-building work of the California Prison Moratorium Project facilitated the organization's successes. In this chapter, I draw from social movement theory to analyze the various ways in which CPMP employed coalition work, and identify some of the shortcomings of CPMP's alliance building in the context of broader conceptions of the prison abolition movement. Ultimately, I contend that successful abolitionist organizing stems from coalition politics.

Because the political analysis of abolition demands a systemic critique of the corporate state, activist groups seeking to operationalize abolition politics are most effective when working with organizations that engage in *both* direct and indirect antiprison activism. The organizing of the California Prison Moratorium Project offers a powerful example of antiprison coalition activism. To analyze their work and draw wider lessons for the abolition movement, I draw from social movement theory literature. There is limited but rich theoretical discourse related to cross-issue coalitions. This research ranges from evaluating factors that contribute to social movement success, intra and inter-movement coalition building processes, collective action frames, and more.

In evaluating the success of CPMP's coalition organizing, I refer to Beamish and Luebbers (2009) who evaluate social movement coalitions based on whether or not groups "[achieve] the movement's stated objectives," as well as "the capacity of

an alliance to persist and thus continue to be a viable vehicle for social change" (648). Given this definition, my analysis highlights CPMP's political accomplishments and shortcomings as well as the organization's capacity to build coalitions that outlive any given campaign.

Research of 53 US protest groups by William A. Ganson (1975) demonstrates that social movement organizations that work in coalition are more likely to be successful. Similar analysis by Homer R. Steedly and John W. Foley (1975) shows that organizations that form "strong alliances tend to be more successful than groups fighting alone" (182). These foundational texts inform more recent research on social movement coalitions. On a fundamental level, CPMP organizers acknowledged that the political successes of their campaigns would not have been possible without the diverse coalitions they developed over time.

CPMP's 2006 do-it-yourself-guide for activists "How To Stop A Prison In Your Town" succinctly outlines the organization's strategy for coalition building. Coalitions are critical, CPMP claims, because when fighting prisons "broad support... translates into real political power" (Fauvre et al. 2006, 38). As reiterated in the overview of CPMP's campaigns earlier in this chapter, the basic premise of CPMP's coalition building is that "prisons benefit no one, so potential allies are everywhere" (39). By identifying and connecting with likely and unlikely allies, CPMP built coalitions across extraordinary political and geographic divides.

CPMP's coalition work raises a number of key questions I explore in more depth below. How and to what extent has CPMP's coalitions supported campaign

successes? What factors – such as issue framing and political opportunity structure – facilitated CPMP’s alliance building? What role does social identity and political geography play in CPMP’s coalition work? Does CPMP’s coalition work align with abolitionist politics? What are the limitations of CPMP’s coalition work? And finally, what lessons can be drawn from CPMP’s coalition work for organizers seeking to build a more powerful abolitionist movement? To address these questions, I place CPMP’s coalition work in dialogue with social movement theory.

The Building Blocks of Power

CPMP’s coalition building success was due to a number of compounding factors. Ultimately, CPMP’s coalition work is a vehicle for building power. CPMP has leveraged informal coalitions between *communities* and formal coalitions between *movements*, building strategic alliances with organizations working for social, environmental, and economic justice. CPMP was able to mobilize the *grassroots* (the people-based source of power) and the *grasstops* (powerful organizational and movement stakeholders) to generate support for their campaigns.

Building Community

CPMP used a community-organizing model as a basis for building locally situated power. Through intensive and creative outreach tactics, a participatory organizing model, collaborative workshops, and informal gatherings, CPMP created space for people to come together across lines of difference, geographically, politically, and socially. This process of building community translated into tangible

political power. In this context, I define *building community* as the process of creating “solidarity, commitment, mutuality and trust” within a group of people (Smith 2001).

Community building translates into political power when solidarity and commitment is coupled with a sense of agency and autonomy. CPMP’s campaigns are saturated with examples of community-building work as a building block of political power. In our interview, CPMP Central Valley Coordinator Debbie Reyes described how bringing people together created a sense among those involved that “this is our community, we have the rights to dictate what we want our community to look like” (Reyes 2013).

Especially when CPMP’s coalition work involved groups from different racial and socio-economic identities, building trust came with its challenges, ranging from navigating language barriers to challenging identity-based assumptions. In addition, working in rural areas, the close-knit nature of community organizing stemmed from a familial dynamic typical of the Central Valley’s small towns. Yet despite the potential for (and reality of) tension and in fighting, CPMP managed to support unlikeliest alliances between groups, such as an alliance between Republican ranchers, migrant farmworkers, faith communities, and young people in Mendota and Farmersville (Reyes 2013).

Cross-Movement Alliances: Leveraging Strategic Political Opportunities

Whether building alliances with labor unions in Sacramento or

environmental justice organizations in the Bay Area, CPMP has cultivated an impressive list of informal and formal partnerships with various organizations and agencies to support their campaigns. The process of identifying and capitalizing on strategic political opportunities characterizes this coalition work.

Social movement literature on Political Opportunity Structure identifies various factors that lead to collective action. Political Opportunity Structure refers to “consistent - but not necessarily formal, permanent, or national - signals to social or political actors which either encourage or discourage them to use their internal resources to form social movements” (McAdam, McCarthy and Zald 1996, 54). Some commonly-identified factors of Political Opportunity Structure include “the relative openness or closure of the institutionalized political system,” “the stability or instability of that broad set of elite alignments that typically undergird a polity,” the presence or absence of elite allies,” and “the state's capacity and propensity for repression” (27). A simple example: CPMP was alerted of a proposed prison in Farmersville, identified engaging city council as the most accessible and relevant strategy, and organized around the city council hearing. It is clear that political opportunities have shaped CPMP’s campaigns, but how have such opportunities impacted CPMP’s alliance building?

Although extensive research defends the salience of Political Opportunity Structure in determining the likelihood and nature of collective action, scholars have not thoroughly explored the relationship between Political Opportunity Structure and cross-movement coalition building.

Nella Van Dyke (2003) outlines various factors that contribute to the formation of effective alliances across social movement boundaries. Her research analyzes compiled data on 2,644 protest events facilitated by college students from 1930 through 1990. She argues that "local threats inspire within-movement coalition events, while larger threats that affect multiple constituencies or broadly defined identities inspire cross-movement coalition formation" (226). Her research also suggests "the availability of resources is important to within-movement coalition events but not to cross-movement coalition formation" (226). Van Dyke discusses how external threats and political opportunities impact cross-movement alliances, yet her study focuses only on coalitions formed for single protest events, rather than long-term campaigns. Despite this theoretical limitation, my analysis is consistent with two of Van Dyke's hypotheses regarding cross-movement coalition building.

First, Van Dyke argues, "A common enemy that simultaneously affects multiple constituencies or widely shared identities facilitates the formation of coalitions" (229). In the Delano and Mendota fights, the prospect of prison construction presented threats that stretched across a wide range of constituencies, from public health agencies and labor unions to environmentalists and education advocates. In mobilizing for campaigns, CPMP framed prison issues as a wider threat to multiple identity groups, communities, and cross-issue organizations. When reaching out to potential allies, organizers identified exactly how prison construction would impact that particular group. Through targeted, systematic

outreach, CPMP created opportunities for a diverse range of stakeholders to join as partners in their campaigns.

Van Dyke also proposes, "Cross-movement coalitions occur in response to broader threats coming from outside the local community" (229). In all of CPMP's prison fights, the threat of prison construction came from either the state or a private corporation. Although local decision-makers often held power to accept or reject prison projects, the threat of prison construction was delivered by outside forces such as the California Department of Corrections (or in the case of Farmersville, the Wackenhut Corporation).

Political threats and opportunities play a significant role in guiding CPMP's coalition building. However, Political Opportunity Structure does not account for the long-term nature of many of CPMP's formal coalitions, such as involvement with CURB and CCEJN. Social movement theory on issue framing helps explain this.

Transforming Political Terrain: Broad-Based Issue Framing

To analyze the collective action frames utilized by CPMP to mobilize coalitions against prison expansion and construction, I draw from Snow et al (1986), who discusses the impact of framing processes on social movement participation. To Snow, "frames function to organize experience and guide action, whether individual or collective. So conceptualized, it follows that frame alignment is a necessary condition for movement participation, whatever its nature or intensity" (464). How did CPMP frame prison issues to various stakeholders in their campaigns? How

were prison issues presented to environmental justice groups, labor unions, inner city justice groups, and rural townspeople? Did the issue framing change when these constituencies were brought together? These are some of the questions I explore in my study of CPMP.

CPMP's coalition work begins with the assumption that prisons aren't good for anybody, a disposition that opens up tremendous potential for likely and unlikely alliances to form. CPMP's challenge "was to translate the specific negative effects for potential allies, so that each member group could understand and express how building another prison would hurt their members and how fighting the prison had to be part of their mission" (Braz and Gilmore 2006, 101)

Extensive research and comprehensive review of social movements literature conducted by Robert D. Benford and David A. Snow (2000) links framing processes and political opportunity structure. Their theoretical contributions help explain how CPMP built alliances across different constituencies. The authors suggest that framing is a "dynamic, ongoing process" that is influenced by, among other factors, "political opportunity structure, cultural opportunities and constraints, and the target audiences" (628). . To build coalitions, CPMP shifted the way they framed issues when reaching out to potential allies, based upon the cultural and social context of the target group and how that aligned with CPMP's political strategy.

When reaching out to potential allies in the Service Employees International Union (SEIU), CPMP and Critical Resistance framed the Delano II issue as a budget

issue that was intimately linked with threats to workers' benefits in sectors that SEIU served. This framing decision was influenced by political opportunities (the need for more broad-based movement support for changes to California's budget) and the needs of the target audience (Reyes 2013). Had CPMP approached SEIU through the environmental justice frame, the powerful union would have been less swayed to engage in the campaign.

Additionally, CPMP engaged in *frame transformation* to cultivate a coalition of environmental justice and antiprison activists. To Benford and Snow (2000), frame transformation "refers to changing old understandings and meanings" surrounding an issue "and/or generating new ones" (625). This process was most clearly articulated at the "Joining Forces" conference. The conference proceedings challenged participants to reconceive their conceptual understanding of prison issues and environmental justice issues as interlinked. By framing prisons as a fundamental component of everyday landscape, antiprison and environmental justice organizers were able to more clearly identify the structural similarities between the siting of prisons and other environmental hazards by the state. Environmental Justice, as framed by the United States Environmental Protection Agency, mandates that

No group of people, including any racial, ethnic, or socioeconomic group, should bear a disproportionate share of the negative environmental consequences resulting from industrial, municipal, and commercial operations or the execution of federal, state, local, and tribal programs and policies. (US EPA 2012)

By expanding the scope of the term *environment* to include the landscape of everyday life, environmental and antiprison advocates could claim that the social, economic, and ecological impact of prisons indeed fell within the realm of environmental justice. Through this transformational process, CPMP and Critical Resistance developed a broad-based frame, creating space for a wide variety of stakeholders to participate in the Delano campaign.

Former Critical Resistance staffer, CPMP ally, and Professor at the Parsons New School for Design Shana Agid highlighted how frame transformation played a critical role in the Delano II campaign. Coalition partners in Delano II came on board “for really different reasons” and subsequently “learned from each others’ reasons for not wanting that project to happen” (Agid 2013). “Rather than erasing difference” in analysis, CPMP embraced coalition partners’ ideological differences to build “the broadest possible understanding of what [Delano II] could cost” the community – socially, economically, environmentally, and politically (Agid 2013). To Agid, CPMP “made it their business to build these unlikely coalitions.”

Leading from the Front Lines

CPMP’s efforts have always been informed by the leadership of community members most impacted by the prison system – incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals and their families and the residents of poor rural towns subject to predatory prison siting practices by the state. In our interviews, a common insight was that CPMP focused on empowering “folks that are incarcerated or have been incarcerated to be at the forefront of this movement” (Saavedra 2013).

Leadership from the frontline infuses campaigns with deep meaning and purpose as well as a strategic edge. I agree with Russell and Moore (2011) who argue that “communities most directly impacted on the frontlines are not only dealing with the brunt” of mass incarceration “but are also best equipped with the knowledge and skills to chart the way forward” (13). Incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people and their families and communities have the most at stake in challenging the prison industrial complex and have the most experience in navigating the system. Leadership from the frontlines fosters deep commitment from activists behind the movement and ensures that any organizing work aligns with the needs of people most directly impacted by mass incarceration.

“Shrinking the Beast”: An Abolitionist Project?

“When the PMP was founded, the prison moratorium project was not explicitly abolitionist,” Craig Gilmore told me towards the end of our interview. He continued, “PMP for many years was a 'stealth abolitionist organization' ... we never said we were abolitionist, there was nothing in our written or unwritten principles that suggested that there was anything we couldn't do except agree to a new prison being built” (C. Gilmore 2013).

What did Craig Gilmore mean by ‘stealth abolitionism’? CPMP’s primary framing strategy was to engage potential campaign members, coalition partners, and other allies by focusing on how the prison would adversely impact their lives based on their primary concerns and issue focuses. An example of this: an educator is brought into a campaign because a new prison would inherently mean less

funding for schools, not because she is drawn to an explicit abolitionist vision. Yet despite the apparent pragmatist nature of this strategy, I argue that CPMP's use of frame transformation aligns with abolitionist politics. By extending invitations to new partners then bringing diverse groups together for dialogue and joint activism, CPMP created space for everyone involved in the struggle to transform their understanding of the prison system.

During the Delano campaign, CPMP and Critical Resistance organizers often stated, "Californians have shown that they don't want another prison. California doesn't need another prison" (Agid 2013). CPMP used coalition building not "as sublimation of difference, but as a way of acknowledging different ideological standpoints, different approaches, different ways of understanding the end goal." Throughout its organizational history, CPMP has spearheaded numerous creative educational efforts to help coalition partners "draw the connections... about the Prison industrial complex" to better understand "how the PIC affects them on all different levels" (Saavedra 2013). In hosting periodic educational events, CPMP brings experts that connect the dots between prisons and a variety of issues, from education to public health to the environment and more. By engaging and embracing different perspectives on prisons and social, economic, and environmental justice, community members developed "a comprehensive understanding of Delano II's impacts," comprising "a counter-discourse to the idea that prisons are inevitable or necessary. It's an abolitionist argument" (Agid 2013).

Through grassroots organizing, public education, and strategic advocacy,

CPMP developed complex campaigns that *both* directly and indirectly targeted the prison industrial complex. CPMP's coalition work challenged the criminal justice infrastructure itself as well as the political and economic structures that perpetuate the expansion of California's prison system. In the case of Delano, CPMP targeted the construction of the prison itself – direct resistance. In the same campaign, CPMP tied prison expansion to California's broader economic crises (underfunded schools and loss of union jobs), social crises (police brutality and structural racism) and environmental crises (predatory siting practices for ecological and public health hazards) – indirect resistance. CPMP addressed short-term needs (preventing the construction of prisons in one town) to long-term goals (stopping the system from growing altogether). CPMP's work is a powerful example of abolitionist politics in action.

Navigating the Limits of Reform

Craig Gilmore contends that CPMP's activism has always been an abolitionist organization, however 'stealthy'. Yet, CPMP has not always *explicitly* named itself as an abolitionist organization. To what extent does explicit abolitionist framing impact CPMP's capacity to work towards more radical long-term goals?

CPMP's broad-based coalition work has facilitated successful antiprison campaigns. Yet, the diverse and sometimes contradictory agendas of some of CPMP's coalition partners raise questions about the long-term potential of certain alliances. For example, during the Delano campaign, CPMP aligned with SEIU – a union that also represents many prison workers.

The framing of CURB poses a similar problem. If, as some suggest, “the decision to build no more prisons is driven largely by dwindling financial resources,” then “as long as a shift is driven by economics, some fear the pendulum will swing back as funds become more available” (Miller 2005). Framing prison issues around resolving California’s budget crisis could be a nullified argument in better economic times. Should the economy recover, CURB would need to dramatically shift its framing, strategies, and goals in order to continue to effectively challenge the Prison industrial complex.

“Moving Separately Together”

Fundamentally, CPMP’s coalition building strategy is about supporting diverse groups of people to fight prisons together. CPMP does not demand that coalition partners share the same political analysis of the prison industrial complex, capitalism, and structural racism. Rather, CPMP creates space for new and unlikely allies to learn from each other, embrace differences as strengths, and ultimately organize together to stop prison expansion. In the process, people involved in CPMP’s campaigns start to make the connections between economic crisis, police brutality, pollution, education, and incarceration. CPMP does not attempt to pressure anyone into changing their ideological stance on prisons. Rather, CPMP helps diverse coalitions “move separately together” (Agid 2013).

Conclusion

Moving Forward

This thesis is an exploration of what it means to organize for abolition. My research and analysis raises questions of how activists can effectively frame issues, build strategic alliances, and ultimately achieve campaign victories along the long, winding, experimental path towards abolition.

To address these questions, I began by reviewing the current state of mass incarceration in the United States. I introduced a historical analysis to show how structural racism, global capitalism, and inequitable policies and practices gave rise to the prison industrial complex. I then situated the rich tradition of resistance to the prison system within debates about reformist and abolitionist organizing approaches. I proposed a framework for evaluating antiprison efforts, based on whether or not short-term efforts align with long-term visions of abolition. Because my political analysis of the prison industrial complex includes historical and structural social and economic inequality, my framework for abolitionist organizing includes a wide range of activist strategies, from developing alternatives to incarceration, to fighting for equitable access to health care, education, and housing – and more.

Next, I zoomed in on California, highlighting how the War on Drugs and economic restructuring facilitated a massive prison expansion project beginning in the 1980s. To site these new prisons, the state targeted poor rural communities in

the San Joaquin Valley with false promises of economic progress. To fill these new prisons, the state targeted poor communities of color in California's rapidly deindustrializing cities with draconian sentencing laws and militarized policing. The history of California's Central Valley includes both corporate exploitation and a rich tradition of resistance.

I then outlined the structure, history, and campaigns of the California Prison Moratorium Project, an anti-prison organization based in Fresno. Drawing from organizational publications, news articles, CPMP's website, and transcriptions from interviews with CPMP staff, advisory board members, and allies, I emphasized the various coalition building strategies employed by the organization throughout its history. Finally, I situated CPMP's strategies within discourse on social movement theory about framing, political opportunity structure, and coalition building.

I argue that broad-based coalition building – as demonstrated by CPMP – is an effective strategy for advancing abolitionist politics. By bringing together groups with diverse interests, backgrounds, histories, and political orientations around a common goal of fighting prison expansion, CPMP created opportunities for movement participants to learn from each other's reasons for not wanting new prisons. In terms of framing, it *didn't matter* whether or not CPMP explicitly named itself as abolitionist; what mattered most was building power to achieve strategic victories on the path towards stopping the California prison system from continuing to expand – and CPMP achieved this in 2005.

So how does the California Prison Moratorium Project, an organization

dedicated to antiprison organizing in California's poor, rural, Central Valley towns, relate to the Liberation Summer effort in New York City? What lessons can be drawn from CPMP's coalition work?

I acknowledge that the social, political, and geographic context of the Liberation Summer effort was tremendously different than CPMP's campaigns (New York City is obviously a very different type of organizing setting than Delano). Yet both efforts are, at the heart, working towards the same goal: an end to mass incarceration and the abolition of the prison industrial complex. Therefore, despite the contextual differences of CPMP and Liberation Summer, I contend that there are important insights our organizing committee could have gleaned from CPMP's coalition building work.

First, whereas the initiative in New York was focused on mobilizing primarily racial justice groups to orchestrate mass resistance to the prison industrial complex, CPMP always oriented its coalition building efforts towards a very specific and strategic goal. It is much more effective to approach a potential ally by saying, "come fight *this* prison with us, and here's why this antiprison campaign make sense for *you*," than asking, "come fight *all* prisons with us, and here's why *we think* abolition is a good idea." Not only would choosing a specific direction or goal have been more strategic politically, but such focus would have granted Liberation Summer more leverage to bring in a much wider range of groups into our effort. Instead of reaching out only to groups that aligned with our specific political ideology, we could have brought together a much more diverse array of participants to enrich

dialogue about the function of the prison industrial complex and expand our capacity to reach more people.

Second, although our meetings included some organizers who were formerly incarcerated, these individuals did not play enough of a lead role in our effort. CPMP's organizing model empowers people most impacted by the prison system to take leadership in their campaigns. When the voices of the most marginalized groups are front and center, organizing efforts are more accountable to the needs of those marginalized groups. Had Liberation Summer emerged through the leadership of formerly incarcerated people, our effort would have been more strategic and powerful.

And finally, the Liberation Summer coalition was spearheaded by a group of energetic young people, many of whom (myself included) did not have strong roots or relationships in the communities we sought to organize. CPMP's organizers have always emphasized that powerful organizing emerges from meaningful relationships, and such trust emerges through building community. Future efforts to mobilize mass resistance to the prison industrial complex must be led by and for community members with strong ties to the places in which they are organizing.

The prospects for the abolition movement are hopeful. After Liberation Summer fizzled, many of the initiative's core organizers went on to coordinate a historic call to close the infamous Attica Prison. On September 14th, 2012, over 3,500 people packed into Riverside Church for a riveting evening with Angela Davis, Cornell West, Marc Lamont Hill, and Michelle Alexander, among others. In the

middle of the event, Mumia Abu-Jamal called in from SCI (State Correctional Institution) Mahanoy in Frackville, Pennsylvania. His deep, soothing voice echoed throughout Riverside's towering chapel:

“To actualize [abolition],” Mumia began, “is to build a movement that does not seek reform; build a movement that seeks revolutionary transformation in the prison industrial complex. That doesn't mean building shinier, brighter cells. It means decarceration. It really means abolishing the idea that millions of people can be held in cages for years, for decades, for lifetimes. We cannot have that” (All Things Harlem 2012).

Although the road to abolition is long, we cannot lose sight of that ultimate vision. Activists fighting for abolition today are standing on the shoulders of giants; the emerging movement to end mass incarceration is another chapter in the rich, diverse, and powerful history of movements for social justice in the United States. As Mumia reminded us in Riverside Church, “Only people's movements... only a radical, energized people, can transform.”

Bibliography

- ACLU. "School-to-Prison Pipeline." *American Civil Liberties Union*. 2013. <http://www.aclu.org/racial-justice/school-prison-pipeline> (accessed April 25, 2013).
- AFSC. "Stopmax." *American Friends Service Committee*. 2013. <https://afsc.org/campaign/stopmax> (accessed April 25, 2013).
- Agid, Shana, interview by author. *Skype Interview* (April 7, 2013).
- Alexander, Michelle. *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. New York, NY: New Press, 2010.
- All Things Harlem. "Mumia Abu Jamal Live Over the Phone - End Mass Incarceration - Riverside Church." *YouTube*. September 19, 2012. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nGea2dDa3Dc>.
- American Civil Liberties Union. "Immigration Detention." *ACLU*. 2013. <http://www.aclu.org/immigrants-rights/detention> (accessed April 1, 2013).
- American Friends Service Committee. *Struggle for Justice: A Report on Crime and Punishment in America*. Farrar Straus & Giroux, 1971.
- Aronowitz, Stanley. "The Situation of the Left in the United States." *Socialist Review* (Duke University Press) 23, no. 3 (1994): 5-79.
- Arriola, Kimberly R. J., Ronald L. Braithwaite, and Henrie M. Treadwell. "Health Disparities and Incarcerated Women: A Population Ignored." *American Journal of Public Health* 95, no. 10 (October 2005): 1679-1681.
- Barber, John, and Robert Pallas. "From Riot to Revolution." In *The Politics of Punishment*, by Erik Olin Wright, 237-261. Harpercollins, 1973.
- Barnes, Brooks. "As Grocery Dies Off, DownandOut Town Lives On, if Barely." *The New York Times*. September 16, 2012. www.nytimes.com/2012/09/17/us/in-struggling-mendota-california-another-loss.html (accessed March 4, 2013).
- Beamish, Thomas D., and Amy J. Luebbbers. "Alliance Building across Social Movements: Bridging in a Peace and Justice Coalition." *Social Problems* 56, no. 4 (November 2009): 647-676.
- Benford, Robert D., and David A. Snow. "Framing Processes and Social Movements: An Overview and Assessment." *Annual Review of Sociology* 26 (2000): 611-639.
- Bittman, Mark. "Everyone Eats There: California's Central Valley is our greatest food resource. So why are we treating it so badly? ." *The New York Times Magazine*. October 10, 2012. www.nytimes.com/2012/10/14/magazine/californias-central-valley-land-of-a-billion-vegetables.html (accessed February 24, 2013).

Braz, Rose, and Craig Gilmore. "Joining Forces: Prisons and Environmental Justice in Recent California Organizing." *Radical History Review* (MARHO: The Radical Historians' Organization, Inc.), no. 96 (2006): 95-111.

Brown, Brian, and Greg Jolivette. "A Primer: Three Strikes - The Impact After More Than a Decade." *Legislative Analyst's Office: California's Nonpartisan Fiscal and Policy Advisor*. October 2005.
http://www.lao.ca.gov/2005/3_strikes/3_strikes_102005.htm (accessed April 4, 2013).

Bureau of Labor Statistics. "Occupational Outlook Handbook: Correctional Officers." *United States Department of Labor*. April 26, 2012.
<http://www.bls.gov/ooh/protective-service/correctional-officers.htm> (accessed April 29, 2013).

California Prison Moratorium Project. "Stopping Construction Where It Starts." *Why Fight Expansion*. <http://www.calipmp.org/stoppingconstructionwhereitstarts> (accessed March 4, 2013).

Casella, Jean, and James Ridgeway. "Unlock The Box: The Fight Against Solitary Confinement in New York." *The Nation*. October 12, 2012.
<http://www.thenation.com/article/170276/unlock-box-fight-against-solitary-confinement-new-york> (accessed April 25, 2013).

Central California Environmental Justice Network. "What is CCEJN???" *Central California Environmental Justice Network*. 2012. <http://ccejn.wordpress.com/> (accessed March 3, 2013).

Christianson, Scott. *With Liberty for Some: 500 Years of Imprisonment in America*. Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press, 2000.

Correctional Association of New York. "About the Rockefeller Drug Laws." *Drop the Rock Coalition*. 2013. <http://www.correctionalassociation.org/cp/rockefeller-drug-laws> (accessed April 25, 2013).

CPMP. "Milestones." *California Prison Moratorium Project*. 2012.
<http://calipmp.org/milestones> (accessed April 26, 2013).

Critical Resistance. "About." *Critical Resistance*. 2013.
<http://criticalresistance.org/about/> (accessed February 27, 2013).

—. "History." *Critical Resistance*. 2013. <http://criticalresistance.org/about/history/> (accessed February 27, 2013).

CURB. "Who We Are." *Californians United for a Responsible Budget*. 2013.
http://curbprisonspending.org/?page_id=2 (accessed March 4, 2013).

Davis, Angela Y. *Are Prisons Obsolete?* New York, NY: Seven Stories Press, 2003.

- Dignity in Schools. "About Us." *Dignity in Schools Campaign*. 2011. <http://www.dignityinschools.org/about-us> (accessed April 25, 2013).
- Estrada, Leobardo F., Chris F. García, Reynaldo Flores Macías, and Lionel Maldonado. "Chicanos in the United States: A History of Exploitation and Resistance." *Daedalus* (MIT Press) 110, no. 2 (1981): 103-131.
- Fauvre et al., Ashle. *How To Stop A Prison In Your Town*. Oakland: California Prison Moratorium Project, 2006.
- Foley, John W., and Homer R. Steedly. In *The Strategy of Social Protest*, by William A. Gamson, 182. 1975.
- Fraser, Steve, and Joshua B. Freeman. "Locking Down an American Workforce: Prison Labor as the Past - and Future - of American "Free-Market" Capitalism." *Huffington Post*. April 20, 2012. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/steve-fraser/private-prisons-_b_1439201.html (accessed March 5, 2013).
- Free Mumia Abu-Jamal Coalition. "Who Is Mumia Abu-Jamal?" *Freemumia.com*. 2013. <http://www.freemumia.com/who-is-mumia-abu-jamal> (accessed April 25, 2013).
- Fresno Historical Society. "Description of the Valley." *valleyhistory.org*. 2013. www.valleyhistory.org/index.php?c=74 (accessed February 24, 2013).
- Gamson, William A. *The Strategy of Social Protest*. Dorsey Press, 1975.
- Garrett, Judith Simon. *Prison and Jail Administration: Practice and Theory*. Gaithersburg, Maryland: Aspen Publishers, 1999.
- Gilmore, Craig, interview by author. *CPMP Skype Interview* (February 1, 2013).
- Gilmore, Ruth Wilson. "Globalisation and US prison growth: from military Keynesianism to post-Keynesian militarism." 1999.
- . *Golden Gulag: Prisons, Surplus, Crisis, and Opposition in Globalizing California*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2007.
- Glaze, Lauren E., and Erika Parks. *Correctional Populations in the United States, 2011*. Bulletin, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Washington: U.S. Department of Justice, 2012.
- Greenman, Sarah J., William J. Sabol, and Heather C. West. *Prisoners in 2009*. Bulletin, Bureau of Justice Statistics, Washington: U.S. Department of Justice, 2010.
- Harris, Emily. "Corrections' master plan falls short." *Capitol Weekly*. May 3, 2012. <http://capitolweekly.net/article.php?xid=10jbb7srywqhse0#> (accessed March 4, 2013).
- Hartnet, Stephen John. *Challenging the Prison industrial Complex: Activism, Arts, and Educational Alternatives*. University of Illinois Press, 2011.

- Justice Policy Institute. "The Punishing Decade: Prison and Jail Estimates at the Millennium ." Washington, D.C.: Justice Policy Institute, May 2000.
- Kelley, Robin D. G. "History of the California Prison Moratorium Project." *Black Movements in the US*. December 7, 2007.
<http://dornsife.usc.edu/cdd/civic/bmus/History%20of%20the%20CPMP.html>
 (accessed February 15, 2013).
- King, Ryan S., and Marc Mauer. *Distorted Priorities: Drug Offenders in State Prisons*. Report, The Sentencing Project, 2002.
- Kirkham, Chris. "Private Prisons Profit From Immigration Crackdown, Federal And Local Law Enforcement Partnerships." *Huffington Post*. June 7, 2012.
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/06/07/private-prisons-immigration-federal-law-enforcement_n_1569219.html (accessed April 29, 2013).
- Kysel, Ian. "International Body Slams U.S. Solitary Confinement Practices." *American Civil Liberties Union Blog of Rights*. April 9, 2013.
<http://www.aclu.org/blog/prisoners-rights-human-rights-criminal-law-reform/international-body-slams-us-solitary> (accessed April 26, 2013).
- Lee, Suevon. "By the Numbers: The U.S.'s Growing For-Profit Detention Industry." *ProPublica*. June 20, 2012. <http://www.propublica.org/article/by-the-numbers-the-u.s.-growing-for-profit-detention-industry> (accessed April 29, 2013).
- Liberation Summer. *A27 Invitation*. New York, NY, April 9, 2012.
- Liberation Summer. *LibSum A27 Meeting Notes*. New York, NY, April 27, 2012.
- McAdam, Doug, John D. McCarthy, and Mayer N. Zald. *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities Mobilizing Structures, and Cultural Framings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.
- McCulloch, Jude, and Phil Scraton. *The Violence of Incarceration*. Taylor and Francis, 2008.
- Mears, Daniel P. *Evaluating the Effectiveness of Supermax Prisons*. Research Report1, Urban Institute Justice Policy Center, 2006.
- Miller, Sarah B. "California prison boom ends, signaling a shift in priorities." *Christian Science Monitor*. June 20, 2005.
<http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/0620/p03s02-usju.html> (accessed March 4, 2013).
- Mitford, Jessica. *Kind and Usual Punishment: The Prison Business*. New York, NY: Vintage, 1973.
- Mohan, Geoffrey. "Judge Halts Kern County Prison Project Environment: The state is ordered to reconsider the impact of the \$335million, maximumsecurity facility in

- Delano." *Los Angeles Times*. June 12, 2001. articles.latimes.com/print/2001/jun/12/local/me-9486 (accessed March 3, 2013).
- NAACP. "Criminal Justice Fact Sheet ." *National Association for the Advancement of Colored People*. 2013. www.naacp.org/pages/criminal-justice-fact-sheet (accessed January 28, 2013).
- NYJAC. "Mission Statement." *New York Jails Action Coalition*. 2012. www.nycjac.org/about/ (accessed April 25, 2013).
- Parenti, Christian. *Lockdown America: Police and Prisons in the Age of Crisis*. New York, NY: Verso, 1999.
- Parsons, James J. "A Geographer Looks at the San Joaquin Valley." *Geographical Review* (American Geographical Society) 76, no. 4 (October 1986): 371-389.
- PBS. "Attica Prison Riot." *American Experience*. 2013. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/americanexperience/features/general-article/rockefellers-attica/> (accessed April 29, 2013).
- Pettit, Becky, and Bruce Western. "Incareration and Social Inequality." *Daedalus* (MIT Press) 139, no. 3 (2010): 8-19.
- Pisani, Donald. "From the Family Farm to Agribusiness." In *Green Versus Gold: Sources in California's Environmental History*, edited by Carolyn Merchant, 276-281. Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 1998.
- Prisoner Hunger Strike Solidarity. "2011 Hunger Strike: 1st Round." 2012. <http://prisonerhungerstrikesolidarity.wordpress.com/1st-round/> (accessed January 5, 2013).
- A Prison in the Fields: False Progress in the Central Valley*. VHS. Directed by Ashley Hunt. Produced by CHF Film & Video. Performed by Laura Pulido. 2002.
- Reyes, Debbie, interview by author. *CPMP Skype Interview* (February 22, 2013).
- RJOY. "About Us." *Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth*. 2013. <http://www.rjoyoakland.org/about.php> (accessed April 25, 2013).
- Russell, Josha Kahn, and Hilary Moore. *Organizing Cools the Planet: Tools and Reflections to Navigate the Climate Crisis*. Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2011.
- Saavedra, Ernesto, interview by author. *CPMP Skype Interview* (February 5, 2013).
- Saed. "Prison Abolition as an Ecosocialist Struggle." *Capitalism Nature Socialism* 25, no. 1 (March 2012): 1-5.
- Sahagun, Louis. "The Mothers of East L.A. Transform Themselves and Their Neighborhood ." *The Los Angeles Times*. August 13, 1989. articles.latimes.com/1989-08-13/local/me-816_1_east-los-angeles (accessed February 26, 2012).

Sankin, Aaron. "California Prop 36, Measure Reforming State's Three Strikes Law, Approved By Wide Majority Of Voters." *Huffington Post*. November 7, 2012. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/11/07/california-prop-36_n_2089179.html (accessed April 25, 2013).

Shapira, Philip, and Michael Teitz. "Growth and Turbulence in the California Economy." *Deindustrialization and Regional Economic Transformation: The Experience of the United States*. Edited by Lloyd Rodwin. Winchester, MA, January 1989.

Smith, Mark K. "Community." *The Encyclopedia of Informal Education*. 2001. <http://www.infed.org/community/community.htm> (accessed March 5, 2013).

Snow et al, David A. "Frame Alignment Processes, Micromobilization, and Movement Participation." *American Sociological Review* (American Sociological Association) 51, no. 4 (August 1986): 464-481.

Sun Mt. Chronicles. "August 25th, 2004." *Sun Mt. Chronicles Archive*. August 25, 2004. <http://www.sunmt.org/aug25chron04.html> (accessed March 4, 2013).

Swart, Betsy. "The Passion of Aurora Castillo & The Militant Mothers of East LA." *On the Issues*, 1992: 12-42.

Tejada-Flores, Rick. "The United Farmworkers Union." *PBS: The Fight in the Fields: Cesar Chavez and the Farmworker's Struggle*. 2004. <http://www.pbs.org/itvs/fightfields/cesarchavez1.html> (accessed April 25, 2013).

The CR10 Publishing Collective. *Abolition Now! Ten Years of Strategy and Struggle Against the Prison Industrial Complex*. Oakland, CA: AK Press, 2008.

The Osborne Association. "About Us." *The Osborne Association*. 2012. <http://www.osborneny.org/about.cfm?pageID=1> (accessed April 25, 2013).

The Sentencing Project. *Mentally Ill Offenders in the Criminal Justice System: An Analysis and Prescription*. Washington, D.C.: The Sentencing Project, 2002.

United Nations. "Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment ." *Human Rights Web*. January 25, 1997. <http://www.hrweb.org/legal/cat.html> (accessed April 25, 2013).

US EPA. "Environmental Justice Program and Civil Rights." *United States Environmental Protection Agency*. October 16, 2012. <http://www.epa.gov/region1/ej/> (accessed March 4, 2013).

Van Dyke, Nella. "Crossing Movement Boundaries: Factors that Facilitate Coalition Protest by American College Students, 1930–1990 ." *Social Problems* 50, no. 2 (2003): 226-250.

Wozniacka, Gosia. "Calif. Central Valley cities among poorest in US." *The Seattle Times*. September 20, 2012.
http://seattletimes.com/html/nationworld/2019211233_apuscaliforniapoverly.html (accessed February 24, 2013).