

CAFETERIA, COMMISSARY AND COOKING: FOODWAYS AND NEGOTIATIONS OF
POWER AND IDENTITY IN A WOMEN'S PRISON

by

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Social Welfare in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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ABSTRACT**CAFETERIA, COMMISSARY AND COOKING: FOODWAYS AND NEGOTIATIONS OF
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by

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This study uses foodways theory to build knowledge about the lived experience of incarceration by analyzing women's narratives about prison food and eating. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 30 formerly incarcerated women in New Haven, CT. The interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed. Findings explain the different ways that inmates collect, prepare, distribute and consume food, and the centrality of these activities to incarcerated life. By shedding light on these daily routines, the world of prison life comes into greater focus.

Thematic analysis of the data further illuminates the prison experience by suggesting the positive and negative ways that food impacts inmate's perceptions of themselves, their social networks and the State. Negative foodways humiliated the women, accentuated their powerlessness, and reinforced their perceptions of the State as nonsensical and apathetic towards their needs. Positive foodways illustrated the inmates' capacity to resist State power, build/maintain relationships and construct positive self-narratives. Racialized foodways narratives began to reveal how food stories may be deployed to reinforce prison's racial character and construct the identities of self and other.

Foodways interventions to support the rehabilitative goals of correctional facilities are proposed. These data suggest that inmates want to build positive relationships and identities and that prison food systems could do more to help women realize these intentions.

DEDICATION

For the women and girls across time and place who have been denied the opportunity to attend school.

This one is for you.

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Everyone has a story. Mine includes a huge cast of characters; here are the leading roles:

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Cafeteria, Commissary & Cooking:

Foodways and Negotiations of Relationships and Identity in a Women's Prison

Since the late 1700s, incarceration has played a central role in the US criminal justice system (Friedman, 1993). Today, the US has the highest per capita rate of incarceration in the world with over two million people behind bars (Glaze & Parks, 2012; International Prison Centre for Prison Studies, 2011). This massive incarceration has come at tremendous human and fiscal cost. For prisoners, who are disproportionately poor people and racial minorities, the experience of incarceration can exacerbate problems of substance abuse, under-education, illness, and unemployment (Mauer & Chesney-Lind, 2002; Mauer & King, 2007; Travis & Waul, 2003). Further, their removal from communities weakens the family networks and social fabric of these neighborhoods (Clear, 2007). Financially, the states spend approximately \$50 billion per year on corrections, on average, 2.5% of their total budgets (Kyckelhahn, 2012). Given the widespread use of this expensive criminal justice intervention, the lack of empirical findings indicating any measure of effectiveness is remarkable. Research suggests that, in spite of repeated efforts to reform and ameliorate prison programming, prisons serve primarily as mechanisms of containment and are largely unsuccessful at preventing criminal behavior, discouraging re-offending, or improving community safety (Lynch, 2007; Nagin, Cullen, & Jonson, 2009; Simon, 2007).

Scientific attempts to understand what, if anything, about prison “works” has focused research on evaluation and analysis of specific prison programs, long-term recidivism rates, and other trends in criminal justice and public safety. In this pursuit of empirical outcomes, descriptive social science research about what life in contemporary US prison systems actually entails has been lost. Today’s prison institutions have been described as a ‘black box’ because

so little is known about “how individuals feel and act while incarcerated [and how the experience] may affect their attitudes and behaviors after release” (Visher & O'Connell, 2012, p. 386).

Paradoxically, attention to and concern with the social order of prisons in the US academic and political discourse has declined. Just when the experience of imprisonment is becoming a normal pathway for significant portions of the population, the pathways of knowledge that made the experience of incarceration visible are closing...what was going on inside prisons, the nature of their regimes, or of the prison social order that was emerging, has not been a major focus. (Simon, 2000, p. 285 - 286)

From the post-WWII era through the 1970s, politicians, academics, community activists and the inmates themselves actively debated the role of incarceration in US society. State correctional departments hired researchers to document prison life and inform decisions about how to effectively manage the “society of captives” (e.g. Sykes, 1958). Inmates published autobiographies that described and critiqued their incarcerated lives (Davis, 1976; Malcolm X, 1973). Prisoner strikes and riots were high profile events that engaged the general public in discussion about prison life, how prisoners ought to be treated and what services, if any, should be available (Lynch, 2007). However, for a variety of different reasons, public discourse and research about life on the inside began to wane in the late 1970s, just as prison growth started to take off (Simon, 2000).

The premise of this dissertation project was that improving the outcomes of formerly incarcerated people, reducing recidivism, and building safer and healthier communities involves building knowledge about the prison experience. How do prisons function and what is the impact of these institutions on the lives of people who are confined? Information about prison

life can inform the development of interventions to moderate the negative effects of incarceration and/or accentuate the positive in order to respond more effectively to the needs of prisoners and foster better individual and community outcomes after incarceration.

Statement of Research

With this dissertation project, I sought to expand knowledge about the lived experience of incarceration in the United States by collecting and analyzing narratives from formerly incarcerated women about their experiences with food and eating in prison. The purpose of this endeavor was two-fold. One, to shed light on day-to-day prison life, in order to build knowledge about the prison experience and encourage public policy debate about the role of incarceration in US society. Two, to inform the design of correctional programming and social services for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated women by providing insight into this population's prison experience. A comprehensive understanding of what the prison experience entails and how it may shape the lens through which prisoners see themselves, society, and social service agencies is essential for social workers and other professionals who work with prisoners and formerly incarcerated people.

A project to build knowledge about incarcerated people and prison life could be designed in many ways. I chose to focus on female prisoners and food. There were several reasons to focus on women. For one, the invisibility of female prisoners is even more pronounced than that of their male counterparts (Davis, 1998; Zaitzow & Thomas, 2003). This is due, in part, to the fact that women have always made up a small minority of the incarcerated population; currently only 7% of the U.S. prison population is female (Carson & Sabol, 2012). Consequently, knowledge about the prison experience is based largely on men's experiences (Owen, 1998). However, research that compares male and female prisoners suggests that "gender matters" –

women's service needs and experiences of incarceration differ from men's and prison programs and policies designed for male inmates may not be responsive to women's needs (Bloom, 2003a; Chesney-Lind & Okamoto, 2003; Covington, 2007; Thomas, 2003b). From this, it is imperative that knowledge about both men's and women's incarceration experiences is generated. Two, while the rate of female incarceration is relatively low, in the past decade it has been increasing at a faster rate than male incarceration. Between 2000 and 2007, rates of adult male incarceration in state and federal prisons increased, on average, 1.9% per year, while the average annual increase of female incarceration was 3.0% (Sabol, West, & Cooper, 2009). After an all-time high in 2008, rates of female incarceration began to decline with the 2011 population approximating 2006 levels. Still, the overall rate of growth of the female prison population since 2000 (1.9%) remains higher than the growth of the male prison population (1.3%) (Carson & Sabol, 2012). Three, the diverse, varied and private lives of women in the United States is a topic of interest to me. Living in a society that privileges men's stories, I wonder about the other half of our shared histories. My undergraduate thesis explored women's diaries and memoirs of domestic life during the Revolutionary War. My Master degree's project recommended programs to promote breastfeeding in the US. This doctoral project was a continuation of my curiosity about women's lives and my desire to bring attention to female narratives.

My choice to inquire specifically about prison foodways, or "the beliefs and behavior surrounding the production, distribution and consumption of food," was informed by anthropological and sociological theory about food and foodways that suggests, "The social and cultural uses of food provide much insight into the human condition" (Counihan, 1999, pp. 2, 24). Research about foodways has explicated culture, social relationships and place across a broad range of time periods and geographic locations, but it has rarely been used to understand

prison life. The small body of anthropological and sociological work about incarcerated eating has been conducted primarily in men's prisons in England and Canada (Earle & Phillips, 2012; Godderis, 2006a, 2006b; Milligan, Waller, & Andrews, 2002; Smith, 2002; Ugelvik, 2011; Valentine & Longstaff, 1998). This study expanded on existing research by using the food/foodways lens to better understand women's experiences of incarceration in the United States.

My focus on prison activities relating to food also reflected a feminist paradigm that lends importance to domestic tasks that are generally understood to be women's work (Counihan, 1999). This approach is a critical response to traditional accounts of history and society that privilege the activities of the public [male] sphere (i.e. war, government, employment), over the private [female] sphere (i.e. family, domestic work). Generally speaking, media coverage and academic studies of prison life focus on "conflicts taking place in public view...[that] force the prison into taking immediate public action" (e.g. inmate clashes, hunger strikes, abuse by guards, riots) (Ugelvik, 2011, p. 56). Analyses of these most dramatic and sensational parts of the prison experience render the activities of the private sphere invisible. This project maintains that the micro-activities that comprise regular daily life are equally important, albeit less frequently explored. It is through these quotidian activities that identity, resistance and relationships are negotiated and performed (Bosworth & Carrabine, 2001; Counihan, 1999; Nagin, et al., 2009; Ugelvik, 2011): "How material goods are delivered, how staff approach prisoners, how managers treat staff and how life is lived, through talk, encounter or transaction constitute...key dimensions of prison life" (Liebling, 2004, p. 50). In other words, the power of the "little things" and the insight to be gained from examining these details can be

as meaningful, if not more so, than the knowledge that comes from public acts and acute incidents of violence.

Finally, this investigation was informed by Social Work's mission to ameliorate the lives of vulnerable populations. The Code of Ethics of the National Association of Social Work states:

The primary mission of the social work profession is to enhance human wellbeing and help meet the basic human needs of all people, with particular attention to the needs and empowerment of people who are vulnerable, oppressed, and living in poverty. (NASW, 2008, para. 1)

Female prisoners in the United States, who are disproportionately poor and non-White, experience a "hyperinvisibility" at the intersection of criminal justice status, gender, race and socio-economic class that places them at the far margins of US society (Davis, 1998, p. xi). The marginalization of prisoners also has a uniquely geographic and physical character. Prisons are often located in remote, isolated locations, literally at the edge of society, and prisoners are physically locked behind these walls. Efforts to build knowledge about this population are consistent with Social Work's commitment to vulnerable communities.

Social work practice in prison and community-based supervision and re-entry programs has the most obvious connection to female prisoners and ex-prisoners, but social workers in service environments that are not criminal justice specific also interact with formerly incarcerated women. Mental health clinicians, housing providers, public benefit and entitlement workers, domestic violence counselors, college professors, and child welfare staff are all likely to work with female ex-offenders at some point in their careers. Project findings inform social

workers who provide services to, design programs for, and create public policy that concerns incarcerated and formerly incarcerated women by illuminating the female prison experience.

Chapter 1: Literature Review and Problem Formulation

This project built on three distinct but related bodies of literature: prison studies, social science research about female prisoners, and foodways analysis. The interdisciplinary field of prison studies includes writings about the history of prison policy, prison life, correctional management, race, and criminal identities that are of particular relevance to this project. Demographic, health, and psychosocial research about female prisoners in the United States reflects the current state of knowledge about this population. The foodways literature demonstrates how analysis of the ways in which human beings collect, distribute and consume food can offer a window into their culture, including constructions of identity and social relationships.

Prison Studies

Prison studies consist of a wide range of disciplines and substantive areas, including historical accounts of correctional policy and interventions (especially in the United States, Canada and Great Britain), qualitative and quantitative research about prisoners, correctional officers and prison life, analysis of incarceration trends, including individual and population-based studies, discussion of the philosophical foundations and ethics of corrections policy, and debate about different approaches to prison management.

Historic overview. Prisons first came into use as a mechanism for punishment in the United States during the latter half of the 18th century (Clear, Cole, & Reisig, 2008; Friedman, 1993). Prior to this, offenders would generally receive corporal punishment (e.g. lashings, stockade, execution) or be banished from a community (Welch, 2004). Jails were used only as temporary holding cells, especially for debtors, and had little to no services (Friedman, 1993). Inmates often had to pay for their food, or have it brought to them by family or friends. When the

first prison opened in Philadelphia in 1776, it was considered to be an enlightened, more humane, form of punishment (Craig, 2004). Rather than maiming or killing offenders, these institutions would give them a chance to repent for their sins – through prayer and/or hard labor - and be re-integrated into the community. In spite of these reformist intentions, the penitentiaries, as they were called at that time, often differed little from their “holding cell” predecessors (Friedman, 1993). Conditions were often squalid and the use of physical punishment, including withholding food or reducing rations to bread and water, was not uncommon if prisoners failed to exhibit adequate remorse or desire to repent (Johnston, 2010). Different iterations of the penitentiary concept were developed throughout the Northern part of the US during the 19th century (Friedman, 1993).

During this same time period, prison development flourished in the US South, as the region emerged from the Civil War looking for ways to contain the newly emancipated African-American community and rebuild devastated economies (Oshinsky, 1996; Perkinson, 2010). Prison labor camps, populated almost entirely by African-American men who had been arrested for minor socio-economic “crimes” like vagrancy, mischief and theft, were violent places of forced work and torture that were completely devoid of rehabilitative intent (Oshinsky, 1996). State government and private landowners profited enormously from the nearly free labor that incarcerated workers provided (Perkinson, 2010). And while under slavery workers had been “owned” by landowners, giving the masters at least some motivation to keep the workers healthy and productive, prison workers were leased and easily replaced in these prison labor schemes, so their supervisors had no incentive to invest in their mental or physical health (Oshinsky, 1996). Thousands of men and women, primarily African-Americans, were literally worked to death (Oshinsky, 1996; Perkinson, 2010). It was within these Southern prison systems that the

racialized character of US corrections first came into focus. From its inception, the US prison system has served as a system for the social control and confinement of poor people and racial minorities, African-Americans in particular (Alexander, 2012; Davis, 2003; Oshinsky, 1996).

Back in the North, US prison systems underwent a wave of reform during the Progressive Era (1870 – 1920), when a broad range of social programs were implemented. During this time period, there was increased debate about how prisoners ought to be treated; reformers believed inmates should be treated with respect and advocated for reduced levels of supervision (Bosworth, 2010). The creation of new prison programs and amenities during the Progressive Era was coupled with an increase in patronage and corruption. This was the era of the “big house” when control of day-to-day operations was often ceded to inmates and relationships between prisoners and politically connected people on the outside dictated the conditions and length of their confinement (Simon, 2007).

It was also during this time that states began to create separate facilities for male and female prisoners and employ women to work as guards in female prisons (Johnston, 2010). Before these changes, female prisoners had been housed in the same buildings, and often in the same wings and cells, as male prisoners. This co-ed arrangement, combined with the fact that guards and prison staff were almost exclusively male, made women vulnerable to mistreatment and sexual assault. While the female-only, female-managed institutions of the Progressive Era ameliorated the physical safety of incarceration, the middle-class reformers’ focus on reshaping the inmates in their own image, by teaching cooking, sewing and other housekeeping skills, has been criticized by historians as psychologically oppressive and irrelevant to the inmates’ struggles with poverty, social marginalization and violence in the community (Bosworth, 2010; Johnston, 2010).

In the 1940s, when the New Deal programs were being developed and implemented, prisons came to be known as “correctional institutions,” reflecting a renewed commitment to the idea that prisons could rehabilitate prisoners and “correct” previous wrongs (Simon, 2007; Friedman, 1993). Over the next two decades, the academic field of prison studies was born (Simon, 2000). Ethnographic studies of male prison life, conducted primarily by sociologists who worked for state correctional departments, served two purposes. One, the studies were designed to inform prison managers about inmate culture and organization in order to better produce and sustain order within the institution (i.e. reduce fighting, riots, disobedience). Two, this research provided insight into broader themes of social structures, social organization and the State’s ability to exert power over its citizens (Reisig, 2001). The pioneering studies in this field asserted that prisons had their own culture and vocabulary, which was produced by “convict codes” and administrative policies (Clemmer, 1940; Sykes, 1958; Van Tongeren & Klebe, 2010). Clemmer (1940) coined the term “prisonization” of inmates, to describe how individuals were transformed by the incarceration experience. He asserted that these changes in values and personality could make it difficult for inmates to transition back to the community. Sykes (1958) provided a detailed description of the “society of captives” and “pains of imprisonment” in the maximum-security men’s prison in New Jersey that he studied. Sykes delineated the vulnerabilities of correctional authority, and argued that given the “defects of total power,” inmate cooperation was essential to maintaining order (Bosworth, 2010; Reisig, 2001).

While these studies of prison life focused exclusively on male prisons, rates of female incarceration rose during this time period, with a marked increase during WWII (Bosworth, 2010). Scholars have maintained that this rise in female incarceration reflected growing social concern about women’s sexuality and the desire to enforce social norms regarding marriage,

monogamy, and child-bearing (Bosworth, 2003; Bosworth, 2010; Carlen, 1994). Throughout US history, female perpetrators of violent acts (e.g. murder, assault) have been the exception; female prisoners are predominately individuals who live at the social margins and are convicted of non-violent crimes (Friedman, 1993). When rates of female incarceration continued to rise in the 1960s and 1970s, some critics of the women's movement in the US asserted that women's liberation had encouraged more women to break the law in an attempt to "be equal" to men (Zaitzow & Thomas, 2003). Analysis of trends, however, has shown that the increased rates of incarceration were not related to an increase in "male" crimes of violence or other changes in behavior but, instead, increasing social intolerance and surveillance of sexual and socio-economic deviance (Bloom, 2003a).

The 1960s and 1970s were a period of tremendous social change in the United States, and correctional systems were not immune to this turmoil. Prisoner lawsuits, strikes and riots challenged correctional policy and sought more inmate rights and freedoms (Bosworth, 2010). Prison conditions improved as inmate demands for more religious freedom, better sanitation, and greater access to health care, education, exercise and nutritious food were met. Also, during this period, the first large studies of female prison life were conducted (Giallombardo, 1966; Heffernan, 1972). These studies, that documented and hypothesized about gendered difference in prison experiences, were part of a larger push-back against the functionalist theories of the 1940s and 1950s (Welch, 2004). Academics criticized the idea that inmate populations were monolithic and united against institutional power. They used conflict theory to argue that the divisions and identities around race, ethnicity and gender that exist in the community are "imported" into prison life and critical to the power dynamics of incarceration (Bosworth & Carrabine, 2001).

The “War on Drugs,” that was launched in the late 1970s, and continues to be waged today, led to dramatic increases in the number of US prisoners in the 1980s and 1990s as draconian penalties for drug offenses, including mandatory minimums and life sentences for repeat offenders, removed judicial discretion and filled the prisons beyond capacity (Mauer, 1999). Rehabilitative and educational programming inside prisons was cut to reduce the cost of operating prisons because the efficacy of these programs, many of which were underfunded and underdeveloped from the beginning, had not been demonstrated (Lynch, 2007). These cuts in prison programs and amenities were consistent with the larger neo-liberal movement that transformed the role of the US federal and state governments during this time period (Abramovitz, 1992). State support for its vulnerable citizens was slashed as policymakers promoted a free-market capitalist market economy with reduced regulations and taxes (Abramovitz, 2004/2005). Across the social service spectrum, the onus for recovery was placed squarely on the individual with the problem, and the prison system was no exception.

The field of prison studies, which had focused on inmate culture and prison life since the 1940s, shifted during the late 1980s. Generally speaking, criminal justice scholarship retreated from prison research and became focused on quantitative analysis of incarceration trends, community-based systems (i.e. policing, courts, alternatives to incarceration) and “what can be easily measured” (Liebling, 2004, p. 132; Simon, 2000). Prison researchers became increasingly interested in administrative management and rule-making (Bosworth, 2010; Coontz, 1983). The work of John DiIulio exemplified this shift (Simon, 2000; Reisig, 2001). DiIulio (1990) argued that it was unnecessary for correctional administrators to understand or negotiate inmate culture in order to govern prisons. He suggested that prison staff should manage *around* inmate systems, not *through* them (Craig, 2004). He advocated for strict rules and systems of

surveillance and security to insure prisoner containment. Within this framework, prison ethnography became both irrelevant and practically impossible, given the rigid systems of control that limited prisoner movement and researcher accessibility. While this approach to prison governance still enjoys broad support, it has also come under considerable criticism in the last decade (Craig, 2004; Reisig, 2001). Critics suggest that this management paradigm undermines community safety goals. Correctional policies that confine inmates to their cells and limit interaction with other people and rehabilitative programs may promote prison stability but can also make it more difficult for the prisoner to reintegrate into the community after his/her release (Bosworth, 2010; Craig, 2004; Steiner & Wooldredge, 2009).

After several decades of a decidedly quantitative, positivist approach to incarceration research, many prison scholars have called for a return to the qualitative work that lies at the foundation of this field (e.g. Bosworth, 2010; Owen, 1998; Simon, 2000; Thomas, 2003a). Specifically, the absence of the voice of prisoners and formerly incarcerated people has been noted, as has the need to create a richer understanding of the incarceration experience (Craig, 2004; Hedderman, Gunby, & Shelton, 2011; Maidment, 2007; Rowe, 2011; Thomas, 2003a; Visher & O'Connell, 2012). Efforts to construct an administrative formula for success have failed to produce changes in rates of incarceration or community safety, and states can no longer bear the tremendous financial costs of these “total surveillance” systems (Burnett & Maruna, 2004; Lynch, 2007; Welch, 2004). The potential value of engaging incarcerated people, and their communities, in creating correctional solutions has been recognized. This study’s goals and methodology were consistent with this qualitative renaissance currently underway in prison studies.

Themes and theory. The prison studies literature includes themes and theory that seek to explicate a wide array of topics, for example, how prisons operate, the antecedents to incarceration and possible outcomes, inmate relationships with people on the inside and the outside, and prisoner identities (e.g. Bierie, 2012; Comfort, 2008; Dryer, 2005; Morani et al., 2011). Here I will introduce four of these themes – order and legitimacy, resistance, desistance and identity, and race - all of which figured centrally in this study’s data analysis.

Order and legitimacy. The concept of social order is critical to prison management, because the safety of inmates and guards is dependent on the institution’s ability to avoid inmate disobedience and upheaval (Craig, 2004; Sparks & Bottoms, 1995). While prison administration has the authority to physically control inmates’ actions and movement, few institutions operate in a continual state of lockdown where prisoners are confined to their cells (Bosworth & Carrabine, 2001). Most prison life allows inmates to move, unshackled, around the institution: in the cafeteria, on the recreation yard, at work assignments, from one area of the facility to the other. Given the fact that correctional officers are greatly outnumbered by inmates, sustaining prison order requires some degree of cooperation from the inmate (Sykes, 1958). Debate about the centrality of this cooperation to order and how to obtain cooperation – through carrot or stick – is ongoing (DiIulio, 1990).

A key concept that is linked to these discussions of order is the legitimacy of power. Research has found that individuals are more likely to follow the rules and policies of an institution or individual if the power-bearer’s acquisition and utilization of authority is perceived as legitimate (Tyler, 2006). Therefore, many scholars believe the construction of correctional systems as legitimate sources of power, in the minds of both inmates and the general public, is critical to achieving prison order (Bosworth, 2010). Food has been identified as one of the

many tools that can impact institutional legitimacy. In their renowned article about prison legitimacy and order, Sparks and Bottoms (1995) wrote (*emphasis added*): “Every instance of brutality in prison, every casual racist joke and demeaning remark, every ignored petition, every unwarranted bureaucratic delay, *every inedible meal*...every petty miscarriage of justice, every futile and inactive period of time is delegitimizing” (p. 60).

Issues of order and legitimacy have primarily been explored within the context of male incarceration, because men are perceived to be more volatile and dangerous (Craig, 2004). Indeed, riots and incidents of inmate-on-inmate and inmate-on-staff violence are more prevalent in men’s prisons. Research to measure and understand legitimacy in female prisons may seem less pressing because the threat of violence, should institutional order be disrupted, is minimal (Craig, 2004). However, recent work on this subject has suggested that understanding women’s (and men’s) perceptions of institutional legitimacy may be important for reasons beyond the question of prison order. Franke et al. (2010) have called for research to explore associations between perceived legitimacy and compliance with programs during and after incarceration: “We do not know whether the experience of being incarcerated influences perceptions of authority and whether these attitudes extend beyond the prison staff and regime to reflect the entire justice system” (Franke, Bierie, & MacKenzie, 2010, p. 90). At the very least, it seems logical that people who are treated poorly will have negative feelings about the perpetrator of that treatment (Liebling, 2004). How do perceptions of correctional power impact inmates’ willingness to engage with prison services? If an inmate believes that prison rules are arbitrary and meaningless, will that affect her relationship with community-based structures of power – including social service providers, police, courts – moving forward?

Prison foodways are shaped by prison rules regarding food and are, therefore, an excellent vehicle for understanding inmates' perceptions of institutional legitimacy. Do inmates believe that food rules should be followed? Why or why not? Does the institution display the key characteristics of legitimate power – “procedural fairness, consistent outcomes, official conduct, and regime standards” - in executing food policy (Carrabine, 2005, p. 903)?

Resistance. Another central theme in prison studies literature, one that is closely related to and interwoven with the themes of order and legitimacy, is resistance (DiIulio, 1990; Simon, 2000; Sykes, 1958). Prisoners across time and place have struggled to maintain a sense of personal autonomy and identity by resisting institutional control over their lives (Allspach, 2010; Ashkar & Kenny, 2008; Bosworth, 2000; Brockman, 1999; Crewe, 2011; Jiang & Fisher-Giorlando, 2002; Kenning et al., 2010). In the context of prison operations, the word resistance may evoke negative connotations; indeed, riots and other types of violence that undermine order have been constructed as forms of resistance (Bosworth, 2010). However, inmate resistance need not be dramatic or even disruptive. Prison studies, and prison foodways literature in particular, have described forms of prisoner resistance that are barely discernible to the authorities (Ferraro & Moe, 2003; Godderis, 2006; Rowe, 2011; Smith, 2002; Ugelvik, 2011). For example, Ugelvik (2011) described how non-Norwegians held in the Oslo prison used food spices and seasonings to transform Norwegian fare into dishes typical to their own cultures, resisting prison structures that rendered their identities invisible. Rowe (2011) reported that women in English prisons deliberately resisted gaining weight while incarcerated in an effort to refuse “bodily colonization by the institution” (p. 579). In their analysis of narratives from women who had been incarcerated at an Arizona jail, Ferraro and Moe (2003) constructed inmate self-help groups and diligent work as forms of resistance that allowed women greater control over their incarcerated

lives by avoiding interference from jail authorities. In short, prisoner resistance is not always violent or disorderly, in fact, benign forms of resistance may be beneficial to both institutional order and inmate mental health outcomes.

Desistance and identity. Desistance studies examine the socio-economic conditions, psychological factors, and therapeutic programs that may contribute to an individual's decision to stop committing crimes (Giordano, Cernkovick, & Rudolf, 2002; Laub & Sampson, 2001). Research has suggested that a wide range of variables are associated with desistance, including marital status, employment, community supervision programs, and age (e.g. Bersani, Laub, & Nieuwebeerta, 2009; Craig & Foster, 2013; Farrall, Sharpe, Hunter, & Calverley, 2011; Forrest & Hay, 2011; Healy, 2010, 2012) and that desistance patterns vary by gender (Bersani, et al., 2009; Brown & Ross, 2010; Giordano, et al., 2002; Herrschaft, Veysey, Tubman-Carbone, & Christian, 2009; Opsal, 2012; Rungay, 2004). Existing research has not found any positive association between prison and desistance (Burnett & Maruna, 2004). A comprehensive review of the desistance literature reported that “the great majority of studies point to a null or criminogenic effect of the prison experience on subsequent offending” (Nagin, Cullen, & Jonson, 2009, p. 178). At the same time, this review pointed out that “remarkably little is known about the effects of imprisonment on reoffending,” suggesting that there may be some impact that is as of yet unmeasured (Nagin, et al., 2009, p. 115).

There is growing discussion in this literature about the role of identity shifts in the desistance process. Giordano et al. (2002) proposed a theory of “cognitive transformation” that suggests lasting desistance requires a “fundamental shift in identity” in which a “replacement self” supplants the “marginal self” (p. 1001). Similarly, Maruna's (2001) longitudinal study of formerly incarcerated people found that ex-offenders' ability to construct positive narratives

about their past lives and their futures was critical to long-term desistance from crime. Finding a positive identity or narrative to latch onto can be tricky when socio-economic conditions make employment and other expressions of financial stability difficult to attain (Opsal, 2012).

Research with female offenders has found that the role of “mother” is an accessible positive role with which many women identify and suggests that programs that facilitate women’s ability to attach to this identity may promote desistance (Cobbina, 2010; Opsal, 2011; Visher & O’Connell, 2012). However, some critics have asserted that this research is “preoccupied” with the motherhood identity and advocate for exploration of other stable identities that women can use to differentiate themselves from their criminal selves (Rowe, 2011).

The impact of prison on the identity-desistance equation is a subject of considerable interest. Research has explored the process of prison adaptation and the long-term ramifications of prison life on inmate identities (Brooks & Johnson, 2010; Jiang & Winfree, 2006; Steiner & Wooldredge, 2009; Van Tongeren & Klebe, 2010). On the one hand, scholarship has generally described prison as having a detrimental effect on inmate identity, beginning with Clemmer’s (1940) work about the “prisonization” of incarcerated people and Goffman’s (1961) theory about the “mortification of self” that occurs when individuals enter into prison and all traces of their former selves are stripped away. The lack of autonomy in prison and strict rules erode adult identities while institutional practices (e.g. body searches, discipline) can be mechanisms of humiliation and degradation for incarcerated people (Annas, 2012; Rowe, 2011). On the other hand, researchers suggest that prison has the potential to rehabilitate and transform people’s lives, not just punish them, especially women for whom prison offers a space of relative safety and recovery (Harris, 2010; Rowe, 2011; Van Tongeren & Klebe, 2010; Visher & O’Connell, 2012). The questions that remain unanswered are if and how prison can be (re)configured into a

safe place for women to reconstruct their self-narratives and engage in a process of identity transformation that would facilitate desistence.

Race. Across time and place, minority populations have been disproportionately incarcerated as criminal justice systems, and corrections in particular, serve as mechanisms to enact social prejudice and contain poor and marginalized people (Foucault, 1975/1995; Perkinson, 2010). For example, in Canada, where Aboriginal people comprise 4% of the population, 20% of the male prisoners and 32% of the female prisoners are Aboriginal (Public Safety Canada, 2010). In the socio-economic and historical context of the United States, African-Americans experience the highest rates of disproportionate incarceration: African-Americans comprise 13% of the US population, yet 39% of male prisoners and 25% of female prisoners are Black (Carson & Sabol, 2012). Put another way, while 73% of the US population is White, only 32% of male prisoners and 49% of female prisoners are White. The extent to which this racial disparity and race in general are factored into prison studies research varies considerably. For example, Faris and Miller (2010) factored race into their research design, deliberately recruiting a racially diverse sample of incarcerated mothers for their study about perceptions of fairness and assigning a Black research assistant to conduct the focus group with Black mothers, but race was not a variable in their data analysis. In other studies, race is the central variable of interest. For example, one study tested the association between length of prison sentence and skin tone among African-American women in North Carolina, finding that Black women with lighter skin served less time (Viglione, Hannon, & DeFina, 2011). Analysis of race has become increasingly complicated as its inextricable ties to class and gender are recognized and prisons and prisoners are positioned at the intersection of multiple identities and oppressions (Davis, 2003).

Scholarship has suggested that race, and the intersectionality which includes race, functions within prisons at various levels of institutional and individual reflexivity (Martin, 2006). In some analyses, the prison institution and its agents (i.e. correctional officers and administrators) were described as deliberately racist, creating policy and programs for the express purpose of bolstering White privilege (i.e. Alexander, 2012; Oshinsky, 1996).

Alternatively, racism has also been constructed as a foundation upon which correctional systems are built, seeping into prison operations even without the actors' consent. For example, in her article about the common practice of shackling incarcerated women during labor and childbirth, Ocen (2012) accounted for "the persuasiveness of this practice" not by attributing these protocols to individual staff prejudices, but by connecting shackling to the US history of slavery: "When placed in this context [of racial subjugation], we can see the continuities between the degradation and devaluation of Black women during slavery, convict leasing, and chain gangs and the modern dehumanization of female prisoners through the use of shackles during childbirth" (pp. 1239, 1310). These varying levels of reflexivity are not mutually exclusive but instead suggest that there are multiple ways in which race and racism are simultaneously enacted.

In sum, prison studies provide a historic perspective on current prison policy and scholarship, develop prison management theory, and explore prisoner life issues that have been associated with improved community and individual outcomes both inside and outside of correctional institutions. While there is a strong tradition of qualitative research in this field, this type of work has become scarce in recent years; this study addressed this gap. This dissertation study was also designed to build knowledge specifically about female prisoners, a subset of the prison population that has been historically under-explored by prison studies. In general, prison studies literature has centered on male prisoners or described incarceration in gender-neutral

terms where the maleness of the prisoner is implicit. However, deliberate efforts to build knowledge about female prison life and prisoners have grown since the 1960s, and it is to this work that I now turn.

Women in Prison

Historically, research about women's prisons has been relatively scarce (Owen, 1998). However, in the last forty years, work in the field of prison studies by psychosocial and health researchers has begun to describe female correctional institutions and female prisoners, and unpack the various ways in which incarceration is gendered and may impact women's lives.

The female prison experience. Research has documented the daily routines, humiliations, and occasional joys, of female prison life in order to describe prison culture, prisoner cultures and the ways in which these "two cultures intertwine" (Thomas, 2003b, p. 7). These are qualitative studies that used interviews with incarcerated and formerly incarcerated women to report on a broad range of prison experiences and emotions (Allspach, 2010; Cobbina & Bender, 2012; Einat & Chen, 2012; Ferraro & Moe, 2003; Goldingay, 2012; Marzano, Hawton, Rivlin, & Fazel, 2011; Nelson, Woodhams, & Hatcher, 2010; Owen, 1998; Pollack, 2003; Sharkey, 2010; Watterson, 1996). Autobiographies provide very personal accounts of incarceration that highlight the paradoxes of an experience simultaneously filled with fear, loss, healing and friendship (Brooks & Johnson, 2010; George, 2010; Kerman, 2010; Willingham, 2011). Studies described the considerable stress that women experience when faced with the loss of control and disorientation of incarceration, especially during intake (Annas, 2012; Douglas et al., 2009; Fogel, 1993; Harris, 2010; Rowe, 2011). Over time, most women learn how to adjust and manage their new environment (Owen, 1998; Kerman, 2010). Research has also described the logistical and emotional barriers related to maintaining contact with family and

friends (Byrne, Goshin, & Blanchard-Lewis, 2012; Faris & Miller, 2010; Kruttschnitt, 2010; Mignon & Ransford, 2012) and fears about re-entry and relapse (Cobbina & Bender, 2012; Grella & Rodriguez, 2011; Herrschaft, Veysey, Tubman-Carbone, & Christian, 2009; Moran, 2012).

Relationships. The ways in which female inmates negotiate relationships with each other and prison staff has been a frequent topic of inquiry. Studies of inmate relationships have described the construction of kinship networks to provide family-like support and different types of consensual sexual relationships (Einat & Chen, 2012; Giallombardo, 1966; Greer, 2000; Koscheski & Hensley, 2001; Owen, 1998; Pardue, Arrigo, & Murphy, 2011; Propper, 1982). For example, Severance (2005) interviewed 40 incarcerated women in Ohio to explore the support functions and benefits of inmate relationships. Based on this data, she identified four different types of relationships (acquaintance, friend, family, and girlfriend) and explored the various types of support associated with each role. This analysis suggested that, just like on the outside, relationships inside prison may be supportive or abusive. These studies of prison relationships have also highlighted the importance of gaining respect from the community in order to avoid peer exploitation (Owen, 1998; Watterson, 1996; George, 2010). A recent study of prison-based HIV education programs suggested that formal projects like these offer an alternative to informal family-like networks by building inmate-inmate and inmate-staff collaboration and trust (Collica, 2010).

Violence. Studies about female prisons have also documented the prevalence of sexual and physical assault of female inmates by other inmates and correctional officers and have explored the conditions that perpetuate this abuse (Alarid, 2000; Blackburn, Mullings, & Marquart, 2008; Cain, 2008; Fleisher & Krienert, 2006; Nader & Pasdach, 2010; Rasche, 2003;

Walsh, Gonsalves, Scalora, King, & Hardyman, 2012; Wolff & Jing, 2011). Fogel (1993) found that over half of the 55 incarcerated women whom she surveyed reported stress, panic and fear, both for themselves and their family members (especially children), related to their imprisonment. Indeed, studies have demonstrated that interpersonal trauma is not only a history that is brought with women to prison but is produced by the correctional system itself (Blackburn et al., 2008; Kenning et al., 2010). Ironically, even with these high rates of trauma and abuse in/by prison, researchers have reported that the multiple vulnerabilities women face in the community may make the prison seem relatively safe for many female inmates (Nelson, et al., 2010; Van Tongeren & Klebe, 2010). Bradley and Davino (2002) found that over two-thirds of the female prisoners that they interviewed perceived the prison to be as safe as or safer than their home. Similarly, Ferraro and Moe's (2003) interviews with jailed women revealed that "incarceration provided a much needed break from their daily lives" (p. 91). This response may be more a reflection of the hostility of the outside world than the comforts of incarceration (Bosworth, 2010).

It is worth noting that few of these studies included information about prison foodways. As in the larger prison studies literature, the focus of this work has been primarily on the "public" and/or extra-ordinary (violent) events: the shock of entry, painful separation from family, physical and sexual abuse. However, some of the studies did mention food, or issues related to the cafeteria and commissary, in passing. Several articles and books described unhealthy and/or unappetizing food and weight gain among female inmates (Girshick, 1999; Talvi, 2007; Watterson, 1996). Fogel (1993) noted that the stress of incarceration was associated with weight gain in her study of 55 female inmates. Watterson (1996) enumerated the rules and dynamics of the dining hall in the maximum security facility that she studied and the systems

surrounding the delivery of food packages, but there was little analysis beyond simply recording these observations. Zaitzow (2004) listed food as one of the items used by correctional officers to control female prisoner behavior. Interestingly, the most detailed reflections of prison food were in the autobiographical works suggesting that it is a theme of interest to inmates, even though it has not caught the academic eye. For example, in her autobiography about her time in federal prison, Kerman (2010) recounted a confrontation with another prisoner at the salad bar that was a defining moment for her, simultaneously reflecting the ways in which incarceration had changed her and her commitment to preserving her own personal identity. She discussed cell cooking at length and pointed to her successful preparation of a commissary-based “cheesecake” as a feat that was key to gaining acceptance within the inmate population.

The female prisoner. Social science literature provides a detailed picture of the female prisoner with demographic, health and psychosocial information. This work is distinct from the sociological/structural focus of prison studies in that the unit of study is the *individual* prisoner, not the prison institution. While this research includes some information about the prisoners’ incarcerated lives and various prison-based interventions, it tends to center on socio-economic descriptors and conditions *prior to* and *after* incarceration, in order to explain criminal behavior and suggest interventions to foster rehabilitation.

Descriptive statistics. Demographic and psychosocial data about the United States’ federal, state and local prison and jail populations are collected and disseminated by the US Department of Justice’s Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). In 1994, BJS issued a special report about women in prison (Snell, 1994). The report summarized results from a 1991 survey of approximately 9% of the female prisoners in state facilities. Another report about women offenders, based on secondary data analysis, was released in 1999 (Greenfeld & Snell, 1999).

While the Bureau should be commended for issuing these comprehensive reports, the fact that there have only been two BJS reports specifically about female prisoners in the last 20 years lends credibility to the assertion that female inmates are the “forgotten offenders” (Zaitzow, 2004, p. 34). For the most part, women are relegated to a summary paragraph or a couple of columns in a statistical chart in BJS reports about men (Carson & Sabol, 2012; Kyckelhahn, 2012).

The 1994 BJS report. The 1994 study described female prisoners as primarily non-married women of color, between the ages of 25-44, who had less than a high school education and a history of substance abuse, who were convicted of a non-violent offense. Violent female offenders were a minority (32.2%); most women were incarcerated for non-violent crimes including drug offenses (32.8%), property offenses (28.7%), or public order offenses, like sex work (5.7%, Snell, 1994, p. 3). While female and male prisoners reported similar histories of drug use, family structures, and family histories of incarceration and substance abuse, women were much more likely to report prior physical or sexual abuse. Among female prisoners, 43.2% reported histories of abuse, compared to only 12.2% of male prisoners (Snell, 1994, p. 5). Women were also more likely than men to report living with their young children prior to incarceration (71.7% vs. 52.9%) and report more contact with these children while incarcerated (Snell, 1994, pp. 6, 7). This study reported higher rates of HIV among female prisoners (3.3%) than male prisoners (2.1%; p. 9).

Other BJS reports. The 1999 report offered similar statistics about race, age, marital status, education, parenting, economic circumstances, and health (Greenfeld & Snell, 1999). The report also included detail about violent female offenders and information from a 1997 recidivism study. This study found that 33% of women who were discharged from prison were

re-incarcerated within 3 years and that prior arrest history was a strong predictor of recidivism. The most recent BJS report about state and federal prisoners that included, but was not limited to, female offenders, reported the 2011 rate of female incarceration as 65 per 100,000 US women (Carson & Sabol, 2012). While much lower than the male rate of incarceration (932 prisoners per 100,000 men), the rate was just below the historic high of 69 per 100,000 women in 2007 and 2008, and reflected a growth since 2000 when the rate was 59 female prisoners per 100,000 women (Carson & Sabol, 2012). When compared to Whites, Black and Hispanic women were incarcerated at disproportionate rates: 51, 129 and 71 per 100,000 respectively (Carson & Sabol, 2012).

Other quantitative data. In addition to these government reports, there is a large body of quantitative academic research that has documented the needs of the female prison population and reported findings on efforts to develop and test interventions to address these problems.

Access to health care. In the United States, prisoners are the only population with a constitutionally guaranteed right to medical care, although research has identified systemic problems that may produce gaps in the provision of these services (Eliason, Taylor, & Williams, 2004; Nader & Pasdach, 2010; Williams, 2007; Wilper et al., 2009). While access to health care can be problematic for male prisoners as well, researchers have found that issues of medical access are particularly acute for female prisoners because correctional systems have fewer facilities for women, generating an economy of scale that produces fewer resources than those available for men (Braithwaite, Treadwell, & Arriola, 2005; Eliason et al., 2004; van den Bergh et al., 2009). In spite of these issues, correctional healthcare offers an opportunity for women who are unable to access medical care in the community, for reasons ranging from lack of medical insurance to homelessness, to improve their health. In order to try to sustain these gains

and ease the transition back into the community, attention has been given to re-entry interventions that try to connect women with health care and prevention services upon release (Blitz, Wolff, Pan, & Pogorzelski, 2005; Davis et al., 2009; Freudenberg, Daniels, Crum, Perkins, & Richie, 2005; Freudenberg, Moseley, Labriola, Daniels, & Murrill, 2007; Freudenberg, Wilets, Greene, & Richie, 1998; McLean, Robarge, & Sherman, 2006; O'Brien, 2001; O'Brien & Leem, 2007; Richie, 2001; Richie, Freudenberg, & Page, 2001; Sheu et al., 2002).

Physical health care. Substance abuse, HIV, and sexual and reproductive health have been identified as key health issues for incarcerated women (Nijhawan, Salloway, Nunn, Poshkus, & Clarke, 2010; Springer, 2010; van de Bergh, Gatherer, & Moller, 2009). Given the high rates of substance use among female prisoners, and the strong association between this behavior and criminal activity, it is not surprising that there has been significant research about addiction treatment for inmates (Alleyne, 2007; Grella & Greenwell, 2006, 2007; Hall, Prendergast, Wellisch, Patten, & Cao, 2004; Mosher & Phillips, 2006; Peugh & Belenko, 1999; Welle, Falkin, & Jainchill, 1998; Williams, 2007). Similarly, considerable research about HIV care and prevention has been conducted in response to the disproportionately high rates of HIV among female prisoners (Farley et al., 2000; Freudenberg, 2001, 2002; Maruschak, 2008; McClelland, Teplin, Abram, & Jacobs, 2002; Mullings, Marquart, & Hartley, 2003; Staton-Tindall et al., 2011; Staton-Tindall et al., 2007; Wingood, 2003). Research about obstetrical care has built knowledge about how to manage prison pregnancies (Bell et al., 2004; Egley, Miller, Granados, & Ingram-Fogel, 1992; Ferszt, 2011; Hollander, 2005; Knight & Plugge, 2005; Marshall, 2010; Schroeder & Bell, 2005; Siefert & Pimlott, 2001).

Mental health care. The literature about women in prison has also evaluated interventions to improve psychosocial and mental health outcomes. Programs have been developed and tested to treat psychological disorders and stressors with a range of services from talk therapy to dance (Berson, 2008; DeHart, 2010; Ferszt, Salgado, DeFedele, & Leveillee, 2009; Johnson & Zlotnick, 2012; Mahoney & Daniel, 2006; Silber, 2005). Addressing women's histories of trauma and grief have been a common focus of this work (Ferszt, Salgado, DeFedele, & Leveillee, 2009; Gunter, Chibnall, Antoniak, McCormick, & Black, 2012; Heath, Lynch, Fritch, McArthur, & Smith, 2011; Lynch, Heath, Mathews, & Cepeda, 2012). Research has suggested that successful mental health care and rehabilitation are associated with maintaining connections with community and family, especially children, during incarceration and at release (Bloom, 2003b; Fogel, 1993; Lund, Hyde, Kempson & Clarke, 2002; O'Brien, 2001). In particular, there has been a focus on incarcerated mothers, the impact of prison separation on inmates and their children, and how to minimize these harms (Arditti & Few, 2008; Craig, 2009; Greenberg, 2007; Loper & Tuerk, 2011; O'Brien, 2009; Sharp & Eriksen, 2003; Stringer, 2009; Surratt, 2003). Research has constructed risk assessment tools and case management models designed specifically for women (Bloom, 2003b; Gehring & Bauman, 2008; O'Brien & Young, 2006; Orbis Partners, 2006).

Gender-responsive interventions. Interventions research has suggested that assessment tools and service systems should be designed to respond to the unique life experiences and interpersonal communication styles of female offenders. In other words, male and female offenders require different types of interventions and providing services to women that were originally designed for men places women at a disadvantage: Programs should be *equivalent* but not the *same* (Bloom, 2003a, p. xx). Covington and Bloom have documented the prevalence of

traumatic experiences and interpersonal violence in the lives of female offenders and called for “gender-responsive” strategies and treatment that take these histories into consideration (Bloom, 2003a, 2003b; Bloom, Owen, & Covington, 2004; Covington, 2007; Covington & Bloom, 2003, 2007). At the same time, prison programming for female inmates has been criticized for reinforcing gender stereotypes by fostering dependency and re-enforcing socially acceptable domestic roles of women as caregivers and mothers instead of building skills and providing education to promote independence and wage-employment upon release (Cain, 2008; Leeder, 2007; Mageehon, 2008; Pollack, 2009; Zaitzow, 2004). The goal to move beyond parity (i.e. sameness) and create equality (i.e. equivalence) between programming for male and female prisoners that is gender-responsive, without fueling stereotypes that perpetuate inequities, remains elusive (Bloom, 2003a; Hannah-Moffat, 2006; Thomas, 2003b).

Qualitative data. Qualitative research about female prisoners has provided further detail about this population’s psychosocial profile and the various paths which lead to incarceration (Chesney-Lind & Pasko, 2004). A classic example of this type of work is *Women in Prison: Inside the Concrete Womb*, first published in 1973 and now in its second edition (Watterson, 1996). This book offered a strong critique of the US prison system by relating the unforgiving circumstances of the prisoners’ lives prior to incarceration and describing the failure of the prison system to address women’s needs. More recently, in her book *Inner Lives*, Johnson (2003) presented 23 narratives collected from incarcerated African-American women. These life histories focused on the participants’ early life experiences and events that surrounded the crimes that led to their prison sentence. Similarly, *No Safe Haven* (Girshick, 1999) related life histories from 40 incarcerated women and called for policy changes to reduce the incarceration of non-violent female offenders. Pollack (2003) highlighted the role of perceived racism in the life

histories of Black Canadian female prisoners. In this type of research, the humanity of the female prisoners and the complex circumstances that have shaped their lives are articulated. The BJS statistics come to life in these narratives that relay horrific stories of childhood and adult abuse, lack of professional and educational opportunity, persistent poverty and loss.

Gaps in knowledge and critique. The amount of knowledge that has been generated about female prisons and prisoners since the 1960s is remarkable. This literature has brought much-needed attention to the growing phenomenon of female incarceration and its impact on these prisoners and their families and communities, has described the population's needs and interventions to address these problems, and documented the ways in which female prisoners and prison life are similar and different from their male counterparts. Unfortunately, in an effort to underscore the urgent needs of female prisoners, this work may have inadvertently fueled popular images, perpetuated by the media and political establishment, of prison and prisoners as deviant vectors of disease and danger (Welch, 2004). Knowledge about every day, mundane prison life is lacking. This information about quotidian activities is critical to understanding the human experience of incarceration. In addition, while this review highlights many excellent qualitative studies, overall there are many more quantitative studies and statistics about this population than nuanced discussions about their lived experience of incarceration.

Construction of the Other. Much of the existing research about women in prison has described female prisoners' characteristics, with a focus on health and psychosocial needs, and incarceration trends, in order to explore what can be done both during incarceration and upon reentry to reduce the likelihood of future criminal behavior. This work has focused on the individual, her problems, and what interventions might resolve them. This focus on inmate personal deficits and prison abuses may allow the general public to distance themselves from

prisoners and the prison experience (Carlen, 1994). The literature paints a picture of a damaged group: abused, addicted, uneducated, suffering from poor health and mental illness. In this way, even though many authors concluded that incarceration is not an appropriate response to this population's needs, the literature has perpetuated the notion of the prisoner as *Other* that is needed to justify her incarceration and continued surveillance by social service and criminal justice systems (Godderis, 2006a). As Bosworth (2010) described, the status quo suggests that "Those in prison are fundamentally "unknowable" to and different from, society. Locked away and invisible, they remain shadowy figures in a debate about belonging and about good and evil that they can never win" (p. 154).

Similarly, for the most part, the female prison environment has been described as callous, violent and lonely. Accounts of institutionally condoned rape and strip searches have documented the need for reform but also have contributed to the characterization of female prisoners and prisons as abnormal. Prison life is presented as consistent with the harsh life experiences of this population and, from that, not entirely inappropriate. Indeed, researchers have reported that some inmates recognize prison as an improvement over their community life. By emphasizing the gross abuses in the female prisoners' lives, before and during incarceration, the female prisoner has been distanced from the reader and her potential for rehabilitation may be underestimated.

Understanding quotidian activities. Without glossing over female prisoners' problems or ignoring the abuses that take place in prison, there is a need to build knowledge about the daily aspects of incarcerated life in order to resist "exoticizing" female prisoners and prisons and expand understanding of their humanity. There is no denying that prison life includes violence

and sorrow, but it primarily consists of the routine tasks of everyday life: eating, cleaning, watching TV, and waiting.

Knowledge about these aspects of prison life is important for three reasons. One, it is in understanding these typical realms that the *Other* is deconstructed and the “master status” of prisoner can be challenged (Maidment, 2007, p. 36). To the extent that these activities are “normal,” building knowledge about routine experiences offers the opportunity to alter stereotypes about female prisoners and incarceration, build empathy, and expand appreciation of the potential to make meaningful change in both the lives of the prisoners and prison life. This information may offer ideas about how correctional systems can expand opportunities for normalcy that alter both the social understanding of female prisoners and, perhaps even more importantly, the prisoners’ own sense of self, in order to increase the possibility of successful re-integration after incarceration (Maruna, 2001). Two, learning about the extent to which these quotidian activities are shaped and distorted by the prison environment offers an opportunity to re-examine the purpose and function of incarceration in the US. Do correctional systems prevent inmates from enacting the daily activities associated with human experience (i.e. eating, cooking, socializing)? If so, is it in society’s interest to re-enforce or deconstruct these barriers (Liebling, 2004)? Three, as the subsequent review of food and foodways theory will detail, analysis of routine activity offers the opportunity to lift the veil of invisibility off prisoners and prison life. By understanding how people live on a day-to-day basis, their culture, values and identity are revealed. It is through these micro-activities that people, on the inside and the outside, make meaning of their lives and do their time (Counihan, 1999; Counihan, & Van Esterik, 2008a; Earle & Phillips, 2012).

Qualitative data about the prison experience. Another gap in the literature that this project sought to address is the underutilization of qualitative data, specifically female prisoners' own voices and expertise, to build knowledge about the prison experience. While the pioneering studies in prison life were all qualitative, prison research has become increasingly quantitative over the last 40 years (Simon, 2010). Failure to more fully include the voices of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people in academic discourse about prison limits our capacity to understand this phenomenon:

Scholars tend to view prisons and prisoners' culture and experiences within it from the perceptions and perspectives of others...Talk to prisoners!...Giving prisoners the opportunity to tell their stories...allows the researcher to generate dialogues and engage in critique not only of the narratives, but also of the broader gender and other ideological frames – including our own - in which they are embedded. (Thomas, 2003a, pp. 210-211)

The systematic data collection and analysis used in this project has produced robust qualitative findings about prison life that can be used by policymakers, program managers and social service providers who seek to understand and help this population (Tolman, Hirschman, & Impett, 2005). Specifically, this project collected data about the daily prison activities and interactions related to food. Foodways is a well-established framework for understanding the human experience, as the following review of foodways literature will describe.

Food & Foodways

My utilization of narratives about prison food and eating to build knowledge about the incarceration experience reflects anthropological and sociological theories of food and foodways that suggest, “[t]he social and cultural uses of food provide much insight into the human condition...Food is a particularly important concern and symbol for females in all

cultures...Rules about food consumption are an important means through which human beings construct reality” (Counihan, 1999, pp. 24, 96, 113).

Foodways theory. The analysis of food and foodways as a framework for understanding culture was first articulated in academic writings by anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss (Wood, 1995). His writings about the “culinary triangle” suggested that the transformation of plants and animals from their raw state to cooked food, interrupting their natural progression to rotten remains, was a reflection of the culture in which this change took place (Levi-Strauss, 1966/2008). Levi-Strauss argued that the cooking experience was universal, suggesting that “if there is no society without a language, nor is there any which does not cook in some manner at least, some of its food” (Levi-Strauss, 1966/2008, p. 36). In the 40 years since he sparked this conversation, many anthropologists and sociologists have expanded, revised and critiqued his theory. These iterations can be loosely categorized into two camps that need not be mutually exclusive: Structuralists (like Levi-Strauss), who believe food is a mechanism by which social meaning and culture is constructed; and materialists, who are interested in how food practices and preferences develop over time in response to biological, psychological, environmental, technical, political and/or economic factors (Counihan & Van Esterik, 2008a; Wood, 1995). Food and foodways theory has been combined with other social science theory (e.g. Marxism, feminism), to create sub-theories that use food practices to understand specific aspects of the human experience, for example, cultural communication (Barthes, 1975/2008), the development of capitalism (Mintz, 1979/2008) and the construction of social class (Wood, 1995) and gender (Counihan, 1999).

Culture and identity. The lens of food and foodways has been used to analyze a wide range of cultures around the world. In the introduction to the Second Edition of their anthology,

Food and Culture, first published in 1997, Counihan and Van Esterik (2008b) wrote, “Food touches everything and is the foundation of every economy, marking social differences, boundaries, bonds and contradictions – and endlessly evolving enactment of gender, family and community relationships” (p. 3). For example, in his article about the Inuit, Searles (2002) demonstrated how foodways, especially related to norms around food sharing, hospitality and the consumption of specific foods (i.e., ringed seal blood and walrus meat), were used to differentiate the Inuit culture from the non-Inuit world and create personal and collective identities. Similarly, Bower’s edited volume (2009) about African American foodways described the various ways that this minority group has used food to preserve links to African culture and recognize their history of enslavement and survival. Williams-Forson’s (2008) chapter about chicken in contemporary African-American culture attributed various meanings to this food, including its association with a history of resistance among enslaved Africans who pilfered their masters’ chickens to feed their own families. The author concluded, “This essay has attempted to illustrate the importance of moving beyond studying merely the foods of various cultures to include the behaviors, actions, contexts and histories that involve them...food is always about more than what it seems” (p. 351). The power of food to sustain and create history and culture was also described in Nielsen’s (2006) discussion of Italian pastries. She described the role of festival treats in sustaining religious beliefs, regional identities, and memories of scarcity and hunger.

Social space. Research about food and foodways has also been used to explicate the formation of personal identity in specific physical spaces and the creation of order and social meaning for these spaces (Counihan, 1999). Salazar (2007) analyzed Mexican-American adults’ childhood memories of eating in school cafeterias in the US in order “to explore how children’s

identity is negotiated in the particular socio-cultural dynamics of the school lunchroom” (p. 153). Acculturation was also the subject of Marte’s (2007) study that created “foodmaps” with Dominican women in New York City “to track the role of food in the way immigrants search for home in a new society” (p. 261). Valentine (2002) explored the distribution and consumption of food in contemporary English workplaces in order to understand how foodways construct workplace identity and, in another paper (1999), “focused on the home as a consumption site and eating as a process of consumption and identity formation” (p. 520).

Gendered foodways. Of particular relevance to this project were theories of gendered food and foodways that have been used to build understanding of women’s lives. Taken broadly, this literature suggests that the study of food and foodways is particularly useful in understanding the “enactment of gender” (Counihan, 1999, p. 106). While there has been research about the ways in which men have used food to create identity and make sense of their lives (Aarseth & Olsen, 2008; Deutsch, 2005; Julier & Lindenfeld, 2005; Mechling, 2005; Roos & Wandel, 2005; Sobal, 2005; Wilk & Hintlian, 2005), this gendered analysis is most frequently used to illuminate women’s lives because the management of the domestic sphere, including most of activities that relate to food, has traditionally been women’s work:

Food gives us far more than calories: It tells us who we are. The identification of self with food is especially well entrenched for women, whose traditional roles have required them to plan, shop for, prepare, serve and clean up after its consumption. Even for modern women, this connection remains strong. (Gantt, 2001, p. 63)

Recent research has discussed the ways in which food and foodways construct, reinforce and challenge images of femininity, including the role of women as caregivers, raise awareness of

self, others and relationships, and offer women an important source of power (Avakian & Haber, 2005a, 2005b; Counihan, 1999; Counihan & Van Esterik, 2008a).

Culture and identity. Gendered food and foodways theory has been primarily used to understand women's lived experience in two different ways. One, researchers have analyzed foodways in order to understand the formation of identity among specific female sub-populations. O'Sullivan, Hocking and Wright-St. Clair (2008), for example, analyzed stories from older Canadian women about preparing the Christmas meal to build knowledge about the personal, social, cultural, historical, and religious influences that give meaning to their lives. Harris-Shapiro (2006) recorded the "food voice" of Jewish women in the US, how they described traditional Jewish foodways, in order to understand, "the articulation and authentication of atypical Jewish identities" (p. 67). Similarly, Ehrhardt (2006) analyzed the queering of traditional foodways in Chicana lesbian literature to unpack the ways in which these writers create identity by challenging the hetero-normative assumptions of the larger Mexican-American culture. She called for further research about "deviant foodways" (p. 107). As these articles illustrated, foodways can both reproduce existing identities and challenge these social standards by assigning new meanings to the ways in which food is prepared, consumed and distributed.

Social space. The second way that gendered foodways have been used to understand women's lived experience is by building knowledge about women's lives in different historical moments and settings by describing their use of food. Goldstein's (2005) heartbreaking account of women's efforts to provide sustenance to their families during the Nazi siege of Leningrad (1941–1942) illustrated women's ingenuity and strength, documented the role of homemakers in the Russian resistance and offered, through these stories of desperate, creative cooking, an

allegory for wartime survival: “Above all, every product had to cease being itself” (p. 157). Engelhardt (2001) discussed the shifting meanings of women’s lives in the US Appalachian region at the turn of the 20th century by focusing on efforts by Progressive reformers to encourage local women to bake soda biscuits instead of cornbread: “A social history of class, race, and gender hides in the different recipes and uses of corn bread and biscuits” (p. 152). These two examples offer a taste of the type of analysis that has been done about a range of different foods (e.g. bananas, Jello-O) in order to understand different historic moments and women’s roles in those time periods (Inness, 2001).

Prison foodways. Research about food and foodways has also been used to build knowledge about prisoners and the experience of incarceration. This body of literature is small but diverse and can be loosely divided into two categories. One set of articles, which is found in a wide range of publications including peer-reviewed journals, the popular press, and professional newsletters, has addressed the subject of prison nutrition and food service management. The other category includes foodways analysis that uses food systems to explore prison relationships, identities, and culture.

Prison nutrition and food service. The literature about prison nutrition and food management has offered correctional staff guidance on how to comply with nutritional standards, dietary legal requirements and budgetary constraints and evaluates these services. Topics have included the nutritional content of prison diets (Edwards, Hartwell, Reeve, & Schafheitle, 2007; Foster, 2006; Herbert, Plugge, Foster, & Doll, 2012; Tammam, Gillam, Gesch, & Stein, 2012), accommodating medical and religious diets (Brisman, 2008; Wakeen, 2008a), security menus for prisoners who mishandle food or are in solitary confinement (Brisman, 2008; Waaken, 2003a), managing hunger strikes and force feeding (Blumenthal, 2006; Brisman, 2008; Brockman, 1999;

Kleinman, 1986; Larkin, 1991), decisions about privatization and outsourcing (Aramark, 2008; Cray, 2001; Stein, 2000), and interventions to improve prisoner diets (Boss, 2007; National Farmers Union, 2009; Northern Ireland Prison Service, 2005; Rierden, 1992). A few articles examined prison weight gain and tested interventions to help inmates lose weight (Eves & Gesch, 2003; Feinstein, Gomez, Gordon, Cruise, & DePrato, 2007; Fogel, 1993; Khavjou et al., 2007; Nikolas, 2000; Robinson et al., 2006; Shaw, Rutherford, & Kenny, 1985). The American Dietetic Association has published a manual, now in its third edition, that provides information about all aspects of operating prison food service, including legal regulations, dietary guidelines, and logistical issues (Wakeen, 2008b).

Foodways analysis. The other body of work, a literature that is more relevant to this project, is the handful of articles that have examined the symbolic meanings, identity and relationship formation, and dimensions of control and discipline related to prison food and foodways.

Historical accounts of prison foodways in World War II concentration camps explored war-related incarceration, but the analyses and findings are also helpful in thinking about foodways in criminal justice institutions. Dusselier (2002) explored how foodways, specifically protests relating to food distribution and meal patterns, inform understanding of how relationships and culture were re-constructed in the US Japanese internment camps during World War II. She described how chaotic meal times (internees had to wait for hours in line to be served) and food shortages gave rise to resistance ranging from the planting of community gardens and publishing recipes in the camp newspaper, to hunger strikes and riots. These actions were critical to the internees' larger processes of survival and "making place" inside the camps (Dusselier, 2002). Similarly, analysis of food and foodways was included in memoirs and

research about prisoners' community-building and survival in Nazi concentration camps (Levi, 1986; Sindler, Wellman, & Stier, 2004). There, prisoners pooled rations in order to manage the scarcity of food and hoarding food – even it was just a small crust of bread – was considered critical to survival, because it offered prisoners some semblance of control over their lives (Levi, 1986).

In regards to contemporary correctional facilities, my review of the literature found eight articles about foodways in these institutions (Cate, 2008; Earle & Phillips, 2012; Godderis, 2006a, 2006b; Milligan, Waller, & Andrews, 2002; Smith, 2002; Ugelvik, 2011; Valentine & Longstaff, 1998). Valentine and Longstaff (1998) created a detailed account of food and foodways in a British male prison that housed about 1,100 inmates by observing the prison's kitchen, canteen, and cafeterias, conducting interviews and focus groups with prisoners and prison staff, and analyzing data from a survey about food that had been previously conducted by the prison administration. Data from food diaries kept by five inmates were also included in the study. The article offered detailed descriptions of the cafeteria service (including the cost of meals, timing, religious meals, and logistical problems with serving) and canteen offerings but focused primarily on the inmates' reactions to the food. The authors described several forms of prisoner food resistance, including illegal trading and hoarding of cafeteria and canteen foods, and incidences of food-related bullying and violence. The ways in which food was used by both correctional officers and inmates to negotiate power was explicated. The authors concluded that food was a critical dimension of prison life because it was used to construct social relationships and “produce complex webs of power” among inmates and called for more research about prison foodways in order to understand prison life and help prison officers “manage effectively” (p. 149).

A decade later, Earle and Phillips (2012) conducted a similar study in a medium-security men's prison near London. In this study, however, the focus was on the 'self-cook' areas of the housing units, not the cafeteria and the canteen. The 'self-cook' area was a fully-equipped kitchen with gas rings, ovens, countertops, sinks and an array of cooking gear, including knives where prisoners prepared food (e.g. eggs, meats, oils, vegetables and spices) purchased at the prison store. The researchers spent "as much time as we could" in the prison during an eight month period, recording observations, keeping reflective diaries and conducting semi-structured interviews with 50 prisoners (p. 145). They described the prisoners' management of this space and ways in which conflict around cooking schedules and protocols were negotiated. The space was constructed as a contact zone where the diversity of ethnicities and cultures represented in the prison's population intersected, destabilizing White privilege and forcing a "proximity with racialized 'others'" (p. 149). The authors also explored the gender ambiguity of this space in order to challenge the "toxic myth" of prisoners as hyper-masculine "inherently predatory men" (p. 151). It was this multiplicity of identities that the authors highlighted, describing their ethnography as an effort to "inform us about how, and who, men are in prison...taking them beyond the dehumanized two-dimensional shadows and bogey man caricatures that prevail, respectively, in criminological theory and popular culture" (pp. 152-153).

While these studies of male prisoners in Britain were designed with the express purpose of examining prison foodways, Smith (2002) drew her foodways data from a larger study about women, health and imprisonment that was conducted between 1993 and 1995 in three female correctional facilities in England. In total, 89 women participated in focus groups (n=39) and semi-structured interviews (n=50). The data collection instruments asked women to offer definitions of health and describe what it means to be healthy. Questions did not explicitly ask

about food and foodways, but many of the women's responses about health included discussions about these issues. Her findings challenged the government's prison health promotion agenda by suggesting that un-nutritious prison eating patterns might actually be emotionally and politically "healthy" choices for women inmates:

When people are living in an environment in which everything seems out of their control, where the expression of emotions such as anger and frustration carry their own penalties, certain behaviours, including those often considered 'risky' or 'unhealthy', can be understood as constituting a rational means of release, a way of coping and of holding on to a sense of self. The pleasures and consolations of such behaviors lead to definitions of 'what it is to be healthy' that challenge the dominant meanings constructed in health promotional discourse. (Smith, 2002, p. 210)

Similarly, Milligan, Waller and Andrews' (2002) quantitative study of eating behavior and anger among a sample of 91 female prisoners in England found that eating disorders were two times higher than the prevalence among non-incarcerated female samples in the UK, and that disordered eating was associated with anger. The authors concluded that "although damaging to the individual in the long run, behaviors such as bingeing and purging serve the more immediate function of regulating and coping with intolerable emotional states" (p. 124).

Godderis (2006a, 2006b) wrote two articles about prison foodways based on semi-structured interviews with 16 male inmates in British Columbia, Canada. In one analysis, she referenced Foucault and Goffman's theories about the role of the correctional institution as a tool of power, control and discipline in modern society to suggest that "the loss of control over the [food] consumptive process is a key aspect of transforming individuals into inmates by creating a sense of estrangement between one's self and one's body" (Godderis, 2006b, p. 62). Her other

article focused on “food-based resistance ... [in order to provide] insight into how prisoners use consumptive spaces to negotiate and contest the power inequalities” (Godderis, 2006a, p. 255). She argued that by uncovering variation in individual enactments of food resistance, her findings shed light on the personal identities of inmates depicting them not as “monstrous others but people with personal histories” (p. 257). She also expanded upon criminological theory about the ways in which prison culture is created and sustained by asserting prisoner foodways demonstrate “the role and influence of the prisoner on the dynamics and operation of penal institutions” (p. 256).

Ugelvik (2011) also explored ideas of resistance and identity construction in his study of foodways at the Oslo prison in Norway. Within this facility, he focused on the food behaviors in the wing of the prison that held 50 remand prisoners (either awaiting trial or recently convicted and awaiting transfer to a long-term prison). All of the men he interviewed and observed “were either born outside Norway, or had parents who were...visible outsiders” (p. 58). Meals in this prison were prepared at a local hospital and delivered to inmates in their cells. The prisoners could also purchase additional food from the prison store. His findings illustrated how the prisoners used illicit and semi-illicit cell cooking to modify and transform “the official food into something more edible by making it taste like part of a more familiar cuisine” (p. 51). Using spices and vegetables, heat from a single light bulb, and homemade water heaters and stoves, the men privately resisted the prison system and the larger Norwegian culture that confined them. Ugelvik theorized that prisoners found the official food to be emasculating and child-like and used cooking practices to re-assert control over their bodies. In resisting the official food, prisoners also “positioned themselves as smart prisoners,” constructing a dignified identity and

sense of self that became a performance of “courage and resourcefulness...in a very limiting and narrow environment” (pp. 56, 55).

In the only foodways analysis that described prison food in the US, Cate (2008) used interview data and photographs to analyze foodways relating to “spreads” in a San Francisco County men’s jail. Spread is a “generic term for...the inmate-created foods most often built around a single ingredient, instant ramen noodles” (Cate, 2008, p. 17). The article included long quotes from the male inmates that detailed spread recipes, including ingredients and step-by-step directions. She analyzed that ways in which racial identity was used to construct recipes and cooking groups and explored inmate social and economic decision-making about sharing spreads. Cate argued that “the value and significance of spread to inmates can be understood only within the larger contexts of confinement and the institutional diet” and laid out the ways in which spread was used by the inmates to manage hunger and resist institutional control (p. 20). The article appeared in *Gastronomica*, a relatively new journal that offers an “eclectic mix of articles” that explores food and foodways “through scholarship, humor, fiction, poetry, and exciting visual imagery” (Goldstein, n.d., para. 1). Perhaps due to its location in this alternative journal, no information was included about research methods or design. The sample size was not specified; 14 men were quoted in the article.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not mention the extremely compelling autobiography of Jeff Henderson (2007), a celebrity chef who was introduced to this trade while incarcerated. The chapters in this book that described his time working as a cook in the prison kitchen during his ten year sentence offered detailed information about the systems that determine who gets what job in the kitchen, how tasks are delegated, how food is smuggled out by inmate staff and distributed to other inmates, the manner in which inmates cook and prepare food in their cells,

and the racial and power dynamics that hold all these foodways together. While not an academic piece of research, the memoirs were thoughtful and reflective, highlighting the power and utility of food in this environment. In a TV interview, Henderson asserted, “The kitchen in prison is the most important place. Food is the most important thing to a person serving time” (Smiley, 2008). His autobiography definitely makes this case.

All of these writings recognize that the phenomenon of prison food and foodways is a mechanism for understanding prisoners and correctional institutions that has not been adequately explored and call for further research on this topic. Indeed, the breadth and generalizability of these studies are limited. Setting aside the articles about prison nutrition and food service planning, in this review of the literature, I found only eight research articles that offered analysis of incarcerated food and foodways. The Valentine and Longstaff (1998) sample size was not articulated, but up to 1,100 people may have participated in this ethnography. The other seven articles reported on data from a total of approximately 300 people. This body of research was also geographically limited with one article from the US, one from Norway, two from Canada and four from England. Still, these articles have laid a foundation for future investigation by suggesting the ways in which food and foodways structure prison relationships (Earle & Phillips, 2012; Henderson, 2007; Cate, 2008; Valentine & Longstaff, 1998), construct identity (Earle & Phillips, 2012; Ugelvik, 2011), function as a mechanism for coping with prison stressors and offer insight into psychological health (Milligan et al., 2002; Smith, 2002) and are utilized by both the correctional institution and the inmates to exert power, control and resistance (Godderis, 2006a, 2006b; Cate, 2008; Henderson, 2007; Ugelvik, 2011). In these ways, the findings serve to build a beginning knowledge about the lived experience of incarceration by illustrating the variety of ways that food has been used to create prison and prisoner identities. This project

intended to expand this exploration by gathering data about incarcerated foodways in a US prison for women. As described earlier, discussion of food has appeared in research about female incarceration in the US, especially in autobiographical work. However, there has been no foodways analysis, per se, conducted within this population.

Summary and Conclusions

In this review of the literature, I have identified a need for qualitative research about women's lived experience of incarceration. Much of what is known about life in US prisons is based on research with men, who comprise over 90% of the confined population. Studies about women in prison have demonstrated that prison is a gendered institution and experience. This research has tended to focus on the prisoner: her life history, prior to incarceration, and her needs at re-entry, after incarceration. Less is known about the actual prison experience, the meanings that women ascribe to confinement and its impact on women's identities. Research on this subject has grown in the last twenty years, but knowledge about the phenomenon is by no means complete. Existing work relies heavily on researchers' observations; the voice of the female prisoner has not been fully engaged.

The foodways literature has demonstrated how analysis of beliefs and behaviors surrounding the preparation, distribution and consumption of food can build knowledge about culture, social spaces, relationships, including dynamics of power and control, and identity. Further, gendered foodways theory asserts that information about food and foodways is particularly useful in understanding women's lives because women's identities have been socially constructed around these processes. While food and foodways theories have been used to explicate the human experience around the globe and across history, they have not been applied to the contemporary culture of US female incarceration. The limited research that does

exist about prison foodways has demonstrated that collecting narratives about incarcerated food and foodways is a feasible and productive way to build knowledge about prisoners and prisons.

What follows are the design and methods I used to gather foodways data from formerly incarcerated US women in order to address these gaps in knowledge.

Chapter 2: Research Design and Methods

The purpose of this project was to build knowledge about women's experience of incarceration in the US by analyzing their narratives about food and eating in prison. The questions guiding this study were: What are the foodways inside a women's prison and what can be learned from these foodways about prison, incarcerated people, and the experience of incarceration? To answer these questions, I recruited and interviewed a convenience sample of formerly incarcerated women to explore how prison foodways shaped and reflected their experiences of incarceration. In designing this research project, I sought to maximize the possibility that the data, analyses and findings would reflect the interactions and narratives that I co-created with the participants (Luttrell, 2000; Riessman & Quinney, 2005). In this chapter, I provide a detailed description of these methodological choices, in order to provide sufficient transparency about my decisions and to establish the trustworthiness of these data and my interpretations (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Kirk & Miller, 1986; Patton, 2002).

Qualitative Methodology

My decision to use semi-structured interviews to construct the study data reflected both the purpose of this study and my epistemological commitments.

Study purpose. The purpose of the inquiry was to build knowledge about the lived experiences of female incarceration in the US. Specifically, I collected narratives about women's experiences with prison food in order to build understanding of inmate culture, identities, and relationships among prisoners and between prisoners and staff, with a focus on the dynamics of power and control. This analysis used anthropological and sociological foodways theory, which posits that food practices reflect and construct culture, identity and social relationships (Counihan, 1999; Wood, 1995, see Chapter 1). This type of naturalistic, holistic study, undertaken to learn about and analyze women's prison experiences, is well-suited for

qualitative methods (Janesick, 1994; Patton, 2002). My goal was to gather detailed information and reactions; all participant recollections about food practices were useful (Bogdan & Biklen, 1983). My questions were broad and open-ended, consciously not focused on a specific variable or causal relationship, all hallmarks of qualitative methods (Patton, 2002).

Epistemology and ontology. The qualitative design of this study allowed me to co-construct knowledge with the participants by posing and answering questions about their idiographic, lived experiences (Patton, 2002). Using open-ended questions about prison food, I invited women to create answers with their own vocabulary, from their own memory. Using a standpoint epistemological framework, the knowledge of these marginalized women, gained through their lived experience, is the “place to begin inquiry:”

Standpoint means beginning in the actualities of people’s lives as they experience them
 ...It proposes to create a knowledge of the social grounded in people’s experience of their
 own lives. It does not treat experience as knowledge, but as a place to begin inquiry.
 (Smith, 1996, p. 172)

There were no fixed responses to constrain the participant’s expression and no “right” answers. Indeed, qualitative methodologies embrace the multiplicity of human experience: “complex, individualized, various” (Smith, 1992, p. 89). For example, one inmate described feeling anxious while eating in a crowded cafeteria, while another inmate found the environment hospitable. Was the cafeteria hostile or welcoming? Qualitative inquiry looks beyond, even incorporates, seemingly contradictory data about reality to identify both shared and idiosyncratic experiences. The cafeteria was loud, chaotic, hospitable and social: People experienced this environment differently. The ontological premise of this type of qualitative inquiry is that there is no single reality; we can “never fully know” what reality is (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 111).

Target Population & Recruitment

For this project, I recruited a convenience sample of 30 adult women who had been previously incarcerated in Connecticut (CT)'s York Correctional Institution (YCI). While the need to hear and record prisoners' voices is particularly acute (Thomas, 2003a), I decided to interview formerly incarcerated women for the variety of logistical and validity factors that are generally recognized as barriers to prison research (Schlosser, 2008). It would be difficult and time-consuming for me to gain access to prison inmates at YCI. In addition, incarcerated participants may have concerns about confidentiality that inhibit their responses, and active immersion in the state of incarceration may make it difficult to reflect on the experience. Talking to women after their release from prison allowed a proximity to the community that facilitated my access to participants and a time and distance from the institution that facilitated their ability to reflect upon and openly discuss their lives there.

York Correctional Institution (YCI). YCI is CT's only correctional facility for women. All state and local female prisoners, whether they are pre-trial jail inmates or sentenced prisoners, are housed in YCI. This correctional facility was chosen because I live and work in New Haven, CT, and planned to conduct interviews in this city. From this vantage point, it made sense to focus on YCI, the institution where most formerly incarcerated women in New Haven have served their sentences. Restricting eligibility to women who had been imprisoned at a single institution also allowed me to concentrate my limited resources on developing knowledge about a single space and comparing experiences therein, rather than spreading myself thin across institutions. Finally, it is my intention to share these findings with the social work and criminal justice community in CT and data from CT women about their in-state experiences are most relevant to this group.

Evergreen. All of the participants were recruited from Evergreen, a non-profit organization in the West River neighborhood of New Haven, CT.

Description of Evergreen organization and services. Evergreen provides temporary housing and case-management services to women and men being released from prisons and residential drug treatment programs in CT. Depending on the availability of funds and the prisoner's re-entry needs assessment, the CT Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS) may pay for an ex-prisoner to stay at Evergreen for two months after release. When the DMHAS subsidy ends, residents can choose to continue to live in the facility, paying their own rent with personal income. All residents live in the housing program voluntarily and can leave at any time. Evergreen operates one apartment building for women and two apartment buildings for men. Each resident is assigned to a bed in a shared room and has access to common areas, including bathroom, living room and kitchen. Case management services are provided by staff and residents are required to attend a weekly residents' meeting which serves informational, administrative and counseling purposes.

Evergreen as the study's recruitment site. My relationship with Evergreen began in 2005 when I joined a task force of elected officials, State of CT employees, academic researchers, non-profit managers and community activists who were interested in improving systems of care for people being released to New Haven from prison. One of the members of this group was Pam Allen, the Founder and Executive Director of Evergreen. Over the years, Ms. Allen and I worked together on this task force and I spent time at Evergreen as a volunteer. Given the population that Evergreen serves and my strong professional relationship with both the organization and its Executive Director, it made sense to base this project's recruitment efforts at Evergreen. Nearly all of the women receiving services at Evergreen have been incarcerated.

Ms. Allen and I share a mutual trust and she welcomed the opportunity for program clients to participate in research. The clients with whom I spoke during the course of my volunteer work also expressed interest in the project. Many of the program participants, especially those who had recently been released from prison, were waiting to begin substance abuse treatment programs and/or had not yet found employment and were looking for constructive ways to pass the time and make money. The availability of a private office in the main building offered an interview space that was safe and convenient for both me and the study participants.

Representativeness of Evergreen clientele. Women at Evergreen may not be representative of the population of women in CT who have been recently released from prison. Evergreen is a program for people in recovery from either substance abuse or mental illness and not all formerly incarcerated women have addiction or mental health issues. However, many incarcerated and formerly incarcerated women do struggle with these conditions. A 2010 analysis of national US prison data reported that among incarcerated women 66% had a substance abuse or dependence disorder and 55% had a diagnosed mental illness (CASA, 2010). Similarly, a 2008 report about CT prisoners (not disaggregated by gender) indicated that 67% had serious addiction problems and 47% were classified at intake as having a minimal to severe mental health impairment (Immarigeon & Greene, 2008). (Note: This data in both the CASA and CT reports about addiction and mental illness were collected separately and the two diagnoses are not mutually exclusive). There are several supportive housing programs like Evergreen in New Haven and individuals are assigned at random based on availability of space. Evergreen does not cater to any particular ethnic, racial or religious group. Conversation with Ms. Allen and my own informal discussion with Evergreen residents suggest that people come to the program for many different reasons. For some, their ability to access Evergreen's services

may reflect a higher than average level of functioning and ability to advocate for themselves. Others may be referred to Evergreen by prison re-entry coordinators because they have been identified as low functioning and in need for a structured service environment. Women may choose Evergreen's group housing setting because they have social personalities and do not want to live alone, or, alternatively, because they are anti-social people with no family or friends to house them. In short, Evergreen is a diverse community that may not reflect the larger ex-prisoner population but is not necessarily distinct.

Human subjects protections. This project was first rolled out as a pilot, with 6 participants, in Spring 2009. The protocol was finalized in Spring 2011 and the remaining 24 interviews were conducted during the Summer and Fall of 2011. The protocol for the pilot was reviewed and approved by the Hunter College Institutional Review Board in Spring 2009. Subsequently, the protocol for the full project was approved in March 2011 and renewed in March 2012. In accordance with the approved protocol, all respondents were informed, verbally and through a written consent process, that their participation was voluntary and that their responses, with the exception of information relating to the abuse of a child or elderly person, would remain completely confidential (see Appendix C: Informed Consent Form). It was made especially clear that their access to Evergreen's services would not be affected by their decision to participate or not. Women who volunteered for the study were not provided with any program advantages, nor were women who declined to participate denied access to services. All subjects were compensated \$30 for their time and to cover their transportation and other costs associated with participation. In addition, each participant was offered two brochures that are distributed by the City of New Haven: The "New Haven Re-Entry Resources" book that describes programs for

formerly incarcerated people and New Haven's "Street Sheet" that lists services for low-income and homeless people.

To protect the confidentiality of the participants, neither their first or last names were recorded. In managing, analyzing and describing the data, I identified the participants using numbers from 1 to 30, which I assigned chronologically to each participant as she joined the study (i.e. P1, P2, P3...P28, P29, P30). While some qualitative researchers choose to assign pseudonyms to their participants, I am not comfortable with this naming practice. For me, a name is an intimate label created and given by family or self, not an arbitrary collection of letters to be assigned by a stranger. I appreciate that identifying people with numbers may be perceived as dehumanizing and, in retrospect, I wish I had asked the women to create their own pseudonym, a practice I learned about after data collection was complete. However, without this option to draw from, I decided that a fake name of my own invention was just as dehumanizing as a number. Neither is a label with which the participant identifies. However, with a pseudonym, there is a danger that the reader could derive some meaning from the invented label. The new names may construct a false self which confounds the presentation of data.

Is the participant "named" Imani African-American? Is Darlene from the South? Did Chelsea come from a leafy suburb and play soccer as a child? Names carry meaning which makes re-assigning them complicated. If the real name of a Latina participant is Maria, what should her pseudonym be? Rosa? What if the Latina participant's real name is Jennifer? Can her pseudonym still be Rosa? And if it is, how does that name change the reader's perceptions of this individual? Assigning a pseudonym with the same social connotations as the individual's real name is an impossible challenge. Can I come up with a name that is "as Black" as Tiana without being "too Black"? However, ignoring the match and re-naming Tiana Betsy naively

ignores the ways in which names can construct ethnic, racial, and socio-economic identity. Finally, I believe naming participants creates a false sense of intimacy between the researcher/reader and the participant. After a one hour interview with a study participant, I know very little about this person. To then assign her a name and talk about her, “Diane said this...Diana said that...,” suggests a friendly closeness that is simply untrue. In short, I chose to use identifying numbers instead of pseudonyms in order to make it clear that these labels were not the participants’ names, to remove the possibility of any conscious or unconscious conclusions about the participants from their monikers, and to recognize that these narratives are not stories exchanged between friends but qualitative data constructed through social science research.

Recruitment steps and phases. I recruited women for this study in three phases. First, 6 women were enrolled in the pilot phase of the study during the Summer of 2009. Second, 20 women were enrolled during the Spring and Summer of 2011. Third, 4 women joined the study in November 2011. In total, I conducted 30 interviews. The number of participants was estimated during the design phase to be a sample size that would be feasible and provide sufficient data for analysis (Patton, 2002). There was flexibility in this plan to recruit a fewer or greater number of participants if saturation was reached earlier on or if the sample of 30 was not diverse or rich enough to allow for thematic analyses. As it turned out, the sample size of 30 was adequate for this study’s goals.

During all three phases of data collection, the recruitment process was the same. To begin, I introduced the project to a group of women at one of Evergreen’s weekly residents’ meeting. After the meeting, several women expressed interest in participating. I screened each of them individually and arranged interview appointments for those who qualified (see next

paragraph for specific inclusion criteria). I posted IRB-approved recruitment flyers in the organization's main office and on bulletin boards in the women's apartment building. Women were also referred to the study by others who had participated. When women called the study number, I screened them over the phone for eligibility and scheduled appointments.

Screening and verifying eligibility. The eligibility criteria were fairly broad and clearly stated on the recruitment poster: able to speak English, over 18, incarcerated at YCI in the last year and willing to participate. From this, most of the women who volunteered for the study were eligible. I did not record information about "ineligibles" but do recall speaking, on the phone and at Evergreen meetings, to a handful of women who were not eligible because they had never been incarcerated at YCI or had not been incarcerated in the previous year. Using the information that I collected during the screening process, i.e. the women's names, dates of birth and most recent incarceration dates, I was able to confirm their eligibility using the State of CT's on-line Judiciary and/or Corrections databases. This verification was conducted in the time between the phone/in-person screening and the actual interview. The Judiciary database provides complete information, including dates, charges and sentences, for criminal convictions and pending cases in CT. The Corrections database provides information about prison sentences for people who are currently incarcerated by the State or on parole. All of this information is free and open to the public. In every case, the information provided to me by the participants matched State records.

Changes and exceptions to eligibility criteria. Over the course of the study, there were some changes regarding the eligibility criteria relating to the length and dates of the women's most recent incarceration. In the first phase of recruitment, during the 2009 pilot study, I proposed interviewing women who had been incarcerated for at least 3 months in the last year. I

later dropped the criterion about length of prison stay when it became clear to me that this measure was unnecessary and cumbersome. I learned that the intensity of the arrest and intake experience meant that it did not take long for women to acquire food stories at YCI. In addition, it was difficult to establish the length of the participants' most recent incarceration using the on-line databases because people move in and out of prison on bond and then parole in a single sentence.

Requirements regarding the time since the participants' last incarceration also blurred towards the end of the study. The study's protocol and recruitment flyer indicated that women must have been released from YCI in the past year to participate. There were three participants who did not meet this requirement: P22, P27 and P29, who were released 3.5 years, 2 years and 5 years ago, respectively. In each case, I had different reasons for waiving this criterion. I decided to enroll P27 when I learned, during the screening process, that she had spent long amounts of time in YCI segregation due to alleged gang affiliations. I had not yet spoken to anyone who had lived in this section of YCI and I thought her story would offer a unique opportunity for discovery and knowledge development. The admission of the other two ineligible women was less scientific. When I met P29 at Evergreen, she appeared very sick and tired. Even though she did not qualify because she had been out for 5 years, I felt bad for her and thought that receiving the participant payment and talking with someone for an hour might be helpful to her. Similarly, P22's inclusion in the study reflected my own personal feelings and emotions. I felt intimidated by P22 when I spoke to her on the phone. She was very aggressive about wanting to participate and became irritated when I told her that she had been released too long ago. She emphasized that she had been incarcerated on several occasions and had strong memories of her life in prison. I believe my decision-making confidence was also undermined by

my race- and class- based insecurities that made me afraid to reject her or appear to be passing judgment on her experiences and memories. As a white, middle-class woman who has never been incarcerated, I felt uncomfortable telling P22 that she had been out of prison too long to accurately remember the experience, that I somehow knew better than she what she was able to recall.

Upon reflection, I think my decisions to include these women benefited the project. P22 and P29 were excellent informants and although P27's illness limited her contribution, there were aspects of her narrative that were unique and compelling. Their participation suggests that women need not be recently released from prison in order to recall and reflect upon their incarcerated experience. Further, the centrality of prison foodways to incarcerated life may facilitate women's ability to recall these experiences. These women's contributions challenged my initial assumption – that it would be easier for participants to discuss experiences in their recent pasts. Similarly, many of the participants who were incarcerated in the last year shared information about previous incarcerations beyond this time period. In other words, individuals who met the timeframe eligibility did not draw solely upon this most recent incarceration in our discussions. What I found was that the richness of the participants' stories was more a reflection of their own narrative storytelling skills and the dynamic between us, than the timing of the experiences they were describing.

Description of sample. The study sample of 30 included 12 White women, 13 Black women and 5 Latina women. Their ages ranged from 22 to 56 years old; the average age was 38. As detailed in Appendix A, the sample's distribution by race and age mirrors the demographics at YCI, which was my intent. I had considered purposely recruiting women from specific racial or age categories in order to align the sample with YCI demographics, but this turned out not to

be necessary. The convenience sampling produced a representative sample. Sexual orientation was not a demographic that I systemically collected, but there were 2 women who self-identified as lesbians during the interviews. Most of the women (90%) had last been incarcerated for crimes related to substance abuse, including larceny, robbery, possession/sales of narcotics, DUI and violation of probation. This reflects the high percentage of non-violent drug offenders in female prisons (Grella & Greenwell, 2007; Snell, 1994) and Evergreen's focus on recovery from addiction. There were three women with non-drug specific charges: P14 (First Degree Assault), P20 (First Degree Manslaughter) and P25 (Vehicular Manslaughter). The average length of the sample's most recent incarceration was 9 months, with sentences ranging from 1 month to 10 years.

Interview Instrument and Data Collection

I used a 14 item semi-structured interview to guide the data collection process (Appendix E). Each interview took approximately one hour, was digitally recorded and transcribed for analysis. Prior to beginning the interview, I administered a brief Demographics and Incarceration History Survey (Appendix D) to collect basic background information. In general, the interviews were well-received by the participants, although there were some women who expressed irritation with the questions and, on rare occasion, hostility towards my inquiries. Overall, I felt that the range of reaction and emotion that was expressed during the interviews was appropriate and expected given the sensitive nature of the project. There were no adverse study events that required IRB attention.

The semi-structured interview. I chose to use a semi-structured interview because this technique enabled me to efficiently collect data which could be compared across participants, while still allowing for flexibility and discovery (Sorsoli & Tolman, 2008; Tolman, 2005).

Because all the interviews were focused along a specific line of inquiry, there was a basis for analytic comparison between respondents. At the same time, the use of follow-up questions and freedom to change the wording or sequence of questions, as is standard practice in this technique for data collection (Patton, 2002), meant that the instrument was not identically administered to each respondent. In short, interviews played out differently but were comparable because even as the focus fell on different questions, the basic outline of each interview was the same. The full interview guide is included here as Appendix E.

I designed the interview guide to facilitate a telling of the participant's most recent incarceration, using food experiences to punctuate, explore, and build the narrative. I began the interviews with a general inquiry about the participants' most recent arrest: *Tell me about the incident and arrest that resulted in your most recent incarceration.* This question was an opportunity to build rapport by allowing participants to describe the circumstances that brought them into the correctional system, get a sense of their life prior to incarceration, and bring them, narratively, into the beginning of their incarceration story. Next, I brought the interview directly to foodways by asking participants about the first food they were served in police lock-up or YCI: *Describe the first thing that was served to you and/or that you ate [upon entering the criminal justice system, i.e. police lock-up or YCI].* From there, we explored a wide range of YCI foodways experiences, I asked questions about cafeteria, commissary, cell cooking, court run lunches, food preferences and food discipline. Each question included a collection of follow-up possibilities to gather detail about each foodway: *How? Who? What? Where? Why? When?* Responses generally focused on their most recent incarceration but experiences from previous incarcerations, if any, were also included. I closed the interview with a question about release, similar to the first question about arrest (*Tell me about your release from prison.*), that included

follow ups about foodways, if any, associated with the end of their sentence. With the final item in the instrument, I encouraged participants to comment on any aspect of prison foodways that we had not already covered: *Is there any other information about eating and food in prison that you would like to add?*

The pilot phase (2009). In the summer of 2009, I piloted the interview guide with six participants.

Pilot successes. These six pilot interviews, which ranged in length from 50 to 80 minutes, were filled with discovery. I knew hardly anything about prison foodways and so practically every story and comment represented new knowledge for me. There were no logistical issues in conducting the interviews. The sample was very diverse, including White, Black and Latina women from 23 to 56 years old. Their prison histories ranged from 1 month to 6 years and included both repeat and first-time offenders. I was successful in building rapport and productive dialogue with the participants. The women seemed eager to describe their prison foodways experiences and had no problems understanding, responding to and modifying the interview questions. While some participants seemed surprised by my interest in prison food and wary of the process at first, they gained confidence and enthusiasm as the interview unfolded. During the consent process, I did explain to participants that the project was designed to build knowledge about the incarceration experience and that I would be asking specifically about food and eating in prison but did not provide any detail about foodways theory or the ways in which food narratives may build knowledge about lived experience. However, as we constructed detailed accounts of their prison lives through food stories, they seemed to recognize the knowledge produced by foodways. Many of the participants expressed appreciation for the opportunity to talk about and reflect upon their incarceration.

Lessons learned. My experiences in this pilot phase led me to make several changes to the study instrument and protocol. For one, I added the questions about eating and food in police lock-up (Appendix E, #2) and on court runs (Appendix E, #9), food spaces which were brought to my attention by pilot participants. Two, I changed the sequencing of the questions. During the pilot phase, I had inquired about food experiences by location within the prison and type of food. I found this order could be awkward and redundant so I revised the approach in favor of a more chronological organization. Even with this temporal structure, narratives drifted between different prison sentences and incidents therein, so that data were not completely chronological. However, especially in the beginning and at the end of the interview, presenting the questions in this way facilitated the construction of a story with a beginning, middle, and end (Riessman & Quinney, 2005). Three, I decided to do the transcription myself. While professional transcription of four of the six pilot interviews allowed for a quick turnaround from data collection to analysis, I valued the insight and proximity to the data that I achieved by transcribing two of the interviews myself (Bird, 2005). The richness of this experience, combined with the cost of transcription, led me to decide to do my own transcription from that point forward.

Continuation of data collection (2011). When data collection resumed in 2011, recruitment and interviews continued to go smoothly. For the most part, participants engaged enthusiastically with the project, appreciated my interest, and expressed gratitude for the chance to tell their stories. The process was not, however, without road bumps, especially in regards to the creation of rapport and trust with study participants. My notes and reflections on each interview, which I recorded immediately after each interview in a notebook, provide record of my varied experiences. For example, my interview with P19 got off to a bad start when she saw

me pull up to Evergreen in my minivan. She made a sarcastic remark about a soccer mom's interest in prison which I was only able to partially deflect with a self-deprecating joke. The class differences between us lingered in the air. As we turned to the consent process and began to talk about the study, she expressed her disgust with the Casey Anthony verdict, which had been handed down that day. She was outraged by the fact that her sentence for drug sales was longer than Ms. Anthony's, who was accused of killing her daughter. She described her frustrated efforts to try to be reunited with her own children. I tried to use reflective listening to attend to her emotions, but she remained tense and angry. In another example, P22 seemed irritated when I asked her which prison food she liked the most, insisting that all the food was disgusting and interpreting my inquiry to suggest that I was not listening to her when she described how unpalatable the food was. While these types of experiences created awkward moments that disrupted the flow of the data collection process, the participants and I were always able to recover equilibrium and complete the interviews.

Transcription. Transcription was a staggered process that I undertook iteratively with the interviews. As I have previously described, in 2009, I paid for four of the pilot interviews to be transcribed, and then I transcribed the two remaining pilot interviews myself. In April 2011, data collection resumed: I conducted six interviews that month. During May 2011, I put the interviews on pause and transcribed four of these interviews. This process allowed me to reflect on the finalized instrument and check that data collection was on track. I then re-started data collection in June 2011, conducting 13 interviews that summer to bring the total number of participants to 25. I spent September and October transcribing all of these interviews. I wanted to listen to these tapes in detail before conducting the final 5 interviews to determine if there

were any gaps in the data or areas that warranted further exploration. I then conducted the final five interviews in November 2011 and completed transcription by the end of December 2011.

During this process, I specifically undertook denaturalized transcription that focuses on “informational content;” the linguistic and speech detail included in naturalized transcription were not recorded (Oliver, Serovich, & Mason, 2005). However, even though I did not try to represent speech patterns, accents, or involuntary vocalizations, I did retain what Oliver et. al (2005) describe as the “socio-cultural features” of the data, that is the specific words and language that were used by the participants, even if they are not grammatically correct, and prominent nonverbal vocalizations (e.g. crying, extended pauses, pronounced movements). Transcribing the interviews allowed me to sit with the data and actively re-listen to the interviews. In this way, the activity was transformed from a typing task into a part of the data analysis process: I recorded notes, reactions and ideas about possible points of analysis, follow-up questions, and emerging themes. This practice provided me with a preliminary sense of patterns in the data, strategies for detailed and rigorous analysis, and possible types of findings.

Member Checking. In November 2011, as data collection was drawing to an end, I presented these preliminary patterns and potential findings at an Evergreen client meeting attended by 15 women. While only one of these women had actually participated in the study, the women at the meeting were similar to the study sample because they were Evergreen residents with histories of incarceration. In the same month, I also shared these data with the New Haven Re-Entry Roundtable, a community meeting about prison re-entry that included about 30 formerly incarcerated people and professionals who work with this population. At both forums, I presented a poster with a 15-minute explanation of the project and preliminary findings. The response from both groups was positive. At the Roundtable, several people,

including a formerly incarcerated woman and a retired YCI correctional officer, stayed after the meeting to discuss the project with me. Their comments suggested that the premise – that foodways can build knowledge about the prison experience – had face validity for them. The women at Evergreen were interested that anyone would find prison food important but were less engaged with study findings. Our conversation drifted to their general perceptions about research and complaints about prison food and food insecurity after release from prison.

Data Analysis

Given the exploratory and qualitative nature of this study, I decided to use thematic analysis to build knowledge from the study's data set (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Constant comparison of patterns and themes allowed me to identify areas of difference and commonality between participants and build knowledge about women's incarceration (Patton, 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). The study's thematic analysis included the following steps: familiarizing myself with the data (listening, reading and memo writing, including matrix development); generating initial codes; applying, editing and consolidating codes; organizing and reviewing themes to generate findings (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002).

Listening, reading and memo-writing. As I have described earlier, my memo writing began during the data collection process: I recorded notes and reactions after each interview. This helped me to reflect upon the interview experiences, which were often intense and emotional, in order to care for myself and begin to process the stories in my mind. I made note if there were parts of the interview that were particularly compelling or unique and recorded thoughts about possible points of analysis. I had the opportunity to hear the interviews again while transcribing. At all points during the process, I kept pen and paper at my side and recorded my thoughts and reactions to the data. During transcription, my notes were less reflective,

focusing more on emergent themes and ideas for analysis. When all of the transcription was complete, I read through each interview and created a one-page profile summary of each participant. These reference sheets, which included the participant's race, age, time incarcerated, and remarkable/unique pieces of her story, were very helpful to me when I began to work through the decontextualized data. For instance, as I read through reports of coded data organized in NVivo, I might come across a story or extended description and wonder, who is the speaker? While the sample size was small, I could not always remember who each participant was. The reference sheets would allow me to quickly recall the participant and place the story in context.

Participant matrix. I also used the read-through of the complete transcripts to create and populate a participant matrix. Beginning with basic demographic and criminal justice information, additional content columns were added to summarize and explore study data (e.g. *Ever got a disciplinary ticket. Received money from home. Ever worked in the kitchen. Homeless at time of arrest.*) These data allowed me to quantify the frequency of particular experiences in order to get a sense of how extensive each experience may have been across the sample. For example, the fact that 21 of the 30 women had been kitchen employees suggested to me that this was a common assignment. The final matrix included 23 columns of summarized data, most of which was integrated into the final analysis. Among that data that were not used in these findings were incomplete columns that had missing data. Because the interview instrument was flexible, every subject was not covered in the same way with each participant. For example, there was no question about children, so I did not consistently discuss this subject with participants. Still, some participants mentioned being mothers and so I began to record this information as I read through the interviews. Ultimately, I only had motherhood information for 12 of the 30

participants, so I did not use these data to describe the sample or analyze the data. In other cases, the data were complete but I did not end up finding a use for the information in the dissertation. For example, I did not use data about how many women went through opioid withdrawal at arrest. A modified version of this matrix, that includes all of the data used in the analysis, is included here (Appendix B).

Coding process. Once I completed this initial familiarization with the data and rough organization of the interviews, I began the process of coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

Coding tree. I created the first draft of the coding tree after completing the interviews in November 2011. This draft included subjects and themes that I expected to encounter in the data based on my literature review, the questions in the interview instrument, and what I heard during data collection. For example, I anticipated that hunger would be a salient theme in this data because it is a prominent topic in foodways literature and during data collection I noticed participants speaking about this aspect of their incarceration experience. In other words, I did not come to the analysis process with a completely blank slate, with no idea whatsoever of what I might find in the data. After all, I had read extensively about prison and foodways and had conducted all of the interviews myself. I did not know which themes would be the most fruitful in terms of content, nor was I aware of all the themes that would arise during coding, however I had a strong sense of what was included in the data. This first draft of the coding tree reflected an early understanding of project themes which I considered very raw.

In this first draft, I organized the codes into two sections that I labeled cataloging codes and normative codes. Cataloging codes included readily-apparent categories that were subject to little interpretation. For example, demographics (as reported by participants on the intake Survey, Appendix D), location of narrative (e.g. police lock-up, dorms, segregation unit),

mention of specific foods (e.g. breakfast, slop, coffee) and food activities (e.g. trading, stealing, cooking). Normative codes captured more subjective themes like perceptions of the prison (e.g. apathetic, resentment), identities (e.g. good person, old timer) and psychological concepts (e.g. power and control). Over the next few months as I listened and read the interviews while transcribing, themes were added, removed and modified and this first draft of the coding tree evolved into a second draft based on my interaction with the data during the transcription stage.

Applying, editing and consolidating codes. In January 2012, when transcription was complete, I entered all of the transcribed interviews and the second draft of the coding tree into NVivo and began to apply the cataloging codes. As I worked through the data, I modified the coding tree to capture new themes that arose during this process and remove or alter codes that were not working. In these ways, I was both applying existing codes and creating new codes. For example, I created a new “Hot Pot” code to capture discussion of the hot water provided in the common areas, a topic that I had not previously noticed. I also altered existing codes: “Correctional Officer Eating” was changed to “Staff Eating” when I realized women’s stories about prison personnel included counselors and teachers, not just correctional officers. I consolidated codes as well: When the difference between Sharing and Trading became muddled in my mind, in part because women used the words interchangeably, I combined them into a single code.

Initially, this coding process was arduous, taking me 3 or 4 hours per interview, in part because I was still shaping the coding tree to best fit the study purpose and data. After coding about 5 or 6 interviews, the efficiency of process increased because I was more familiar with the coding process and customization of the coding tree was complete. I had reached saturation with the codes in that I was able capture most of study data in the coding tree and “what has been

missed will in all probability have little modifying effect” on study findings (Glaser, 1965, p. 442). From then on, the process shifted to editing and creating codes to applying the final draft of the coding tree to the data. While this final version of the coding tree (Appendix F) was not tremendously different from the first draft, small changes during the transcription and coding process were important to accommodating discovery, clarifying meaning and maximizing the utility of each code.

When this phase working with the cataloging codes completed, I restarted the coding process with the normative codes. This section included the set of codes I had created during the research design and data collection phases plus several codes that I had shifted over from the cataloging codes section. For example, coding for Identities and Hunger proved much more interpretive than I had anticipated, so I moved these concepts from the cataloging to the normative section. Applying the normative codes was a slower process than working with the cataloging codes that required careful attention. It was not enough to read through the data quickly to capture different locations and topics, I had to read the transcripts slowly and consider the meaning and intentions of the narratives. The normative codes were loosely defined in my head and when I had doubts about whether or not a piece of data fit a particular code, I always included it. After this rough cut, I examined all the data that had been coded and narrowed the material if necessary.

Generation of findings. The final step of this process was to organize and review the themes in order to generate preliminary findings (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In many ways, this was not a separate step but one that was woven into and created from the entire process. After spending so much time with this data set, I had many different ideas and thoughts, but these were still just hunches. Analyzing the coded data allowed me to explore these ideas in an organized,

systematic and deliberate manner and examine to what extent and in what ways specific themes existed within the data set.

Description of foodways. My first step was to catalog, organize and describe the various prison foodways. I chose to begin the analysis with this descriptive survey of the prison food environment because, as was detailed in the Literature Review (Chapter 1), there has been little documentation of US prison foodways. Before I dove into thematic analysis, I wanted to generally describe what it was women eat in prisons, when, where and with whom. This was done by pulling the “cataloging codes” about different prison foods, food locations, and food activities. I read through each code report, which ranged in length from 10 to 50 pages, and highlighted particularly descriptive or informative passages. In a separate notebook, I took brief notes about each participant’s responses and analyzed the data to identify similarities and differences between participants’ descriptions in order to provide as complete a picture as possible. I then wrote a summary of each code which included a description and analysis of specific foods and food-related activities across the prison (Chapter 3).

Thematic analysis. Next, I used the “normative codes” to conduct an analysis of food-related themes that arose in discussion about different types of food and food activities across the prison. For example, women talked about hunger during lock up, at the cafeteria, and in their cells. Hunger came up in discussions about cake, commissary and smuggling. The coding process identified all of this hunger data and brought it together for review and analysis. In total, I worked with six themes that ran across the institution: apathy, hunger, punishment, resistance, relationships, and good/healthy. I chose to develop these six themes in my analysis because I found them to be particularly pronounced in the participants’ narratives: The largest amount of data had been assigned to these themes during the coding process. In addition, these themes

connect to existing literature about corrections and/or foodways and current policy and practice issues. For each theme, I pulled the related code(s) and reviewed the data closely. I tried to understand the different ways that participants talked about the themes. I selected quotes that were typical and quotes that were atypical in order to exemplify the range of findings. I referred to existing literature on the themes and thought about how this data interacted with and expanded upon this knowledge. Through this iterative process of comparing and contrasting, looking at the data up close, from a distance, and thinking, I sought to tell a story that emerged in these data that represented the women's words and experiences in conversation with the larger dialogue about criminal justice systems.

Summary

All told, this project took nearly four years to execute. During this time, my broad plans to conduct an exploratory study about women's incarcerated lives narrowed down to a specific analysis of food stories shared by 30 women living in New Haven. The research design choices that I made along the way illustrate my role in co-constructing these narratives. It was my questions and reactions that lay the pathway upon which the participants and I set out, although the flexibility of the design did allow for all of us to change the study's course of discovery. Throughout the process, I strove to document my intentions and reactions in order to keep the project as transparent and reflective as possible. With a different researcher or set of participants, the stories would not have been the ones that I have recorded. However, the deliberate design of this study suggests that the findings would not be dissimilar. This study has recorded and analyzed unique individual narratives that speak to a larger human experience.

Chapter 3: Description of Prison Foodways

This study is not about food. The purpose of the project is to expand knowledge about the lived experience of female incarceration in the United States. In this effort, foodways analysis is a tool; a mechanism for gathering and analyzing women's narratives about prison while, at the same time, shedding light on the quotidian activities of carceral life. In the next four chapters, study data are presented in two ways. First, I present the various foodways that study participants described during the course of our interviews (Chapter 3). The purpose of this section is ethnographic: To describe a facet of prison life that is largely un-documented and give readers the background and vocabulary that is needed to understand subsequent analysis. Second, I share findings from my thematic analysis of the women's foodways narratives that I conducted in an effort to build knowledge about the prison institution and the prisoners. Specifically, I explore the themes of apathy, hunger, punishment, resistance, relationships, good/healthy and racialized identity. (Chapters 4, 5 and 6). In the final section of the paper, the policy implications of these findings are explored (Chapter 7).

Food During Arrest & Intake

The prison journey begins in the community. I spoke to 23 of the 30 participants about their lives at the time of arrest. These women reported being arrested in their cars, their homes, on the street, in stores and parking lots. At the time of their arrest, 18 (78%) of the women were under the influence of drugs or alcohol; 7 (30%) were addicted to opiates. Nearly half (11) reported that they were homeless. Two of the participants had killed someone. Eight of the 23 women (35%) reported having eaten irregularly in the weeks leading up to their arrest, primarily because they were using drugs heavily:

I wasn't really eating, I was running on the streets doing drugs. And I was eating like,

that 25 cent chips a day. Maybe like 2 bags. If I had enough I would go to McDonald's and get the Dollar Menu. Like a Dollar Burger. That was it... I was using so much that you don't get hungry. (P28)

On the whole, their lives were chaotic and then the police caught up with them and they went to jail.

Police lock-up. When an individual is arrested in Connecticut (CT), she is transported by patrol car to a lock-up facility in the local police station. Within this sample, there was wide variation in the locales where participants reported being arrested and held. One third (n=10) of the women were arrested in New Haven and held in the lock-up in the basement of the New Haven Police Department's headquarters on Union Avenue. The remaining women were detained in a variety of cities and towns across the state including Bridgeport, East Haven, Hartford, Meriden, Milford, Naugatuck, New London, Norwalk, Southington, Waterbury, West Haven and Westport. All of these lock-up units are operated by the CT Judicial Branch so there is some uniformity in their food service procedures.

Baloney and juice. Participants arrested and held in New Haven reported being fed a baloney sandwich on white bread and a small carton of orange-flavored juice three times a day. This meal, which was served in a brown paper bag, occasionally included a second sandwich of either cheese or baloney, or two additional pieces of white bread. "On Union Avenue, that's all they feed you. If you are there for the weekend, you eat baloney sandwiches and orange drink all weekend" (P7). Baloney sandwiches were also described as lunch and dinner in the Hartford and Waterbury lock-ups; breakfast at these sites was cereal and milk.

Fast food. Women held in the other jurisdictions reported that staff brought them meals from a local diner or fast-food restaurant. While there were some larger cities included in this

list of lock-ups where participants reported being served fast food (Bridgeport, New London, Norwalk), most of these places were small towns or suburbs (East Haven, Meriden, Milford, Naugatuck, Southington, West Haven and Westport). Fast food meals included egg sandwiches and coffee or Coke for breakfast and hamburgers or cheeseburgers with cokes, and sometimes fries, for lunch and dinner. While this food was generally perceived as better than the baloney sandwiches, it was not immune to criticism. In this passage, the participant described the food in the Norwalk lock-up:

Like a really cold egg sandwich with burnt toast and black coffee with no sugar or cream...And then a big piece of something that was called meatloaf, I guess they got it from the diner - at the police station they got the food from the diner...Yeah, wherever they order food from. I'm assuming it comes from a restaurant. It sucks. It's nasty.

(P22)

Courthouse. Once arrested, women remain in lock-up until their case is arraigned in court. Court hearings are held on weekday mornings, so individuals may spend just a few hours in lock-up, or an entire weekend, depending on when they are arrested. At this initial court appearance, a judge reviews the case and can choose either to dismiss the case or, if charges are going to be pursued, set bail, or release the prisoner (without bail) on a "Promise to Appear" (PTA) at the next court date. If the individual does not qualify for a PTA and cannot make bail, she is sent to the York Correctional Institution (YCI), to wait for her next court date (pre-trial detention). The van to YCI leaves every weekday, in the late afternoon. Women may be transferred to YCI directly from the courthouse's holding cell or moved from across the state to New Haven lock-up and then transferred from there, depending on the court where their case is heard, the time of day, and the van's schedule. In short, the initial path into the criminal justice

system for a woman who does not post bail or get a PTA is as follows: arrest, patrol car, police lock up, courthouse holding cell, courtroom, courthouse holding cell, New Haven police lock up, YCI. The entire process takes at least a day, and may be longer if the individual is arrested during the weekend.

YCI intake. The transportation van from local lock-ups to YCI arrives at the facility in the early evening. The women are then led into the YCI medical unit for intake, a process that takes about six hours. Women are strip searched, issued uniforms and IDs, and undergo a medical assessment. They also take showers, including a mandatory lice shampoo. Most of their time in intake is spent waiting to be seen by staff. As a rule, participants reported that food was not provided during this process: “Even if you was to ask, they’d tell you no...I didn’t bother [to ask] because I already been through it already.” (P13). Women did report occasional exceptions to this rule – a baloney sandwich (P21), saltines (P15) - but this was not a “regular thing” (P15).

After the initial intake is complete, usually between midnight and 2:00 am, women are placed in cells within the medical unit. Each cell includes two bunk beds, a toilet and a shower. During times of overcrowding, women reported up to two additional temporary beds inside the cell, but usually each cell has four women. During the five to seven days that new inmates are held in the medical unit to complete the intake process, the women are in their cells 23 and a half hours a day. Thirty minutes is allocated for indoor recreation time (“Rec”) in the unit’s day room. All three meals are delivered to the cell by inmates employed as tier workers. (Tier worker is an inmate job in all the YCI units. Responsibilities primarily include cleaning the common areas, bathrooms and showers, handing out supplies and, in units where the women eat in their cells, distributing and collecting the food trays.) The food on the trays is the same meal that is being served in the cafeteria. The tier workers return to the cells after 10-20 minutes to

retrieve the trays and uneaten food. The first meal that new inmates receive during intake is breakfast, usually hot cereal (e.g. oatmeal, grits) and cake, served at 4:30 am or 5:00 am, about 10 hours after their arrival.

Food during intake was generally described as sloppy and unpleasant: “A lot of times, the food gets mixed up, like when they deliver the food, the slop will fall onto the bread and the green beans will go into the slop and then it’s like everything’s everywhere” (P25). In addition, many women found the prospect of eating in the cells (on their beds, with the toilet nearby) revolting: “I don’t believe in eating where you have to remove yourself at. ... In medical, it’s a big room...And, we’re using the bathroom in that same room” (P13). P17 described the cells as dirty with “ants everywhere.” However unappetizing the food or the circumstances, the cafeteria trays are the only food option at this stage. Prisoners in intake are not eligible to order snacks from the commissary and since they rarely leave the cells and do not work, participants reported that opportunities to smuggle food items into the cell were extremely limited.

Transitional units. Once the intake process is complete, YCI prisoners are transferred to transitional housing units. Prisoners who have a bond and outstanding court dates will remain in this unit until they are sentenced or make bail. This could take a week or several months, depending on the case. Because of its temporary nature, P8 compared these units to a bus station: “I call it the Greyhound Bus Station because it’s just transit – in and out, in and out.” Once a prisoner is sentenced, she will be transferred to the General Population after her security level and placement have been determined, administrative actions that usually only take a week or so. However, some prisoners with a relatively short sentence may never be transferred. For example, P21 served her entire bid (48 days) in a transitional unit. Other prisoners may elect to take jobs as tier workers in the unit and stay on there even after they are sentenced.

In these transitional units, women live in cells with one other person. The cell has a toilet, a bunk bed, and a counter with two chairs. There are two lock boxes in the cell for prisoners to store personal items. The cells are clustered into tiers, a grouping that includes 12 cells, or up to 24 women. Each tier has two showers stalls. Neighboring tiers constitute a housing unit. Inmates spend most of their time on the tier, going between their cells and the day room, an arrangement that offers slightly more freedom than the medical unit. However, because their security level has not yet been fully assessed, they are not permitted to interact with the General Population. Their daily life is confined to the tier: no outside jobs, no school, no programs, no chow hall. Cafeteria food is delivered three times a day to each housing unit. Inmates file down from their tiers to a serving station in a central location within the housing unit to retrieve the trays, and then return to their cells to eat, either on the bed or at the counter. If the food was cold by the time they got back to their cell, participants described heating it up again by putting the food in plastic garbage bags and submerging the bags into hot water from the communal hot pot in the day room. After about 20 minutes, tier workers come around to pick up the trays and any uneaten food.

Women in the transitional units are allowed to order snacks from the prison commissary, however, participants said it was not common for them to do so. For one, most inmates do not have any money to place an order. Few of the women are working, so they have no earned income, and deposits from friends and family in the community can take several weeks to clear. Only those new inmates who brought money with them to the prison are likely to have funds “on the books.” Two, inmates location is in flux because the women are waiting on the adjudication of their cases and/or their assignment in the General Population. If they order commissary, they may no longer be in the unit when the items are delivered. When women are transferred between

units, the commissary system is slow to identify these moves and the ordered items may never reach the inmate. P30, for example, was a first-time inmate who made the mistake of placing a large commissary order while still in a transitional unit. After she placed the order, she was moved into the General Population and the radio she paid for never arrived. Still, even without ordering anything, women may be able to access the snack and cosmetic items sold on commissary if their cell mate is one of the unit's long term residents or if they have friends who are able to send items through illicit channels, primarily via tier workers.

Court runs. As was described earlier, many women arrive at YCI unsentenced. These women have been charged with a crime, but not convicted. They are in prison because they were either not granted bond by the judge or were unable to pay the bond required for them to remain in the community while their case plays out in the courts. These pre-trial detainees remain incarcerated in the transitional units until their case is adjudicated. The time that they are detained while the case is being resolved will ultimately count as "time served" and be credited towards their sentence if they are convicted. On the days when they are scheduled to appear in court, pre-trial detainees are transported from YCI to courts throughout the state. These trips are called "court runs." As P13 described, unsentenced women may make several court runs before their case is settled: "I went to court like, I believe, 5 times. Fighting for probation. They was not trying to give me no probation time."

Court runs take all day. Women are woken up at 3:30 am and brought to a holding space where they are strip searched and served a bagged breakfast. The bagged breakfast includes cereal, milk and a piece of fruit. Once they are ready to go, the prisoners wait. The transportation van usually arrives between 5:00 am and 8:00 am. Women are transported from YCI to the CT courthouse where their case is scheduled to be heard. Once they arrive at the

courthouse, they wait in the courthouse holding cell until their case is called. The lunch which is provided is the same meal that is served in big city lock ups: baloney sandwich with orange-flavored drink or milk. The sandwich may include cheese. Fruit and extra pieces of bread may sometimes be included. There was a clear consensus among study participants that these court run lunches were disgusting. Stories about the sandwiches and/or the milk being rotten were common:

‘Cause when you go on a court runs, you have to eat a baloney sandwich all day. You can’t eat. You gotta. Ick. That you think about. That’s torture. The court runs back and forth, getting up 3:30 in the morning. And all day eatin’ a baloney sandwich. (P28).

Often the effort of the day is for naught: “Sometimes they don’t even call you upstairs; you just sit down in the corridor. [The public defender] He’ll come by and tell me they continued it and that’s it” (P4). If the case is continued or the judge never calls the case, then the inmate’s pre-trial detention is extended until her next court date. Women return to YCI from court runs after dinner has been served, so they will not eat until breakfast the next morning unless they have access to commissary snacks in their cells.

Eating in the General Population

After months of being shuffled through YCI’s front gates, women find themselves sentenced, assessed and assigned to permanent housing. This housing is referred to as “General Population.” There are basically two different General Population housing wings in YCI: the minimum security East Side and the maximum security West Side. Most of the women who I interviewed for this study had spent the bulk of their last incarceration on the East Side. However, some did spend part of their sentence on the West Side or had been housed there in the

past. While inmates experience different levels of mobility and supervision on the East and West Sides, their foodways are generally the same: cafeteria, commissary, workplace and cell cooking.

Cafeteria. The cafeteria is the main source of food for women incarcerated at YCI. Women are called for meals three times a day: breakfast (5:30 am), lunch (11:30 am) and dinner (4:30 pm). The correctional officers (COs) release one housing unit at a time to the cafeteria. Each housing unit is comprised of several tiers that accommodate about two dozen women each. The women walk to the cafeteria in a single file line. Attendance at these meals is optional; women can choose to stay back on the tier. After passing through the serving line in the same single-file order that was established while walking to the cafeteria, women are directed by the COs to tables of six, which are populated in the order of the single-file line. They are seated at the table for a short period of time, approximately 10 minutes, before they are ordered to stand up and leave the room in order to make room for the next group of women. In general, the environment in the cafeteria is described as chaotic: not only hurried, but crowded and loud. P8 likened it to a “refugee camp.”

Social space. The public nature of the cafeteria makes it one of the prison’s primary social spaces. Inmates at YCI spend most of their time with the women who live in their tier. Opportunities to leave the tier and interact with other inmates include outside Rec time, school, church, work and the cafeteria. Among these, the cafeteria is the only activity that is universally available on a daily basis, making it the principal social avenue. “It [going to the cafeteria] felt like you were out in the world, in your own little way, like you were doing something because you’re not just stuck in a cell, you’re out and about” (P25). This sense of “doing something” was magnified on days when popular foods were served. Here, P8 talked about the energy surrounding the baked chicken meals: “You see people actually getting dressed to go to the chow

hall....Yeah, it's like corny in a way. On chicken day, the whole place comes out....You know it's chicken day, because they served baked chicken and its good." Mealtimes offer inmates the chance to interact with women from the other tiers in their housing unit and, possibly, people who live in other units. "Like a good friend of mine that I was running the streets...at lunch time was pretty much the only time I would really be able to see her and hang out with her" (P5). It is this social opportunity, not the food, which participants reported motivated them to go to the cafeteria. "To see people...To see your friends...That's, or if you were gay, to see your girlfriend. It's all the motivation. That will get people up better than the food, trust me" (P22).

Cafeteria hustles. Participants reported that it was common for women to attempt to trade/share food items between each other and take food back to the tiers. Both of these activities are prohibited and COs are employed to prevent them from happening. Women also reported bringing food items into the cafeteria, usually seasonings like salt and pepper or hot sauce that they had bought from commissary or received from kitchen staff. This activity is also prohibited. Other cafeteria food hustles included trying to get extra portions or attempting to get off-menu food from inmates working behind the serving line or in the kitchen.

Commissary. The second major food system at YCI is the prison store, or commissary. The commissary sells a range of foods, cosmetics, clothing, electronics and stationary items. A bubble form, similar to the answer sheet used in standardized tests, is used to place orders. (Appendix G is an example of this form from 2007.) Inmates are permitted to order up to \$75 worth of merchandise every week and a maximum of \$50 can be spent on food. The cost of the order is discounted from the money that women have "on the books."

Funding accounts. There are three ways that women can fund their commissary accounts. One, any money that they have with them at the time of arrest is credited towards

these accounts. This money may include spare change that women happen to have in their pockets – P8 reported depositing 13 cents at intake – or larger amounts that women have deliberately brought with them in order to fund the account. “When I got arrested, I had \$125 on me... Just thinking, OK, if I know if I don’t get out of this and they send me up there [YCI], I might as well come prepared” (P13). Two, anyone in the community, usually family or friends, can put money in an inmate’s prison account via Western Union or by sending in a money order. P10, a participant with serious mental illness, reported receiving \$100 from her social worker at a community mental health clinic. In the past, people could send CT prisoners food packages in the mail, but this is no longer permitted; all contributions must be cash. Nineteen of the 30 participants reported receiving money for commissary from people in the community during their most recent incarceration.

Three, wages that women earn in prison employment are deposited into these accounts. The minimum wage for an inmate worker at YCI is \$0.75 per day or \$10.50 every two weeks. Participants reported taking jobs expressly to get commissary funds:

I’ll just keep working, just to keep money on my books ‘til when my mom or my significant other would send me money. ‘Cause when you get money sent in, from the outside, that takes at least two weeks, two and a half weeks, so but, me working, it was keeping me fed. (P13)

Twenty-one of the 30 study participants reported working during their most recent incarceration, primarily as kitchen staff (n=14). Seven of the 9 women who did not work were at YCI for less than two months which is not enough time to get an inmate job. P19 was unable to work because she spent most of her incarceration in the medical unit, due to acute psychiatric problems, and P6

refused to work: “They give you 75 cents a week, I mean a day, and they slave you. And I’m not, I’m not a slave, and I’m just not working for you for 75 cents.”

The commissary food options include chips, snack cakes, candy, sausage meats, canned fish, starches (rice, bagels, wraps, crackers) and condiments like peanut butter, jelly, fluff and cheese spreads. Initial commissary orders, especially for women who expect to be incarcerated for a while, tend to focus on cosmetics and clothing rather than food. Although women are issued a prison uniform when they arrive at YCI, warm layers, shoes (e.g. sneakers, shower shoes), and additional underwear must be purchased from the commissary. Similarly, women are eager to buy cosmetic items from the commissary. New inmates and inmates who have no money in their accounts are provided with a weekly indigent toiletries package which includes a toothbrush, a comb and small containers of toothpaste, shampoo and soap. Sanitary pads and toilet paper are also available at no cost. However, these prison-issued items are perceived to be of very low quality and so women said they preferred to buy toiletries from commissary. The need for cosmetics and clothing is relatively finite, so once the women have “stocked up” (P27) on these items, the focus of commissary orders moves to food.

Commissary hustles. Women discussed several hustles that they used when they did not have any money on their books to place commissary orders, or they wanted to supplement their purchases. For example, P9 sold her sleeping pills, prescribed by the medical staff, to other inmates in exchange for commissary items. Some jobs provided access to prison supplies that could be stolen and traded for commissary items. Tier workers diverted trash bags and cleaning supplies, while kitchen workers stole seasonings and other foods that were in high demand. There were also a variety of personal services that could be bartered for food. Women in this study described doing hair, cooking and drawing portraits in exchange for food:

I would draw a portrait on a piece of paper and then I would put the paper behind the hankie and trace what I already draw on the paper on the hankie...I would sell 'em. Sometimes two, three dollars.... Like a bag of creamer's 98 cents. So a bag of creamer, a bag of coffee's \$2.25. People add everything to the penny in there... So say if I did [drew] like two or three people, that's \$9 right there I could get. Bag of coffee, bag of creamer, a bag of sugar. (P25)

Study participants also reported that other inmates traded sex for food or tricked other women, especially newly arrived prisoners, out of their commissary.

Eating at work and school. In addition to the cafeteria and commissary, women obtain food at worksites and in classrooms. Specifically, the kitchen workplace and, to a lesser extent, the prison's culinary class, were reported as primary sources of food for both the people who work and study in these environments and the general prison population. Other worksites in which women reported consuming food included the commissary and grounds duty. In addition, women passed food between each other at worksites, classrooms, and extra-curricular places (e.g. gym, Rec yard, church).

Women are generally not eligible to participate in activities, including work, until they are processed through intake and classified to General Population. Once they are housed on the East or West Side, they can sign up for work and classes, go to the gym and participate in activities like Bible Study. For the most part, participants reported signing themselves up to work, although some said their employment was mandated:

I think they go by people that don't have that much money in their account and they'll call 'em for a job..I didn't put in for it, not for 75 cents a day [laughs] but if you don't do it then you get a ticket and end up goin' to Seg. (P4)

Either way, an inmate's first job is likely to be in the kitchen. There seemed to be an almost infinite number of entry-level kitchen positions, including food prep, dish/pot washer and tray cleaning, which pay \$0.75/day. P20, who served a relatively long sentence, was promoted to the top kitchen job, Head Cook, after working in food prep for four years. She held this position, which pays \$2.25/day, for eight years. In total, 21 women reported kitchen work experience: 14 worked there during their last prison stay and 7 reported kitchen work during a previous sentence.

Kitchen jobs. Participates identified several benefits to working in the kitchen. P2 specifically listed three of these benefits:

Three reasons why I wanted that [kitchen] job. The first was, I needed the money. The second, because I think of cosmetics and all, shampoo and everything and even food, you know. The second was to do something productive with my day, and the third being, I wanted to eat better and I had heard that you do eat better there. (P2)

First, as was described earlier, P2 highlighted that “the money” was an important source of income for commissary items. While the salary for entry-level work is not much, \$10.50 every two weeks allows an inmate to at least buy some basic cosmetic and snack supplies: “If I didn’t know the people that did the hiring [in the kitchen], then I would have been probably in a f***ed up situation until my family decided [to send in money]” (P24). Second, P2 described the kitchen work as a way to do “something productive” and, third, a mechanism to “eat better.” These sentiments were echoed by other women, including P22: “A lot of people work [in the kitchen] just to get out of the units, just to have something to do. Or they take the kitchen so they could try to get, at least, a decent meal.” The unfettered access to a wide range of foods was considered by participants to be an enormous benefit, often valued more than the meager salary.

Women who worked in the kitchen had access to more food: They could eat while they were working and had extra portions at mealtime. Participants also reported that kitchen workers had access to different and better types of food. “Eat what you want, whatever you want” (P12). Staff supervisors would purchase special items just for the workers’ consumption (e.g. potato chips, Danish) and/or prepared foods that were not cooked for the general population (e.g. cheeseburgers, grilled cheese). “If you are working in the kitchen, you have it made” (P5). Women also appreciated having access to table seasonings (e.g. salt and pepper) and condiments (e.g. butter).

Kitchen job hustles. Another benefit of kitchen work was the opportunity to smuggle food items into the general population: “You can also make a hustle from working in the kitchen. Like dried onions, butter, cheese, cereal, sugar, seasoning – all of that right there is just money” (P24). Unlike at the entrance/exit to the cafeteria, kitchen workers reported that they were not regularly searched on the way to and from work. “A big block [of butter]. They wrap it up, like a lot of people, cause you wear, like the little cook’s, chef coat, and they put it in that, wrap it up, and just walk with it, you know” (P1). Not all participants engaged in this type of hustle. Five of the 21 women who had worked in the kitchen insisted that they never took any food out of the kitchen, either because they were committed to following the rules or feared getting caught and losing their jobs. “Absolutely not. No - and you get fired if you got caught...No, I never did [smuggle out food] ‘cause I wanted my job, but there was girls that did that and a couple of them got caught and got fired” (P2). Indeed, women caught stealing were punished but women noted that this punishment tended to be short-lived and offenders were often able to get their jobs back at a later date.

Commissary jobs. On the other end of the inmate pay scale is commissary work, one of the most coveted jobs in the prison. Commissary workers are paid \$ 0.30/hour. Employees are assigned to stations where they are in charge of allocating specific items. As a paper bag with the inmate's order moves down the line, employees deposit any items from their assigned station that are on the list. These jobs contrast with the kitchen jobs in two major ways. For one, commissary work is relatively well-paid and not physically taxing. Because of this, the jobs are considered desirable and the posts are usually occupied by women with longer sentences, who are incarcerated long enough for a vacancy to arise and have demonstrated a high level of responsibility and integrity in other positions. A second point of contrast is that the employees work under very close surveillance: They are strip searched on the way in and out of work and monitored by cameras at all times.

This combination of the job's high desirability and intense surveillance means that food is not stolen from this workplace. Employees do not want to risk losing these well-paid jobs and, even if they did, it is nearly impossible to remove items undetected:

I never had a commissary job. I wish I could have got that job. ... I would never steal out of no commissary. Because you get caught in commissary, they are no joke in commissary...It's like working in a bank...It's a luxury job and then you gotta have time over your head to get that job. 5 or more [years]...If you doing life, that's a person that you can trust. A person that's doing life, you can trust that person in that, in that kind of job like that cause... they're there...they need that job, it's like working in a bank. (P12)

These comments from P12 reflected the awe afforded to this "luxury" position. P12 never worked in commissary but clearly had hoped to get a position and had assessed what might qualify one for this coveted job. Her comparison of the commissary store to a bank illuminated

the value of food inside the prison: In this cashless society, food is money, the primary form of currency to be earned, stolen and/or traded. While opportunities to smuggle and steal food from this workplace were limited/non-existent, the one participant who had worked in commissary reported that supervisors might occasionally allow workers to consume surplus or novelty items during their shifts.

Groundskeeping jobs. One of the study participants, P26, held a position with the grounds crew as a landscaper during her most recent incarceration (e.g. mowing the grass, planting flower beds). She reported two aspects of this position that were related to food. One, at lunchtime the grounds crew received trays from the cafeteria and ate in the tool shop or at a picnic table on the grounds. She perceived this arrangement as a benefit because she enjoyed eating in this relatively quiet, open space. Two, she described volunteering to maintain a small tomato garden in the greenhouse and picking wild berries during the summer.

Classroom food. The prison's education programs can also be a source of food. Three of the study participants were enrolled in a six month culinary class at YCI. This class includes only a dozen inmates at a time and is considered a desirable opportunity so there is always a waitlist for spots. The women I spoke to who went through the class included P20, who was incarcerated for 12 years, P1 who reported being able to get the class because of her young age, and P28 who thought she was admitted because she was pregnant at the time. These women described learning how to cook a variety of food items, including pizza, with homemade dough, meatball and chicken dishes, and desserts. P20 used the skills she learned there to earn her promotion to Head Cook in the kitchen, and P1 hoped to use the training to get a job upon her release. In addition to this professional development, the ability to cook and eat homemade foods was greatly appreciated: "We didn't make anything like they would have in jail. You

know, like, we made, like, outside food, pizza, a lot of good stuff, you know, salads” (P1). All three of the women reported bringing items that they cooked in class back to the tier, but this was more of a special occasion than a regular habit since the students in the class usually ate all the food that they prepared.

In other classes, food is not part of the curriculum, but can still find its way into the classroom. P14, for example, reported that there was a microwave in her classroom where students would occasionally heat up commissary soups they brought in from the tier. She also spoke about eating left-overs from the teacher’s lunch:

We used to get her for her lunch, if she had something left over. [Laughs]...She could bring her own food and, like, sometimes she’ll be like, “Eww, I don’t like this.” And I’ll taste it and I’ll eat it...she had to drink this funny tasting yogurt pudding or something.

And I tasted it – it was good! I ate it. (P14)

Others told stories about using classroom, church and recreational spaces to trade/share food with women from other housing units.

Cell cooking. In all 30 narratives, women reported using food purchased from the commissary and/or removed from the cafeteria, workplace or classroom to cook in their housing units. Cooking in the cells and day rooms was a central activity of prison life that women described in great detail. This cooking was generally a collaborative effort in which several women contributed food items and/or prepared the food. Women used water from the sink in the cell or a hot pot in the day room and created cooking tools from items that were provided for other purposes (e.g. hair dryers, trash bags).

Recipes. The three creations that were most frequently described by study participants included: soups, mufungos and dessert cakes. At about \$0.25 per package, Chinese-style wheat

noodles (Ramen Noodles, Oodles of Noodles) were one of the least expensive, and from that, most frequently purchased food items on the commissary list. Women reported eating the noodles uncooked as a snack - “Peanut butter on raw Ramen Noodles” (P15) – and used them as a base for elaborate soup dishes:

Let me tell you how we do cooking. They give us trash, clear trash bags, and then we have a hot pot. What we would do was take our noodles, and since I worked in the kitchen, I would get chicken bits. You could also order off the commissary you could get sauces and whatever, but you take it and mix it with the noodles; you pour water in there, you twist up the bag, put it in something. Sometimes you wrap it in a towel and sit it there till the noodles get soft. The food will get soft. That’s how we cook. (P3)

Poppas and mufungos are two names used for another commonly prepared dish with a potato chip base. Hot water is combined with crushed potato chips to create a flat crust upon which various items are added:

You get bags of chips and you crush them up and you put water in it and then you make it like a burrito... You use the bag to roll it out and then you put anything you want on it, meat, cheese, anything, you put in noodles, rice, whatever you want. And then you use the bag and you roll it and then you roll it really tight, squeeze out all the excess water and then you put it in the hot boiling water for while, you cook it, get everything hot and melted and everything and then you take it out, you let it cool and you cut it and its like ... You can call it a mufungos...They’re pretty good, you put whatever you want in them...(P5)

The two dishes described below, Chicken Alfredo and Hamburger Helper, are further examples of the types of creative concoctions that women pulled together:

They sold chicken in a bag on commissary...we would have Saturday night dinner where we would make soup with, they had a provolone cheese bar. We would put that in and the chicken and we would have like a Chicken Alfredo. (P2)

Saturdays we get hamburger. So I would take the hamburger back. All of us would go to chow and we'll get our hamburgers and we'll bring the hamburgers back from the chow hall. And then when it was time to cook, I'll chop up the hamburger and I'll use the Roman (sic) Noodles, and just some sauce, and make Hamburger Helper. (P24)

Participants also reported preparing condiments to complement cafeteria meals. For example, P22 described inmates making barbeque sauce by combining grape jelly and hot sauce and smuggling the sauce into the cafeteria on chicken day.

In addition to these “main dishes,” women described doctoring cookies and snack cakes to create elaborate sweets. The “Fatty Girl Cake” was a frequently described specialty:

They got the honey buns when you order those and they call ‘em fatty cakes and you put peanut butter on it and Fluff... And they make a cake with it...It's fattening. ..They fix up and they put anything on top of it. Like Skittles, Snicker Bars, anything they put on top of the cake and they make a cake that's got all this stuff on it. So they call it fatty girl cake. (P4)

Participants also described making treats for the holidays:

For Easter, she did stuff with chocolates and stuff like that for Easter. She melted the chocolates and made bunnies ... with the blow dryer...Yeah, a Hershey's bar with a blow dryer and the hot water. Let it sit, dry. Air dry, you know, with the cold air, dries it out. ... Structure it, with her hands. (P19)

For many women, this cooking was a source of pride and admiration:

You should see how they cook in Niantic. They cook in bags with the hot pot and it's amazing the stuff that you can really cook. I've eaten stuff there that is better than some food in restaurants, seriously...A girl made me Nacho Bell Grande, one time. And I'm like, "What?" She's like, "Nacho Bell Grande, like at Taco Bell." And it was better than the nachos I had at Taco Bell... I'd be like, "Oh my God! That's so good!" (P8)

However, these cooking experiences were not always recalled in a positive light. P25 remembered inmates becoming very sick from eating poppas: "It's like potato chips with hot water...the way all the food was, people, I guess, it was just like they would get disgusted and they would just throw up." Others felt the group process was dirty and preferred to cook alone.

Cooking tools. In spite of all the cooking that takes place in the housing units, these spaces are not designed to accommodate or encourage cooking. Women are not provided with cooking utensils nor are there stoves or ovens. Participants described improvising, turning the equipment and supplies to which they did have access into cooking tools. For example, mirrors were used as cutting utensils: "We would break the plastic mirror in half, pull the, you know, the aluminum piece off, clean it up and that was our cutter" (P24). Prison regulations prohibit these acts of re-invention. When anything is used for a purpose other than that for which it has been officially designated, it becomes contraband:

The Fluff container, after the Fluff is empty, is considered contraband... So people would pour the rice, seasonings, onions and stuff in it and close it [slaps hands together]. Alright, to let it absorb the seasoned water and stuff. And...there are ways of cooking, but the ways we cook, if we get caught, can be a contraband ticket. It could be "Destruction of State Property" [disciplinary] ticket. Because the trash bags are supposed

to be used just for that. Trash. Your Fluff container, when it's empty, is supposed to be discarded. Not, not saved to be teflon coated cookware. You know? (P7)

The commissary store does sell small plastic bowl for women to prepare food and eat from.

These bowls, however, are too small to prepare communal dishes with many ingredients.

Therefore, women reported using clean trash bags to assemble and cook soups and rice dishes.

Hot water is a critical tool in the preparation and heating of food. Women can get hot water by running the hot faucet at the sink in their cells. In addition, there are hot pots – large stainless steel urns that plug into the wall – in the day rooms of the housing units that women have access to during Rec and at other times when cell doors are open. Hot water is used to prepare coffee, soups, rice, poppas/mufungos and other dishes. In addition, hot water is used to warm up food that had been removed from the cafeteria (e.g. chicken, hamburgers) or delivered to the cell cold. Women described sealing the food in a trash bag and placing the bag either on a bowl of hot water, directly inside the hot pot basin or on the inverted lid of the hot pot.

Similarly, food was kept cold by placing it in a trash bag in the toilet. Other options to cook and warm up food included using blow dryers and the radiators:

Put it [the food] in there [paper bag], put the blow dryer, clip the bag with our ID clips on the side, so it acts like a little oven, and we'd let that cook for like a half and hour and it would get crispy. (P25)

One time they got a hold of some Steak 'Ems...They actually put the Steak 'Ems on top of the heaters in plastic bags....And they kept flipping it back over. And I could smell 'em. And see it turning brown and it was actually was hot and they actually cooked them. (P22)

Cooking groups. Because dishes include multiple ingredients and most inmates have limited resources, it is common for women to cook together in groups. Women who cooked well were recognized and respected for these culinary talents. Study participants described giving ingredients to these cooking experts for preparation: “The people that really know how to make it, like who’ve been there the longest. They know how to make the stuff. That person would make it” (P4). Participants who had been in the chef role expressed both pride and exasperation in this designation:

I cooked for a lot of people....Sometimes I cook for like 20 people...it’s fun sometimes, but sometimes you don’t feel like doing it. I love to cook, it would be fun, but I had my days where I was like, listen, I’m not even making me nothing to eat today. (P24)

Whether participants described cooked in groups or alone, detailed narratives about cell cooking were common across the sample. Their recipes and cooking tools reflected creative ingenuity and elicited expressions of both pride and disgust. Willingness to engage with others in the cooking process varied, and women with cooking talent were held in high esteem.

Other Spaces: Foodways in the Special Units

During the course of their incarceration, women may be moved from the General Population into a special housing unit. Serious disciplinary infractions, for example, may land women in the Segregation Unit, known as “Seg.” They may spend time in the medical unit, if they develop acute physical or mental health problems. Special therapeutic units are available for women who want to address addiction issues or prepare for re-entry. Each of these special units has unique food system features.

Segregation. Placement in the Segregation Unit is the most severe form of prison discipline. Decisions to send inmates to this unit are made by a Disciplinary Board based on the

nature of the charge and the inmate's prison behavioral history. Housing in Segregation is not necessarily solitary confinement; each Seg cell can accommodate two women. There is a toilet and sink in the cell. There are two different classifications of Segregation. In the first, women are held in a cell almost 24 hours a day. They are allowed out of the cell only three times a week for a shower. Women in this type of Seg cannot purchase food from commissary, but are allowed to buy cosmetic items if they have money on their books. Since women in this classification cannot work, they will only have money if it is being sent to them from home or if they have money saved from wages earned when they were in the General Population. Women classified to the second type of Segregation are in the cell 22 hours a day; they are allowed out for Rec and a shower, one hour in the morning and one hour in the afternoon. In this classification, women can purchase both food and cosmetics from commissary, provided that loss of commissary privileges is not a part of their punishment, which it often is. It is also possible for women in this category to be employed as tier workers for the Seg Unit.

All the women in Seg – regardless of classification – have meals delivered three times a day to their cells through a slot in the cell door. The food on the tray is the same meal that is being served in the cafeteria. Participants who had lived in Seg reported that the food was often cold by the time it reached them: “It’s extremely cold. Because they let it sit there, undelivered... You never gonna get hot food unless you go to the cafeteria. You never get hot food there.... They give it to you when they feel like it” (P22). Women also reported that the food on the tray was often mixed together en route: “ They just serve it to you through the door and a lot of times, the take out trays are, everything’s flipped all over each other. Like the cookies will have sauce on it” (P25). After about 20 minutes, staff (either COs or tier workers) come back to collect the trays and uneaten food. As is true in other parts of the prison, inmates

are prohibited from keeping cafeteria food in their cells. Still, women said they attempted to hoard food. If food items are uncovered by COs during cell checks, the food is thrown out and/or the inmate may receive a disciplinary ticket.

Medical unit. Women who become ill may be moved to the medical unit for care. Here, food is also delivered on trays from the cafeteria. The mechanics of cafeteria tray service have been described elsewhere and will not be repeated here. The meals include the same items that are served in the cafeteria: There is no special “medical” menu for the medical unit. Individual women may receive special food allowances for specific medical conditions (e.g. pregnancy, diabetes), but these menus are in force no matter where the women are housed. One participant, P17, spent 24 hours in Q15, a room inside the medical unit where women with acute psychiatric problems are temporarily housed for observation. To guard against suicide attempts, women in Q15 wear only a gown with Velcro closures and no eating utensils are provided with the cafeteria meal:

They give you these Styrofoam “to go” containers. And that’s it. It was always ice cold. And, no spork. You had to break off the corner of the container... My first – it was dinner time by the time I actually gotten out to Q15 and it was chili for dinner. And I’m like, “How am I supposed to eat this?” [The CO] said, “Break off the corner of the container.” (P17)

After 24 hours in Q15, women are transferred to what P17 referred to as the “Psych Ward”, also inside in the medical unit, where standard tray service, including utensils, is provided.

Therapeutic communities. YCI has several special housing units that are considered therapeutic communities. Women living in these units have access to psycho-social programming and addiction counseling. The food systems in these spaces are the same as in the

General Population: Women can buy commissary items and go to the cafeteria three times a day. One small difference is that women are permitted to bring commissary coffee and snacks to program meetings within the Unit. Women also reported that cake was provided to celebrate program graduation.

Other spaces. In addition to the principal prison food spaces described here, there are other smaller arenas that are defined by the consumption of food, or lack thereof. For example, no food is permitted in the visiting room. While other state prison systems install vending machines in these areas, no food is permitted in the rooms in CT where inmates meet with family and friends. Although P28 was allowed to bottle-feed her infant when he was brought to visit her by State foster care workers. Finally, the spaces where COs eat their meals can be sources of food for the inmates. Women reported that COs would give them leftover food directly: “Sometimes they used to give me some...They’d be just like, here [P20], you want this? And it’s like, Yeah, real food, yeah!” (P20). On other occasions, participants felt the COs would purposely leave food behind after eating, allowing the inmates to consume the scraps: “Say I’m eating right here and I’m a CO. I’d put it like right there and just walk away. Like, you know, I didn’t give it to you. That’s what a lot of them did...” (P1). P8 reported that some tier workers would go through the trash as they cleaned to collect uneaten food after the COs disposed of their meals.

Summary

The primary foodways at YCI are centered around the cafeteria and commissary. Additional food is procured by women through workplace assignments. While cooking in cells and on the tier is largely prohibited, inmates do cook regularly in these spaces using items purchased through commissary and smuggled from the cafeteria or kitchen. Access to food in

restricted areas, including intake units, medical, and segregation, is limited to cafeteria food brought in on trays. Still, even in these restricted spaces, the variety of food provided at YCI is much greater than what is offered in local lock-ups and courthouses where simple sandwiches and juice are the standard fare. On the surface, these prison foodways are fairly simple and straightforward, similar to systems in other institutions like schools and hospitals. An important difference, however, between this prison space and other institutions is that these foodways are the only food to which prisoners have access. For people held in prison, there is no going home for dinner or out to lunch. In the context of these confined lives, prison foodways take on tremendous meaning and importance. The next chapters will begin to unpack this complexity.

Chapter 4: Negative Foodways

Foodways are socially constructed systems designed to obtain, distribute, prepare and consume food (Counihan, 1999; Counihan & Van Esterik, 2008a). As I described in the preceding chapter, formal and informal rules, and the extent to which people choose to comply with these rules, create and perpetuate food systems (Wood, 1995). In this chapter, I move from the description of prison food systems to an analysis of the meanings that can be derived from and assigned to prison foodways. People who create these systems, live, work and eat within them, and learn about the systems second-hand, may assign various meanings to foodways and the manner in which they are executed. I chose to analyze six themes that run through the participants' narratives – apathy, hunger, punishment, resistance, relationships, and good/healthy – because they were themes that participants spoke about at length, are relevant to public policy, and engage existing academic discourse about prison life.

Most of these thematic analyses begin with an extended participant quote about prison food. I have chosen these quotes for their richness of content and potential for explication. Sometimes the stories are typical, embodying the theme and representing a common experience or emotion (Braun & Clark, 2006). Other times they are atypical, outliers that offer opportunities for knowledge building through contrast (Braun & Clark, 2006). Sometimes, they are simply good stories; narratives that stand out in the data for their attention to detail, description and plot that offer especially clear windows into women's experiences of prison foodways (Braun & Clark, 2006). My interpretation of these passages is then shared, along with data from other participants that complement or contrast with the featured story, to explicate a specific theme. For some themes, for which I could not identify an emblematic quote, the analysis begins with my own presentation of the theme. Throughout these analyses, my premise is that prison

foodways shape women's perceptions of themselves, the prison institution and, more generally, the State. In this chapter, I describe what I have coined as "Negative Foodways." These are food systems that participants reported as humiliating, degrading and dismissive. Later, in Chapter 5, I will explore "Positive Foodways," illustrating how food systems were used to build a sense of autonomy, forge relationships, and construct positive self-narratives. Chapter 6 describes how narratives were used to build racialized narratives.

"Let Them Eat Cake": The Apathetic Nonsensical Institution

The warden took away bread too. Like you used to get bread with every meal, now you get bread once a day and that's...it because he said the inmates are getting too heavy. But it can't, I'm like *it doesn't make any sense* because it's what you buying on the commissary that makes you heavy, it's not the measly three meals that you're getting, that he doesn't want to give us bread now.

I can't even understand the concepts of that. When you have those choice pieces of bread, it's crucial because you are so hungry when you're first coming in. Especially when you are coming off drugs and now you have been running on the streets for months or years and you haven't been eating and now the drugs are out of your system and you're hungry. I mean I used to get hungry where I was shaking, I would almost feel like I was going to pass out. But *they don't care*. Like you can't say, "Oh my God, I'm so hungry I'm gonna pass out" and they'll say, "Oh here, have an apple." No, *they don't care*.

No bread...but they'd give you cake, cake. And I'm like, you don't want to give us bread, but you give us a big ass piece of cake and you get cake every day in jail, almost every day you get cake. You get it almost every morning for breakfast, a piece of cake with your oatmeal, a piece of cake with your freno, a piece of cake with your eggs, a piece of cake with everything. But, you can't have bread. *I just can't understand the logic behind the menu.* (P5, *emphasis added*)

Legend has it that when word reached the palace that the peasants were starving because they had no bread, the 18th century French queen, Marie Antoinette, replied, "*Let them eat cake.*" Her suggestion that hungry people who had no access to bread would be able to eat cake reflected a lack of understanding about the constraints of poverty and the hardships that the French citizens were enduring. Further, her snide dismissal of the people's concerns showed

little concern or empathy for their plight. In fact, there is no evidence that the Queen ever uttered this phrase, but the story survives as an example of the insensitivity of the State and the disconnect that can exist between the powerful elite and the masses. The narrative above, from my interview with P5, echoed Antoinette's misappropriated quote: P5 complained that prisoners were hungry because the warden "took away" the bread. Inmates' pleas for food fell on deaf ears because the staff "don't care." In a logic that "doesn't make any sense" to P5, the institution provided cake instead of bread, a frivolous dessert that could not satiate the inmates' appetites. This quote exemplified a major theme in the participants' foodways narratives that: 1) the correctional system does not care about the people in its custody, and 2) its policies do not make sense.

Apathy. Fourteen (14) of the 30 participants used foodways narratives to illustrate what they perceived as the correctional system's apathy towards inmates. During police lock up, the attitude of the staff about the bagged meals was "You take what you get. If not, then you starve" (P21). Food was not provided the first night in medical during the intake process because the staff did not care if the new inmates were hungry (P13). Food was unhealthy and cold because "no one cares" (P20). The Disciplinary Board did not consider P1's allergies to cafeteria food when they suspended her commissary privileges, telling her: "That's not our problem." People who were moved to the medical unit due to illness were not offered any type of special meal because "they don't care" (P5). It was futile to report the incident when commissary items were stolen because "COs don't really care who - they like, it's jail" (P4).

This apathy was generally characterized as detrimental to the inmates, but it could also be beneficial. As P6 explained, at times the COs' lack of concern meant that women were able to bend the rules:

Some COs don't even care. I knew not to do it [cook in cell] when the main counselors were there from 7 to 3. I know not to be cooking like that. But the 3 to 11 staff. They've been there for years, about to retire. They don't even care. (P6)

Similarly, P2 recounted how some COs would allow women to cook illicitly with trash bags and hot water because they "just didn't care" (P2).

Women portrayed the institutional apathy in these stories as coming from a place of laziness and nonchalance not cruelty. In P5's cake-bread narrative, she did not assert that bread was taken off the menu as a form retribution just that, for some reason that defied logic, they "don't want to give us bread." In P24's discussion of the baloney sandwiches served during court runs, she explained that "You can possibly get a sandwich that's sour. Done been sittin' too long." P24 did not suggest that anyone intended for the sandwiches to be "sour," rather that no effort was made either way – to keep the sandwiches fresh or rotten – the system was apathetic. After all, for the system to be intentionally cruel would have required the personnel to be invested, to show feeling. Most participants maintained that the food systems demonstrated that the institution simply did not care.

As a counterpoint, women did occasionally recount foodway incidents that suggested the institution, or at least individual staff, did care about the women. These moments where inmates were offered empathy stood out in women's minds and built some faith in the system. For example, P3 had an untreated chronic pain issue when she was at YCI. Unable to get a prescription from the prison doctor, she stole sugar while working in the kitchen and traded it with other inmates for their 800mg Motrin pills. When a CO found sugar and the Motrin pills on P3 while doing a strip search, she was issued a ticket and sent to the Disciplinary Board. After P3 explained the situation, telling the Board that she felt she had to trade stolen sugar in order to

“self-medicate” because her pain was so severe, the ticket was dropped. Here she reflected on this leniency:

Actually there are people [at YCI] that are human ‘cause... I actually thought, when I first go there, that people are just inhumane. You know, the authority, the COs.

Inhumane. All I heard was, “I don’t care. I don’t care.” Then I actually realized they don’t care. You know what I mean? I mean this is not a place where people care... But as I got within the system and seeing how things work, there are people that are human.

You know what I mean? He [member of Disciplinary Board] understood. I mean, I guess in his mind he’s like, “I probably would have done the same thing.” (P3)

P3 left this hearing with the Disciplinary Board with the impression that “there are people that are human” working in the system, an impression that negated her earlier perception that “this is not a place where people care.” She felt that she had connected with the CO as a fellow “human” and perceived his response as empathetic: He “probably would have done the same thing.” This interaction changed her perception of the entire institution and led her to believe that some staff was, in fact, human and capable of caring about her situation. This transformative moment illustrates the potential power of positive foodways interaction.

Nonsense. The second dimension of P5’s cake-bread narrative – that the system made no sense – travelled together with the allegations of apathy. Participants often concluded that the system was apathetic after deliberating the rationale behind specific food policies and finding no reason to explain them. For example, in P5’s mind there was no logical reason that explained why bread was removed from the cafeteria menu, “it doesn’t make any sense.” With no explanation in sight, P5 concluded that “they don’t care.” The nonsensical narrative also reinforced the lack of intention that characterized the apathy narrative: No efforts were being

made on behalf of the inmates, even to create thoughtful policy, because to put forth such intention would require that administrators cared about the women. P1 stated that she had “no idea” why commissary rules restricted inmates to five cans of tuna per week. P5 could not explain the rationale for not allowing women leaving for court runs to go to breakfast in the cafeteria: “You get a bagged breakfast which I don’t know why they don’t let you go to breakfast [in the cafeteria] because you don’t leave until after breakfast is way over.”

Cafeteria policies also did not make sense to the participants. P20 was one of many women who criticized the rules prohibiting inmates from taking food from the cafeteria or getting extra portions, even when there was extra food that was being thrown out: “They don’t want to feed it to the girls. It didn’t make sense to me.” Similarly, P27 thought it was “crazy” that prison food policy prohibited second servings even when there was extra food that would be thrown out. P17 puzzled over the fact that COs would throw out the food that woman tried to remove from the cafeteria: “Even a perfectly good apple or orange that somebody else could have eaten.” Reflecting on the 12 hour stretch between dinner and breakfast, P2 could find no reason why inmates were not allowed to bring snacks from the cafeteria: “They’re allowed commissary so it’s not a question of bringing ants in or anything like that. I don’t know the reasons for that...why can’t you bring a bag of cereal back?” In all these cafeteria narratives, prison policy was constructed and experienced by the women as nonsensical.

As demonstrated in P5’s cake/bread narrative, the reasoning behind menu choices and nutritional planning was also challenged. P26 questioned why the court run sandwiches could not be made with more nutritious bread:

Always white bread. Which doesn’t make any sense to me either because white bread has all that sugar in it and they are going to complain about weight and everything but

you don't want to give us a healthy bread, you'd rather give us white bread which is the worst kind of bread you can give someone...(P26).

To P26, white bread was clearly unhealthy, "all that sugar in it," yet for a reason that she could not fathom, the institution "would rather give us white bread." Again, there was no allegation of cruelty in her remarks, it just "doesn't make any sense." P6 reported that while the prison doctor instructed her to eat fewer white starches, these items figured predominantly on the prison menu: "[MD advised] Don't eat so much rice, and stuff like that, but that's all they give you...potatoes. That's all you're getting, so what you're not going to eat?" Similarly, several women, like P5 in the bread-cake narrative, expressed the belief that commissary snacks, not cafeteria food, caused women to gain weight. From this, institutional attempts to control women's weight by limiting cafeteria portions were deemed pointless. Restricting cafeteria meals only pushed women to consume more commissary food which was largely high-fat, high-sugar snack foods.

Summary. In short, prison food policies were used by participants to construct the correctional institution and its staff as apathetic and nonsensical. The refrain "They just don't care" was repeated throughout these narratives as women described a prison system and administration that they perceived to be indifferent to inmates' pain and suffering. Participants reported that many food policies, including cafeteria rules regarding timing and menu choices, simply made no sense. In these narratives women suggested that the institutional policymakers held prisoners in such low regard that they would not make any effort to address their food-related needs or explain current policies. The rules made no sense to inmates and this lack of reason was understood as an indication that staff couldn't be bothered to straighten out fragmented systems, reinforcing their perceptions of the system and its agents as apathetic.

“Hungrier than a Hostage”: Power and Powerlessness in Prison

[For breakfast before a court-run] They give you one cereal, one milk, and I think they give you a fruit... You do be hungry because it's like, you either gonna eat breakfast or you gonna eat that baloney sandwich. And then, when you come back, it's usually after a lot, you be hungry as hell. Hopefully, you talked with somebody and the CO will let them leave the hot pot on for you to get some hot water when you come back... Hungry as hell. Hungrier than a hostage. (P14)

I would wake up in the middle of the night, my stomach would be so hungry, like I would be starving, I mean my stomach would be, I would wake up cause I was so hungry, that my stomach was like hurting, it was growling really bad like the pit of my stomach felt like it was burning, like it was just... I was starving. (P5)

Study participants described hunger, and even starvation, as a central feature of their incarceration experience. As P14 stated in the preceding passage, “You do be hungry.” Hunger stories like hers, which referred to being “hungry as hell” after returning to the prison from a court run, were common in describing prison spaces where access to food was limited (e.g. intake, court runs, segregation). P5 described being hungry on a daily basis, regardless of her location, especially at night, and other women echoed this experience: “You’re hungry where ever” (P22). In this analysis, I describe two distinct but related experiences of hunger that were shared by study participants. One was a hunger resulting from insufficient food, the other was a hunger produced by powerlessness. The distinction I am making here between these two experiences is not intended to privilege one over the other. Both types of hunger were part of the women’s lived experience and produced physical hunger pains, that burning “in the pit of my stomach” (P5). Further, the distinction between these different types of hunger was also not always clear cut; the narratives overlapped and intertwined as women described their prison experience. Still the distinction, however faint, is useful in organizing and discussing these narratives.

Hungry for food. Participants most frequently reported experiencing hunger during the

first stages of their incarceration and at nighttime. Among newly incarcerated women in lock-up, medical intake and the transitional units, hunger was common because food options and social networks were limited. As new prisoners, participants rarely had money to buy commissary food and their restricted mobility and social networks made it nearly impossible to connect with other inmates to trade or share food. P5 recalled, “You are hungry in jail, especially in the beginning, you are starving,” as did P18: “For the first month and a half that I was in York, I was starving.” Newly incarcerated women did not have the financial or social power to secure sufficient food. In the introductory passage, P14 recognized this power dynamic comparing her hungry self during court runs to a “hostage,” powerless and cut off from all resources. She described how women were only able to avoid hunger after the court run if they had strong social connections - other inmates who were willing and able to negotiate an exception with the correctional officers to “let them leave the hot pot on.” Without these connections, “you just starve” (P4).

Initial hunger. For some, their initial hunger was a continuation of experiences just prior to prison, in the community, when addictions distracted them from eating and consumed their social and financial resources. P26 recalled, “I was starving [in lock-up] because I was hung over... I was just feeding my face...some of the girls come in and they’re starving so they don’t even take the time to smell it.” For others, who had relatively stable eating patterns prior to arrest, hunger began on the inside. P20, for example, described herself as “pretty healthy” at arrest but because she “really didn’t eat anything” during the entire weekend she was in lock-up, she was “really hungry” when she got to YCI. P16 also spoke to this hunger at arrival: “I think it was about 8, maybe 9:00 at night. So, I didn’t eat all day. By then I was getting hungry.” P15 remembered “asking for bread or something in medical at Niantic, ‘cause I was starving and my

stomach was all crazy.” Hunger at arrival continued through intake because meals were not provided that first night and women had no informal sources of food.

Nighttime hunger. Once women were placed in the General Population, hunger became less prevalent because between the cafeteria, commissary and illicit hustles there were multiple opportunities to access food. Still, because their movement and resources were limited, participants described being constantly concerned about hunger, especially during the hours between dinner (4:30 pm) and breakfast (5:30 am): “There be people in there hungry... [after dinner], we starve for the rest of the day unless you have money for commissary” (P4). As P4 suggested, the key to avoiding nighttime hunger was to have snacks, most commonly those purchased from commissary. Women without income from home or prison work to buy commissary could engage in illicit behaviors to secure snack food, namely smuggling food from the cafeteria or trading goods (e.g. prescription medication, trash bags) or services (e.g. hair styling, art work, sex) for snacks. Still, everyone was not able to consistently secure snacks: “A lot people don’t have commissary... they be, you be hungry! You be hungry! You be hungry in there.” (P23). Because there was no food provided by the institution in the 11 hours between dinner and breakfast, women who were unable to buy or hustle snacks experienced hunger at night.

Apathy and nonsense redux. Participants interpreted the prevalence of hunger among the inmates as an indication that the institution did not care about them: “If you say to them, ‘I’m starving, I haven’t eaten in two days.’ Nothing” (P8). They suggested the changes in policy that would be needed to combat inmate hunger were fairly straightforward. That no such changes were made, again signaled that the institution did not care and its policies made no sense. For example, P11 suggested nighttime hunger had a simple solution: “Feed these people and they

wouldn't be going to bed hungry like this...or waking up at 5:30 in the morning, starved.”

Similarly, P14 tried to inject logic into discussion about meal timing:

They don't want you to bring your fruit with you, or stuff like that. But what are we supposed to do? We don't have enough time to eat it. And everybody didn't have commissary...And it's like the last time you feed someone is at 5:00[pm]. What you expect for them to do at 9:00[pm]? They hungry!

The tone of these women's comments reflects their sense of powerlessness and exasperation in the face of institutional control. Using hyperbolic language about starvation and raising their voices, they accentuate what they perceive as the apathetic neglect of the State. P11 implores, “Feed these people.” Participants cast the reasoning behind the institution's disregard for their unfulfilled appetites as ridiculous:

I guess they don't want to make it comfortable. That's what they said, they don't want to make it comfortable for people because then they'll just think that it's OK to come back to jail. But don't nobody want to go back to jail, not for all the food in the world! (P14)

In these comments, P14 highlighted the disconnect between the prison and its inmates that was frequently raised in foodways narratives. The prison does not understand its incarcerated community. P21 shared this hunger story about an incident between the COs and a deaf inmate:

There was this deaf girl...She couldn't hear when they were being buzzed or saying “Chow Time.” She slept through it and she was hungry... She was like doing sign language and then the staff didn't understand her and she started writing it down that she didn't get no food. So they like told her to come down to get it and they just give her a fruit. And they were like real rude about it, they shouldn't do that. She's deaf, how is she supposed to know when to come down? (P21)

Just like the “deaf girl,” inmates were continually telling the institution that they are hungry, and the institution ignored them, did not care or did not understand them, reactions that left the women feeling even more powerless.

Hungry for power. These narratives about hunger illustrated that there were times and places where women were unable to secure sufficient food to satiate their appetites. However, given that prison cafeteria meals offer, on average, more than 2,500 calories a day and weight gain is common among prisoners (Dong & Tang, in press), participants’ reports of hunger and even starvation raise a question: How is it that participants experienced such profound hunger, even when they were living in the General Population and had broad access to food? Here, the idea that hunger describes not just access to food, but access to power, is helpful: “There is no more absolute sign of powerlessness than hunger” (Counihan, 1999, p. 7).

Control over food. In women’s narratives, hunger, even in the presence of sufficient food, was inversely associated with control. When women felt they had no control over their timing, pace and content of their food, the meals would fail to satiate:

I was hungry every night...Rushing to eat and the nasty looking food...I always left the chow hall hungry. I don’t know if it was because you had to inhale it, and it didn’t hit my stomach, but I always hungry in there. And it’s all carbs: pasta, bread, uh – what did they give us a lot of – fareno, oatmeal. (P17)

In spite of all the “carbs: pasta, bread,” P17 was still “always hungry” after cafeteria meals. Because she was “rushing” to eat the “nasty looking food,” it “didn’t hit my stomach.” P26 told a similar story: “You’re trying to eat it fast and there’s no substance to it, it just sort of fills you for a minute and then you’re starving again.” P13 described the breakfast food as plentiful yet “it doesn’t do nothin’ for you” because of the awkward timing: “You get like oatmeal, cake, peanut

butter and a banana. But it then it like...it doesn't do nothin' for you because they feed you so early in the day, you'll eat breakfast 5:30 in the morning." Stripped of the power to decide when, where, what and how fast to eat, women reported that the cafeteria meals – however plentiful - could not satiate their hunger. The State's near-total control over the cafeteria setting, that dictated the contents, timing, and pace of daily meals, inhibited women's ability to regulate their own personal consumption, rendering the food experience unsatisfying.

Meanwhile, women reported that when they were able to control their foodways, even a small snack could satisfy them. For example, P2 recalled that just a "few crackers" from commissary were enough to keep her full: "If you were hungry or anything you can have a few crackers to kind of hold you over." Hunger was managed not just by increasing intake but also by increasing control over food consumption:

You learn to stretch your things. You don't eat as much as you would eat at home.

You're in prison, you have to sacrifice. You save. This is what you're gonna eat and if you're, you just pray to God that you're not too much hungrier after that... You learn to discipline yourself. This is what I'm eating. If I'm hungry, maybe it's my imagination.

I'll drink a cup of juice or some water. (P22)

In contrast to the thousands of rushed, unchosen calories in the cafeteria that could not satiate appetites, small snacks over which the women felt a sense of control could manage hunger. When P2 and P22 felt in control of their eating, their hunger decreased.

Control over others and self. As has been described, hunger is an indication of limited financial and social resources. The study participants' narratives reflected an understanding of this association between hunger and power. They described hungry inmates as weak, unable to successfully adjust to and navigate the prison environment:

In jail, food makes or breaks people. Commissary makes or breaks people. It does. It controls relationships, friendships. It controls people not liking people or people, sexual favors have been done for food...I seen a girl do something nasty for a jar of peanut butter one time. Wasn't even a full jar of peanut butter. Seriously. A sexual favor... Because she was that hungry. (P8)

In a system where “food makes or breaks people,” women who lacked food, who were without the financial resources, social connections or individual ingenuity to satiate their hunger, were forced to do “something nasty” for snacks. Hunger was a sign of disadvantage and powerlessness.

The participants' shared understanding of the social location of hungry people at the bottom of the inmate hierarchy was used by the women to rank themselves within this social system. Specifically, participants used hunger narratives to describe themselves as not hungry or not as hungry as other inmates in order to distance themselves from those they perceived as powerless. For example, in talking about the prison intake process, P8 said that heavy drug users were easily identifiable by their extreme hunger: “They are on runs where... you see it on them. Their faces are a mess, they're picked out, they're just hungry, hungry.” She used this description of drug-induced street hunger – a hunger that was easily recognizable on “their faces” – to illustrate the gravity of these women's situations and ameliorate her own social standing. For P8, a middle-aged opiate addict with a long history of multiple incarcerations, the hungry women in her narrative were a comparative tool. She may have been badly off at arrest (running the streets, using heroin), but there were other women who came in even worse: “picked out” and “hungry.” Her derogatory description of the hungry allowed her to position herself above this group, in possession of marginally more power and control.

While P8 used the hunger of others to construct her social position, P26 used the story of her own hunger. P26 described herself as an alcoholic who was unhealthy and out of shape at arrest. Her hunger during lock up (“starving...just feeding my face”) was both a physical state and a metaphor for her sickness, a key descriptor of her rock-bottom self. While incarcerated, she dedicated her time to work, yoga practice and healthy eating: “I stopped the pasta, no rice, no white stuff, just got all that carb out of the way....And then yoga every day for about an hour and half every day, sometimes more.” Her positive food narrative about making healthy food choices was one of recovery, she was proud of the changes she had made in her life. Her advice to other inmates about how to overcome hunger was to “eat it slow, digest it:”

The more you shovel in, the faster you eat, your brain isn’t even processing that it’s eating. So you’re gonna be starving in 20 minutes again because you only get so much time to sit and eat a meal. You don’t have to eat everything. Eat it slow, digest it... You get up, you have a glass of water, you keep it moving. And then you’re body will get used to that and eventually it doesn’t need all of those calories. (P26)

In contrast to the hungry character in lock up who was “just feeding her face,” her healthy self was no longer hungry, eating slowly and deliberately: In control. The contrast was a sharp illustration of the extent of her recovery.

Summary. Hunger was an extremely common theme in the participants’ narratives, a reflection of the inmates’ lack of access to both food and power. Stories about hunger during their initial intake and at night speak to the vulnerability that women experienced in these moments. During intake, the women were in a new environment without family and friends, stripped of their personal belongings, powerless. They had no social or financial resources, they were hungry. Similarly, hunger resurfaced at night when they found themselves alone in their

cells. P5 recalled, “I would wake up in the middle of the night, my stomach would be so hungry...I was starving.” Their inability to access food during these times was interpreted as a sign that the prison did not care about them and/or that prison food policies were poorly designed. Hunger was also fueled by the lack of control that women felt over the food. While some women drew strength from their ability to overcome their hunger, women who were chronically hungry and unable to effectively manage the prison foodways were vulnerable to ridicule and abuse.

Food and Punishment

I got a ticket one time and it was as embarrassing as hell... I had - for a girl and it was a gift...six balls of coffee, six balls of creamer and like ten twin packs, which are the sugar, wrapped in a hair tie...

I go to Bible Study, she's not there. Now I have all this stuff on me...I'm just going to bring it back...I'm standing up talking to a girl...and these two LTs [Lieutenants] come down in the little truck...[the male CO] threw me up, “Whattayas doing? Where do you live?” ...I said, “Listen, sir” and I tried to talk, he wouldn't let me talk...[The female CO] put me up against the wall and search me...She feels the coffee balls...And I'm like, I'm trying to whisper to her, “Come on man, it's only coffee...” Everybody's comin' up out of Bible Study now, looking at me. It looks like I'm being arrested in jail, like for a drug bust...

[The ticket] wound up getting thrown out... I went through that embarrassment of being put against the wall. Searched... that is how I was treated for trying to give something to a friend...So it was really like how we get treated on the street, exactly....The whole thing was embarrassing (P8)

The theme of punishment was present in the participants' foodways narratives in two distinct, but related, ways. One, prison foodways were described as punishing, a harsh and exacting aspect of the carceral experience. This recognition of food as punishing at YCI is not unique; scholars have understood food as punishment in the prison studies literature: “From the bad old days of ‘bread and water’ punishment diets to the minimal functional variety of contemporary prison fare, prison food is popularly regarded as part of the punitive armory of the

prison experience” (Earle & Phillips, 2012, p. 144). Two, women described the disciplinary consequences of breaking prison foodways rules. In both types of narratives – punishing foodways and foodways punishments – humiliation was a central feature. In the passage above, P8 spoke about the various forms of embarrassment that she experienced during her “coffee bust:” The humiliation of being caught, of being silenced, of being forced to stand against the wall in front of the other inmates, of being reprimanded for trying to help others. While the ticket was eventually thrown out and no official consequences were delivered, P8 did not escape punishment. Her narrative suggested that the COs’ management of the situation produced an experience of acute humiliation and powerlessness that was as harsh a punishment as anything the Disciplinary Board could have issued.

Punishing foodways. While participants constructed prison food policy as apathetic and nonsensical, regardless of the State’s intentions, or lack thereof, prison foodways were often experienced by the women as punishing. Just as manslaughter takes a life, even if the act is accidental, prison foodways were punishing to the inmates regardless of intent. Specifically, a sense of punishment was extracted from both the type of food that was served and the manner in which it was served. In this way, it was not just the food that was perceived as punishing, but the foodways. Punitive aspects of the prison foodways included the timing of meal service, surveillance of food consumption, the ways in which food was served, and cooking systems. Women described these foodways as aggressive and demeaning, one of the many negative features of prison life.

Nasty. In discussing the food throughout the correctional system, women consistently characterized the food as disgusting. For example, here P22 described the “nasty” food served in lock-up: “[A] big piece of something that was called meatloaf...It sucks. It’s nasty. They don’t

put seasoning on it. And they give you black coffee, with no sugar or cream.” Participants assigned similar descriptions to the court-run lunches. P17 described bologna and cheese sandwiches “you wouldn’t eat” and a warm drink. P26’s description was similar: “If you’re lucky you get some sort of a juice. Usually, it’s a warm, disgusting carton of milk...The juice is, it’s 100% fake...it makes you more thirsty if you drink it. It’s all sugar and it’s terrible.” P25 conveyed a sense of repulsion when she equated the slop which was served in the cafeteria to dog food: “Really you don’t want to eat the slop a lot times because that’s like the worst part. It’s like dog food.” Although the food was perceived as disgusting, for the most part women consumed it, because they were hungry and had no other choice. “You don’t want to eat the slop,” but you do (P25). Women were at the mercy of the State because, as inmates, they had lost the freedom to select, prepare and consume their own preferred foods. A loss of freedom to choose their own foodways was part of the punishment.

Rushed. The amount of time allocated to eat cafeteria meals was a highly contested issue. Women alluded to a policy that defined meals as 20 minutes long but reported being rushed by COs to eat in less than half that time:

[The COs] are standing right there and they’re like, “I don’t see you eatin’. You can’t be eatin’ if you’re talking. Get up, let’s go! You got 5 minutes”...You get 12 minutes to eat. They say 20, but that counts your walk there and your walk back. (P8)

Complaints about being rushed to eat were common in the women’s cafeteria narratives. Eating in the cafeteria was described as a process of “scarf”, “shovel” and “inhale” (P14, P15, P5) – verbs that suggested the human experience of eating was transformed into an unpleasant act which was nonhuman, mechanical or animal-like, devoid of social interaction. “Everybody just learns to shovel it all in... you’re not allowed to talk while you eat” (P15). That COs pushed

women to eat as quickly as possible – “You gotta like inhale that food, literally” (P5) – seemed unnecessary and cruel to the women, a sheer show of power that was humiliating and imposed an additional layer of punishment to the prison experience.

Watched. The timing issue was intertwined with another key characteristic of the cafeteria environment: Surveillance. As P15 described it, “You’ve got like your 15 minutes to eat and 50 COs standing over you and telling you to hurry.” While reports of the specific number of COs and other staff in the cafeteria vary (women’s estimates ranged from 5 to 50), there was consensus that “There’s COs everywhere” (P15) in this space. P23 credited this presence with the relative safety and lack of inmate fighting in the cafeteria:

So many COs that, the shit’s sewed up like it’s... It’s probably three COs when you walk in the door, it’s a CO when you, before you get in the door, and it’s a CO over there by the juices, a COs over there, you know what I’m saying, like two COs in the middle of the aisle, watching you, while you’re eatin’ your food, like, it’s like eight COs in there! It’s not, you, really not, you can’t get shit off in there. (P23)

At the same time, P23 also presented CO watchfulness as unnerving and oppressive, “COs in the middle of the aisle, watching you, while you’re eatin’ your food.” Like children or animals in the zoo, the women were closely watched at mealtime. Women also experienced the watchfulness of other inmates in this space: “It’s like a lot of eyes, always watching everybody, always gossiping, always, like, “Oh, you see that girl right there?”(P25). With all the staff and inmate “eyes” in the cafeteria, the daily ritual of eating meals in this space was transformed into a public performance. This public character of prison eating that participants described stands in contrast to daily meal patterns in the community, which are generally played out in the private, domestic sphere.

The cafeteria's atmosphere of surveillance - "everybody's paying attention"(P11) - was certainly not unique within the prison. A central component of prison life is constant surveillance (Foucault, 1975/1995). It was acutely felt in this space, perhaps because of the close proximity of the watchers, the large number of people in the cafeteria and/or the fact that the inmates were eating. Anyone who has ever tried to eat with someone watching them can attest to the self-consciousness and discomfort that this arrangement can provoke. In short, mealtimes, which are generally a private act involving the self-paced consumption of food, were distorted in the context of incarceration into a rushed, public performance.

Served. The ways in which food was distributed and served at YCI provoked embarrassment and ire among the participants. These foodways gave rise to humiliation because they were often infantilizing, removing women's ability to serve themselves (Sykes, 1958). For example, P3 mentioned that on the morning of court runs, inmates ate cereal directly from "the little box of milk." She went on to say that "sometimes they [COs] would actually pour the milk within the cereal." Similarly, P5 expressed frustration about not being able to go to the cafeteria during the intake period when she was housed in the medical unit:

They were feeding me, I thought I was just getting breakfast, I was like, "Oh, this is nice. I don't have to go to the cafeteria, I get it right in my room, oh great." And then lunch came, and then dinner and I was like, "What the hell is this? Why aren't we going to the chow hall?" (P5)

While the tray service of the medical unit seemed "nice" at first, P5 quickly tired of this arrangement and was irritated that she was not allowed to go to the chow hall. Indeed the cafeteria offered marginally more control over meals than catered trays as women could decline items that they did not want. However, women could not ask for extra portions nor were they

offered substitutions for the items they declined. P3 described the amount of food which they are served as child-like: “I have a grandson that’s seven and it wouldn’t satisfy him...The portion was so small.” With this expression, P3 constructed portion size as a reflection of how the institution diminishes the consumer’s maturity. Small portions are for children and the YCI serving would not even “satisfy” her school-age grandson. The portion size seemed to degrade her sense of adulthood, her grown self.

Cafeteria. Upon arrival to the cafeteria, women picked up a tray and were served the meal items by other inmates who worked in the kitchen. “You don’t really get to pick; you’re just given your food. You take a tray, a drink, and you go sit down.” (P2) The parallel between prison and school cafeterias was not lost on the women: “There’s a line, like in school, they take a spoon and pour it on and you move to the next person that got something. If you want that, they pour it on” (P22). The women’s lack of control over cafeteria servings created some resentment towards the kitchen workers, although ultimately, as P27 suggests below, the women recognized that the workers were acting on institutional orders and their anger was aimed at this authority:

The people who working in the cafeteria act like they don’t, they, “Oh, we’re only allowed to give you this”...You got the dude that runs the chow hall. “You better only be giving them this amount”...And then they give us little cups like this for juice...And if you get caught with more than one cup of juice, forget about it. Forget about it. I’m like, you guys are saving it for what? (P27)

The strictly calibrated serving system degraded both the inmate who was serving and the inmate who was being served. Neither was deemed capable of handling the serving discretion; this power lay with “the dude that runs the chow hall.”

Commissary. In addition to this discussion about cafeteria serving systems, women described the way in which commissary orders were distributed as humiliating. Given the power attached to commissary food – the ability to purchase drugs, services, and supplies, and gain some control over what and when eating occurs - the amount of commissary that people possessed was a key social marker. While systems of trade and exchange between inmates were concealed to avoid CO detection of this illicit activity, the distribution of goods ordered from the commissary store was performed publically, under close surveillance by staff and inmates:

It's in the Commissary building, where we go pick it up...They call your name, they put your bag on the thing. Some people, their bag is just flat, with nothin' – one soup in it, or envelopes...Everybody's looking at your bags... You get, you gotta feel funny, because everybody's always in everybody's business, every day. (P25)

As P25 described, inmates monitored their peers' commissary bags and women with few purchases – a “flat” bag – might find this embarrassing: “You gotta feel funny.” Public distribution of paltry purchases alerted the rest of the community that an inmate had few resources at her disposal: “If you can't provide for yourself in jail, it's like, you the scum of the earth. They talk about you. They look at you funny like, you know what I'm saying?” (P23) While peers might not have needed to witness a flat bag to determine who “can't provide” for themselves, the system of commissary distribution paraded these conditions for all to see. This foodway may not have been created as a form of punishment to humiliate low-resource inmates, but it certainly had that effect.

CO foodstuff. Finally, several women mentioned that the COs could be sources of outside (non-prison) food. These were not formal institutional foodways, like the cafeteria or commissary, but represented informal mechanisms created by the institution's agents. To begin

with, that staff ate outside food at their posts on the tier was described by P8 as “the worst part of being in jail.” She went on to describe this foodway: “[The COs] are on their posts, they bring pizza in, they get it delivered. They’re always eating grinders. They cook eggs, right in front of us. Yeah, it’s a real tease. They are constantly eating in front of you.” While other participants defended the staff’s right to eat at work, P8 constructed this act as a form of deliberate punishment, “a tease,” that further exacerbated the pains of incarceration. Participants reported that COs would sometime share left over food with them: “They’d be just like, here, you want this? And it’s like, Yeah, real food, yeah!” (P20). On other occasions, women felt the COs purposely left food behind after eating in order to allow inmates to consume the scraps:

Say I’m eating right here and I’m a CO. I’d put it like right there and just walk away.

Like, you know, I didn’t give it to you. That’s what a lot of them did... I would never eat it, but a lot of girls did...If they were smart they would eat it there really quick. (P1)

When CO leftovers were not set aside in this way, P8 described how women would go through the trash for this uneaten food: “I’ve known people that have the cleaning job, that literally go into the trash and have taken people’s, some of the COs’ food.” While this type of food distribution could be interpreted as acts of compassion on the part of the COs, efforts made to share food with the inmates, there was a thread of humiliation in these stories. It was a manifestation of their degraded state as inmates, which can be understood as a dimension of their punishment, that women were so desperate for “real food” that they were willing to eat staff scraps, even if they had to pull them from the trash can.

Cooking. On one level, cooking on the tier with items bought from commissary or smuggled from the cafeteria, kitchen or workplace was a restorative act. Women could access a relatively normal moment preparing the food themselves, sharing with whomever they chose,

and eating at their own pace. However, most cooking, beyond narrow allowances for preparing noodle soups and drinks with hot water, was prohibited so women risked disciplinary action by engaging in this behavior. In other words, part of the prison punishment was that this relatively normal, enjoyable activity was not allowed.

Since most cooking was illicit, the prison provided few cooking tools and women were forced to be “creative” in order to prepare more complicated, group dishes. For example, prison policy required that inmates cook in small plastic bowls that could be purchased from commissary. However, these containers were too small to accommodate the multi-ingredient (illicit) dishes that women prepared, especially when they were cooking in a group: “We’re supposed to cook in a bowl...[But] if it’s meat and stuff and all of that stuff doesn’t fit. Like, just one soup fits in the bowl” (P1). With no institutionally sanctioned container to cook with, women used trash bags:

You can throw a lot of soups in the [trash] bag. And you take hot water from the hot water pot, tie it in a knot. And let it sit ‘til it swells up and you eat it. Sounds gross, I know, but that’s just how they cook in bags in jail. (P22)

In addition to having to cook in trash bags, because women did not have access to plates or serving utensils, “We would eat out of a garbage bag” (P23). Participants also reported keeping perishable food cold by wrapping the items in trash bags and placing them in the cell toilets: “Get cold water and put it in the toilet and keep it cold like that. It’s an experience you never want to have to go through.” (P29). That women found themselves in a situation where eating food which had been prepared in garbage bags and stored in the toilet was common reflects how far removed they were from the outside community norms and its foodways. This displacement

can be understood as a form of punishment, situations which degraded inmates by distancing them from socially accepted behavior: “An experience you never want to have to go through.”

Foodways punishment

In addition to describing the punishing aspects of prison foodways, participants talked about the punishments exacted on them for violating prison food policy. Foodways discipline existed along a continuum from a fixed gaze or verbal reprimand to the issuance of a ticket and disciplinary action. In the passage at the top of this section, P8 described getting a ticket for her botched attempt to pass commissary items to another inmate. Her narrative suggested that the COs over-reacted to the incident and the ticket was, in fact, thrown out by the Disciplinary Board. Still, the process of being caught smuggling and searched in front of her peers was humiliating. Only 11 of the 30 women who I interviewed reported ever receiving a disciplinary ticket for offenses related to food, but nearly all of the women reported being verbally reprimanded by COs for food-related behavior and “patted down” for contraband food when leaving the cafeteria. Like P8’s coffee bust story, these incidents were often rife with embarrassment.

Ugelvik’s (2011) description of prison foodways in Norway helps to understand why women found these disciplinary actions to be embarrassing. His work constructs three prisoner prototypes: 1) The Good Prisoner, who follows all the food rules and is disdained by peers for this compliance; 2) The Bad Prisoner, who is consistently punished for blatantly breaking rules and is seen by peers as stupid and immature; and 4) The Smart Prisoner, who is streetwise and able to bend the rules just enough to resist the CO authority without getting caught, thus earning the respect of peers. In the prison environment, neither “The Good” nor “The Bad” persona is desirable. Most inmates wish to present themselves as Smart, undaunted by institutional

authority, crafty enough to break the rules and get away with it (Ugelvik, 2011). When inmates get caught breaking prison food rules – trying to smuggle snacks out to a friend or bringing apples from the cafeteria – they become the idiot.

Humiliation. Participants reported that a common consequence of breaking food rules was to be verbally called out in front of their peers and reprimanded. For example, P8 described what happened when inmates spoke to each other while waiting in line to enter the cafeteria:

You're in chow hall, waiting in line... You see somebody you know... And you might not have seen 'em for six months and you're in jail now and they're in jail.... You go, "Hey! What's up?" [The CO says:] "Go back. Get out of the line and go back to your unit. You're not eating." Now, I've heard that that's against the rules. That they can't send you back with no food. (P8)

In this story, the inmate's punishment for talking in line was to leave the line and go back to her unit, denying her the meal to which she was entitled. Like some of the foodways described above, this punishment infantilized the inmate by evoking the common childhood consequence of going to bed without dinner and may have been embarrassing for her. The fact that this punishment was delivered in front of the other women waiting in line made it even more degrading. Similarly, when P13 talked back to a CO after he pressured her to eat more quickly, she was directed to "go over there and sit down" and then issued a ticket:

I was in the chow hall, eatin', and he was like, "You need to hurry up, you been in here long enough." I said, "I've only been in here 5 minutes." "Who are you getting smart with?... Get over there, get up and go over there and sit down." I went over there and sat down. He took my badge, wrote me a ticket... They have no life, they're miserable so they want to make us miserable. (P13)

P13 believed that the goal of this disciplinary action was to undermine her emotional state, “to make us miserable.” Humiliation as a consequence was articulated by P3 in her description of what can happen if an inmate gets caught trying to smuggle food from the cafeteria:

If you got stopped and they ask you a question, and then they searched you and seeing that you did have something. Sometimes they would give you a ticket or sometimes they would actually make you stand up against the wall with your head against the wall.

“Stand up, stand up with your head against the wall.” A humiliation thing. (P3)

Like a child with a dunce cap in the corner, women were made to stand with their “head against the wall” for attempting to remove cafeteria food. With these punishments, the institution used humiliation to re-assert its power over the inmates and to discourage future attempts at evading this control.

Body searches. Another humiliating punishment used to enforce food policy was body searches. The first type of body search was the pat down. In P8’s coffee bust narrative, she described the “embarrassment of being put against the wall [and] searched.” Participants frequently discussed being patted down as they exited the cafeteria. COs surveyed the inmates as they left the cafeteria and pulled some women from the line to pat them down to see if they were carrying any food. Because pat-downs were conducted on suspicion and at random, women could undergo this examination any time they left the cafeteria:

They [COs] would shake ‘em [inmates] down, they would pat people down. They would look you up and down and see if you had any lumps or anything sticking out or your pockets or whatever. They would pat you down.... Well, after awhile they stopped patting me down, ‘cause they [COs] started to get to know me ...But I still would get patted down from here [points to body, not sure what part] – from time to time. (P25)

While P25 did not specifically describe these searches as embarrassing, her words suggested that she found the process uncomfortable: “They would look you up and down.” Also, she seemed discouraged by the fact that she continued to be subject to search even when “they started to get to know me.” In spite of her good behavior in prison, she was unable to gain the COs’ trust.

According to participants, tickets were rarely issued to women caught trying to remove small items from the cafeteria. If COs discovered a piece of fruit or bread, inmates were usually just directed to throw the food away. More severe sanctions, including Seg, were reserved for situations where women were caught trying to remove large amounts of food or resisted CO authority:

This old lady was stealing her food. Putting it in her pants. And she got caught at the door. They let her go, but you’re supposed to go to Seg. Nothin’ happened to her. They just took the food away from her. (P23)

While this “old lady” was spared from Seg, to say that “nothing happened to her” underestimated the potential emotional impact of this public performance. She was found to be smuggling food and made to look foolish in front of a crowd of her peers. Even though many women engaged in this smuggling behavior, to be caught in this public way and shown incapable of circumventing the institution’s control, was a source of humiliation.

The second type of body search was the strip search. In his law review article about Supreme Court decisions related to strip searches, Annas (2012) quotes Justice Steven Breyer:

A strip search that involves a stranger peering without consent at a naked individual, and in particular at the most private portions of that person’s body, is a serious invasion of privacy . . . such searches are inherently harmful, humiliating, and degrading. (p. 1655)

Indeed, in the context of prison foodways, the strip search was used as a tool of humiliation designed to squash any ambition among the inmate community to challenge prison authority. P8, who was strip searched after being caught trying to remove a pound of roast beef from the cafeteria, described the process to me: Based on a CO's accusation of smuggling, inmates were brought into a bathroom or staff office and told to remove all their clothes. A female CO then did a visual inspection of the inmate's body cavities (i.e. vagina and anus) to check that illicit items, in this case food, had not been stored there. COs conducted strip searches at their own discretion; no special permission or justification was needed:

Everybody tries to steal their bread and everything, to bring it back to the cell...But you'll get strip searched leaving, just randomly, if they think you grabbed something, or just randomly. That's a bitch to get strip searched to see if you have some bread. I mean really, it's white bread, dude, leave me alone. (P15)

That the prison would use this "inherently harmful, humiliating, and degrading" technique to monitor their foodways suggests that there was something much more valuable at stake than the food itself. It seems that what the COs were really seeking to protect was their power and control, not the institution's bread supply.

Summary. Participants constructed prison food and foodways as an unsavory, punishing dimension of prison life. The food itself and the conditions under which inmates obtained and consumed the food humiliated the women by depriving them of the privacy and control afforded to adults in free society. In the limited space where they could cook on their own, the illicit nature of this behavior forced them to prepare and eat the food with toilets and trash bags, circumstances that highlighted their degraded state. When they were caught breaking food regulations, their punishment included being humiliated in front of their peers, and privately by

COs. Even without breaking the rules, women could be subjected to random pat downs or strip searches at the discretion of the COs.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have described ways in which prison foodways can impact negatively on inmates and their perceptions of the prison institution. Women's experiences with food in prison suggested to them that the State did not care about them and was largely nonsensical. The hunger they experienced while incarcerated reinforced this perception of institutional apathy and accentuated their dis-empowered state. Finally, participants reported that prison food and foodways, including disciplinary processes related to food, were a particularly humiliating and punishing dimension of prison life. In these ways, negative prison foodways experiences can be understood as mechanisms that degraded the inmates' individual sense of self and weakened their perceptions of State authority. In the next chapter, the potential of prison foodways to create a positive impact is explored.

Chapter 5: Positive Foodways

In this chapter, I analyzed three themes - resistance, relationships and healthy/good - that demonstrated how prison foodways were used by participants to create positive experiences. In contrast to the negative foodways experiences described in Chapter 4, which participants perceived as humiliating and degrading, these narratives illustrated how foodways can be used to manage the pains of imprisonment and build positive identities and relationships.

Food and Resistance

Intimidation didn't work with me. I'm not the type of person you—God intimidates me; people do not intimidate me....With dinner you'd get an apple and an orange. You're not gonna get time to even finish that little meal... So I used always steal mine; put it down my pants. I mean, that's a normal thing there. When I worked in the kitchen what I would do is - there are certain things that I just wouldn't eat. We would have baggies for lunches for the people that go to court. I would steal the baggies and I would actually go to food, grab the food up, twist it around and bring it back. Then when I would get back I would share. (P3)

Prolific rules at YCI prohibited all food behavior except eating what one was served in the cafeteria, consuming self-purchased commissary items, and simple forms of cooking. Like P3 in the opening narrative, participants frequently reported breaking these food-related rules and engaging in prohibited foodways behavior: "That's a normal thing there." As was described in Chapter 4, some participants felt they had to break the rules in order to avoid hunger: "You're not gonna get time [in the cafeteria] to even finish that little meal" (P3). However, rule-breaking was not simply about satiating their physical hunger. In their narratives, participants constructed their disobedience as a form of resistance, an exercise of power and autonomy that challenged the authority of the institution and its agents: "People do not intimidate me" (P3). Participants broke food rules in order to push back against the system that confined them and the sense of powerlessness that it produced. In the telling of her story, P3 seized this control by stressing the active intention of her theft: "I would steal the baggies...grab the food up...bring it back...I

would share” (P3). Foodways resistance took many forms in these narratives. Participants described trying to secure extra cafeteria portions, hoarding food, smuggling and stealing food, and cooking and eating in the cells in order to resist prison power and gain some control about what, how, when and with whom they ate.

Portion resistance. Women resisted institutional authority while serving and being served cafeteria meals by breaking rules about portion size and serving protocols. These stories about women disobeying rules in order to secure more cafeteria food may seem incongruent with their complaints about this food. Participants described the cafeteria food, especially when it was delivered on trays to the medical, segregation or transitional Units, as cold and unappetizing. Nevertheless, women made efforts to obtain as much of this undesirable food as possible. This apparent contradiction might be explained in two ways. One, given the inmates restricted access to food, especially in confined units, all prison food, however disgusting, was valued. Women experienced hunger and were desperate for anything that might satiate this pain. Two, their actions had less to do with food than their desire to resist, to demonstrate to themselves, their peers, and to me that they were capable of pulling a fast one on the institution and its agents and regaining some semblance of personal control. In other words, food rules were broken in order to enact a resistance of institutional power, not just to get more food.

Resistance by cafeteria workers. Women who worked in the cafeteria reported breaking rules about portion size. Inmate hunger and the perception that the strict serving rules were nonsensical – as explicated in Chapter 4 - justified their actions:

They don't feed you enough, and we would throw pots of food away at the end of everybody being served. My thing was, if they throw that much away, we can give them more. They had little scoops and they would say level that scoop off. When I worked the

[serving] line I would be like, “Yo, y’all put more on them scoops.” (P3)

In this passage, P3 shifted control from the rule-makers to herself as she recognized her own power: “We can give them more.” She rationalized the illicit behavior by explaining that there was always extra food and defining the act as benefiting another inmate. The ownership (“My thing was...”) and authority (“ya’ll put more on them scoops”) that she took in making the decision, also suggested that she experienced a boost in self-efficacy and power from this act of resistance. No longer just a cog in the cafeteria wheel, she was thinking and acting independently. P20 also described breaking the cafeteria portion rules:

Sometimes if I know I cooked enough, I would give them extra... One poor girl she was all drawn up, like she was just coming out of detox or something, and she was so hungry. My supervisor yelled at me because I gave her an extra piece of cake, and a lot of oatmeal and stuff. I said, “Look it. I was once there.” I was hungry before. But they make it an issue to where, “We don’t have enough,” and then they have all this extra food left over and then we have to throw it in the garbage. (P20)

P20 was undeterred by the supervisor’s verbal reprimand, she knew she had “cooked enough” and refused to send food to the garbage when inmates were hungry. In giving “extra,” she endorsed her own knowledge about the amount of food available and the inmate’s hunger and aligned herself with the hungry inmate, telling her supervisor, “I was once there.”

Resistance by tier workers. Like their peers in the cafeteria, women employed as tier workers talked about breaking prison rules in order to make more cafeteria food available to inmates and resist institutional power. In the Segregation Unit where P27 worked, inmates were confined to their cells 22 hours a day and did not go to the cafeteria to eat. Her duties as a tier worker included delivering meal trays to inmates through a small window in their cell doors. In

the following passage, P27 described how inmates in Segregation would drop their trays, inside their cells, in order to get a second tray. Like P3 and P20, she noted that there was consistently extra food that was thrown away and suggested that the “little bit portions” did not satiate inmates’ hunger. She described her efforts to get extra trays to these women:

There was some people who would drop their tray. Make it seem like they dropped their tray so they could get another tray, so they can get more food...It’s crazy because they give you such little bit portions in the trays and they got so much food after, after they’re done serving everyone and they’ll throw everything away. So, it’s like – you’d rather throw it away then...They [staff] used to be like, “How many’s up there [in the Seg Unit]?” And I used to be like, “Oh, we got this many.” And when the CO used to turn, I used to slide people extra trays. You see someone, “Yo, you got me on the extra tray?” I be like, “Yeah, I’ll see what I can do.” (P27)

Even under the extreme constraints and surveillance of the Segregation Unit where these women lived and worked, P27 and the women she was serving were able to extricate power from their ostensibly powerless positions by staging food disruptions and bringing in extra food trays. Women tricked the guards, allowing food to drop to the floor so that they would be given another tray, and then eating food from both servings. Working with the staff to deliver meals, P27 feigned cooperation, responding to them in the first person plural: “We got this many.” Her actual alliance, however, was with the other inmates to whom she would “slide” extra trays. Like P20, her narratives asserted that she was helping others to get more food, but she was also cultivating her own feelings of power and self-efficacy by tricking the staff and taking sole responsibility – and credit - for the allocation of extra trays, “I’ll see what I can do.”

In the transitional units, where women lived until their service needs and security risks

were assessed, women also did not eat in the cafeteria. At meal times, they were released from their cells to pick up trays from a common area and then returned to their cells to eat. Policy allowed for one tray per inmate, but women reported asking tier workers for more than one meal: “There’s been times where I’ve been like, “Lemme get two trays”... I’m gonna try to get a couple of trays. Especially if it’s something I like” (P24). Participants also described how inmates in the transitional units figured out how to go through the line twice:

They’ll come out and they’ll get in the line – they’ll be first – and they’ll come out with their hair all a mess, run back up, put their tray in and then get back in the line with their hair pulled up. ‘Cause we’re all in uniform, we all have the same uniform and the COs – they’re at the desk, looking, but they’re really not.They go and get another tray, they’re that hungry. (P8)

In this scenario, women used the dehumanization of incarceration to their own advantage. That the staff could not recognize the women individually allowed them to pass twice through the line and secure additional food by simply changing their hairstyles, subverting institutional power by transforming the prison’s oppression into a benefit (Ferraro & Moe, 2003).

CO reaction to portion resistance. CO reaction was not necessary to construct an act as resisting institutional authority. However, direct confrontation with the personification of institutional authority - the COs - certainly highlighted the act’s resistance. P25 recalled when an inmate challenged staff by trying to take taking additional servings right in front of them:

I seen a girl, start – like at breakfast – the girl wanted a bigger piece of cake...The girl leaned over and tried to grab the piece of cake and then the CO’s, like, “Put that cake back! Da, da, da, da. Get out!” or whatever. And she had to throw her tray out, she couldn’t even eat. He kicked her out. So, I don’t know how that works. Now the girl

can't eat for the day 'cause she wanted a bigger piece of cake. (P25)

In this story, the CO's actions were decisive and swift: The woman had to throw out her entire tray and leave the cafeteria immediately. However, P25's comments about the incident reflected her disagreement with the punishment. She implied the CO had over-reacted to the cake grab and did not think it was fair that the "girl can't eat for the day." So while the inmate's rule-breaking was unsuccessful in obtaining more food, the inmate's actions still managed to challenge the CO authority and raise questions about staff legitimacy in the minds of her peer, P25.

Hoarding, smuggling and stealing. In addition to resisting rules about cafeteria meal portions, women frequently broke rules about food possession by hoarding food, stealing food, and moving food between prison spaces. These actions resisted institutional power that sought to control when, where and what inmates ate.

Hoarding. As has been described, women ate in their cells in the confined units (medical, segregation, transitional). When mealtime was over, tier workers would collect the meal trays, including any uneaten food. While it was against prison policy to keep cafeteria food in the cells after meal time, participants reported that it was common for inmates to retain uneaten food in order to avoid being hungry at night: "In medical, you can hoard food... Soup. Or potato salad, you want for later...Peaches" (P8). By hoarding food, women could have food on hand and resisted the institution's attempts to completely control their eating schedules. While women expressed concern about the possibility that COs would search their cells and discipline them for this stored food, none of participants had been disciplined for this behavior. Still, even without much enforcement, hoarding was prohibited and the constant threat of discipline could allow these acts to be understood as form of resistance.

Smuggling and stealing. Once women were housed in the General Population, they ate

all meals in the cafeteria and were allowed to seek employment. In this environment, smuggling, or the illicit movement of food from one part of the prison to another, and stealing from the institution were common. Women smuggled food from the cafeteria to the cells, and visa versa. Participants stole food from their kitchen jobs and brought it to the housing units. They moved the food from one tier or housing unit to another. Participants also reported smuggling attempts in the transitional units as women tried to take food with them on court runs and receive food from other inmates in General Population.

Smuggling to court runs. Smuggling was prohibited and actively discouraged by the COs. Inmates caught smuggling could be issued a ticket and brought before the Disciplinary Board. Nevertheless, nearly all of the women reported smuggling food, or at least trying to do so. P3 reported negotiating these searches and successfully bringing food with her on court runs:

I actually only took candy when I went on my court runs...I would actually sneak it. You know, everybody, "You're not gonna make it past them women [the COs]." I'd always make it past...I would actually take and put the fruit in my socks...They would always be like, "You're not supposed to do that," but I would tell them, I said, "I don't eat nothing. Are you actually going to take the chance of me eating nothing for them seventeen hours?"...I said, "You don't know me. I will fall out. I will get the Academy Award on y'all bus. Don't try me." (P3)

P3 understood the prison prohibition against taking food on court runs as an opportunity to enact resistance. She discussed her plans with other inmates beforehand and their warnings that she would never "make it past them" only strengthened her resolve. She was open about her intentions with the COs, challenging them to enforce the rule by threatening them with a real or theatrical collapse. Her resistance was indeed a performance, complete with audience (other

inmates) and supporting characters (the COs) that allowed P3 to demonstrate her disregard for prison rules and authority.

Smuggling to the cafeteria. The most common smuggling pathway reported by women was bringing food from, and to a lesser extent, into, the cafeteria. Food smuggled into the cafeteria was generally seasoning (e.g. barbeque sauce, salt and pepper, butter) that was not available in the cafeteria: “On French Toast day? If you’ve got butter, you’re bringing it.” (P8). Seasonings were stolen and smuggled to the tier by kitchen workers and/or made in the cells with items sold on commissary:

We would bring our own commissary to the chow hall and dress stuff up, too. Like bring our creamer, and our regular coffee – mix it in with that and make it a little bit better.

We’d bring other stuff, like on chicken day, on Sunday, we would make hot sauce ball, bring ‘em with us to put on our chicken. (P25)

In this narrative, P25 assigns ownership of the food products to herself and her peers: “our own commissary... our creamer... our regular coffee.” She downplays the policies prohibiting all food movement and asserts her own power by saying she would “bring” these items to the commissary, not smuggle them. In her mind, there was little wrong with bringing her seasonings to meals. And the COs seemed to agree: None of the participants reported being disciplined for bringing food into the cafeteria. With this smuggling activity, women resisted both the prison rules and a prison experience that would include only bland, unseasoned meals. Bringing “our own commissary to the chow hall” allowed women to “dress stuff up” to match their own personal and cultural palates. In a system designed to depersonalize and dehumanize their lived experience, seasoning food can be understood as a form of resistance (Ugelvik, 2011).

Smuggling from the cafeteria. Food smuggled out of the cafeteria was used to cook and prepare snacks in the housing units, often in combination with commissary items. In contrast to the lack of concern about food coming into the cafeteria, smuggling food from the cafeteria was aggressively discouraged by prison staff. As was described in Chapter 4, COs were stationed at the cafeteria exit and closely monitored the women as they filed out. The threat of search and punishment discouraged some participants from smuggling food from the cafeteria. Four participants (P7, P23, P26, P10) explicitly stated that they never even attempted to remove food from the cafeteria. However, most women were undeterred. Participants reported removing food from the cafeteria, or at least trying to, on a regular basis. Some women would plan their smuggling efforts in advance and, depending on what was being served, bring either empty trash bags and/or paper towels to wrap and transport the food. Others would simply tuck the items into their clothes:

You know how you got a chance to eat your food? Or to get full? You steal it. You take your sandwich and you wrap it up and you stuff it in your bra, or your pants or wherever you're gonna put it, your pocket, whatever, and you eat your other stuff. You eat what you can eat there, but, you know, like you had to steal! (P14)

P14's narrative makes clear that smuggling is not solely about combating hunger. Mealtimes are short – about 10 minutes according to participants – still this could have been enough time to eat quickly. However, instead of dedicating this time to eating, P14 suggested that inmates should use the time to pack “stuff” up – “to steal!” If one really wants “to get full,” the food must be removed from the sanctioned space and eaten on one's own terms. Taking food from the cafeteria offered the opportunity for women not just to eat at their own pace, but to resist prison power and control, transforming an institutionally sanctioned meal into an act of defiance that

was truly satisfying. Wrapped and stuffed into a bra, to be eaten back on the tier (as P14 describes), an authorized meal became contraband, an instrument of resistance and defiance.

The use of clothing, bras and underwear in particular, to smuggle food from the cafeteria was common and created a particularly gendered form of resistance:

A lot of girls would put them [hard boiled eggs] in their bras cause they [COs] are not allowed to pat your boobs down...they can't actually touch your bra so a lot of girls would put the eggs in their actual bras, so it would look like their boobs and that's how they would get away with it and they would do the same thing with the apples. They would say to their Bunkie "Give me your apple" so they could make it even and then when they got back to their cells and give her back her apple. Which is fine, 'cause it [apple] has skin. (P5)

With this smuggling tactic, women took advantage of safeguards against sexual abuse provided by the State. Their bras and breasts were transformed from fragile objects in need of protection into devices of resistance: "It [food] would look like their boobs and that's how they would get away with it." P14 also used regulations which protected sexualized body parts, in this case her crotch, to smuggle food (a bag of spaghetti) from the cafeteria: "I just was like, 'No, I don't know what you're talking about.' ... It's no way in the world he's getting the spaghetti out my pants!" (P14). Turning the tables on the power dynamic for which the prison search policies were created, which constructed the inmate as victim and the CO as perpetrator (Annas, 2012; Nader & Pasdach, 2010), women used their knowledge of inmate rights to resist these roles, transforming themselves into the trickster and the COs the tricked.

Stealing from the kitchen. Another form of foodways resistance was the removal of seasonings, condiments and other items from the kitchen to the housing units by kitchen workers.

Women reported that it was relatively easy to remove food from the kitchen, because inmate workers were not closely supervised and COs did not consistently search them when they left the kitchen. Women reported stealing butter (P1, P3), cheese (P29), seasonings (P4, P18, P24), sugar (P12, P18, P29) and meat (P8, P14). When women were caught stealing, they were fired and issued tickets, but if they wanted to return to work they would eventually be able to do so, because the need for kitchen workers was so high.

Participants who spoke of stealing from the kitchen constructed this behavior as a way to resist the prison's inedible food and low wages. For example, when I asked P29 if she was deterred by enforcement efforts she replied, "No, I still would try. 'Cause you don't want to eat what they make." Knowing that she might get caught and punished, she "still would try" because the prospect of having no control over her food choices, eating "what they make" seemed to be a grimmer option. P3 conceptualized stealing as a way to renegotiate her wages:

We're in prison, believe me, anyone who works in the kitchen, they get access to a lot of things and that's how they negotiate. They steal it cause as far as I'm concerned you don't -- You get paid 75 cent a day. I used to tell them, I said, "Whatever I steal it's compensation for what you all paying me. I don't even want to hear it." (P3)

P3 pushed back against the low salary by taking ownership over any resources, including food, which she was able to acquire, "that's how they negotiate." By stealing, she regulated her "compensation," extracting a wage that was more acceptable to her and thus resisting the prison's attempts to devalue the value of her work and self.

Cell eating and cooking. Eating and cooking in the housing units ran the gamut from snacking on potato chips or candy bars straight from the wrapper, to preparing simple dishes like tuna or lunch meats on saltines and bread, to elaborate group cooking projects that involved

multiple ingredients and participants. Like the other illicit food behaviors that have been described here, most forms of cell cooking challenged prison authority because the activities were prohibited. Further, by (re)creating their food, women resisted prison efforts to dictate what they could and could not eat. Cell cooking was an activity of re-invention and re-purposing that allowed inmates to resist institutional power by assigning new meanings to the prison food and commissary items.

Eating. Inmates who had the social or financial resources to secure commissary food and/or smuggled and stolen items were able to reduce their reliance on cafeteria food, avoid particularly inedible meals and construct a sense of food autonomy. Having enough commissary supplies on hand meant that inmates could choose not to go to the cafeteria: “When I had commissary I would pick and choose what days I was gonna go to the dining hall” (P5). Even though skipping a meal to stay back and eat commissary was not prohibited, the choice that P5 described can be understood as a form of resistance because it allowed her to assert her independence from or refusal to participate in the highly-monitored and humiliating prison meal system. Women expressed their disapproval of a meal by electing to stay back: “If they know they feeding slop, it’s a lot of people won’t come.” (P23). This resistance required having enough food on hand to skip the cafeteria meal without going hungry, making inexpensive yet filling commissary items, like noodles, very popular: “The Oodles and Noodles [sic] is always the favorite because like sometimes you didn’t wanna eat the food and you don’t. You just make the Oodles and Noodles [sic]” (P4). With a small bag of dried noodles, P4 was positioned to resist the meals she did not like. This ability to exert some control over what and when they ate enabled them to renegotiate the conditions of their incarceration.

Cooking. Participants told elaborate stories about their cooking endeavors: Mixing and often heating multiple ingredients in order to create “off-menu,” personalized items. In addition to the resistance of “eating in,” these activities embodied two other forms of resistance: rule-breaking and re-purposing.

Rule-breaking. The only institutionally sanctioned form of cell cooking was to mix hot water and dried noodles or rice in plastic bowls sold on commissary. When women collaborated with each other and pooled resources to cook large dishes in trash bags and pillow cases and/or used hair dryers and radiators for heat, this was a violation of prison policy. Generally, these rules were not enforced and women could cook unperturbed but more egregious cases would catch the COs’ attention. For example, P14 described an incident where she got a ticket and her blow dryer was confiscated for cooking and resisting CO orders:

The lieutenant [CO] came to take my blow dryer ‘cause I was cooking a bagel with it....He [another CO] be up in my room talking shit. I was like, “I can’t hear you.” And that’s all I said. I wasn’t like, “I can’t hear you, I’m cooking.”...So he knew what I was doing so he came downstairs, and he was like, “What are you cooking? Give it to me.” I was like, “Hell, no! I ain’t giving it to you.” ‘Cause I had some contraband roast beef with a poppa on a bagel, I was like, “Hell, no! I ain’t giving you what I’m cooking.” ... So, he called the lieutenant and the lieutenant came and took my blow dryer. I was mad! I did get a ticket, too... I only bought that hair dryer to eat, that’s it! Not for my hair. That was my oven! (P14)

That she told the CO she could not hear him because she was cooking might suggest that rules against this behavior were not regularly enforced or could be an indication of her disregard for his authority. Either way, she clearly constructed this story as an illustration of her resistance:

“Hell no! I ain’t giving it to you.” Even if cell cooking did not generally lead to the type of staff confrontation that P14 recalled, participants did describe this activity as prohibited and their frequent engagement in these activities reflected a refusal to comply, a resistance.

Re-purposing. When women cooked in their cells and housing units, they often re-invented ingredients by cooking and eating items in ways that differed from ordinary consumption or use. Cooking involved re-purposing prison supplies, turning cleaning supplies, linens and small electronics into cooking gear. As described earlier, trash bags and a toilet could be a refrigerator and a hair dryer was a toaster oven. When P14 constructed the hair dryer as something else (“That was my oven”), she was resisting conventional meanings and re-purposing the item to meet her own needs. Similarly, women described how potato chips were crushed and then hot water poured into the bag to create a “poppa,” a popular pizza-like dish with a potato chip crust. This creation was a process of collaborative re-purposing, working with others to smash, squeeze, and flatten the ingredients sold in the commissary to create something new, a poppa. These efforts resisted institutional efforts to erase the women’s individuality and prescribe what they could eat by creating personalized dishes from the standard fare.

Similarly, P9 described how she would line board games with plastic trash bags and build a “Fatty Girl” Christmas cake from the snacks sold on commissary:

I’d make Fatty Girl. Like Christmas, we made a big...we put in for the whole tier, everybody ate on the tier... Out of honey buns...Swiss Rolls, Chocolate, everything...Peanut butter...[We’d make it on a] Card board [game] box... You line it with plastic bags. (P9)

Practically everything in P9’s recipe has been re-purposed: the game boxes, the trash bags, the individual snack cakes. Instead of playing the board games, lining the trash cans with the bags

and eating the snack cakes from the wrappers, the group resisted falling into these prison-authorized scenarios and invented a new name and new uses and modes of consumption for these items. In this story of holiday baking, the women also resisted the unremarkable repetition of daily prison life, using food to recognize and celebrate Christmas. P8 also described a Christmas cooking project:

Take bread from the chow hall, bring it home, and then you cut it up, like into little pieces, and then, put it in a bag and then with the blow dryer, you blow it and...then you add cinnamon to it...And with a little butter and...We made cinnamon balls and then they strung 'em, with a needle and thread, there was no needle, but with thread and made little things for a Christmas tree, they had, like around the tree, but they were made of food. (P8)

It is not uncommon for people to string food (e.g. popcorn, berries) into Christmas tree decorations. However, this project that used the prison cafeteria bread, stolen kitchen cinnamon and butter, a blow dryer and thread, shows extremely creative re-purposing, creating something unexpected and unscripted from the ordinary and allowing the women to resist institutional efforts to deny their humanity.

Summary. Prison foodways offered a myriad of ways for inmates to resist prison control and authority. By circumventing rules about cafeteria portions, hoarding, smuggling, and stealing food, and cooking in their cells, participants created a sense of autonomy, identity and normal in the prison environment. It may seem counterintuitive to consider these attacks on the prison institution to be “positive,” but as a social worker interested in ameliorating the lives of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated women, I see benefit in the participants’ ability to resist oppression and gain self-control. These illicit channels offered an opportunity to develop a sense

of self-efficacy and individual expression.

Feeding Relationships

Discussions of prison foodways describe how participants used food systems to construct, maintain and interpret their relationships and social networks with people inside and outside of prison. Money for commissary was a central mechanism through which participants experienced support, or lack thereof, from people in the community. Their range of reactions about having money for commissary sent from the outside reflected the diversity of their relationships and their appreciation of the financial burden that these contributions created. Similarly, women interpreted food exchanges among inmates in different ways. Participants described an atmosphere of mutual assistance that was critical to surviving – in both physical and psychological ways – the prison experience: “We would all stick together. We never went without” (P6). However food exchanges were not always motivated by benevolence and solidarity, inmates also used food to establish and protect their own social position and power.

Relationships outside. In the United States, there are three ways that the non-incarcerated friends and family of inmates may participate in prison foodways. For one, correctional institutions may have vending machines in the visiting rooms, allowing guests to buy snacks to share and eat with inmates (Tewksbury & DeMichele, 2005). Two, in some facilities, family members are occasionally allowed to spend the night with inmates in trailers with kitchens inside the compound. At San Quentin State Prison (CA), where such facilities are offered, overnight guests can bring food to the trailers and women visiting incarcerated male partners at San Quentin reported that cooking and eating together was one of the most valued parts of these visits (Comfort, 2008). Three, people on the outside may be able to send commissary money to incarcerated friends and family and/or order food packages on-line that

are mailed directly from the authorized vendor to the inmate (e.g. Keefe Commissary Network, 2013). While sending food or money for food to an incarcerated friend or family member does not allow the sender to actually eat with the inmate, this support is still a form of foodway participation in that it facilitates the prisoner's access to food. In Connecticut, the correctional system does not have vending machines in the visitation rooms, nor does it allow for overnight visits or food packages; the only way in which outside friends and family can participate in the prison foodways is by sending money for commissary purchases.

Received money for commissary. Nineteen (19) of the 30 women who I interviewed described receiving consistent financial assistance for commissary from people in the community. Typical contributions ranged from \$20 to \$50 every two weeks. This money sent for commissary food was understood as a mechanism to experience and measure social support. P8 described being “spoiled” by family during an earlier bid when they sent her \$100/week:

When I would get commissary, I'll be...a whole load, a good \$75 order is two bags, two shopping brown bags, filled to the top, and tip that over on my bunk. It would fill my whole bunk up... 'Cause I was spoiled and I had that money at that time, I had family doing that, sending me 100 bucks a week. (P8)

Her words conveyed the sense of pride she experienced knowing that she “had family doing that;” actively making an effort to send her \$100 each week. Deposits were presented as a demonstration of family concern, proof that the inmate was being cared for and had not been forgotten: “My friend was sending me \$20 every other week, so...I bought little stuff to munch on and stuff like that” (P19). Subtle but telling, consistent financial deposits from loved ones was an important support for these inmates: “My mother...and my sister. And, so I was OK, they sent me \$50 every two weeks” (P20). P24's response to my inquiry about if she had sent

commissary money to incarcerated friends since her release from YCI offered further insight into the meanings attributed to this support. I asked her how she decided to send money:

If I know that they need it. If I'm close to you. For instance, there's one lady up there that is like family to me. She's done slept at my mother's house, she's done ate at my mother's kitchen table. Yes. If I get a few extra dollars, I'll send her maybe 10 or 20 dollars. Because somebody did it for me. (P24)

For P24, sending money to an inmate reflected an appreciation of the prisoner's unmet needs, the strength of the relationship, and the availability of resources. There was also an element of reciprocity, if funds were received, they should also be given.

While P8 delighted in the two over-flowing bags of family support, participants' reactions to having people on the outside send them commissary money were usually more ambivalent. Feelings of gratitude and support were accompanied by the shame of having to ask for help, especially if the participant had a child who the kin were caring for. P27 expressed remorse about siphoning her family's limited resources:

It's tough to get people on the outside world to send you money in there, you know.

Because they got their own problems out here... I didn't really want to bother asking her [grandmother] for money, but that was the only person that I knew that would send me money. So she'll send me \$50 every month, which I appreciated it a lot. (P27)

She recognized that sending her money was a burden on the "people on the outside," still she overcame her reluctance and asked for her grandmother's support. Reluctance to ask for money was particularly pronounced when women had children who were being cared for by family: "My dad would send me money. I tried not for ask him for much because he has my teenagers" (P6). Similarly, P25 did not actively solicit commissary money from her father because he was

caring for her son: “My father sent me money here and there ‘cause like, he was taking, they were helping take care of my son and everything so I didn’t [ask].” P30 only asked for one installment of \$20 from her mother, who was caring for her 3 children. She wanted to limit the extent to which the punishment for her “mess” was transferred onto her family:

All’s I did was ask my mother if she could send me \$20 [one-time] ‘cause she had my kids. And I’m the one that relapsed. This is my mess and I couldn’t ask...No, I was being fed. I didn’t need...It’s more important to me for my kids to have it. I was eatin’ three meals a day...I don’t need to have extra or junk. To me, that food could be for my kids to have food in their mouths. I love my kids so much, you know, so. (P30)

In these narratives, P6, P25 and P30 described wanting to reserve family’s funds for their children, making a connection between denying themselves “extra or junk” (P30) and feeding their children. By limiting outside support, women sought to strengthen their children’s economic position and construct themselves as good mothers who prioritized their children’s wellbeing.

Did not receive money for commissary. Eleven (11) women in the sample reported not receiving any money from the outside during their most recent incarceration. Their explanations for this lack of support varied. Over half of these women (n = 6) were simply incarcerated for too short a time (less than 2 months) to have money from the outside hit their books: “I said, don’t send any money ‘cause I am leaving in two weeks, I don’t need it” (P5). Lack of financial support, however, cannot be entirely explained by logistics, even for those with short sentences. For many women, having no money sent in was an indication of a weak and impoverished social network: “I didn’t have no money and I didn’t have nobody to send me no money” (P11). Other women suggested that friends and family had resources but withheld support because they “got

tired of me going” (P22). P15 said that “no one” in her family visited or sent money to her because they found her behavior “shameful.” P18 attributed her parents’ lack of financial support to their distrust of her and ignorance about the prison systems: “My parents didn’t know to send commissary... They didn’t understand that...they just thought I was going to buy drugs or something in jail” (P18). In short, the unwillingness of families to send money for commissary reflected the deteriorated state of these relationships.

While resentment and frustration about a lack of financial support from people in the community was common, some women also took pride in being able to survive in prison without outside support. Four participants – P9, P11, P12, and P29 – used their lack of outside support to construct their prison identity as wise old-timers, veteran prisoners who were able to negotiate and manage the stressors of incarceration. P9, for example, was a 53 year old woman who had been to prison more times that she could count. She worked as the “laundry lady,” sold her sleeping medications for coffee and received support from other veteran inmates; she was emphatic about not requiring outside support.

I lived off of \$10.50 every two weeks [money earned working in the laundry]...I bought saltine crackers and I bought the peanut butter...Yeah, well, I started getting money at the end, but...somebody else gave me coffee and creamer...Chow hall. That’s what I lived off of. (P9)

P9 used this narrative of living off \$5 a week, surviving on only saltines, peanut butter, chow hall and a network of inmate support to construct her streetwise identity. Similarly, P17 brushed off her lack of financial support from home; she was able to steal and trade for food while in prison and did not need outside help. She was irritated when her brother sent her commissary money; she wanted her family to save their money in order to help her make bond and “come back home

with the girls [her daughters].” This narrative served a similar purpose as the passages that were shared earlier from P6, P25 and P30 about making food sacrifices for children. P17 did not need or want outside help to handle prison foodways; she wanted support to get home and continue caring for her children.

In sum, commissary money from the outside, or lack thereof, could be a reflection of the strength of the inmates’ social networks and their relationships with people on the outside and/or the inmates’ self-constructed identity. Family and friends used commissary deposits to provide or withhold social support. Women’s reaction to this money (or lack of money) varied, including pride, gratitude, shame and resentment. Mothers constructed their decisions to limit or decline outside support as an exhibit of their dedication to their children. Women who received no funds often turned this lack of support, which could reflect social weakness, into an indicator of their independence and personal strength. In these ways, participants’ narratives about whether or not they received commissary money from family and friends in the community provided insight into their relationships to other and themselves.

Relationships inside. Just as commissary was used to construct and understand inmate relationships with people on the outside, prison foodways were used to build social relationships and networks inside the prison. The women described two related inmate hierarchies that were organized, in part, by prison foodways. One hierarchy was based on age and time served, with old timers, or veteran inmates who had been incarcerated for a long time and/or on multiple occasions, having more respect and social power than new, first-time prisoners. Knowledge about food, or lack thereof, was a key indicator used by women to organize themselves along this continuum of experience. The other hierarchy that participants described was purely economic: Inmates with the most food resources ranked at the top and the women without food, the hungry,

were at the bottom. Women's access to food and their food preparation skills determined their position within this economic system. In addition to and within these systems of inmate organization, the participants' narratives described how they used prison foodways to develop individual relationships with other women.

Controlling food knowledge. Women who exhibited foodways knowledge and skills earned the respect of their peers. Usually the women with the most knowledge were the old timers, women who were serving long sentences or had been frequently incarcerated. Participants recalled with fondness and great appreciation the veterans who taught them how to manage prison foodways: to cook, to hoard, to order commissary, to steal:

I was like, "How the f*** do they do the rice in the bag? How do they know how much water to use to make this rice soft?"... My roommate...she was straight... she taught me how to cook. She taught me how to order my commissary and stuff like that. (P14)

Teaching newly arrived inmates how to cook was just one element of a larger education about how to manage and survive incarceration that old timers could impart:

[Cellmate cooked] Rice, potato balls with the potato chips and stuff like that, there was like chicken on commissary, you know, they also had tuna fish and stuff like that, so, she cooked a lot of good things...[She taught me] How to be strong. How to live away from your kids. (P19)

These teaching moments were valued both by the new prisoner and the old timer. The new prisoner learned valuable information that would help them acquire food and avoid social gaffes that could expose their naiveté and make them vulnerable to abuse, while the old timer earned respect and social status:

I talked to them [new prisoners] about the about the food, I talked to them about the

staff...Two Spanish ladies, one Caucasian lady...All of us were roommates...in the medical unit. And they never been through this... And they was like just panicking and bugging out and they didn't know what to do. So, I would tell them, this is what you do. If you don't, this is your first time, they will make a mockery of you. (P24)

The panicked newcomers that P24 described were eager to have someone “tell them, this is what you do” to avoid being exposed as a first-timer and mocked. P24, in turn, derived satisfaction from being their expert. P24 even described working with others to record this information in a cookbook:

We wrote a cookbook... We all put...[how to cook] in the bags and with the commissary stuff...we did it on our own...Somebody said they were gonna, you know, publish it when they get out. But, I just left it there. (P24)

While the group did not manage to finalize their cookbook project, the initiative reflects the value placed on this knowledge. The women were interested in recording the recipes they had learned in order to document their authority and pass knowledge onto others. The respect afforded to previously incarcerated women by peers and the value attributed to their prison expertise stands in contrast to the harsh punishments and disparagement that repeat offenders receive from the judicial system and the society at large (Mauer & Chesney-Lind, 2002). In these interviews, stories about displays of prison food expertise and teaching about foodways, or social proximity to veteran experts with this knowledge, were stories of strength. Women used these stories to construct themselves as wise about prison ways, connected and clever, at the top of the experience hierarchy, distancing themselves from the isolated, hungry, first-time inmate who had “never been through this” (P24).

Controlling food resources. Another way that participants reported earning social status and respect was by acquiring and controlling food resources. This economic hierarchy was related to the hierarchy of knowledge and expertise in that the savvy inmates had greater access to food. New inmates were less likely to understand how food systems worked, placing them at a disadvantage. They were also unlikely to know the inmates in the General Population who controlled food resources and had a limited ability to trade and collaborate with others to secure food because of their constrained mobility. Without money, knowledge or social connections, inmates generally started at the bottom of the food resource hierarchy at intake, with access to only the cafeteria food that was delivered to their cells on trays. However, when they moved into the General Population, and even while they awaited assessment, they could begin to accumulate food and ameliorate their social position.

Tier workers. Participants described several ways of moving up the food resource hierarchy. One pathway was through prison employment, or association with employed inmates. Tier workers in the medical and transitional Units, where inmates were first held, distributed the cafeteria food trays and, because they travelled in and out of the unit, could smuggle commissary items into the Unit. They also controlled distribution of cleaning supplies, including the trash bags used to hoard, transport and cook food. These jobs were assigned to inmates who were not new to the Units but rather those who stayed on in the intake units after completing their assessment. New inmates living in these units who aligned themselves with these workers could ameliorate their conditions:

Once you get out of medical, you got into a room where there's just two of you. My bunkie, honestly, took care of me... If she had food, she shared it. If I had a piece of candy that somebody gave me, we throwing fire balls up against the brick wall to break it

up...My Bunkie...was actually a [tier] worker. So she was designated to be there. She was there for like 4 or 5 months. (P17)

In this passage, P17 drew attention to a moment where she and her bunkie tried to break up a piece of candy that someone had given to her by throwing it against the wall. However, given their differential access to resources, it was more generally the bunkie who “took care” of P17. Her bunkie, who worked on the tier, “made sure” P17 had coffee to manage her migraines and shared her food with her. While P17 did not describe being abused or taken advantage of by her bunkie, there was a power differential in terms of food resources that could have made that possible.

Kitchen workers. Working in the kitchen also increased an inmate’s access to food and, from that, social power. Participants described how kitchen workers could expand their social network and influence by smuggling food from the kitchen and selling or sharing these stolen items on the tier. This smuggling activity was described as a central part of the inmates’ foodway systems. The community relied on these items and women who were willing to take on this role could enjoy some degree of social privilege. As P3 described, kitchen workers who “shared” stolen items are likely to find that others are particularly “nice” to them:

Not everybody was me. I worked a hustle for not only me, but for everybody on the tier. There was a lot of hungry people on the tier...I was a heart, you know what I’m saying? I shared, but you know, there’s always somebody that’s on your tier that works in the kitchen...If you worked in the kitchen people were nice to you anyway because they knew you had access to a lot of things they would never be able to get. (P3)

In this narrative, P3 constructed her benevolence as unique, “Not everyone was me,” using the stories of her kitchen smuggling to define herself as “a heart.” At the same time, she

acknowledged that her benevolence was rewarded; she was treated differently because people knew she had access to food items that were not regularly available. Similarly, P5 used her kitchen position to ensure that “my bunkies never went hungry”:

I would bring back stuff for other people, always for my tier or if I was in a dorm...my bunkies never went hungry, I made sure of it. Cause if I could bring it back, I mean that's how I am though, like I will share all whatever I have, I won't make it so I won't have it, but I if I have it, I share it. And so, but when I worked in the kitchen, I was set, I was fine, I was never hungry. (P5)

P5 made it clear that her first priority was herself (“I won't make it so I won't have it.”). Making sure that her bunkies never went hungry was part of this self-protection. It was through this benevolence that she gained social advantage on the tier by placing other inmates in her debt. In another example of the power that could be derived from kitchen work, P14 credited herself with saving another inmate from starvation:

When I was working in the kitchen...this one girl, she couldn't eat nothin' she told me when we came home. She was like, 'If it wasn't for you, I probably would have like starved to death... 'cause you know I couldn't stomach none of that food.' All the time, she's always coming, I would give her...the bags of peanut butter that we made for the pregnant girls...every day. (P14)

In these narratives, P14, P5 and P3 presented their distribution of smuggled food to other inmates as acts of kindness and camaraderie while also acknowledging that they derived social power from these actions. Serving as the tier's benefactor was not always easy. P14 reported being aggravated at times by the other women's demands:

They're always asking you and they're like, they're walking down the walkway and they

know, like, there's a CO right there at the booth. And here you go, asking me for sugar, here you go asking me for cheese, and then you loud about it! Like, you ain't like (whispers), "Yo, could you get me some more cheese?" (loud voice) "Yo – you got some sugar!" I be like, oh my God! (laughs) (P14)

As in P3 and P5's narratives, P14's recollection of the other women's demands evoked a "*noblesse oblige*" performance. Because her job in the kitchen gave her free access to a plethora of food, women relied on her for food and seasonings that were not otherwise available, a role that she found both profitable and burdensome.

Kitchen cooks. In addition to the social benefits and prestige that came from smuggling items back to the tier, skill as a kitchen cook could be a source of prestige and social power. Women who worked as cooks described taking pride in their work and making the food as palatable as possible, efforts which boosted both their social position and self-esteem. Respect was afforded to women who other inmates identified as good chefs:

When I had days off...They'd be like, "Oh, God, [P20 name], I wish you was in the kitchen. Because the food do not taste right without you in there." And, they know who I was, because I didn't, I didn't treat them like they was an outcast. I was the same person who they are. I'm an inmate, just like them. You know? Like, when I was on the tier, they used to be like, "P20, you know, this was good. It tasted real good. We know when you're in the kitchen" and stuff like that because I put seasoning and stuff on the food. (P20)

P20's cooking talents allowed her to send a message to the other inmates that they were not "outcasts," while also allowing the others to "know who I was." She situated herself at the top of the inmate hierarchy by letting the others know that, in spite of her privileged position as Head

Cook, she was not staff; she was “an inmate, just like them.” She looked out for the other inmates by seasoning the food and this effort was rewarded with admiration and appreciation from her peers. While P5 did not have such an important kitchen position, she also took pride in the care she invested in assembling sandwiches for court runs, carefully checking the baloney and removing pieces that had gone bad:

I used to make the baloney and cheese sandwiches...for the court runs. And some of the girls would actually sit there and make the sandwiches even though the baloney had been bad, and it's green. And I would take the stuff and I would throw it out...I'm like, I don't care if I am going to get into trouble. I am not going to sit...how could you make these sandwiches, knowing that other people have to eat them? You have been on court runs before, you know what it's like. (P5)

Her efforts may not have been acknowledged by the other inmates, who had no way to know who made their court run sandwiches unless she told them, which she may have since she told me. The narrative also illustrated her capacity for resistance and constructed her self as generous and caring, the two other positive foodways themes that are explicated in this chapter.

Tier cooks. Just as kitchen cooks could gain the respect and gratitude of their peers, women who were skilled at cooking and preparing food on the tier were valued. P15 described how innovative recipes offered women an opportunity to demonstrate their creativity:

The Puerto Rican girls make, they call them “pasteles,” but really it's just mashed up chips with whatever...I don't know what it is, but some kind of smoked meat...There's like a Dorito or like chip-crust around it...They're pretty ingenious. Pretty creative.
(P15)

Inmates who could cook were actively sought out by their peers to manage the preparation of

communal dishes:

A lot of people who give [another inmate] food to chip in and she'll cook for other people in the unit, within the tier....She didn't ask for anything she had everything... For Easter, she did like, stuff with chocolates and stuff like that for Easter. She melted the chocolates and made bunnies....a Hershey's bar with a blow dryer and the hot water. Let it sit, dry....Structure it, with her hands. (P19)

While P19 reported that this cook who prepared food for her did not “ask for anything” in exchange for these efforts, others reported that cooks could trade these skills for food, that is, be allowed to share in the food they prepared without contributing any ingredients. The participants' narratives also made it clear that relationships with these women were valued as these individuals could pick and choose who they cooked for:

I never cooked. I would put in a bag of noodles 'cause I didn't know how to cook....I had one girl in my room that was, she was like thorough like cooking...knew she could cook, so if she was cooking, I be like...”Yo, cook! I got 2 bags, I got 2 bags of noodles.” I would always cook with somebody I was, comfortable with, or cool with, or whatever. (P23)

Inmates like P23 who “didn't know how to cook” relied on being able to “put in a bag of noodles” with those who could and this required being “cool with” the tier cooks, lending food resources and social advantage to those who were willing and able to cook.

Cooking groups. Because each individual inmate had limited resources, most participants reported organizing themselves into cooking groups to create dishes that required multiple ingredients or supplies. These cooking relationships were symbiotic with members of

the cooking group providing different elements, including cooking expertise, food and companionship:

It all depends what you got. Like, “Oh, you got this? You got the meat? You got the soup? You got the chips?” You know – so everybody puts everything in and make a big...I mean, who you hang with or get along with or whatever. (P27)

As P27 explained, while “what you got” was a factor in the formation of cooking groups, membership was also related to “who you hang with or got along with.” Cooking together was a mechanism to construct and nurture relationships, something women “looked forward to”:

Roommates or friends that you established after a while....Yeah, they would say, you know, “Um, I was thinking about cooking tonight. Would you like to throw in a soup or you know, do you have something else you could throw in, a meat or cheese or something?”...We looked forward to it. (P2)

The chance to “throw in” with other women, spend time together on a common project, could be a welcome opportunity to socialize and connect with other inmates.

Not all participants shared P2 and P27’s enthusiasm for group cooking on the tier. For some participants it was simpler to cook alone: “A lot of times you just cook a little soup for yourself. Put a little cheese in it or something, just to make it, whatever” (P26). Others specifically sought to avoid the drama and complexities of cooking with a group:

I didn’t like mingling with people...They start to arguing and then over who put what in and who put more in and so I’d – to not be bothered with it – I’d usually cook by myself. I rarely, will rarely cook with people. I know how to make the stuff myself. I don’t need anybody else to make it for me. I can do the very same thing they’re doing. (P28)

In this narrative, P28 constructed herself as a loner who did not want to be “bothered” with group cooking and did not “need anyone else” to cook. Similarly, P9 expressed her suspicion of others in relaying her rationale for cooking alone: “I would do my own cooking because I don’t trust anybody else... They want to keep their stuff and they want us to throw in.” In addition to the prospect of getting swindled, women expressed concerns about the cleanliness of group cooking:

I don’t trust people’s hands. And there is a lot of people that cook together and I hate that.... I had my few, like, there was other bids I did... People that were clean, that you know, that you trust. That don’t touch themselves and pick their nose [laughs]... I had a bunkie this time that, I wouldn’t touch anything that she... Because of her habits, just the way she was. (P8)

This passage from P8 offers a glimpse at complexities of how inmates relate to and construct each other. P8 “hated” the idea of cooking with others, but had done so in the past with people “that were clean.” She defined clean inmates as women whom she trusted, who did not masturbate or pick their noses. One of her previous bunkies was unclean, a determination P8 made “because of her habits” and “the way she was.” Her description suggests the existence of an untouchable, unclean caste of inmates with whom socializing and cooking is prohibited (Earle & Phillips, 2012). In short, cooking alliances and groups create both the opportunity to socialize and exclude either oneself or others.

Cafeteria relationships. Another foodway through which inmates built and maintained individual relationships was the cafeteria. Both the walk to the cafeteria and the meal time itself offered opportunity for fellowship. “You look forward to chow time ‘cause that is the only time that you may be able to slide a note to somebody or say hello to somebody or catch ‘em in the walkway, you know, real quick...” (P11). There could be considerable jockeying to secure

seating with specific company or, at least, be in the cafeteria at the same time as a friend. When housing units were called out for meal time, women tried to line up before and after people in their unit with whom they were friendly: “I tried to walk with people that I wanted to sit with” (P1). Those who wished to connect with women who lived outside their unit tried to be either first or last in line in order to sit at a table with women from the units called before/after their own. This task of aligning cafeteria visits with people in other units was “very, very hard” (P17):

One day I gotta be first, the next day I gotta be last...It’s like adding and subtracting...I can’t do it but there’s people that are... been there for years, and that’s what they do and it becomes second nature for them. (P8)

P8’s comments hark back to the old timer/knowledge hierarchy that was explicated earlier. The process of landing the correct place in line in order to maximize the social potential of a cafeteria meal was a skill, like budgeting commissary or cooking on the tier, attributed to veteran inmates.

Once inmates were seated in the cafeteria, time was short and conversations were, theoretically, confined to each table of six: “You were only allowed to talk to people that were in your table. We weren’t allowed to cross-talk, but everybody did it” (P1). Given that most women were unable to determine who they sat with, they ate with whomever they happened to land: “Out of the six people that you sit at the table with, some of them are from your tier, some of ‘em aren’t. The girls were always nice. If they didn’t eat it, they shared it” (P17). While there were some complaints about other people’s table manners, P17’s characterization of the other women as “always nice” was common. Sharing was a courtesy which was regularly extended, even though it was prohibited: “People don’t just get up and throw their whole tray out...usually they’ll say, Do you want this? Do you want that?”(P5). P29’s cafeteria experience

went beyond this typical co-existence, developing into a sense of “home:”

You might see somebody you know and get to communicate, shoot the shit, as they say. Make you feel a little, at home. Or just, someone that you know very well that you can sit and laugh and eat with. Or, when I was there, we had a group that would eat together every day...We sat together and that was our little communication, get together time, because we were all on different tiers...people from Hartford, New Haven...just started talking and a lot of us were doing the same thing at the time before we got busted. Before we got arrested and incarcerated. We were running, getting high. And making a dollar the best way we can to get our drugs. And we just clicked. (P29)

While participants complained about the cafeteria, of being stuck at a table with people who “eat like cows and pigs” (P28), P29 drew strength from sharing mealtimes with other women who had similar life experiences. Her experience was not the norm, but illustrated the potential for cafeteria meals to be a time of positive communication and companionship.

Summary. Prison foodways were used in positive ways to reinforce and build relationships between inmates and their friends and family in the community and among inmates. For the most part, participants appreciated receiving financial support for commissary from non-incarcerated friends and family and interpreted this money as a sign of support. Still, reservations were widespread about accepting money from relations struggling to make their own ends meet, especially when funds came from the caregivers of the participants’ child(ren). To not receive money from the outside was largely understood as an expression of rejection, although there were participants who reframed lack of community income as an indicator of their own personal strength and capacity for independence. Among inmates, control of foodways resources and knowledge was a sign of strength that could translate into social power. Inversely,

participants without their own access to food reported relying on those who did. Participants described cooking groups as another way that inmates organized themselves. Within these systems, women with access to food and/or recognized cooking talents could garner social status. In these various ways, participants reported using prison foodways to construct and maintain their social relationships.

Good & Healthy: (Re)construction of identity through prison foodways

Anthropological and sociological theory suggests that foodways “[play] a critical part in the production of our identities...because they help us to construct and maintain individual narratives of the self” (Valentine, 1999, p. 491). These food stories create a “food voice” that communicates individual and group values through the preparation and consumption of food (Harris-Shapiro, 2006; Hauck-Lawson, 1998). Across time and place, people have used foodways to construct, express and negotiate identity. For example, Valentine (1999)’s two year study of “contemporary patterns of domestic food consumption” (p. 496) described how young people in England used vegetarian eating to align themselves with a certain peer groups, construct identities as strong-willed, healthy and/or committed to fitness, and to separate their individual selves from their nuclear families. Their vegetarian eating choices became a tool for “negotiating sameness or differences in the household” (p. 520). Similarly, Searles’ (2002) study of the Inuit of the Canadian Arctic argued that this community used foodways “to express cultural differences [between Inuit and contemporary Canadian culture] as well as personal and collective identity” (p. 55). In her work with adult Mexican immigrants, Salazar (2007) showed how school “cafeteria-centered interviews served as a window from which to glimpse childhood identity development as told through a series of school lunch events” involving choices between the US school lunch program and Mexican dishes brought from home (p. 178). These studies

exemplify how “food is fundamental to the workings of identity” (Perez & Abarca, 2007, p. 137).

Prisoners’ foodways narratives are no different: Inmates’ descriptions of their food-related behavior are often attached to, or in service of, the construction of their identities. For example, earlier in this chapter, I described how participants used foodways narratives to construct themselves as streetwise elders (Ugelvik, 2011). Here, I describe how participants used positive foodways narratives to construct themselves as good and healthy. I chose to focus on these identities because of the current criminal justice interest, described in Chapter 1, in facilitating the production of positive self-narratives among inmates and formerly incarcerated people. Researchers have demonstrated an association between positive self-narratives and criminal desistance (Giordano, Cernkovick & Rudolf, 2002; Maura, 2001; Opsal, 2012; Rowe, 2011). These studies have called for greater understanding of the ways in which people construct non-criminal selves in order to reduce recidivism by encouraging and strengthening these narratives. This analysis responds to this call.

Good. The prisoner identity is associated with negative characteristics (Alexander, 2012). Prisoners are criminal offenders incarcerated as a punishment for doing wrong, being bad, and/or because they are deemed too dangerous to live in society. Prisoners have been found guilty of breaking the law, hurting others, stealing, damaging property, lying, neglecting their responsibilities as parents, neighbors and citizens. Research has found that criminal desistance and success in rehabilitative programs are associated with ex-offenders’ ability to construct positive narratives about themselves and their lives, in order to distance themselves from the prisoner/criminal identity (Giordano, Cernkovick & Rudolf, 2002; Maura, 2001). In this study, women used foodway narratives to do exactly this: To construct themselves as good. Some of

these narratives constructed their good selves as unique, perpetuating and utilizing the idea that most prisoners are bad, while others suggested that benevolence was common in prison, that most inmates were good. However, because almost all prison foodways were illicit, these “good person” food stories were invariably intertwined with acts of rule breaking, circumstances that complicate the narrators’ attempt to construct a “good” identity.

Good narratives. Foodways stories allowed the narrator to construct herself as a caring, empathetic and generous person who would go out of her way to help others. P8 described being too sick and tired to eat during Intake but still, “just to be nice,” she got out of bed to retrieve her breakfast tray and give it to her cellmates. P21 cast herself in the same light saying that as a tier worker she tried “to help as many people as I can” by distributing extra trash bags to inmates for cooking:

I’m a people’s person, I try to help as many people as I can. I would take my shirt off and give it to you even if I didn’t have another shirt. You understand what I’m saying?
Some people are like that, some people are not (P21)

Similarly, P9 made an effort to take care of another inmate: “I had left mine [commissary items] to my roommate. She was a young girl, I was like a mother to her. So, I left everything to her [at release].” In this story, P9 was a generous and thoughtful person, “like a mother,” leaving everything to “a young girl.” P30 remembered always getting along with the other inmates with whom she sat during meals in the cafeteria, “I’m the type of person that I’m just friendly with everybody, you know.” P17 offered the following explanation for why she decided to trade her medication for food: “I’m a caretaker, so definitely. I make sure people are comfortable.” Nice, helpful, people’s person, like a mother, friendly, caretaker: These self-descriptions interrupt community and judicial narratives that construct inmates as uncaring, selfish and antisocial. At

the same time, these narratives are complicated because most of the activities the women set forth as examples of their good selves are illicit in the prison context. YCI rules prohibit sharing or trading cafeteria or commissary food with others and diverting trash bags for cooking, even if it is to help others. While these stories painted the women in a positive light, they also provided further example of their unwillingness follow the rules. Being “good” to their peers and themselves was not necessarily “good” behavior as defined by the prison.

Good rule-breaking. In these narratives, participants described how they broke rules that they understood as unfair and nonsensical in order to help other inmates. Through this construction, they challenged the morality of the prison rules and constructed disobeying them as good. Women often emphasized the illicit nature of the foodways in order to underscore their benevolence: Their willingness to break the rules and risk getting caught in the service of others magnified their generosity. For example, P8 suggested that she would go out of her way and break food rules in order to help others:

All I was trying to do [when I got caught smuggling] was give some food and coffee and creamer and sugar to somebody that had nothing. ..that is how I was treated for trying to give something to a friend. (P8)

Similarly, P5 claimed she would make an effort to position herself in the cafeteria line next to “somebody [who] wanted my meal” and go to the cafeteria just to pick up her tray and give it to that other person:

If someone wanted something that I had, like somebody wanted my meal and I knew I wasn't going to eat it, they would stick behind me [in the cafeteria line] so that we ended up at the same table so I could pass them my tray. I would pass them my tray then get up ... I wouldn't stay, I would just give them the food and go back to my unit. (P5)

These stories about selflessly risking punishment in order to help “somebody that had nothing” served to construct a good identity. Similarly, P3 asserted that she stole from the kitchen “for not only me, but for everybody on the tier. There was a lot of hungry people on the tier...I was a heart, you know what I’m saying?” Her description of herself as “a heart” suggested that she cared for others and stealing for them was an expression of this sentiment.

Women also used stories about cooking activities on the tiers and in their cells to construct themselves as people who shared with and helped others. In general, women had to contribute ingredients in order to partake in shared meals, but participants claimed to make charitable exceptions for women who had nothing. P1 reported that, “If I knew someone didn’t have food, even if I was on loss of commissary, I would make sure I have a little bit for them... like enough for them to get full.” Similarly, P13 claimed, “I’m such a nice person, I order enough food to where I know I can keep myself fed for two weeks, and I’ll still probably give a couple of girls on the tier that I know a soup, if they’re hungry, or if I cook, I’ll feed them too.” P3 remembered, “I would ask who was hungry and I would put a noodle in for them.” These participants reported not just responding to requests for help but actively seeking out the hungry and cooking for them:

I don’t like to see people hungry... Me and another girl cooked like big food, a lot of food for people. We’d put our stuff together and we’ll cook together and we’d give it to people who didn’t have nothing. (P6)

While these actions may have violated prison policy – sharing food, cooking in groups – the narratives still served to illustrate their kind and empathetic personalities: “I am such a nice person” (P13). They may not have been following prison rules, but they were acting good by reaching out to others and helping those in need.

Uncommon goodness. Some women characterized their good acts as unique, different, better than standard inmate behavior. For example, when discussing how inmates would try to trick new inmates out of their commissary, P12 remarked, “Some people are devious. You just can’t be, you just can’t, on your first time, you can’t be [trusting], it’s no friends in there.” P8 described how people would get mad and “very, very greedy over commissary.” These antisocial behaviors were always described as the actions of others; none of the participants described tricking other inmates or being greedy themselves. Women used their good food stories to differentiate themselves from these bad inmates and shore up their good selves. For example, P24 described the price gouging of stolen kitchen goods as, “Highway robbery.” Her prices, on the other hand, were fair: “I’m not gonna charge you \$7 for a bag of ketchup. I’m just not going to do that, where they would.” Similarly, P7 positioned her sharing self as unique: “I know you’re hungry, here goes a soup. Not everybody does that.” By contrasting their positive behavior with the malevolent actions of others, participants – consciously or unconsciously - reinforced the strength of their good identity while perpetuating the idea that inmates were, in general, bad people.

Common goodness. To a lesser extent, there were also participants who presented their helping stories as typical and shared anecdotes about inmates sharing food with their peers as evidence of community kindness. In describing another inmate, P17 stated, “She’s just like an all-around nice person. I mean, she would give you her last Oatmeal Cream Pie.” P19 also remembered a bunk-mate who shared with her: “She shared with me and she had everything that commissary had to offer...she was a pretty good girl.” P27 spoke more generally recalling how “People cook and, somebody don’t have anything...they’re not going eat in front of nobody. It’s not that bad in there. The food, everybody in there, they like look out for each other.” With this

narrative, P27 maintained that inmates were generally kind to each other. In suggesting that “the girls were always nice” (P17), women strengthened their own personal identities as good people by constructing their peer group as good and challenging the hegemonic identity of criminals as bad people.

Healthy. Prison foodways narratives were also used by participants to construct themselves as healthy. In the context of a women’s prison, where the majority of the inmates have histories of substance abuse, the healthy self can be understood as a good self, because health is synonymous with abstaining from drugs and the illegal (bad) activities associated with addiction. For example, when I asked P2 if being incarcerated changed how she thinks about food, she replied:

I notice a lot of girls say when they get out they want to have McDonald’s ... but for me, I was concerned with eating the right thing. And I don’t know if it’s because I, it [prison] is a life-changing experience, and for me it was and I did the best I could there, and I want to change, and I want to, I’m starting to learn to love myself because that was what, what brought me there, was that I had no respect or love for myself. And now I do and I want to be healthy and I want to eat healthy.

In this narrative, P2 made it clear that she wants “to change” and eating healthy was part of this transformation. Several participants expressed this intention. Whether or not these health goals were actually realized, these narratives reflected the participants’ interest in representing self, both to herself and to others, as a person who was trying to move away from unhealthy choices and in that way rehabilitate herself to be a better person.

Intentions. Participants demonstrated their dedication to health by describing deliberate efforts to make healthy food choices. For example, P14 constructed herself as a healthy person by detailing her efforts to drink water:

When I was able to get water... I would drink like three, I would drink a whole bunch of those big Fluff containers full of water. Oh my God! I loved it! Then when [staff] rotation was over, gotta get an asshole. And I have to sneak and have the tier – the common area worker try to get me some water... It just used to be crazy! (P14)

P14 “loved” water and made an effort to watch the staff schedule and coordinate with the tier worker in order to drink as much as possible. Similarly, P10 described actively seeking out “nutritious” desserts and juices that she understood to be “pretty good for the health,” like blueberry pie and rice pudding. P1 went to extraordinary efforts to avoid cafeteria food altogether after she learned that the protein substitute used in many of the slop dishes contained MSG: “I had to like make sure I didn’t pick the protein pellet. I had to pick the chicken. It was really hard.” Her solution was to eat almost exclusively from the commissary during her 28 month incarceration, especially tuna and saltines. She talked at length about this decision, developing a food voice that was centered on health even though the food she ate to avoid the MSG (tuna and saltines) was not particularly healthy. Similarly, P2 talked about how she avoided most commissary snacks and took advantage of the opportunity to eat the variety of food made available to her at her job in the kitchen. She reported regularly removing fruit from the cafeteria and took pride in her attempts to make healthy food choices. Whether it was drinking a lot of water, eating nutritious desserts, avoiding cafeteria food or avoiding commissary, all of these women used their foodways narratives to create a cautious and thoughtful persona, committed to making healthy choices.

Gaining weight. In spite of these health intentions, participants' efforts to be healthy were often thwarted by misinformation and/or institutional barriers. P14, who drank a lot of water, still gained weight during her 58 month incarceration and was obese at the time of our interview. She attributed her weight gain to the commissary snacks: "It's probably the cakes and the bagels and the potato chips, it's just hard to get off." Indeed the lack of nutritional foods on the commissary list made it difficult for women to find healthy snacks: "I seriously can't think of one thing right now, not one thing, that is not fattening or...healthy on that, on that list of food" (P5). Lack of healthy options and misinformation may have also contributed to P10's 50 pound weight gain during her five month incarceration. In her efforts to consume nutritious foods, she decided that juice and fruit-based desserts, two high-calorie items, were her best options. Similarly, while P2 remembered doing "the best I could there" to be healthy, limiting her snacks to saltine sandwiches and healthy foods from the kitchen, she still gained 40 pounds during her incarceration.

The weight gain during incarceration experienced by P14, P10 and P2 was typical among this study sample and reflects a trend among female prisoners in the US. As is the case in non-incarcerated US communities, obesity and overweight are on the rise among prisoners (Dong & Tang, in press). I did not specifically ask participants to report their pre- and post- weight, so I cannot make claims about the impact of prison on their weight or the extent to which changes in their weight were healthy. However, my field notes indicate that 14 of the women were visibly overweight or obese at the time of their interviews. While many women may have already been overweight at intake, 17 participants (57%) reported gaining weight while incarcerated, amounts ranging from 5 lbs (in one month) to over 100 lbs (in 24 months). Three (10%) reported that their weight remained the same, 4 (13%) lost weight and no information about weight change

was collected from 6 (20%) of the participants. Women's narratives reflected ambivalence about changes in their weight. Because many participants were using drugs prior to incarceration, they came into prison underweight and their initial increase in body weight was welcomed as a sign of recovery and health. However, continued weight gain, beyond that initial recovery, was considered problematic:

I came in undernourished because I on drugs and, I was very under-nourished. My body was already unhealthy. You gain weight, you start looking better, because you're eating candy bars and potato chips for dinner! Every day. I mean you gain excessive weight to where uncomfortable, you can't even walk. If you ever noticed, I don't know if ever seen somebody before and after prison pictures. I mean you may go in 110 pounds, you come out 200, if you stay there long enough. (P22)

P22, who gained 90 pounds during her 2 year sentence, described this weight as "excessive" and "uncomfortable."

Many women reported trying to make healthy food choices and gaining weight while incarcerated. In spite of, and perhaps because of, this weight gain, women made an effort to portray themselves as healthy, as someone who had eaten well while incarcerated, someone who did "the best I could" (P2). P6, for example, was overweight when incarcerated and gained an additional 20 pounds while in prison. In her narrative, she sought to construct a healthy persona by limiting her consumption of instant noodles, "that would mess with my stomach." But these efforts "to stay more healthier" were sidelined by "chips and stuff." She described trying to choose between what she described as high-sodium Saltine crackers, which threatened her high blood pressure, and high-calorie Ritz crackers, which would contribute to weight gain. Her attempts to make the best decision were compromised by inaccurate nutritional information (Ritz

crackers have more calories and sodium than Saltines) and a lack of truly health options (neither Saltines nor Ritz crackers are healthy foods). Still, however misguided and unfruitful, P6's narrative about her efforts to eat well functioned to build her identity as a person who was concerned about health.

Losing weight. Among the four women who claimed to lose weight while incarcerated, two spoke at length about this process. For both of these women (P25, P26), eating well and exercising defined their prison experience and identities. Both women came to prison overweight. In describing her life prior to incarceration, P26 stated, "I was spoiled," because she was living with a wealthy friend and eating out almost every night. She had gained weight during this period of indulgence and deliberately took advantage of her prison time to regain control over her body by restricting her diet and practicing yoga:

I was like, oh, you know what? I've been wanted to, in the past few years, wanting to drop some weight. So, and I did. I just lost 32 pounds before I left. So, I took the time and said to myself, if I'm here to do all this inner work, why not give it a little outer glow, too?...There was no bread, I stopped the pasta, no rice, no white stuff, just got all that carb out of the way. (P26)

In this narrative, she constructed her weight loss as a demonstration of her will and determination: She wanted to lose weight, "and I did." By watching what she ate, "no white stuff," she created a healthy self. This story buttressed her larger story of recovery. She had worked to address her alcohol addiction while incarcerated, participating in an intensive treatment program and working as a groundskeeper. Losing weight was a part of P26's larger story of recovery that reinforced and demonstrated a new, good self.

Similarly, P25 came to prison just after giving birth. She constructed her prison sentence as a time to lose the pregnancy weight and prepare herself to care for her child. She lost a total of 25 pounds in the 25 months she was incarcerated:

I tried to like stay healthy while I was in there. That was like something that kept me motivated, was, going to the gym, trying to eat healthy...I was trying to lose weight and I wanted to leave out of jail looking good. So, people would be like, "Oh, you look good!" 'Cause usually a lot girls gain weight when they go to jail. (P25)

For P25, her recovery was centered on "going to the gym, trying to eat healthy" with the goal of "looking good." While outward appearance is not necessarily an indication of health, P25 strove to attain a look that she thought would demonstrate to other people and herself that she had made meaningful change in her life. If she was "looking good" – a term I did not ask her to define – the assumption was that she and other people would think she was doing good. Research suggests that long-lasting recovery for P26 and P25 will require a sustainable "cognitive transformation" in their perceptions of self (Giordano, Cernkovick & Rudolf, 2002). These narratives suggested that being healthy – or considering themselves to be healthy – could play a central role in the construction of these participants' new identities .

Summary. Criminal offenders' success in attaching themselves to positive self-narratives is associated with desistance from crime (Giordano, Cernkovick & Rudolf, 2002; Maura, 2001; Opsal, 2012; Rowe, 2011). Finding and "latching on" to a positive identity can be difficult for low-income formerly incarcerated people who lack the social and financial resources to secure the positive roles derived from steady employment and family life (i.e. breadwinner, good mother, family man). Similarly, it may be difficult for prisoners to access positive self-narratives while incarcerated in an environment that defines them as criminal offenders. In the

face of this dearth of positive identities, these narratives suggest how incarcerated and formerly incarcerated women were able to actively engage in the construction of two positive identities: good and healthy. Participants defined themselves as good by describing how they shared food and cooked for others. These stories showcased their capacity for friendship, empathy and generosity. Participants also identified themselves as healthy, by describing their efforts to make nutritious food choices and lose weight. These stories emphasized their commitment to wellness and recovery, distancing themselves from drug use and other harmful behaviors.

The construction of these positive narratives was complicated by prison conditions. First, most of their good foodways activities were illicit. Women's positive self-narratives were destabilized by the fact that sharing with and cooking for others required breaking prison rules. Participants negotiated this conundrum by criticizing the morality of prison policy that allowed inmates to go hungry and defining their rule-breaking as good. Second, with few healthy food choices, especially on the commissary, and a lack of information about nutritional content, women had difficulty realizing their healthy intentions. While body weight is only one (imperfect) measure of health, that most participants gained weight and/or left YCI overweight or obese suggests that achieving health while incarcerated was a challenge. In spite of these challenges, women aligned themselves with these positive narratives, identities that research suggests can promote the kind of cognitive shift required to sustain long-term desistance.

Conclusion

These narratives illustrate the potential of prison foodways to have a positive impact on inmates' lives, both during and after incarceration. By wresting some control over their foodways from the institution, participants were able to build a sense of self-efficacy. Foodways offered inmates the opportunity to build relationships with family and friends in the community

and construct relationships and social organization within the prison walls. Gathering, preparing and sharing food was also an opportunity for inmates to (re)construct their identities in positive ways – as wise women, kind women, healthy women. These data suggest that inmates want to build positive relationships and identities and that prison food systems can help women realize these intentions.

Chapter 6: Racialized Foodways

They give you 75 cents a week, I mean a day, and they slave you. And I'm not, I'm not a slave, and I'm just not working for you for 75 cents and I'm working my butt off... people in food prep, they work, they get up at 4:30 in the morning... They work from 4:30 to 12 in the afternoon and then another shift comes in and they work their butts off. You know, so I had issues with that. (P6, African-American)

One of the defining characteristics of the US correctional system, since its inception, has been its disproportionate impact on communities of color, African Americans in particular (Alexander, 2012; Perkinson, 2010; Davis, 2003; Oshinsky, 1997). Given the centrality of this disparity to US corrections, any analysis of prison systems in the United States is incomplete without discussion of race and ethnicity. In this chapter, I take on this thorny issue by exploring the production of racialized food narratives within this data. For example, in explaining (above) why she refused to work in the kitchen, P6 claimed, "I'm not a slave." With this narrative, she assigned the work a racial character by acknowledging and drawing upon the history of unpaid forced labor and dehumanization of African Americans in the United States. As a Black woman, she "had issues" with working for 75 cents a day and with being "slave(d)," suggesting an understanding of undercompensated kitchen employment that was shaped by racial identity and history.

"Racialized food narratives" is not a term with an established presence in the literature, although there is academic writing about "racialized narratives" more generally (Barnes, 1996; Delgado, 1998; Fee, 2006; Gunaratnam, 2008; Hirose & Pih, 2011; Long, 2011; Maines, 1999; Mollett, 2011; Sharma, 2010). The complexity of this concept resists a simple, uniform definition, so I chose to work with one description from Nasir and Shaw's (2011) research about racialized narratives in mathematics education that I found particularly clear and helpful:

Racialized narratives about students' intellectual and mathematical abilities play a central role in processes of positioning and identification. This implies that narratives such as "Asians are good at math" are more than static cultural beliefs. Students put these narratives to work for them in myriad ways that construct identities for themselves and for other students. Analyzing the mechanisms by which this identity work takes place requires a theoretical lens that sheds light on how students deploy these narratives in everyday activity. To that end, we propose conceptualizing racialized narratives as "cultural artifacts," a concept borrowed from anthropology and cultural psychology. (p. 27)

In the same way that students used racialized narratives about math as a tool to construct intellectual identities for themselves and their peers, participants in this study used racialized narratives about prison food in their "processes of positioning and identification" as prisoners (Nasir & Shah, 2011). Racialized food narratives were "deployed" to give a racial character to specific foods and align specific races with the prison experience. The narratives were a cultural artifact with which participants could "practice" race through their interactions with other inmates and prison staff (Martin, 2006, p. 258). I include narratives about race (e.g. Black, White) and ethnicity (e.g. Latina, African-American, Italian-American) in this conceptualization of racialized food narratives. After describing the research design decisions that I made regarding race that delimited the race/ethnicity analyses I could do, I provide preliminary insights into how these foodways narratives are racialized that warrant recognition and further investigation.

Race & Research Design

In recruiting women for this study, I deliberately tried to construct a sample that would reflect the racial and ethnic composition of YCI which is 42% White, 34% Black and 24% Latina. The study sample was 40% White (n=12), 43% Black (n=13) and 17% Latina (n=5). I sought to include a racially diverse sample because I recognized that race shapes individual life experiences. While none of the questions in the interview guide specifically asked about race or ethnicity, I believed that prison foodways experiences would vary by race and ethnicity because existing foodways literature describes racial, ethnic and socio-cultural differences in how people eat (Engelhardt, 2001; Marte, 2007; Peté & Devenish, 2005; Williams-Forson, 2001, 2006, 2008). In other words, my intent was to recruit a diverse sample, ask about food, collect demographic information, and then analyze how food stories or themes varied by race. As it turned out, I was surprised to find that I was unable to identify variation by race among the six themes (i.e. apathy, hunger, punishment, resistance, relationships, and good/healthy) that served as the focus of my thematic analysis.

The similarities in prison foodways across racial/ethnic groups found in my data could be explained in two ways. The lack of variation may be attributed to my research design: the small size of my convenience sample, the (in)sensitivity of the interview instrument, my coding systems and/or the themes that I chose to analyze. It may be that if I had enrolled different people, more people, asked other questions, and/or explored different themes, racial variation in responses may have surfaced. Alternatively, the variation in prison foodways by race and ethnicity may actually be very small to nil in this closed, controlled food environment where food selection and preparation are limited. If the prison allows access to only a narrow range of ingredients and cooking instruments and space are limited, how much variation can arise? Given

a finite combination of food possibilities in prison, the racial variation in foodways found in the community may disappear.

While racial comparison on the study's central themes did not pan out, the participants did share what I have termed racialized food narratives. The semi-structured data collection format allowed participants to bring their own questions and comments to the project and created the opportunity for me to ask unscripted follow-up questions based on participant responses. From this approach to co-constructing narratives, even though there was no "race question" in the interview guide per se, some participants ascribed a racial character to prison foodways. Specifically, 6 participants (P3, P6, P8, P12, P24, P7) told racialized food narratives. Five of these women were African American, one (P8) was White. There were 4 other women to whom I directed specific follow-up questions about the racial character of foodways based on their responses to protocol questions: P15 (White), P17 (White), P22 (African-American) and P27 (Latina). For example, as a follow-up about sharing food, I asked P15, "*Does it break down, in that way, racially? Is the person who is most likely to share with you another white person?*" In sum, 10 of the 30 participants discussed the racial character of prison foodways. The following analysis of these racialized food narratives illustrates how race can infuse women's perceptions of incarceration and their construction of self and others, and suggests areas for future inquiry.

Racialized Foodways

In general, foodways are understood to reflect and produce socio-cultural, racial and ethnic identities (Counihan, 2007). It follows, therefore, that the racial character ascribed to prison foodways was used by participants to construct identities for themselves and others. Foodways were used by participants to construct people of color as being "good at prison," reinforcing the notion of prison as a place for the racialized Other (Alexander, 2012).

Racialized cooking. Participant narratives gave specific cooking practices racial character. These racialized foodways narratives demonstrate how race is accomplished and constructed by positioning people of color as “good at prison” and White people as “not good at prison.” For example, P12, who was African-American, asserted that the Latina women were the best cooks in the housing units:

The Spanish girls they can cook...They can cook. So I used to throw them like two soups. No, get it in there and get it on! They can cook! I don't know how they do it, but they can throw down with some food...Big thick bowls. (P12, African-American)

This narrative about Latinas and cooking –“they [Spanish girls] can throw down some food” – constructed this racial/ethnic group as particularly good at preparing prison food. Similarly, narratives across the data set documented the assignment of Spanish names to several prominent cell-made dishes. For example, “Mufungo,” a term used interchangeably with “poppa,” was a burrito/pizza-like dish prepared on a potato chip-crust. Participants also used the Spanish word, “pasteles,” to refer to dessert dishes made from snack cakes. Outside of prison, mufungo, a Puerto Rican dish made from mashed plantains, and pasteles have little in common, in terms of ingredients and preparation, with the prison dishes that bear the same name. The Spanish naming of these dishes within prison society, therefore, cannot be completely explained by their similarity to actual Spanish food. On that basis, these dishes might just as well have been called pizza, casserole, or prison pie. The concept of racialized narratives suggests that the naming of these dishes with Spanish, rather than English, words is not accidental. Spanish terms are deployed in this context in order to “practice race” by positioning Latinas as “good at prison” and constructing prison foods and prison as non-White (Frankenberg, 1993; Martin, 2006; Nasir & Shaw, 2011).

In a slightly different variation on this theme, P7, an African-American woman, criticized the prison's "Soul Food Dinner" served in the cafeteria during Black History Month:

If we do get fried chicken, we have had barbecued chicken, like... the month of February is supposed to be [lowers voice to add drama] "Black History Month" so they treated us to I guess a [lowers voice to add drama] "Soul Food Dinner."...Barbecued chicken, some nasty collard greens with no flavor, macaroni and cheese, and corn bread. I guess that was "Soul Food." (P7, African-American)

The sarcasm and disgust in her voice suggested that she found this dinner to be a gross caricature of an authentic African-American meal. The prison's efforts to recognize and honor African-American foodways had backfired, at least for this woman. P7 considered the chicken and "nasty collard greens" to be an affront to Southern/African-American cooking traditions. With this description of the prison's soul food "with no flavor," P7 constructed the institution as not-African-American, distancing her own self and identity from her keepers and solidifying her own African-American identity by her ability to distinguish real soul food from a poor imitation.

Racialized eating. Another use of a racialized foodways narratives included P8's description of how her Italian-American "heritage" made it difficult to eat in the cafeteria:

Our heritage is to sit around the table, have respect at the table, talk, and so if we're in different units and we get together and we start rapping. You're eating slow, Italians eat slow, you know?...We talk a lot and [the COs ask,] "You're not eatin'?" They come by. They'll get like 3 or 4 of them will come, they'll stare at you. This close. They are standing right there and they're like. "I don't see you eatin'. You can't be eatin' if you're talking. Get up, let's go! You got 5 minutes." (P8, White/Italian-American)

In this narrative, P8 constructed prison foodways as specifically incompatible with Italian-American [White] identity. This narrative positioned her own ethnic/racial group as non-prisoner: Italian-Americans, as presented in this passage are “not good at prison.” Even without mentioning other racial or ethnic groups, by tying her conflicts with cafeteria eating to her Italian-American background, her narrative implied that people of other “heritages” do not have the same need for respect, talk and slow eating at the table. In short, her narrative constructed cafeteria eating in prison as a racialized (non-White) foodway and, therefore, her discomfort with prison eating practices reinforced her White identity.

Racialized commissary. In her narrative about commissary, a White woman (P15) gave a racial character to commissary funds and spending. In the following passage, P15 constructed “Black girls” as “good at commissary.” Once this cultural artifact was established, her narrative about her own family’s lack of financial support reinforced her White identity by constructing herself as not Black (Frankenberg, 1993).

It’s the Black girls that have the most. I think a lot of White people are so disgraced by the fact that we end up there. I know in my case, that’s it...A lot of Black girls, like it’s not disgraceful because certain people are coming from certain places and have been there themselves, so it’s not, it’s not as condemning... [Black people] have an aunt that’s been, or, like, they just know. They’ve been through it before, their kid isn’t the first person that they’ve seen go to jail...I think a lot of the White girls are really asked out, as far as like their parents go, or something like that. And I think, I think the Latino are a little asked out, too, ‘cause I think it’s just kind of like, shameful. Although, I still think they got a better chance than us. But, the, truly like the Black girls are the ones that religiously always have their commissary, and letters, and visits. (P15, White)

In this narrative, P15 constructed Whiteness as a disadvantage in terms of access to commissary: “They [Blacks] got a better chance than us.” In other words, Blacks are “good at prison.” In this racialized narrative, Black inmates, and to a lesser extent Latinas, come from “certain places” and enjoy more support from their families and friends who had “been through it before.” White inmates, on the other hand, are “so disgraced” by their incarceration that they can’t ask for help from people in the community. White inmates are “not good at prison”, they are “asked out,” and must serve their time without support from their social network. P15’s perception that “it’s the black girls that have the most” was not supported by the study data. In this sample, receipt of commissary funds from the community varied by length of stay, not race. As was the case with the racialized narratives about Spanish cooking, the concept of racialized narratives suggests that this characterization of prison commissary arose not because Black women receive more commissary funds but in order to create a cultural artifact that can be used to construct prison and self as non-White.

Conclusion

Given the racial disparity of the US correctional system, that disproportionately incarcerates people of color, especially African-Americans, it is important to explore how foodways narratives provide insight into perceptions and constructions of race and its intersection with perceptions of incarceration. This chapter offers a smattering of data about racialized foodways narratives. Because there was no question in the study’s interview guide that asked participants’ to describe the racial character of prison foodways, data on this issue was sporadic. However thin, this preliminary data suggest ways in which racialized foodways narratives were used to construct the racial character of prison. Narratives suggested that people of color were good at prison cooking, eating and accessing commissary. In other words, people

of color were “good at prison.” This association created a mechanism for participants of various racial and ethnic backgrounds to practice race and reinforced the notion that prison is a place for people of color. P2’s status as an African-American woman did not prevent her from engaging narratives that construct the stigmatized prisoner population as non-White. Racialized food narratives also offered White participants (P8 and P15) the opportunity to reassert their Whiteness, compromised by their time in this space of color, by offering their failure to succeed with prison foodways as proof of their non-Black status. A more deliberate examination of such patterns is warranted to further explicate how foodways contribute to the racialized construction of US correctional systems and prisoners, and prisoners' lived experiences of incarceration.

Chapter 7: Implications and Conclusion

How is power deployed, resisted, understood, in the very different, and yet structurally related penal environments of the world? What is the nature of the prison experience? How painful is the prison? Can prisons be moral places? These are the new – and old – questions we should be asking about the prison. ...If it were possible to construct a form of imprisonment whose basic structure and daily practices are more or less acceptable to those who endure it, then the effects of this form of imprisonment might be less damaging and socially constructive. (Liebling, 2004, p. 489, 491)

I have used this analysis of women's prison foodways narratives to build knowledge about the lived experience of incarceration: the participants' daily lives, their evolving relationships and identities, and their interactions with and perceptions of the State. Drawing a map of prison foodways (Chapter 3), I explained the different ways that inmates collect, prepare, distribute and consume food, and the centrality of these activities to incarcerated life. By shedding light on these daily routines, the barely visible world of prison life comes into greater focus. Through exploration of foodways themes, I further illuminated the prison experience by suggesting the positive and negative ways that food impacts inmate's perceptions of themselves, their social networks and the State. Negative foodways humiliated the women, accentuated their powerlessness, and reinforced their perceptions of the State as nonsensical and apathetic towards their needs (Chapter 4). Positive foodways illustrated the inmates' capacity to resist State power, build/maintain relationships and construct positive self-narratives (Chapter 5). Racialized foodways narratives began to reveal how food stories may be deployed to reinforce prison's racial character and construct the identities of self and other (Chapter 6).

These narratives respond to Liebling's questions about the dimensions of power and pain in the prison experience. Her larger question, however, remains unanswered: Would a system of imprisonment that is more acceptable to inmates be less damaging? More socially constructive? In this concluding section of the paper, I explore the implications of this prison foodways

analysis to consider these questions and areas for future research. To begin, I suggest that these findings boost the overall visibility of the prison experience and the humanity of incarcerated people. This type of data put a human face on the phenomenon of “mass incarceration” that may help to engage policymakers and the public in prison reform efforts. Study data also inform understanding of the role of prisons in the (de)construction of State legitimacy and inmate identities and relationships. This assessment of prison’s impact on perceptions of the State, self and others provides a baseline from which to build new policy and interventions. Discussion about how to make prison *more* acceptable and *less* damaging, demands consideration of where we currently stand. Finally, this work defines clear pathways for clinical and policy interventions that may make prison more acceptable to inmates, producing better outcomes for incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people and moving our society towards a place where prison could be a moral and socially constructive space.

Visibility

This study found that using foodways analysis to explore the female prison experience, the prison and prisoner can be known (Bosworth, 2010). Detailed accounts of prison foodways provide qualitative data about prison life and incarcerated people that complements the existing literature, which is predominantly quantitative, expanding our knowledge about the incarceration experience. This expanded visibility offers opportunities for recognition of and proximity to prisoners that may inform and inspire public debate about correctional systems.

The prison. Beginning with arrest and travelling through lock-up, intake, and transitional units into the General Population, the participants’ narratives about rancid baloney sandwiches, cold trays of mixed-up food, baked chicken day in the cafeteria, and unrelenting hunger paint a vivid picture of the humiliations and joys of prison life. Through these food

stories about the abundance of cake (P5) and short supply of seasonings (P22), the seemingly contradictory nature of a prison life that is simultaneously terrifying and boring, completely structured and yet unpredictable, comes into focus. For example, P17's story of passing the time with her bunkie in the transitional unit, breaking up fire ball candies against the cell walls, constructed a relative calm that was juxtaposed by her time spent in the psych ward eating chili with no utensils, alone and naked. Similarly, P8 described enjoying Nacho Bell Grande on the tier at one moment and being strip searched for roast beef in the bathroom at another. These portraits of prison food life open the "black box" of incarceration and allow time inside to become visible. From this visibility, empathy may emerge because, while extreme and novel on some level, these stories are familiar. Most of us have sat in a crowded cafeteria at some point, been served food we could not eat, snuck an extra portion when no one was looking. Because these stories are recognizable, we are able to digest them.

The prisoner. The participants' food narratives also exhibit their individual humanity. Instead of depicting a faceless Other – the sex worker, the drug user, the mentally ill – these food narratives construct incarcerated people as human. People in prison share, trade and cook food. They try to get a place in the cafeteria line that will allow them to sit by a friend. They help each other out. They bend rules if they think they can get away with it. They cook creative items with the food they have on hand. They want some control over the food they put into their mouths. These are not prisoner customs, they are human habits. On the inside, people with a lot of food resources and knowledge are revered, while those with more limited stores are marginalized, just like in the larger society. The participants' food narratives construct human beings who seek to maximize their autonomy and self-efficacy, maintain and nurture relationships, and feel good

about themselves. In these stories, we can see ourselves and the people we know, creating a bridge to the inside that dissolves efforts to construct prisoners as Other.

Implications. Given the extraordinarily high rates of incarceration in the US, and the disproportionate imprisonment of low-income people of color, knowledge about prison and incarcerated people is essential to social workers dedicated to working with marginalized and oppressed people. Social workers practicing across the profession in every field from child welfare to elder services, clinical care to legislative advocacy, are likely to come into contact with incarcerated people, formerly incarcerated people, and/or never-incarcerated people whose lives have been impacted by the incarceration of family and friends. The findings from this study about prison and prisoners prepare social workers for these interactions by providing intimate details about the incarceration experience.

Clinical implications. Knowledge about prison foodways and the identities and relationships constructed by these systems may help clinicians conduct psycho-social histories, build rapport, and recommend plans of care by more fully acknowledging and incorporating prison experiences. Social work is committed to meeting clients where they are and the map of prison foodways provided by this study offers a rich description of incarcerated terrain. Further, clinicians can use questions about prison foodways to make specific inquiries about their clients' incarcerated experiences. This study has demonstrated that formerly incarcerated people can readily recall their prison foodways experiences and that information about these activities builds knowledge about their lives. Other human services professionals like teachers, medical providers, correctional officers, and parole/probation managers may also find that this information can inform their work.

Policy implications. Greater visibility of the quotidian activities of prison life and the humanity of incarcerated people may promote a more aggressive critique of incarceration in the US. This study provides evidence that challenges current constructions of the prisoner as Other and may foster the changes in beliefs and attitudes about incarcerated people that will be required to move correctional policy towards a more socially constructive paradigm (Alexander, 2012; Liebling, 2004). Bosworth (2010) has described how, although “economic and, to a lesser extent, safety arguments seem to be effective in generating a national, if muted, critique of current incarceration policies,” public policy debate about corrections in the US has so far failed “to engage in any depth with more complicated normative or rights-based arguments about incarceration” (p. 195). A right-based argument about prison among US policymakers and citizens may be ignited with what current public discourse keeps at bay, the recognition that prisoners are human beings. This portrayal of prison foodways contributes to the construction of the prisoner as human and offers information about what her incarceration entails that challenge the status quo.

The tension between prison’s conflicting mandates – to punish and to rehabilitate – comes to a head in these narratives about prison foodways. For example, consider these compelling images from the study data: P5 slipping a hard-boiled egg into her bra, P3 standing with her head against the cafeteria wall, P8 being searched for bags of coffee and blueberry pies. Confronting these stories offers the reader a glimpse of daily prison life and the opportunity to ask, “Is this what I think incarceration should entail?” For some, the answer to this question may be affirmative; the construction of prison as humiliating and painful may seem entirely appropriate. However, many may disagree. Given that 60% of female prisoners in the US are survivors of physical or sexual abuse (Girshick, 2003), what are the implications of lacing this

population's foodways with a regular dose of humiliation? While these humiliating systems may support the State's punishment goals, they threaten efforts promote desistance from crime by sending inmates strong consistent messages that they are worthless. Dissemination of these findings offers the opportunity for policy makers to see prison life and incarcerated people in a new light and consider the advantages and disadvantages of the status quo.

Legitimacy

These data also contribute to and provoke a long overdue discussion about inmate perceptions of State legitimacy. Jackson et al (2010) offer this definition of legitimacy:

In criminal justice settings, legitimacy is the widespread belief among members of the public (and inmates) that the police, the courts, the prisons and the legal system are authorities entitled to make decisions and who should be deferred to in matters of criminal justice.... prisoners who perceive the prison regime to be legitimate believe that the prison should have rules and that these rules should be followed (p. 4)

The widespread disregard for prison food rules shared in these narratives suggested that participants did not perceive the prison food regime, and the State power behind these policies, as legitimate. Prison food policy was constructed by participants as non-responsive to inmates' needs and nonsensical, leaving them hungry and alienated. Food systems, food-related punishment and the food itself were experienced as humiliating expressions of State power. These understandings of food policy as apathetic, nonsensical and humiliating undermined the legitimacy of these rules and both justified and incited non-compliance. While inmates' refusal to abide by prison food rules may not produce serious consequences in the short-run, in the long-run, the crisis of legitimacy which fuels this behavior may have implications for individuals'

willingness to comply with other aspects of the criminal justice system and other State-provided services, while incarcerated and upon release.

Implications. What are the potential implications of prison food policy that delegitimizes State power? P3's story about smuggling food onto court runs demonstrated how narratives about institutional apathy and nonsense, firmly engrained and reinforced by prison foodways, can seep out of the world of food and shape larger perceptions about the legitimacy of the criminal justice system and, more generally, the State. P3 described how she broke the rules about taking food on these runs because she knew she would be hungry during the day and considered these rules to be ridiculous and nonsensical. From there, she began to discuss the cold that she experienced on the bus, and that trips were often made in vain when hearings were postponed but no one bothered to inform the women because "they don't care:" Then, all within the same response, she began to discuss how she was "not being represented correctly" by her public defender: (*emphasis added*)

Some of them [public defenders] are stupider than you ...actually dumber than me. And they're not doing their job for you because you're a prisoner; you're an inmate in jail. It's like I used to tell the girls, "It's like a vicious cycle." I used to actually say, "I didn't see the memo, but there must be a memo out: *Arrest any woman for any reason.*" This woman that's up there, the reason she be there, the reason she's like [incarcerated], get out of here! *I couldn't figure it out...* From January to March, 1200 women came through. Explain that to me. *Them statistics don't make sense.* (P3)

And so a story that began with a participant's explication of a nonsensical food policy that reflected little concern for the inmates concluded that the entire criminal justice system functions without "reason" and "don't make sense." In P3's story, the rule against bring snacks on court

runs functioned as a segue and as a metaphor for the nonsensical and unfair nature of the entire criminal justice system.

Clinical implications. Further research is needed to measure the impact of prison life, and prison foodways in particular, on perceptions of State legitimacy and engagement and compliance with State-sponsored social services. To date, these associations have not been explored by legitimacy research which has focused primarily on how perceptions of legitimacy impact relationships between the public and criminal justice systems (Franke et al., 2010; Sparks, 1994; Tyler, 2006). As agents of the State, clinical social workers have a vested interest in promoting a better understanding about the impact of State legitimacy on their practice. The profession's efforts to engage formerly incarcerated clients in services and encourage compliance with care may be weakened by client perceptions that the State does not care about them and/or is nonsensical. Appreciation of these potential impacts of incarceration on perceptions of State legitimacy may prepare social workers to negotiate care plans and contracts with clients by more fully considering the vulnerabilities produced by their lived experiences of incarceration.

Policy implications. Ameliorating the legitimacy of prison foodways does not require that every inmate demand be satisfied, only that the system be understood as fair (Liebling, 2004; Sparks and Bottoms, 1995). Franke et al (2010) have theorized that "legitimacy has more to do with the way decisions are made and how people are treated, and less to do with the decision itself" (p. 92). This sentiment was expressed throughout the participants' narratives. While complaints were certainly raised about the food, it was the seemingly arbitrary nature of the foodways that was most infuriating and dehumanizing: that policy was not explained, rules were enforced randomly, and staff was unresponsive to needs. Specific policy changes that

correctional institutions and policymakers can make to build confidence in State power and discretion include:

1. Create prison foodways that demonstrate concern, empathy and respect. For example, allow inmates to serve themselves and eat at a reasonable pace.
2. Communicate the rationale behind food policy. Create a prison food council that promotes dialogue between inmates and staff about food.
3. Alleviate hunger by providing food during the intake period and at night when women reported experiencing food insecurity.
4. Reduce food waste by repurposing leftover food and, as previously stated, allowing inmates to serve themselves.
5. Examine the use of food-related humiliation in prison operations. Choose punishment that seeks to transform prisoners, not degrade them.
6. Build understanding of prison punishment that focuses on the deprivation of freedom and does not use foodways to construct additional layers of punishment.

In support of changes like these, research is needed about how to increase the acceptability of prison food policies (i.e. focus groups with correctional staff, incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people) and measure the impact of the proposed reforms on perceptions of State legitimacy, compliance with prison rules and engagement with care upon release.

Identity

Study findings inform understanding about the construction of identity among incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals. Participants used foodways narratives to describe themselves in positive ways, as assertive, helpful, empathetic and healthy. Accounts of hoarding, cooking, smuggling and other form of foodways resistance attributed self-efficacy and

strength to the narrator. Stories about sharing food, cooking with others and being mindful of other women's hunger illustrated benevolence. Participants explicitly described themselves as friendly, caring people. Many considered prison an opportunity to manage their weight and stabilize eating habits. However, these attempts to construct positive self-narratives were often attenuated by rules that prohibited informal inmate food exchanges and interactions, lack of clarity about the nutritional content of cafeteria and commissary food choices, and racialized food narratives that reinforced the notion that while many positive identities were out of reach, prisoners of color were, at the very least, "good at prison."

Implications. Given the research that finds an association between positive self-narrative and desistance from crime (Giordano, Cernkovick & Rudolf, 2002; Maura, 2001; Rowe, 2011), positive self-narratives should be nurtured and promoted. Incarcerated and formerly incarcerated women may have limited opportunities to attach themselves to positive identities because of criminal justice histories, lack of education, limited employment prospects and/or child custody issues (Opsal, 2012). Prison policy may inhibit or undermine the development of positive narratives. P6, for example, came to prison overweight and her efforts to become "more healthier" centered on deciding between Ritz crackers and saltines. This futile deliberation squandered an opportunity to inform and promote health seeking behaviors: Rather than losing weight, she gained an additional 20 pounds during her imprisonment. Similarly, women who sought to divert their own food to other inmates with limited resources were forced to sneak around and break rules in order to practice empathy. Given the vacuum of positive identities in which incarcerated people dwell, it makes good sense to allow prison foodways to develop positive identities through clinical work and adjustments to prison policy.

Clinical implications. Social work clinicians can play a key role in helping incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people attach themselves to positive narratives. Because so many traditional markers of success are out of reach for these populations, clinician must be creative about identifying positive narratives that are accessible and sustainable. The understanding of the positive identities constructed by prison foodways that this study provides may offer options that clinicians can extract and use with their clients. Positive food narratives may also inform clinicians who use a strengths-based framework to focus on what the client does well. At the same time, these findings prepare clinicians to be vigilant about ways in which prison food policy may have (re)constructed negative identities.

Policy implications. Prison policy may inhibit the development of positive identities by prohibiting inmates from sharing food with each other and providing limited access to nutritional food and information. Two recommendations to promote inmates' access to the good/healthy narratives in which they expressed interest include:

1. Promote food autonomy and collaboration by offering inmates access to self-cook kitchen facilities where they can prepare food individually or in groups and experience greater control over their food consumption. Correctional food systems in Europe and Australia that offer inmates access to kitchen facilities provide the US with examples of food systems that harness the power of foodways to build positive identities and person responsibility (Earle & Phillips, 2012; Folpp, 2011; WHO, 2013). Self-cooking kitchens also offer an opportunity for inmates to prepare foods in ways that reflect their cultural, racial and/or ethnic identities (Earle & Phillips, 2012).
2. Provide healthier foods and nutritional information. Offering more healthy choices on the cafeteria and commissary menus and providing ready access to nutritional

information – at the cafeteria serving line and on the commissary form – may help inmates to develop and/or realize their healthy intentions. This is not a recommendation to eliminate high-calorie/high-fat commissary snacks or create State imposed regimes of healthy eating. Study findings suggest that food choices should be informed and expanded, not restricted, to promote individual control and self-efficacy.

3. Prioritize inmate health. These prison foodways reforms face two formidable opponents: prison security forces and corporate food interests. All prison movement and activities compromises prison control and gaining support from correctional staff for inmate kitchens, with knives, will require intensive engagement and communication. Similarly, the corporate profits derived from cafeteria service and commissary sales may discourage self-cook systems and healthier food options (Nestle, 2002). An enormous commitment to prisoner and community health will be needed to bring these campaigns to fruition.

In light of current State efforts to fight overweight and obesity with a range of policies that promote healthy bodegas, nutritious school lunches, restricted soda sales, and the use of food stamps at farmer's markets (Kalafa, 2011; Moss, 2013; Winne, 2009), it is ironic that in the one setting where the State has near-complete control over what people consume, they serve baloney sandwiches on white bread, sugary snacks, and Ramen Noodles. The exclusion of incarcerated people from society's larger efforts to promote healthy lifestyles is yet another example of the dehumanization of this population. Kitchen facilities and nutritional information reject this dehumanization by offering inmates the opportunity to enact the good/healthy narratives that are available in other facets of society. These interventions also allow development of budgeting, cooking, collaboration, and decision-making skills that prisoners can use upon release,

exemplifying the type of programming that may allow prisons to more fully realize their potential to transform inmates and not simply confine them.

Relationships

Participants described how prison foodways were used to feed their relationships with people inside and outside of prison. Commissary funds from friends and family in the community were understood as a way to express and enact support for inmates. However, these deposits could be a financial burden, especially for low-income families caring for inmates' child(ren). Participants recognized the hardship that these contributions imposed and drew strength from being able to decline the support. In terms of relationships between inmates, participants described how foodways were used to structure the inmates' social hierarchy and build individual connections. Notably, most of these relationship-building foodways were illicit. Group cooking on the tier was a prohibited activity that created social networks and hierarchy based on the inmates' different abilities to secure and prepare food. Similarly, illicit food exchanges and socializing – on the tier and in the cafeteria – were an opportunity for women to negotiate relationships.

Implications. Research has demonstrated a strong association between supportive social relationships and positive prisoner outcomes, especially for women (Chesney-Lind & Pasko, 2004; Gehring & Bauman, 2008; Grella & Rodriguez, 2011; Lund, et al., 2002; O'Brien & Young, 2006; Severance, 2005). Given the importance of social relationships to women's recovery, dimensions of prison life that promote positive social relationships should be facilitated, not discouraged.

Clinical implications. Commissary funds offer a powerful source of connection between inmates and friends on the outside. Relations in the community can rarely afford to send these

funds to prison but do so because they know their incarcerated kin need money and also because there are not many other ways to show their support. Policy recommendations listed below suggest ways to promote inmates' financial independence. Clinicians and community-based organizations can also help by promoting alternative, non-financial connections between the prisoners and their families through facilitated visits, letter writing and phone calls. More generally, counseling and case management services may help family and friends to manage the stressors associated with having a loved one imprisoned.

Policy implications. Participants reported a need for contributions to their commissary accounts from family and friends in order to purchase cosmetic supplies and avoid hunger, especially in the first weeks of their prison experience. For some, this need for outside support continued even after they were placed in the General Population and secured employment. The following policy changes would promote inmates' economic independence and reduce pressure on relations in the community to fund commissary accounts.

1. Provide snacks for inmates in the intake and transitional units. Logistical issues during the first weeks of incarceration make employment and commissary purchases nearly impossible. In these conditions, new inmates are hungry and vulnerable.
2. Set a "living" wage to inmate workers. Participants reported that the current minimum wage of 75 cents a day was barely enough to make ends meet. Without a living wage, inmates are forced to steal food, solicit money from home, or rely on others inmates. Allowing inmate workers to earn a more adequate income would reduce their reliance on others, bolster their sense of personal responsibility, and allow much-needed funds to remain in the community.
3. Permit some forms of collective cooking. Participants reported that prison foodways

were used to organize inmates' social networks. However, prison rules against inmate cooking and food exchanges forced these activities underground, removing the opportunity for prison staff to monitor and participate in these interactions. Constructing these activities as illegal may also perpetuate the "us against them" narrative of street life and encourage a self-organization of inmates that endangers weaker members of the community. Self-cook kitchens (described above) would allow for the development of pro-social activities could be facilitated by staff in order to maximize their potential benefits. On a smaller scale, providing basic cooking tools on the tier (e.g. larger bowls, utensils, small refrigerators, microwaves) would allow women to prepare foods without using trash bags and toilets.

Human beings have a natural tendency to connect with one and other. Participants' narratives about prison foodways described building these connections to other people inside and outside of the prison. Prison policy should consider how to best facilitate these relationships and, where foodways are a problematic bridge, offer other ways for inmates to develop and nurture bonds.

Limitations

There are several limitations to this study. For one, I worked alone in gathering, transcribing, coding, and analyzing the interview data. If other researchers had been involved in data collection, management and analysis, I could make claims about inter-rater reliability and moderation of bias that would boost the trustworthiness of the data (Patton, 2002). Since this is not possible, I have attempted to fully explicate my research design decisions in order to be as transparent as possible about the process. Two, the recruitment of all study participants from a single housing program in New Haven, CT limits the generalizability of the findings. The residents at Evergreen all have substance abuse and/or mental health issues. These diagnoses,

together with their willingness to live in a group housing setting, may distinguish them from other women re-entering the community from prisons. On a related point, recruiting from this single program produced a sample almost entirely composed of women incarcerated for drug-related crimes. The lack of variation among the participants' most recent controlling charge and length of sentences is a limitation. Three, by including only women who had been incarcerated at the State of Connecticut's York Correctional Facility (YCI), the findings' generalizability to the prison foodways experience in other States and outside of this country is limited.

Finally, findings were based solely on participants' recollections of their prison experience. No additional data (e.g. prison observation, interviews with correctional staff, menu review) were used to triangulate these memories. The strength of this data is rooted in an epistemological foundation that asserts all experience is an interpretation of reality, not a replica of an "actual prison experience" (Smith, 1992). The narratives that these participants told, at that moment and with me as a co-creator, are understood to be inherently "unstable." In a policy landscape in which statistics are equated with truth, communicating the significance and import of this form of findings brings with it an inherent and difficult challenge (Tolman, Hirschman, & Impett, 2005). This work highlights the importance of providing visibility to unseen worlds; future research must engage the voices of correctional officers, prison administrators, and family and community impacted by crime and incarceration, to build a more complete picture of prison life and its implications.

Conclusion

This exploration of women's experiences with food and eating while incarcerated at Connecticut's York Correctional Institution builds knowledge about the lived experience of incarceration and the ways in which prison foodways (re)produce relationships, identities and

perceptions of the State. Negative foodways alienated and humiliated the inmates, undermining State legitimacy. In contrast, positive foodways offered opportunities to construct positive self-identities and relationships. Foodways interventions to support the rehabilitative goals of correctional facilities were proposed. For example, providing inmates with the food, tools and space to cook for themselves, something they are already doing through illicit channels, could boost women's sense of agency and control and allow them to build the skills and narrative around responsibility, interpersonal communication, and collaboration that they will need to succeed upon release. Alternatively, simply providing healthier commissary options and accurate information about the nutritional content of cafeteria meals could serve to inform and support inmates' efforts to ameliorate their lives. These data suggest that inmates want to build positive relationships and identities and that prison food systems could do more to help women realize these intentions.

Finally, no discussion of prison in the United States is complete without mention of the victims of crimes. Correctional reforms like the ones proposed by this study are often struck down by victims and their advocates who demand that perpetrators of crime be held responsible for their actions. Programs for incarcerated people may be rejected if they are perceived as overindulgent or superior to opportunities available for non-incarcerated, presumably law-abiding, citizens. Although nearly all the participants in this study were convicted of non-violent crimes, I would assert that few crimes are completely without violence or victims. For example, to kick in a door, rifle through the contents of a home, and remove items of sentimental and financial value is an act of violence with victims, even if no one gets physically hurt. The foodways interventions proposed in this study honor and recognize the victims of crime by suggesting ideas to increase the chances that the people who are incarcerated will create no more

victims. Prison can only prevent an individual from re-offending while she is confined behind its walls. Once an individual is released, it is her relationships, positive self-narratives, self-efficacy, willingness to cooperate with State-sponsored services, and ability to cope with the daily stressors of life in the community that will keep her, and the people around her, safe.

APPENDIX A: Study Sample Demographic Distribution Goals

		YCI*	Sample (n)	Sample (%)
Race	White	42%	12	40%
	Black	34%	13	43%
	Latina	24%	5	17%
	<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>100%</i>
Age	Under 25	20%	3	10%
	25-45	68%	20	67%
	Over 45	12%	7	23%
	<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>100%</i>

***YCI = York Correctional Institution, Niantic, CT (CT's only prison/jail for women)**

APPENDIX B: Participant Matrix

	Demographics							Most Recent Incarceration				Notes	
	Subject #	Age @ Interview	Race			Drug of Choice	Homeless @ Arrest	Times Incarcerated	Length (mos)	Charge	Money from home?		Weight Change
Pilot	1	23	0	0	1			2	28	Violation of Probation	Y	None	
	2	33	0	1	0	Opioids		1	7	Violation of Probation	N	Gain 40	Drug charge
	3	56	1	0	0	Multi		1	6	Drug Related	Y	Loss 15	
	4	36	1	0	0	N/A		3	6	Don't Know	Y	None	Not a drug user
	5	30	0	1	0	Heroin			1	Drug Related	N	Gain 15	
	6	33	1	0	0			3	8	Violation of Probation	Y	Gain 20	Longest bid = 6 yrs
	7	39	1	0	0	Multi	N	6	7	Violation of Probation	Y		Drug charge
	8	43	0	1	0	Crack, Opioids	Y	10	6	Violation of drug court	Y	Gain 70	Lesbian. Longest bid = 6 years
	9	53	0	1	0	Opioids		5	2	Larceny 6th degree	N	None	
	10	53	0	0	1	Crack	N	10	5	Possession of Narcotics	Y	Gain 50	Mental disability, speech slurred
	11	47	1	0	0	Cocaine, Heroin	Y	32	2	Possession of Narcotics	N		
	12	51	1	0	0	Cocaine, Heroin	Y	24	5	Larceny 6th degree	N		
	13	23	1	0	0	Marijuana	N	3	4	Sales of Narcotics to undercover	Y		Lesbian
	14	32	1	0	0	Alcohol, Cocaine	Y	3	58	Assault, 1st & 3rd degree	N	Gain	
	15	30	0	1	0	Heroin	N	2	1	Traffic & Burglary related to drugs	N	Gain 65	
	16	53	0	1	0	Crack	Y	2	1	Larceny 2nd, Check Forgery	N	Gain	Tape malfunction, no audio
	17	33	0	1	0	Cocaine, Opioids	Y	1	1	Possession of Narcotics	N	Gain 5	Spent a week in YCI psychiatric ward.
	18	22	0	1	0	Crystal M. Alcohol, Opioids	Y	1	3	Larceny, Burglary, drug related	N	Gain 50	Nodding off, interview incomplete
	19	31	0	0	1	PCP	Y	2	4	DUI	Y	Gain 10	
	20	43	1	0	0	N/A	N	2	11	Manslaughter, 1st Degree	Y		Not a drug user. First bid = 10 years
	21	26	0	0	1	PCP	N	1	2	Larceny 6th degree	Y	Lost 15	
	22	44	1	0	0			3	24	Sales of Narcotics	Y	Gain 90	
	23	30	1	0	0	N/A	Y	1	4	Robbery	Y	Gain	Not a drug user
	24	41	1	0	0	Multi	Y	27	8	Forgery I	Y	Lost 15	
	25	27	0	1	0	N/A	N	1	25	Vehicular Manslaughter	Y	Lost 25	Not a drug user 10 yrs suspended
	26	44	0	1	0	Alcohol	N	3	14	Disorderly Conduct, Larceny 6	Y	Lost 32	
	27	25	0	0	1	PCP	N	1	24	Possession of Narcotics	Y	Gain 100	13 months in Seg for gang affiliation
	28	35	0	1	0	Crack	Y	7	13	Larceny 3	Y	Gain	Pregnant during incarceration
	29	54	1	0	0	Crack	N	3	3	Possession of Narcotics	N	Gain	Sick at interview, nodding off
	30	43	0	1	0	Alcohol	Y	1	2	DUI	Y	Gain 40	
	37.8	13	12	5			5.6	9.5					

APPENDIX C: Informed Consent Form

(Note: Top Margin will include Hunter College letterhead)

HUNTER COLLEGE OF THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK INFORMED CONSENT FORM

*Cafeteria, Commissary & Cooking:
Foodways and Negotiations of Power and Identity in a Women's Prison*

P.I. Amy B. Smoyer

Purpose & Background

Amy Smoyer is a graduate student in the Department of Social Welfare in Hunter College at the City University of New York. She is conducting a study about women's experiences with food while incarcerated at Connecticut's York Correctional Institution (YCI). Study participants will be asked to discuss their experiences with food while incarcerated.

You have been identified as a possible participant because you have been incarcerated at YCI and you are over the age of 18. It is anticipated that 30 women will participate in this study. Participation in this study is voluntary, and refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled.

Procedures

You are being asked to participate in a single in-person interview. This study does not involve any medical treatments or procedures. During the interview you will be asked questions about your experiences with food while incarcerated including, but not limited to, the cafeteria and the commissary. The interview will take place at a mutually agreed upon location and will take 60-90 minutes.

Risk and/or Discomforts

There are no physical risks from participation in this study. While no significant emotional risks are expected, sometime people find that discussing their experiences while incarcerated can produce some anxiety. If this should happen, Amy can refer you to community agencies and health care clinics in New Haven that can help. You can choose to not answer any particular question. You may also stop the interview process at any time.

Benefits

There are no direct benefits to you from participation in this study. You may feel good about the opportunity to discuss issues that are important to you with an interested listener.

Financial Considerations

You will be paid \$30 for your participation. Even if you do not complete the entire interview, you will still receive the \$30.

Privacy and Confidentiality

The researcher, Amy Smoyer, will digitally record the interview with your permission. You will be given a separate form to indicate your permission. No one but the researcher and her faculty advisors will listen to the tape.

You will be assigned a unique ID number before the start of the interview that will be used to label information collected from you. This number will be recorded on the recording of your interview. The study will retain no personal identifiers that can be linked to the interviews.

When Amy transcribes the interviews she will remove all names from the transcripts. Codes will be put into the transcript in place of the names. All printed transcripts of study interviews will be stored in a locked file cabinet in the Amy's office. All digital recordings and electronic versions of the transcripts will be kept in a password protected file on the her computer. The data will be stored for a minimum of three years. After that, all materials may be destroyed. As long as the data exists it will be kept secured.

The information will be used to write research papers and articles for academic journals and professional conferences. All identifying information about you and other participants will be omitted or disguised.

The researcher is mandated to report to the proper authorities suspected child abuse, elder abuse, and any indications that you are in imminent danger of harming yourself or others. If the researcher is given such information, she will make a report to the appropriate authority.

Withdrawal

You may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits or services to which you are entitled.

Contact Information

If you have questions about the study, you can contact the researcher, Amy Smoyer at (203) XXX-XXXX or her faculty advisor Deborah Tolman at (212) XXX-XXXX. You should contact the Hunter College IRB Office at (212) 650-3053, if you have questions regarding your rights as a subject or if you feel you have experienced a research-related injury.

Signatures

I have read (or have had read to me) the contents of this consent form and have been encouraged to ask questions. I have received answers to my questions. I give my consent to participate in this study. I have received (or will receive) a copy of this form for my records and future reference.

Participant's Name

Signature

Date

Researcher's Name

Signature

Date

APPENDIX D: Demographic & Incarceration History Survey

1. Study ID # _____

Participants will be assigned consecutive numbers from 1 to 30.

2. Date of Birth (MM/DD/YY): _____

3. What is your race?

- a. African American or Black
- b. White
- c. Asian/Pacific Islander
- d. Other, specify _____

4. Are you Hispanic or Latina?

- a. Yes
- b. No

5. How many times have you been incarcerated at York Correctional Institution (YCI) in Niantic, CT? _____

6. If more than one time, what was the length (in months) of your longest YCI incarceration?
_____ months

7. What were the dates of your most recent incarceration?

- a. Date of Entry (MM/DD/YYYY): _____
- b. Date of Release (MM/DD/YYYY): _____

8. What was the controlling charge for your most recent incarceration?

9. When you were at YCI, where were you housed? (Check all that apply)

- a. Medical Wing, during Intake
- b. Medical Wing, due to illness
- c. East Side
- d. West Side
- e. Segregation Unit
- f. Marilyn Baker House
- g. Charlene Perkins Reentry Center

10. In what part of YCI did you stay the *longest*?

- a. Medical Wing, due to illness
- b. East Side
- c. West Side
- d. Segregation Unit
- e. Marilyn Baker House
- f. Charlene Perkins Reentry Center

APPENDIX E: Interview Instrument

1. Tell me about the incident and arrest that resulted in your most recent incarceration.
There are a couple of reasons behind this question:
 - *To try get a sense of their narrative relating to their criminal justice involvement and their opinions about the criminal justice system. Do they take responsibility for what happened? Are they remorseful? Or do they believe they were trapped? Treated unfairly?*
 - *To build rapport. People appreciate the opportunity to tell their story.*
 - *To get a sense of what brought them to prison, the nature of their criminal activity (e.g. drugs, IPV, larceny/poverty, etc)*
 - *With the exception of the following question, a lot of detail will NOT be solicited. Just trying to get a general idea of what happened and their reaction to it.*
 - *Inquire if food played any role in their arrest. Were they eating when the police came to their house? Were they stealing because they were hungry?*

2. Describe the first thing that was served to you and/or that you ate upon entering the criminal justice system. Note: this may have occurred in the local police lock up or at YCI.
 - a. How was this food acquired?
 - b. How was this food prepared/cooked?
 - c. Where did this preparation take place?
 - d. With who was the food shared?
 - e. Where was it eaten?
 - i. Describe this place
 - ii. Who was in this place (e.g. inmates, COs, other prison staff, visitors)?
 - f. At what time of day or night was this food usually eaten?
 - g. What institutional policies existed regarding this food/meal?
 - h. Were there any formal or informal consequences or penalties to eating this food/meal? If so, what caused you to take this risk?
 - i. What did you like about this food/meal?
 - j. Had you ever eaten this food before?

3. Describe the first time that you went to the prison cafeteria.
 - a. Describe the conditions in the cafeteria (temperature, smell, sound, light).
 - b. Describe the emotional atmosphere.
 - c. What time was it?
 - d. Did you eat with other people? Who?
 - e. What type of food was served? Describe the food (Temperature, taste, nutritional content)
 - f. How was the food served? (self serve, staff served, limited portions)
 - g. How did you feel after eating? (stuffed, still hungry, etc)

4. Describe a typical day of meals in prison.
 - a. Why did you go to meals? (hunger, social, required to by prison rules)
 - b. Where were these meals served and consumed? (cafeteria, common dorm/pod area, tray delivery to cell, etc)

- i. Describe the conditions in this location (temperature, smell, sound, light)
 - ii. Describe the emotional atmosphere of this location
 - c. What time were meals served?
 - d. Did you eat these meals with other people? Who? Did your meal companions impact food choices?
 - e. What types of food were served on a typical day?
 - i. How would you characterize this food? (Temperature, taste, nutritional content)
 - f. How was the food served? (self serve, staff served, limited portions)
 - g. How did you feel after eating? (stuffed, still hungry, etc)
- 5. Describe your favorite food/meal while incarcerated.
 - a. How was this food acquired?
 - b. How was this food prepared/cooked?
 - c. Where did this preparation take place?
 - d. With who was the food shared?
 - e. Where was it eaten?
 - i. Describe this place
 - ii. Who was in this place (e.g. inmates, COs, other prison staff, visitors)?
 - f. At what time of day or night was this food usually eaten?
 - g. What institutional policies existed regarding this food/meal?
 - h. Were there any formal or informal consequences or penalties to eating this food/meal? If so, what caused you to take this risk?
 - i. What did you like about this food/meal?
 - j. Had you ever eaten this food before?
- 6. Describe your least favorite food/meal while incarcerated.
Same probes as Question #5
- 7. Tell me a story about eating in the prison cafeteria.
- 8. Tell me about a typical commissary order.
 - a. What did you buy?
 - b. How much did you spend?
 - c. Where did you get the money to make these purchases? (e.g. prison job, money sent from family)
 - d. Did you buy the food for your own consumption, or to trade or give to other?
 - e. Did you have a consumption schedule? (i.e. one candy today, one tomorrow after school, etc) Storage of extra food, when it would be eaten, how much was stored on a typical day, how much eaten and when on a typical day
 - f. Had you eaten this food before?
- 9. Describe your food/meal you were served during court runs.
 - a. How was this food acquired?
 - b. How was this food prepared/cooked?
 - c. Was the food shared, with whom?

- d. Where was it eaten?
 - i. Describe this place
 - ii. Who was in this place (e.g. inmates, COs, other prison staff, visitors)?
 - e. At what time of day or night was this food usually eaten?
 - f. What institutional policies existed regarding this food/meal?
 - g. Did you ever get food outside of the official court-run rations?
 - i. Did you smuggle un-official food onto court runs with you?
 - ii. Did you get additional food or drink from personnel at the court (i.e. marshalls, lawyers, cell guards, police)?
10. Tell me a story about cooking in the dorm or in your cell.
- a. Why did you prepare this food? (hungry, bored, depressed, someone asked them to)
 - b. Who was involved in the preparation of this food?
 - i. People who helped assemble ingredients
 - ii. People who cooked
 - iii. People who provided formal or informal permission.
 - c. How were ingredients obtained?
 - d. What time of day or night?
 - e. Were there any formal or informal consequences to this cooking behavior?
 - f. Was this dish eaten as a substitute for a cafeteria meal?
 - g. How often did you cook in your cell?
11. Describe circumstances when you got a [disciplinary] ticket for a food-related incident.
- a. What food was involved?
 - b. Where did the incident take place?
 - c. Who else was involved?
 - d. What time of day was it?
12. Tell me about your release from prison?
- a. How did you learn about your release?
 - b. How you “celebrate” this news? Was food involved in this celebration?
 - c. Describe your last meal in the cafeteria.
 - d. Describe the last thing you ate in prison before your release.
 - e. If you had any commissary left over, what did you do with it? Who did you give it to?
 - f. What was the first thing you ate (on the outside) upon release?
13. In what ways did your weight fluctuate during incarceration?
- a. What do you think contributed to this weight loss/gain?
 - b. Ask probing questions about the food practices to which she attributes her weight gain/loss (What? With whom? Where? How?)
14. Is there any other information about eating and food in prison that you would like to add?

APPENDIX F: Coding Tree

Cataloging Codes

1. Demographics
 - 5.2. Employment
 - 5.3. From the outside
 - 5.4. Money, Other
2. Location
 - 2.1. Police Lock Up
 - 2.2. Medical, including Intake
 - 2.3. Assessment
 - 2.4. Dorms
 - 2.5. Special Units
 - 2.6. School_Church_Activities
 - 2.7. Court Run
 - 2.8. Outside Prison
3. Specific Food Items
 6. CJS Personnel
 - 6.1. Leniency
 - 6.2. Discipline
 - 6.3. Staff Eating
 - 6.4. Staff Smuggle
 - 6.5. Surveillance
 - 6.6. CJS Personnel, Other
 - 3.1. Fantasy Meal
 - 3.2. Beverages, Including Water
 - 3.3. Breakfast
 - 3.4. Cake
 - 3.5. Coffee
 - 3.6. Holiday Foods
 - 3.7. Protein Pellets
 - 3.8. Slop
 - 3.9. Soup
4. Food Activity
 - 4.1. Boosting/Smuggling
 - 4.2. Cafeteria
 - 4.3. Cell Cooking and Eating
 - 4.4. Commissary Ordering
 - 4.5. Disordered Eating
 - 4.6. Sharing
 - 4.7. Trading
 - 4.8. Working in Kitchen
 - 4.9. Working in Commissary
 - 4.10. Food Activity, Other
5. Money
 - 5.1. Budgeting

Normative Codes

7. Identities

- 7.1. Good person
- 7.2. Bad person
- 7.3. Old Timer
- 7.4. Newbie
- 7.5. Gender
- 7.6. Race
- 7.7. Mental Illness
- 7.8. Weight
- 7.9. I am different
- 7.10. I am healthy

8. Perceptions of Prison Institution

- 8.1. Apathetic
- 8.2. Distrust
- 8.3. Inconsistent
- 8.4. Legitimacy
- 8.5. Men Get Better Services
- 8.6. Nonsensical
- 8.7. Normalcy Deformed
- 8.8. Resentment
- 8.9. Unfair
- 8.10. Positive

9. Perceptions of Prison Life

- 9.1. Waste
- 9.2. Boredom

10. Hunger_ Satiety

11. Power & Control

12. Friendship

13. Anger towards Amy

14. Neoliberalism

15. Good Quote

APPENDIX G: General Population Commissary Order Form

General Population Commissary Order Form

LOC = \$25 (Items marked LOC only)

Facility	Housing Unit	Bed Location
Print Name		
Sign Here When Ordering <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> X		

**INMATE NUMBER
MUST BE FILLED IN**

INMATE NUMBER									
①	①	①	①	①	①	①	①	①	①
②	②	②	②	②	②	②	②	②	②
③	③	③	③	③	③	③	③	③	③
④	④	④	④	④	④	④	④	④	④
⑤	⑤	⑤	⑤	⑤	⑤	⑤	⑤	⑤	⑤
⑥	⑥	⑥	⑥	⑥	⑥	⑥	⑥	⑥	⑥
⑦	⑦	⑦	⑦	⑦	⑦	⑦	⑦	⑦	⑦
⑧	⑧	⑧	⑧	⑧	⑧	⑧	⑧	⑧	⑧
⑨	⑨	⑨	⑨	⑨	⑨	⑨	⑨	⑨	⑨

I am aware that the total cost of these items will be deducted from my account. 6% Sales tax is not included in the prices listed below and will be added where applicable. Taxable items are marked with a double-asterisk(**). We reserve the right to limit orders. This order is subject to posted Commissary rules. Prices are subject to change.

NO REFUNDS - NO TRADES

INSTRUCTIONS	CORRECT MARK	INCORRECT MARKS
Fill in the response under "Quantity" that represents the amount of that item you wish to order.	●	✗ ⊗ ⊙ ⊖

Any stray marks may cause your order to be processed incorrectly

#	ITEM	QUANTITY	COST
STATIONERY			
109	Stamped Envelope	LOC ① ⑤ ⑩ ⑮ ⑳	.49
112	Postcard	LOC ① ⑤ ⑩ ⑮ ⑳	.28
113	Manila Envelope**	LOC ① ⑤ ⑩ ⑮ ⑳	.12
107	Aerogramme	LOC ① ⑤ ⑩ ⑮ ⑳	.75
106	Writing Pad**	LOC ① ② ③ ④ ⑤	.89
110	Ink Pen**	LOC ① ②	.50
114	Pencil**	① ②	.09
111	Eraser**	① ②	.26
104	Spanish Dictionary**	LOC ①	1.82
101	English Dictionary**	LOC ①	2.68
115	Youth Birthday Card**	LOC ① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.12
116	Female Birthday Card**	LOC ① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.12
123	Male Birthday Card**	LOC ① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.12
117	Friendship Card**	LOC ① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.12
118	Love You Card**	LOC ① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.12
119	Anniversary Card**	LOC ① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.12
120	Holiday Card**	LOC ① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.12
121	Get Well Card**	LOC ① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.12
122	Sympathy Card**	LOC ① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.12
108	Address Book**	LOC ①	.55
102	Photo Album**	① ②	2.12
103	Colored Pencil**	① ②	2.08
105	Sketch Pad**	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	.89
125	Composition Book**	LOC ① ② ③	1.60
MEDICAL			
201	Super Multi Vitamin	LOC ①	4.49
202	Laxative Powder	LOC ①	4.44
203	Pepcid AC, 6 ct.	LOC ①	3.88
204	Imodium AD 6 ct.	LOC ①	3.81
205	Vitamin C	LOC ①	2.29
220	Ibuprofen 24 c.	LOC ①	1.77
207	Antacid Liquid	LOC ①	2.89
221	Acetaminophen 24 ct.	LOC ①	1.25
209	Tolnaftate Cream	LOC ①	1.41
210	Benzoyl Peroxide	LOC ①	1.77
211	Allergy Tabs	LOC ①	1.30
224	Bug Repellent Stick	①	5.49
213	Bacitracin Ointment	LOC ①	1.67
219	Vaseline Lip Therapy**	LOC ①	1.17
215	Hydrocortisone Cream	LOC ①	1.34
390	Quinsana Foot Powder	LOC ①	3.23
309	Hemorrhoidal Ointment	LOC ①	3.10
1039	Lubriderm Lotion	LOC ①	3.87
222	Stool Softener	LOC ①	3.90
223	Oatmeal Soap**	LOC ① ②	1.33
SOAP (LIMIT 2 TOTAL)			
1047	Moisturizing Bar**	LOC ① ②	.81
1048	Cocoa Butter Bar**	LOC ① ②	.81
1049	Sports Bar**	LOC ① ②	.81
300	Pure & Natural Bar Soap**	LOC ① ②	.55
306	Dial Anti-bacterial Soap**	LOC ① ②	.77
DENTAL			
332	Colgate Sensitive Toothpaste**	LOC ① ②	4.16
331	Ultra Brite Toothpaste**	LOC ① ②	1.50
322	Effardent Cleaner**	LOC ① ②	6.58
335	Fixodent Denture Adhesive**	LOC ① ②	5.83
324	Colgate Toothpaste**	LOC ① ②	2.28
325	Closeup Toothpaste**	LOC ① ②	1.50
326	Mouthwash**	LOC ① ②	0.88
327	Tek Excel Toothbrush, Soft**	LOC ①	0.79
328	Tek Excel Toothbrush, Medium**	LOC ①	0.79

#	ITEM	QUANTITY	COST
DENTAL, CONT.			
329	Tek Excel Toothbrush, Firm**	LOC ①	.36
330	Toothbrush Holder**	LOC ① ②	.30
333	Anti-Tartar Rinse**	LOC ① ②	3.86
334	Dental Floss Sticks**	①	1.15
SHAVE / DEODORANT / MALE ONLY			
351	Magic Shave Cream**	LOC ① ②	2.81
352	After Shave, Regular**	LOC ① ②	2.34
354	Men's Speed Stick Active Fresh**	LOC ① ②	2.07
349	Winter Ice Power up Deodorant**	LOC ① ②	2.03
355	Dial Roll-On**	LOC ① ②	1.13
359	Clear Shaving Gel**	LOC ① ②	.98
358	Razor Card**	LOC ①	.96
HAIR CARE			
370	Dark and Lovely Shampoo**	LOC ① ②	4.31
372	Dark and Lovely Conditioner**	LOC ① ②	4.31
374	Dandruff Shampoo**	LOC ① ②	1.76
385	Next 1 Shampoo**	LOC ① ②	1.59
386	Next 1 Conditioner**	LOC ① ②	1.59
377	Protein Shampoo**	LOC ① ②	1.68
802	Styling Gel**	① ②	1.53
379	Bergamot Conditioner**	LOC ① ②	1.50
380	Pro Glo Pomade**	LOC ① ②	1.40
371	Protein 29 Hair Gel**	① ②	2.19
387	Pink Moisturizing Hair Oil**	① ②	3.88
378	Comb & Brush Set**	① ②	1.40
381	Afro Comb**	LOC ①	.54
382	Afro Pick**	①	.54
383	5 inch Pocket Comb**	LOC ①	.58
373	Doo Rag - Black**	①	2.11
805	PonyTail Elastics**	①	.76
SKIN CARE			
391	Sunblock SPF 30**	①	3.12
831	Cocoa Butter Cream**	LOC ①	3.50
393	Noxzema**	LOC ①	1.80
394	Baby Powder**	LOC ①	1.24
1045	Vitamin E Gel**	LOC ①	2.79
396	Cotton Swabs**	①	.80
360	Aloe Vera Lotion 8 oz.**	LOC ①	.89
830	Artra Complexion Bar**	LOC ① ②	2.14
MISCELLANEOUS			
400	Bath Towel**	① ②	5.17
408	Cotton Face Cloth**	① ②	.72
415	Coffee Cup 22 oz.**	①	2.72
405	Plastic Bowl & Lid**	① ②	.50
411	Plastic Cup & Lid**	① ②	.38
410	Plastic Fork-Spoon Combo**	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	.25
407	Soap Dish**	① ②	.45
406	Nail Clipper**	①	.59
503	Handkerchief	① ②	.54
404	Mirror**	①	1.64
416	Laundry Powder Clear Bag**	LOC ①	1.16
409	Toilet Paper**	LOC ① ②	.53
428	Pinocle Cards**	① ②	1.36
429	Poker Cards**	① ②	1.36
ELECTRICAL			
908	AA Batteries**	LOC ①	2.15
902	Y-Adapter**	①	3.09
903	Headphone Extension Cord**	①	3.09
904	Coaxial Cable**	①	2.18
905	Band Separator**	①	2.31
906	Mono to Stereo Adapter**	①	1.53

#	ITEM	QUANTITY	COST
CLOTHING & FOOTWEAR			
500	Shower Shoes**	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	2.59
501	Tube Socks	LOC ① ②	.66
504	White Shoe Laces	① ②	.81
505	Black Shoe Laces	① ②	.81
509	Men's Lo-Cut Socks 3pk.	① ②	6.20

#	ITEM	QUANTITY	COST
FEMALE ONLY			
821	Tampons, 18-ct box**	LOC ① ② ③ ④ ⑤	4.84
810	Pantli Liner, 22-ct box**	LOC ① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.21
822	Maxi Pads, 24-ct bag**	LOC ① ② ③ ④ ⑤	2.83
812	Emery Board, 8-ct pkg.**	LOC ① ② ③ ④ ⑤	.63
813	Mascara**	① ②	1.42
814	Eye Liner**	① ②	1.42
816	Curl Activator**	①	1.79
817	Hair Relaxer**	①	6.89
815	Women's Hair Brush**	①	.64
820	Shower Cap	① ②	.09
803	Foam Roller**	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.14
801	Nair Hair Remover**	① ②	8.43
829	B & W Bleaching Cream**	① ②	3.50
355	Dial Roll on Deodorant**	LOC ① ②	1.13
800	Lady Speed Stick**	LOC ① ②	1.93
806	Sport Socks (3 Pack)	① ②	4.48

Use the item code number from your add on list. Write the number in the top four spaces and darken the number that matches it

① ② ③ ④	① ② ③ ④	① ② ③ ④	① ② ③ ④
① ② ③ ④	① ② ③ ④	① ② ③ ④	① ② ③ ④
② ③ ④ ⑤	② ③ ④ ⑤	② ③ ④ ⑤	② ③ ④ ⑤
③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	③ ④ ⑤ ⑥	③ ④ ⑤ ⑥
④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦	④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦
⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧	⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧	⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧	⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧
⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨	⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨	⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨	⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨
⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩	⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩	⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩	⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩
⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪	⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪	⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪	⑧ ⑨ ⑩ ⑪
⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫	⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫	⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫	⑨ ⑩ ⑪ ⑫

#	ITEM	QUANTITY	COST
FOOD ITEMS			
621	Instant Oatmeal - K	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	2.24
625	Grape Jelly	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.58
622	Peanut Butter - K, H	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.76
637	Bagel - K, H	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	.38
629	Tortillas	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	.73
630	Long Grain Rice - K	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	.81
592	Vienna Sausage	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.42
649	Strawberry Preserves	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	2.23
1050	Uncle Ben's Spanish Rice	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	2.20
1038	Cheesy Refried Beans - K, H	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	.99
648	Mackerel - K, H	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	.94
636	Tuna - K, H	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.24
542	Jalapeno Cheese Spread	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.72
624	Sliced Pepperoni**	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.69
738	Grape Squeezers - K, H	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	.19
606	Sliced Salami**	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.78
0159	BBQ Beef Jerky	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.63
585	Provotone Cheese Bar	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.35
599	Roast Beef & Gravy	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	2.59
19	Grits - K	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	2.54
640	Mayonnaise - K, H	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	.63
641	Squeeze Cheese	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	2.32
642	Squeeze Salsa	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.51
632	Louisiana Hot Sauce - K	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	.58
719	Summer Sausage - H	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.62
587	Chicken in a Pouch	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	2.05

#	ITEM	QUANTITY	COST
FOOD, CONT.			
0124	Sazon	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.41
1046	Ketchup 12 pack	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	.46
595	Salmon Flakes 3.53 oz. - K, H	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.07
545	Mozzarella Cheese Bar	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.43
597	Sardines in Soya Oil - H	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	.71

#	ITEM	QUANTITY	COST
SOUP LIMIT 24 TOTAL			
600	Ramen Chicken	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	.19
601	Ramen Beef	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	.19
602	Ramen Spicy Vegetable	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	.19
603	Ramen Chili	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	.19

#	ITEM	QUANTITY	COST
CANDY			
218	Tums 3 pk. - K	LOC ① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.88
671	Hall's Cough Drops	LOC ① ② ③ ④ ⑤	.67
687	Salted Peanuts** - K, H	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	.98
758	Nestles Crunch**	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	.56
675	Butterfinger** - K, H	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	.52
0143	Trail Mix** - K, H	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	.55
679	M & M Plain** - K, H	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	.55
680	Reese's Peanutbutter Cup** - K, H	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	.52
691	Milky Way** - K, H	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	.55
676	Hershey w/Almond** - K, H	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	.56
698	Payday**	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	.56
0146	Cashews	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	2.65
682	Snickers** - K	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	.56
686	Fireballs**	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	.45
673	Jolly Rancher**	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	.83
684	Starlite Mints**	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	.47
685	Sugar Free Wildfruit**	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	.49
672	Sugar Free Breath Savers**	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	.56
691	Sour Skittles**	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	.52
688	Twizzler** - K	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.00

#	ITEM	QUANTITY	COST
BEVERAGES			
700	Decaffeinated Coffee - K, H	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	2.41
701	Nestle Coffee - K, H	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	2.06
702	Hot Chocolate - K	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	2.33
703	Sugar Twin - K	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.85
1044	Flavored Gatorade	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	.81
766	Tea Bags - K	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	3.90
591	Columbian Coffee- K, H	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	2.25
723	Sugar clear pouch - K, H	①	.99
708	Instant Tea with Lemon	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.41
709	Orange Breakfast Drink** - K, H	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.04
724	Non Dairy Creamer Clear Pouch - K	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	.73
759	Totally Light Tea Rasp 10 pk - K	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	3.18
716	Cappuccino - K, H	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.27
725	Strawberry Meal Replacement	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.60
711	Peach Drink**	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.60
728	Tropical Punch Kool Aid - K, H**	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.68
760	Camation Dry Milk - K	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	4.75

#	ITEM	QUANTITY	COST
CAKES AND PASTRY			
650	Quaker Granola Bars	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	3.42
657	Dunkin' Sticks - K	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.25
1033	Fig Bars - K	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.35
661	Cinnamon Roll** - K	② ④ ⑥ ⑧ ⑩	.46
662	Honey Bun** - K	② ④ ⑥ ⑧ ⑩	.59
23	Fluff	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	2.35
762	Lil Debbie Swiss Cake Rolls - K	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.18
763	Lil Debbie Oatmeal Crème Pies - K	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.16
0117	Lil Debbie Fruit Pie** - K	② ④ ⑥ ⑧ ⑩	.44
666	Lil Debbie Brownies	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.27

#	ITEM	QUANTITY	COST
COOKIES AND CRACKERS			
733	Saltine - K	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.27
730	Snack Cracker - K	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.65
731	Cheese Crackers - K, H	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.36
655	Iced Oatmeal Cookie - K, H	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.37
767	Strawberry Crème Cookies - K, H	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.25
748	Peanut Butter Crème Cookies - K, H	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.25
3	Wheat Thins	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	2.14
771	Choc Crème Cookie - K, H	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.24

#	ITEM	QUANTITY	COST
CHIPS & CEREAL			
735	Sour Cream Chip - K, H	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	.90
1043	Corn Chips	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	1.73
753	Regular Ripple Chip - K, H	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	.90
736	Nacho Chip**	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	.80
1035	Banana Granola - K	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	2.06
53	Berry Crunch	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	2.28
1036	Berry Basic Granola - K	① ② ③ ④ ⑤	2.06

K - Kosher H - Halal Approved

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