

**Legitimizing the “fiasco”:
Canadian state justifications of CORCAN prison labour**

Shanisse Kleuskens

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Department of Criminology

Faculty of Social Sciences

University of Ottawa

Abstract

Since Kingston Penitentiary's opening in 1835, prison labour has been an integral part of Canada's penal history. With purported goals such as deterrence, rehabilitation, reintegration, and providing sustenance to the state, the practice of coercing or forcing a prisoner to work while serving a sentence of incarceration was further embedded in the penal landscape in 1980 with the inception of CORCAN, the Correctional Service of Canada's prison labour program. Despite critiques of the prison as "a fiasco in terms of its own purposes" (Mathiesen, 2006, p. 141), prison labour continues as a mechanism of the state's penal apparatus. Drawing on political economy of punishment and penal abolitionism literature, this study reveals and disrupts official discourses used to justify and perpetuate this modern form of slavery in Canada. Through a content analysis of 33 Solicitor General of Canada and CORCAN annual reports, I demonstrate how CORCAN's prison labour program is legitimated as a "positive reform" (Mathiesen, 1974, p. 202) of Canada's penal system, beneficial to the reintegration of prisoners into society, communities, and the needs of the Canadian state and economy. Underneath this benevolent mask such representations are found to reproduce neoliberal capitalism as the hegemonic form of economic organization, construing prisoners and prison labour as solutions to the gaps and shifts in the national economy and labour market. After outlining these contributions, I suggest ways that future research can reveal and discredit penal 'solutions' such as prison labour to eradicate the penal system as a means to address the harms inherent in our social and economic systems.

Acronym list

CSC Correctional Service of Canada

COSA Circles of Support and Accountability

DND Department of National Defence

FY Fiscal year

KP Kingston Penitentiary

PIC Prison-industrial complex

SCJLA Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs

SECU Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security

SGC Solicitor General of Canada

UNFCCC United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

WHMIS Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System

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Chapter 1: Introducing an old practice

At present, in Archambault, there is no “workshop” and there never has been one, despite what the administration says/thinks, despite what is “supposed” by the technical teams in the “shops,” despite the programmes now being tried in the pre-employment shop (15 guys a year!). All that stuff is bullshit...

All there is, is some large cells being used as occupational storage rooms, beautifully equipped, not, however, to teach a trade or technical competence, but purely and simply to “pass time,” to fill minds. Here, the “need to work” (*sic*) is interpreted as the need to occupy the guys somehow, to make them forget their situation, to keep them from “brooding,” the need to catch them up in a routine where they have nothing to say and nothing to think. It’s another drug – wanted, planned and administered in order to alienate any critical capacity, any impulse to challenge the system. Then too, it’s useful, it helps keep down the “damage,” makes the guys forget their situation. And out there, on the outside, it’s the punch line for the old gag about rehabilitation in prison.

But, in fact, everything has been planned and organized so as to destroy any capacity for independent analysis.

The guys have to learn to obey their boss, to do as they’re told (i.e., ask no questions), bow down like all the good little proletarians to their boss.

Fed up with their living conditions and the hypocrisy of the Canadian Penitentiary Service, 350 prisoners from Québec’s Archambault maximum security institution launched a work strike on January 14, 1976 (Gosselin, 1982, p. 179). They created a manifesto entitled “The Just and Legitimate Demands of the Archambault Guys”, outlining many problems of the institution and demanding numerous changes be made by the Canadian Penitentiary Service to ameliorate the unjust conditions imposed on prisoners (Gosselin, 1982). The quote above is an excerpt from their manifesto (as cited in Gosselin, 1982, pp. 196-197), arguing that prison work imposes on prisoners the discipline of a capitalist over his labourers, all the while presenting this penal practice as a ‘rehabilitative’ project. Sadly, as

this study will demonstrate, such mystification prevails in the discourse of the Correctional Service of Canada's (CSC) prison labour¹ program CORCAN to this day.

At a standing committee meeting in February of 2015, CSC Commissioner Don Head noted that over 4000 prisoners labour for the CORCAN “rehabilitation” program over the course of the year (Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security [SECU], 2015). Trademarked in 1980 for the marketing of products and services made by prisoners in Canada's federal penitentiaries, CORCAN was designated a Special Operating Agency (SOA) in 1992 to allow for its operations to be run more in line with those of a business (CORCAN, 1993; CSC, n.d.b; CSC, n.d.c). The status of an SOA purportedly grants CORCAN more managerial flexibility to focus on improving business management, innovation, and performance (CSC, n.d.b; Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, n.d.). Prisoners working for this agency occupy jobs in one of its four business lines, being “manufacturing”, “construction”, “textiles”, and “services”, making a maximum of \$6.90 *a day* for their labour (CSC, 2014; CSC, n.d.a). Official CSC accounts purport that CORCAN's goal is to provide prisoners with employment skills to aid in their reintegration into the community and labour market (SECU, 2015).

Discourses promoting the ‘rehabilitative’ and ‘reintegrative’ capacity of prison labour, however, were not always at the center of penal authorities’ discussions. On the land that we today call Canada, prisoners worked on and for the institutions in which they were caged even before the creation of CORCAN (Gosselin, 1982). In fact, Canada's first modern prison – Kingston Penitentiary (KP) – was constructed by prisoners (CSC, n.d.b; Gooderham, 1984). In effect, they were forced to build the very structure that would cage them and their peers. The

¹ For the purpose of this study, *prison labour* refers to (forced) work carried out by prisoners during their imprisonment. *Penal labour*, which includes prison labour, refers to all uses of forced labour for the purpose of punishing an individual (e.g. galley slavery). *Forced labour* refers to any type of work that a person is forced to do, often under threat of punishment (e.g. chattel slavery).

goals of punishment and penitence at this time, however, superseded any goals of skills training and reintegration into society (Beattie, 1977). From this fact we can gather that the use of prison labour in Canada has not been guided by a consistent set of values (Lightman, 1979).

Not surprisingly, other researchers have, quite critically, theorized the existence and utility of prison labour in ways that problematize and provide complexity to its ambivalent set of officially-stated goals. Some works highlight how the contemporary use of prison labour, particularly in the United States, has sustained colonial histories of slavery, whose remnants bleed beyond the plantation owner's property into institutions such as the convict leasing system, modern-day chain gangs, and prison industries preying on the captivity of largely marginalized populations (Alexander, 2010; De Jonge, 1999; Hirsch, 1992; Lichtenstein, 1996; Lynch, 2004; Sellin, 1976). Others have deemed prison labour a cog in the wheel of the "prison-industrial complex" (PIC), exploiting the labour of prisoners, paying them meagre "wages", if any wage at all, to produce goods and services for the profit of private and state enterprises (Christie, 2000; Davis, 1992; Dyer, 2000; Evans and Goldberg, 2003; Herivel & Wright, 2007; Schlosser, 1998). In his analysis of the prison, Foucault (1975/1995) conceptualizes its advent, along with the institutional use of prison labour, as a project for disciplining the prison population and creating docile workers for industrial production in the capitalist marketplace. In addition to this purpose, the intricate relationship between the penitentiary, forced work, and the economic conditions of capitalist societies have been explored by various scholars, who highlight past uses of prison labour as a means of regulating the wages of and minimizing hostilities from non-incarcerated workers towards the bourgeois and capitalist elites (Melossi & Pavarini, 1977/1981; Rusche & Kirchheimer, 1939/2003). Yet, despite this growing body of literature problematizing the use of prison labour (and the prison itself), benevolent discourses regarding this practice still permeate

contemporary penalty, calling on its potential to provide prisoners with vocational skills (e.g. Penal Reform International, 2001) and lessen the (financial) impacts of criminalized harms on victims, the state, and taxpayers (e.g. Babbage, 2011; Reynolds, 1997).

In Canada today, prison labour operates alongside increasingly higher rates of income inequality and poverty (e.g. Yalnizyan, 2013). The emergence of neoliberal capitalism, complete with free trade agreements and movements to privatize and downsize both social services and the labour market, has seen with it both the flight of stable industrial jobs to the developing world, as well as the fragmentation and growing precarity of work in the late 20th and early 21st century (De Giorgi, 2006). All the while, the penitentiary system coerces prisoners into participating in programs such as those utilizing prison labour as a means to address their “needs” and achieve parole, while the systemic factors leading to their incarceration, such as the racist, colonial, and economically unequal institutions and practices permeating their communities, are ignored (Duguid, 2000; Moore & Hannah-Moffat, 2005). After a round of oppression, they often return to these same communities stigmatized and discriminated against due to their period of incarceration, forced to negotiate the stigma placed upon them that manifests itself in their incomplete résumé and prison tattoos, both real and perceived (Munn, 2012).

Despite these shifts and a growing body of literature that recognizes the prison as a failure when measured up against its own stated purposes of rehabilitation, deterrence, justice, and incapacitation (Mathiesen, 2006), the state continues to engage in *impression management* (Goffman, 1959), putting on a mask and performing for its audience a play that justifies the existence of its penitentiaries. CORCAN, like most reforms that penal functionaries have dreamt of, is little more than a state initiative that attempts to demonstrate that “something is presumably being done about law and order” (Mathiesen, 2006, pp. 142-143). In light of this, my study seeks

to examine the Canadian state's penal discourse regarding the inside of the penitentiary 'factory'.

It addresses the following main research question:

How do state annual reports on CORCAN legitimate the use of prison labour in Canadian federal penitentiaries since its founding?

What message this song-and-dance conveys is of interest to unveiling the culture of punishment in Canada and in understanding how practices rooted in oppression, including the use of prison labour, continue to serve a purpose in a society that claims to pride itself on values of human rights and equality for all. Exposing such discourses is essential for the struggle towards making institutions of oppression obsolete (Davis, 2003; Mathiesen, 1974, 2006).

Through a content analysis of 33 annual reports by CORCAN and the Solicitor General of Canada (SGC), this study demonstrates how CORCAN's prison labour program is justified as a valuable contribution to the reformation and reintegration efforts of prisoners, beneficial to communities, and a contributor to the Canadian state, national economy and labour market. Besides wearing many masks to re-legitimate the prison's own "fiasco" (Mathiesen, 2006, p. 141), I contend that representations of CORCAN's prison labour program reproduce neoliberal capitalism as the hegemonic form of economic organization, subsequently normalizing (if not encouraging) its exploitative capacity (see Marx, 1867/1977). Consequently, mirroring Foucault's (1975/1995) observation of the role of the prison in capitalist societies, prisoners are constructed as subjects to be produced for the economy, as prison labour is often posed as a solution to national economic and labour market shifts. To illustrate this shift in federal prison labour discourses in Canada, locate my findings within relevant scholarly debates and explain how I arrived at my conclusions, the balance of my master's thesis is organized as follows.

In *Chapter 2: A review of the literature on prison labour*, I review the literature on the different perspectives on prison labour. I also provide an overview of the history of official

discourse on prison labour in Canada to identify how my study builds upon and addresses gaps in knowledge pertaining to this topic. *Chapter 3: An “unfinished” theoretical map*, discusses the role(s) of prison and punishment in society drawing on abolitionist and political economic work. From there, I explain how these two perspectives blend to inform the lines of inquiry I have developed and the analysis of the data examined. In *Chapter 4: On researching prison labour justifications and method*, I outline the content analysis approach used to gather and analyze state discourses regarding CORCAN prison labour. Moreover, I discuss why such a method was most appropriate for understanding how the state continues to legitimate this penal practice.

In *Chapter 5: Findings on state legitimations of CORCAN prison labour*, I present the discourses used to legitimate the use of CORCAN prison labour. I outline how CORCAN’s prison labour is justified as a benefit to prisoners to develop skills and a work ethic in preparation for their reintegration into the labour market. Canadian communities are also positioned as the beneficiaries of this practice, which purportedly contributes to savings for taxpayers, public safety, environmental sustainability, and community development projects. Lastly, state discourses often points to the benefits of CORCAN prison labour to the operations of both CSC and other federal government departments. Moreover, prison labour was often framed as economically beneficial to the Canadian labour market, national economy and private businesses. Throughout this analysis, I employ an abolitionist and political economic theoretical framework to discuss the role these discourses play in sustaining the prison idea and perpetuating capitalist exploitation of the working class. Finally, *Chapter 6: Future directions and conclusion* summarizes the main contributions of this study and reflects on the significance of my findings as they relate to penalty in Canada. In conclusion, I propose future directions for research on prison labour, as well as penal policy and abolitionist practice more broadly.

Chapter 2: A review of the literature on prison labour

This chapter explores different ways prison labour is theorized in the literature on punishment, the multiplicity of normative stances inherent in these visions, and a historical overview of the use of prison labour in Canada pre- and post-Confederation. An exploration of these themes is essential for understanding how prison labour in Canada and elsewhere has not only changed in rhetoric and practice over time in some ways, but exhibits some continuity with the penal past. Furthermore, through dissecting the various explanations for the existence of this phenomenon, I show how my own analysis of prison labour benefits from a more holistic perspective. In the following section (**2.1 – Theories on prison labour**), this chapter turns to an examination of four main theoretical perspectives that advance important claims concerning the emergence and continued use of prison labour.

2.1.1 – Prison labour as capitalist regulation: A Marxist analysis

To develop an explanatory framework for changes in various societies' systems of punishment, some theorists have turned to transformations in the *mode of production* of these societies for an answer. Marx and Engels (1976) note that how human beings produce the means for their survival depends on the nature of these means themselves. The *mode of production* is how individuals reproduce and express themselves, “both with *what* they produce and with *how* they produce. Hence what individuals are depends on the material conditions of their production” (Marx & Engels, 1976, p. 37). Each *mode of production*, or industrial stage, contains an element of social relations as a “productive force” (p. 49). In the capitalist mode of production, the working class sustains itself by selling their labour-power in order to receive the means of sustenance (Marx, 1867/1977, pp. 274-275). Marx (1867/1977) contends that this history of

capitalist production encompasses a struggle, or division, between the class of capitalists – those who own the means of production – and the working class (p. 344). Ownership of the means of production results in the ruling capitalist class's control of the means of sustenance for the working class (p. 448), controlling their very existence. Furthermore, he goes on to note:

The organization of the capitalist process of production, once it is fully developed, breaks down all resistance. The constant generation of a relative surplus population keeps the law of the supply and demand of labour, and therefore wages, within narrow limits which correspond to capital's valorization requirements. The silent compulsion of economic relations sets the seal on the domination of the capitalist over the worker (Marx, 1867/1977, p. 899).

As such, Marx (1867/1977) observes that the advancement of capitalism in a society leads to the worker being formed into one that envisages capitalist arrangements as the natural order of social arrangements (p. 899). This exploitation then becomes engrained into societal order.

Generally, Marxist approaches outline that the determining factor in the social organization of a society is the mode of production. As discussed above, those who control the mode of production have power in that society, shaping social and economic institutions to uphold the values and rules that reinforce this dominance (Garland, 1990). Despite Marx's little attention to crime and punishment in his work, Garland (1990) notes that Marxist scholars have generally extrapolated from his writings in order to comment on the role of the economy and social structure in the field of punishment (p. 84; also see Chambliss, 1975).

Particularly, Rusche and Kirchheimer's (1939/2003) *Punishment and Social Structure*, developed from and extending upon Rusche's (1933/2008) *Labor Market and Penal Sanction*, and Melossi and Pavarini's (1977/1981) *The Prison and the Factory* provide Marxist-oriented examinations of European and American penal systems. For Rusche and Kirchheimer (1939/2003), the focus is on changes to systems of punishment in general since the late Middle Ages. Melossi and Pavarini (1977/1981) focus more acutely on the development of capitalism in

these systems and its relationship with the emergence of the modern prison as a form of punishment that did not exist in pre-capitalist societies (p. 2). For instance, they highlight how the imprisonment of individuals in debt under the feudal system did occur, but that such was for custodial purposes until one's debt was paid, and not based on the notion of punishment through one's time (p. 2).

According to Rusche and Kirchheimer (1939/2003), “[e]very system of production tends to discover punishments which correspond to its productive relationships” (p. 5). To understand this relationship, these four authors develop their analyses through a reflection on the mode of production, socioeconomic conditions and the labour force throughout the centuries and in various nation-states. The dissolution of feudalism in 15th and 16th century England resulted in masses of peasants expelled from the land they worked on, many of whom traveled to urban areas to find work (Melossi & Pavarini, 1977/1981). Around this time as well, vagabondage and begging was subject to regulation and punishment in certain cases (Melossi & Pavarini, 1977/1981; Rusche & Kirchheimer, 1939/2003). However, towards the end of the 16th century there still remained a scarcity of labour, when many workers would often find respite from the harsh work standards demanded by their employers in begging or would all together participate in illegitimate economies not accepted by the capitalist mode of production (Rusche & Kirchheimer, 1939/2003; Melossi & Pavarini, 1977/1981). As such, Melossi and Pavarini (1977/1981) contend that the criminalization of one's refusal to work was a means of quelling labourer's dissidence against exploitative working conditions and reduced wages (pp. 14-15).

As such, “houses of correction” became the means for controlling and resocializing the resistant classes into participating in the capitalist labour market, putting their labour to work in an economy in dire need of workers (Melossi & Pavarini, 1977/1981, p. 14; Rusche &

Kirchheimer, 1939/2003, p. 41). One example of this was the Rasphuis in Holland, where vagrants and petty criminals were housed and their labour exploited to make the building self-sufficient from the late 16th century during a time of impoverishment under Philip II and an increased demand for labourers due to population decline and trade growth (Melossi & Pavarini, 1977/1981, pp. 16-18). Melossi and Pavarini (1977/1981) point out that that the crimes of many committed to these houses were rooted in the system of capitalism – for example, the resulting vagrancy from the dissolution of feudalism (pp. 18-19). The labour itself consisted of *rasping* wood, using a heavy saw to make sawdust out of wood to be used for dyeing textiles (Melossi & Pavarini, 1977/1981, p. 19). Despite the inferior quality of the product and more efficient techniques available for rasping wood, the arduous manual labour of prisoners was kept as a practice within these houses (Melossi & Pavarini, 1977/1981, pp. 19-20). Melossi and Pavarini (1977/1981) outline two reasons for the retention of this method: firstly, the use of exceptionally cheap labourers and the subsequent disinvestment in machines led to high profits and the protection of this industry in the free market (p. 20). Secondly, the hard labour made use of unskilled individuals with as little training needed as possible (which costs both time and money), and more so rendered them docile and disciplined to take part in capitalist production; that they were being disciplined to produce rather than for the quality of product they were producing was of importance (pp. 20-22). In these instances, penal labour served to discipline a resistant class.

The 1800's, however, saw a different development in the use of prison labour. An increase in labour supply due to a growing population, as well as the displacement of workers by machines during the industrial revolution meant that wages and standards of living had both decreased (Melossi & Pavarini, 1977/1981; Rusche & Kirchheimer, 1939/2003). Furthermore

prisons were no longer able to be profitable due to the introduction of efficient machinery into the economy, leading to the decrease of the value of prison labour in the market (Melossi & Pavarini, 1977/1981; Rusche & Kirchheimer, 1939/2003). As such, prisons became places of intolerable and punitive conditions, and consequently the objective of prison labour shifted from being reformatory to being arduous, the purpose of this being to deter the poor from pursuing criminalized activity and to dissuade them from using the prison as a means of personal sustenance during hard times (Melossi & Pavarini, 1977/1981; Rusche & Kirchheimer, 1939/2003).

Perhaps most telling of the relationship between the use and purpose of prison labour and the economic conditions of time can be found in the transition from the Pennsylvania/Philadelphia system of constant solitary confinement for prisoners to that of the Auburn system administering solitary confinement at night for its prisoners and communal, though silent, labour during the day. Melossi and Pavarini (1977/1981) discuss how the Pennsylvania/Philadelphia penitentiary system, which championed solitary confinement for the silent meditation and repentance of those convicted to these prisons, spread across the American states at the turn of the 19th century, largely without any economic impetus. The Auburn system replaced the Pennsylvania/Philadelphia system in the early nineteenth century (Melossi & Pavarini, 1977/1981; Rusche & Kirchheimer, 1939/2003). Rusche and Kirchheimer (1939/2003) attribute this to the shortage of labour available to fill the jobs concomitant with industrial development in the Northern United States, contrary to the high rates of unemployment in Europe during the same period (p. 128). Given the need for labour power in this context, perpetual solitary confinement for prisoners was viewed as absurd by prison administrators and a shift to communal labour in prisons during the daytime ensued, also allowing for the use of

machinery brought on by the industrial revolution that could not be employed in the cellular system of solitary confinement; prisons then became arranged like factories for profitable production in the northern United States (Melossi & Pavarini, 1977/1981; Rusche & Kirchheimer, 1939/2003). The move towards this system also contributed to lowering the wages of free workers given the new competition from within the penitentiary (Melossi & Pavarini, 1977/1981, p. 130).

As such, according to this perspective, punishment, and specifically prison labour, served an important economic function throughout the development of capitalist societies, including the mercantile period, that served as a means to regulate the labour market and wages. Rusche and Kirchheimer (1939/2003) thus reject the notion that developments in penal policy are the result of humanitarian efforts to reform the penal system. Instead, they contend that these transformations depended on how useful they were for society at the time and the economy in particular (p. 207). Specifically, punishments, especially prison labour, were a means of coercing the lower classes into participating in the labour market (Melossi & Pavarini, 1977/1981; Rusche & Kirchheimer, 1939/2003). Melossi and Pavarini (1977/1981) take this a step further, contending that the prison exists as an instrument to assert the bourgeois social order of capitalism, that is, to discipline the working class into becoming a safe proletarian worker ready for wage labour exploitation in the capitalist market (pp. 148-149).

The concept of *less eligibility* forms a key aspect in political economy of punishment literature. Rusche (1933/1980) describes this as follows:

[A]ll efforts to reform the punishment of criminals are inevitably limited by the situation of the lowest social significant proletarian class which society wants to deter from criminal acts. All reform efforts, however humanitarian and well-meaning, which attempt to go beyond this restriction are condemned to utopianism. (p. 3; see also Rusche & Kirchheimer, 1939/2003, p. 6).

In the context of prison labour as a penal sanction, Melossi and Pavarini (1977/1981) observe the principle of less eligibility in how prison conditions have varied throughout the centuries depending on the society's economic need for the prisoners to be productive or not. In cases where labour power is in demand, prison conditions must simultaneously sustain the captive workforce as well as exploit it. The treatment of prisoners and the conditions of their work, however, must be worse than that of the "free" working class, lest the prison cease to deter the poor from entertaining it as a place of respite (Melossi & Pavarini, 1977/1981, p. 51).

Walking in the footsteps of political economy of punishment scholars, De Giorgi (2006) posits that the disciplinary function of penal systems during the rein of capitalism is no longer suited to explain relatively recent transformations in the conditions of work in the late 20th and early 21st century. Instead, he contends that a post-Fordist economic structure in many developing nations, characterized by the informatization, fragmentation, and precarity of labour since the 1970's (in contrast to the rigid manufacturing assembly line mentality of the Fordist era) has resulted in new ways of controlling threatening populations, including the "criminalization of international migrations" (p. 111), as well as mass confinement and surveillance of entire populations governed by actuarial logic (pp. 79, 103).

Though De Giorgi's (2006) analysis does not address a possible shift in the rationale behind the use of prison labour as a penal sanction (indeed, he does not intend for his propositions to be all-encompassing), his questioning of how transformations in economic arrangements provides a lucrative starting point from which this study can

investigate how current economic transformations (neoliberalism, post-Fordism) may impact state justifications of prison labour, including in Canada.

2.1.2 – Prison labour as discipline: A Foucauldian analysis

In his book *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1975/1995), like the previously mentioned authors, seeks to explain the origins of the modern-day penitentiary. The prison and its development into the penitentiary were means by which to reform those deemed transgressors of the social order (p. 236), though according to Foucault (1975/1995) this was not for benevolent intentions as the word ‘reform’ may connote. Instead, the reformatory goals of the penitentiary were to make prisoners into “docile bodies”, moving punishment and power away from the body as carried out by the ruling monarch through corporal and capital punishment, and to the mind of the prisoner as a means of extending and refining the reach of social control and the governance of society (pp. 136-138).

Labour within the prison and penitentiary for Foucault (1975/1995), “is defined, with isolation, as an agent of carceral transformation” (p. 240), a means by which the individual changes and disciplines themselves to be obedient and of greater utility to societal norms and economic production, similar to other social institutions such as the school and military barracks. Consequently, prison labour as punishment within the penitentiary becomes an envisioned vehicle for the normalization of the individual (pp. 183-184). “What, then, is the use of penal labour?”, Foucault (1975/1995) asks; “Not profit nor even the formation of a useful skill; but the constitution of a power relation, an empty economic form, a schema of individual submission and of adjustment to a production apparatus” (p. 243). The remuneration of prison labour also serves an important utility in the transformation of the individual – an incentive to coerce the

prisoner into accepting and continuing to adhere to this form of discipline (Foucault, 1975/1995, p. 243).

Thus, in contrast to political economic approaches to punishment and prison labour that stress the economic conditions as the primary influence behind modes of punishment, which finds the purpose of prison labour in upholding the ruling bourgeois ideology and a capitalist economy, Foucault (1975/1995) stresses the importance of prison labour as a part of the penitentiary program for disciplining its captives into becoming productive workers for the (re)production of the capitalist economy. Importantly, however, Foucault (1975/1995) goes on to explain that reform is not ultimately achieved through the penitentiary's endeavours. In contrast, "delinquents", those individuals whose lives are characterized by the transgression of laws and rules, are created as a result of the very exploitative and exasperating conditions of the penitentiary itself (Foucault, 1975/1995 , pp. 253-256, 266).

2.1.3 – Prison labour as slavery: An analysis of race and class exploitation

Despite the professed abolition of legalized slavery in many countries throughout the world, prison and penal labour have been conceptualized as a new form of this social institution for the exploitation of marginalized groups (Alexander, 2010; Blackmon, 2008; Davis, 2003; De Jonge, 1999; Lichtenstein, 1996; Sellin, 1976). The institution of slavery heavily influenced transformations in the world's penal systems throughout the millennia (Henrikson & Krech, 1999; Sellin, 1976). In ancient Rome, one from a higher class could evade corporal punishment through making a payment, whereas those without such means were destined to be slaves and/or suffer a number of corporal punishments (Sellin, 1976, pp. 41-42). The late Middle Ages saw a penal system based on the tenets of retribution and intimidation. However, the corporal

punishments that accompanied such goals had little effect given the growing number of poor who often turned to petty theft for sustenance (Sellin, 1976, pp. 43-44). In addition to reformist reflections on the morality of corporal and capital punishment, the premium on labour at the time influenced authorities to cease the maiming of a potential workforce and of employing those deemed ‘criminal’ in forced labour for the benefit of the state (Sellin, 1976, p. 44).

Sellin (1976) contends that penal slavery has repeatedly masked itself throughout history in different guises depending on the needs of that specific time period. For example, galley slavery, where prisoners were sentenced to propel naval ships as a means of punishment and incapacitation (not reform or rehabilitation), “ceased to exist as a specific form of punishment when galleys no longer served any useful purpose” (p. 55). Similarly, the convict leasing system employed in the Southern United States post-Civil War was the solution to an unreliable work force and newly freed individuals in a time of rapid industrialization and redevelopment of a region ravaged by the Civil War (Lichtenstein, 1996, p. 4).

Much of the analysis of prison labour and modern-day penal practices as an extension of the institution of slavery draws from American examples, analyzing the convict leasing system and its succeeding chain gangs in the southern United States after the Civil War (e.g. Blackmon, 2008; Lichtenstein, 1996). The Thirteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution abolished slavery throughout the United States, yet left forced labour legal if it was a punishment for a criminalized act (Alexander, 2010; Davis, 2003; Lichtenstein, 1996; Sellin, 1976), allowing for the perpetuation of slavery for populations mostly composed of criminalized Black people and poor Whites.

Lichtenstein (1996) contends that the convict leasing system was a means of enacting punishment, contributing to the political economy of the time through the recruitment of labour,

along with the control and exploitation of a newly found class of free African American peoples. Black prisoners “were slaves in all but the name” (Blackmon, 2008, p. 2), forced to endure arduous conditions in mines, fields and other industries where their labour power was extracted from them under the guise of punishment (Davis, 2003; Lichtenstein, 1996). The convict leasing system had its differences with pre-Emancipation slavery in the United States, including its relative exclusion of women and that its enactment was not automatically passed throughout the generations, yet it was still a system of enslavement that commoditized human beings for the exploitation of their labour (Blackmon, 2008; Wacquant, 2003). The convict leasing system was deemed imperative for the reconstruction of the war-ravaged South at a time when industrial production was also taking off, yet the labour of newly-freed Black persons was no longer under private control (Lichtenstein, 1996; Sellin, 1976).

The shift from convict leasing to the chain gang, however, did not make the conditions for prisoners any less arduous, despite humanitarian arguments against the brutal treatment of prisoners under the former system (Lichtenstein, 1996; Sellin, 1976). The shift was merely a movement from the private exploitation of labour to that of the public, where convicts were often put to work building public infrastructure such as roads (Lichtenstein, 1996; Sellin, 1976). Both the works of Ledbetter, Jr. (1993) and Mancini (1978) observe that the abolition of the convict leasing system in Arkansas and Georgia, respectively, was not solely due to humanitarian concerns for the lives of the prisoners and the system’s racist undertones. Rather, they observe that it was convergence of these humanitarian discourses with political and economic imperatives calling for its demise that ultimately led to the abolition of the convict leasing system in the early 20th century in both these states (Ledbetter, Jr., 1993; Mancini, 1978). In fact, one of the main critiques compelling the transition from convict leasing to the chain gang was

that free labourers resented the competition provided on the market by private capitalists profiting off of cheap black labour (Lichtenstein, 1996).

Though similar to a political economic framework for analyzing slavery as a vehicle for economic development (e.g. Lichtenstein, 1996), this framework of understanding the convict leasing system and chain gangs is dependent on the concept of race and class as determining factors for the perpetuation of forced labour. Often taking an abolitionist stance (e.g. Davis, 2003; De Jonge, 1999), those seeing these systems from this framework conceptualize the convict leasing system and chain gang as institutions for the authorities and capitalists of the South to justify the exploitation of black labour and fortify caste preservation (Wacquant, 2003). This is accomplished through the perpetuation of white supremacist and racist ideologies, which consequently suppressed the involvement of Black people in social and political life (Blackmon, 2008; Davis, 2003; Lichtenstein, 1996; Sellin, 1976).

After Emancipation, newly-freed Black peoples were subject to an increasingly racist judiciary and penal system whose laws and sentences ensured that Black people were increasingly criminalized, incarcerated and recycled into a system of labour exploitation (Alexander, 2010; Blackmon, 2008; Davis, 2003; Lichtenstein, 1996), often “for refusing to behave as menials and follow the demeaning rules of racial etiquette” (Wacquant, 2003, p. 478). For example, the ‘crime’ of “vagrancy”, being unable to prove employment at a given time, was in Southern states almost exclusively applied to Black men despite widespread unemployment among the region of people from all races (Blackmon, 2008, p. 1). Eight of the nine states that adopted these types of laws also ratified convict leasing legislation whereby county prisoners could be hired out to third parties, remunerated little to nothing for their labour (Alexander, 2010, p. 28).

The racial caste system oppressing African Americans is consistently present in various institutions which rise, fall, and are born again and adapted to the conditions of their time (Alexander, 2010; Wacquant, 2003). The reintroduction of chain gangs into American penal systems over the past 20 years has considerable symbolic weight as a continued form of racial and social discrimination given the largely black population of prisoners who comprise these chain gangs (De Jonge, 1999, p. 316). As De Jonge (1999) notes, “[i]t represents the reactionary mentality of the responsible criminal justice officials in those southern states and makes it clear that slavery may have been abolished, but still lingers as a concept in the minds of the local enforcers of law and order” (p. 316). Similar to past exploitation, prisoners today in the United States (and throughout the world, for that matter) work within prison and are paid *much* less than minimum wage; for example, prisoners are generally paid anywhere between 12 cents and \$1.20 *per hour* (Dyer, 2000, p. 19; Thompson, 2012, p. 41; Urbina, 2004, pp. 110-111). Charged for various living expenses by the prison or penitentiary, they often cannot make money to pay off their debts imposed by the state or get back on their feet if and when they are eventually released, resulting in a vicious circle of mass incarceration for many often stimulated by racist penal policies (Alexander, 2010, p. 152).

America’s carceral system according to Wacquant (2003) is the country’s fourth “peculiar institution”, functioning to preserve its caste system and institutions of forced labour. Though he contends that it does not contain “a positive economic mission of recruitment and disciplining of an active workforce” like its predecessors did, there may be, he notes, a shift in the future to the use of unskilled labour in private enterprises, with prisoners helping to build profit, in addition to lowering the costs of incarceration (p. 479). It is from this premonition that

we springboard into the next explanatory framework that conceptualizes prison labour as an engine of the modern day prison-industrial complex.

2.1.4 – Prison labour as profiteering: An analysis of the prison-industrial complex

In an enlightening vignette, Evans and Goldberg (2003) describe a scenario whereby an American worker loses his job as his employer outsources its production to Southeast Asia. He finds a solution to his unemployed and alienated status in some form of criminalized activity, which leads to his imprisonment and consequent forced labour making less than a dollar an hour. In contrast to the losses that this man faces, Evans and Goldberg (2003) contend that big business comes out on top, gaining from the profits of such exploitation. The prison, like developing countries, serves as the new hunting ground for profitable enterprise.

Despite stagnating or declining rates of police-reported victimization, the last thirty plus years have seen a massive expansion in the imprisonment rates across the United States, with more than two million human beings behind bars (Christie, 2000; Dyer, 2000; Evans & Goldberg, 2003; Schlosser, 1998; Thompson, 2012). Countless researchers have sought an explanation for the motive behind this boom in incarceration and expenditures in the penal system, arriving at a conclusion that profiteering and economic growth is the source of this phenomenon (Christie, 2000; Dyer, 2000; Evans & Goldberg, 2003; Schlosser, 1998; Thompson, 2012). The concept of a “prison-industrial complex”, defined by Schlosser (1998, p. 54) as “a set of bureaucratic, political, and economic interests that encourage increased spending on imprisonment, regardless of the actual need” is used to describe those forces behind this growing profit imperative in the penal system (Dyer, 2000). In other words, the economic market has intruded to become a major influence in the delivery of punishment throughout the United States

(Christie, 2000), increasingly placing penal decision-making in the hands of private corporations and investors who benefit from an expanding penal system (Dyer, 2000, p. 5). For example, Thompson (2012) describes how private corporations lobby politicians in hope that public policy will sway to favour incarceration as an increased response to criminalized activity. Keeping prisoners imprisoned is just good business when one's industry depends on contracts and sales generated from incarceration and prison labour (Christie, 2000; Schlosser, 1998).

However, as Dyer (2000) and Schlosser (1998) note, the prison-industrial complex cannot be simplified to a conspiracy concocted by the business leaders of the world to fatten their wallets. The drive behind this increased search for penal profits is attributed to the rising influence of neoliberal economic policies, which stresses free market intervention, deregulation, privatization and economic efficiency in all markets, including the penal system (Dyer, 2000; Evans & Goldberg, 2003). An increased privatization of penal services is based on the idea that government monopolies are inefficient and that the privatization of government services allows for productive competition (Schlosser, 1998; Thompson, 2012). The ideology of maximizing profit and return on investment that rose in the 1980's and 1990's has now made its way into the penal system (Dyer, 2000, p. 21).

As such a system comes to dominate, criminalized acts and prisoners become the raw materials upon which the PIC feeds off of (Christie, 2000; Dyer, 2000; Schlosser, 1998). In addition to the various industries in which private corporations profit off of within the penal system, such as prison construction, the provision of food and healthcare services, and weapons for the use of the state (Christie, 2000), prison labour is increasingly a lucrative source of potential profit (Christie, 2000; Dyer, 2000; Evans & Goldberg, 2003; Reutter, 2005; Thompson, 2012; Urbina, 2004). Prisoners in the United States produce military equipment (Urbina, 2004),

furniture (Evans & Goldberg, 2003) road signs, and clothing (Christie, 2000) for for-profit state and private enterprises. Prisons serve as useful “units for production” (Christie, 2000, p. 133), full of dependable and cheap labour power (Thompson, 2012) due to the few rights prisoners have to dissent against working conditions and the meagre wages paid to them by their keepers (Evans & Goldberg, 2003; Urbina, 2004). The authorities that run prison industries, however, profit in the billions from this exploitation (Dyer, 2000). Private prisons find loopholes in the laws that do not require prisoners to pay part of their wages to offset the costs of incarceration; instead, by moving prisoners out of state, taxpayers must cover this cost and the private prison runs a profit (Dyer, 2000, pp. 232-233). Private prisons will receive much more money per hour from the state to house prisoners than they will pay out to these prisoners in wages for work, again banking a profit (Dyer, 2000, p. 233).

Manufacturing goods in places other than prisons consequently becomes illogical for businesses whose sole interest is to turn a profit based on the pittance paid to prisoners for the same task that was previously done by free, and thus more expensive, labour elsewhere (Dyer, 2000; Thompson, 2012). Evans and Goldberg (2003) link this flight of jobs to other markets, including the prison, with the deregulatory and de-unionizing forces that accompanied neoliberal economic policies. The draw of profit has allowed companies to lay-off their workforce in favour of prison labour (Dyer, 2000).

Researchers who argue that the increase in mass imprisonment in the United States, and by extension the use of prison labour, are motivated by economic profit, problematize the combination of punishment as both a state practice and a profitable venture. The selling of the state’s legislated monopoly over social control and governance is perceived as a corruption of the state’s public duty (Christie, 2000; Dyer, Schlosser, 1998; Thompson, 2012). Though Dyer

(2000) contends that such expansionary measures cannot continue indefinitely, Christie (2000) warns us about the dangers of this new industry attempting to expand and develop even further than it already has (p. 184). What is certain, however, is the role that prison labour plays in the perpetuation of this industry in the 'land of the free'.

2.2 – A brief overview of prison labour in Canada

Prison industries in Canada have regularly held contradictory goals, such as rehabilitation, punishment, and cost-minimization (Lightman, 1979). Arduous labour during imprisonment became an alternative to corporal and capital punishments in Upper Canada when a report of the Select Committee on Expediency of Erecting a Penitentiary (1831) called for a reform in penal practices through the building of a penitentiary, as it was believed that the facility and prison labour would act as a deterrent for even the most hardened criminals (pp. 211-212; also see Beattie, 1977, p. 10). In deliberating on the structure of a new penitentiary that was proposed to be built in Kingston, Ontario, the Committee (1831) decided that the penitentiary should be modeled after a combination of the Glasgow and Auburn system, whereby prisoners congregated during the day to work, albeit in silence, and returned to their individual cells at night (pp. 211-212). Reformation of the prisoner, though stressed through the penitentiary discipline, was to come second to the deterrent function of the institution and prison labour, which the committee thought could also help offset the costs of running the penitentiary (Select Committee on Expediency of Erecting a Penitentiary, 1831, pp. 211-212). In other words, the Auburn system of silent communal work during the day and solitary confinement at night was thought to be most beneficial for the discipline, punishment, and reformation of the work habits of prisoners (Beattie, 1977, p. 22). After touring various prisons throughout the United States,

commissioners Macaulay and Thomson (1833) noted that the Philadelphia system, whereby prisoners are subjected to solitary confinement both during the day while working and at night, was still in its experimental stage and unproductive in terms of the labour carried out by prisoners (pp. 26-28). In contrast, they recommended the Auburn system, finding it to be successful in prison discipline and used in many penitentiaries in the United States (Macaulay & Thomson, 1833, p. 28).

Following the opening of KP in 1835, prison labour was used to build and maintain new penitentiaries, as well as create goods for purchase on the private market (Goodenham, 1984). For instance, in the mid-1800's KP instilled prison labour on men and women, who broke rocks to be used in the construction of a church and other endeavours (Goodenham, 1984; Gosselin, 1982). In the late 1840's, however, a commission headed by Brown (1849a, Appendix B.B.B.B.B.) presented findings of extensive corruption and abuse within KP, which Beattie (1977) contends can be attributed to the impossible discipline and silence that the warden and guards attempted to instill on the prisoners, who no doubt sought communication with each other (pp. 28-29). As a result of these findings and the lack of discipline in the penitentiary, along with emerging beliefs that the institution should also focus on the reformation of prisoners for their eventual release, the Brown (1849b, Appendix B.B.B.B.B.) suggested the use of both the Philadelphia and Auburn systems in KP management, whereby new prisoners would live and work in solitary confinement for a maximum of six months before being transferred to work in the congregate system.

From 1835 to the late 1880's, the leasing of prisoners to private businesses for use of their labour was a common practice in order to generate additional revenue and work (Goodenham, 1984). A prisoner's labour was only remunerated when he or she worked overtime

(Gooderham, 1984). As Lightman (1979) observes, however, prison industries in Canada have consistently transformed not because of reformative ideals, but because of a need to avoid competing, or being seen to compete, with free labour. For example, Edwards (1996) notes that in 1913, opposition by free labourers to competition produced by prison industries resulted in penitentiaries retracting prison labour from producing goods for the private sector. The Biggar, Nickle, and Draper (1921) report, noting that the “mere provision of work is not, in the opinion of the Committee, sufficient” (p. 21), made provisions for prisoners to be remunerated for work according to a five-step pay scale corresponding to the skills and effort required for the work being carried-out. Furthermore, hoping to counter idleness or meaningless work within penitentiaries, the committee recommended that productive labour be provided for all prisoners, including work in the penitentiary for the state’s use (Biggar, Nickle, & Draper, 1921, p. 21). This provision sought that “[t]he public money of Canada shall not be expended in the purchase of any goods which can conveniently be manufactured or produced at a penitentiary and delivered where they are required for the public service with economy to Canada” (p. 21). As a result, prison labour was increasingly used to produce goods for government use, such as clothing and brooms (Edwards, 1996; Lightman, 1979).

This presented a problem, however, to the purpose of prison labour, as its reclusion from the private sector market meant that work was more seen as a means of keeping prisoners busy, not of making a profit, resulting in poor quality goods being made, and little interest from government departments to purchase from the prison industries (Lightman, 1979). The Archambault Report tabled in 1938 heavily criticized the “extremely low” level of productive work for prisoners and the dearth of training opportunities available (p. 126). In fact, the commissioners found that:

Little of the employment provided in Canadian penitentiaries gives the prisoner any sense of accomplishment in the perfection of his task, or, in fact, any inducement to finish the task that is immediately before him. The result is that those who *are* employed perform their duties with a monotonous indifference (Archambault, 1938, p. 126).

Instead, the report noted that employment in the prison should be for the purpose of “discipline and reformation” and not punishment (p. 129), and an eradication of the custodial work expected of trade instructors so that they may actually spend their time training prisoners (p. 135). The Second World War provided an opportunity for an increase in the use of prison labour, as prisoners were employed making goods for the war effort (Goodenham, 1984; Lightman, 1979). In the late 1960’s, there was a push in penitentiaries for prisoners to be trained in various trades such as plumbing and carpentry (Carter, 2008, p. 61). In fact, the Ouimet (1969) report outlined that vocational and skills training, including that in the community, should take precedent over industrial production and the provision of goods and service for institutional sufficiency (p. 321; see also Edwards, 1996). Furthermore, it made a provision for the implementation of a pay system for participation in different “treatment” programs, including prison labour (Ouimet, 1969, p. 320).

2.3 – The inception of CORCAN and CORCAN at present

Identifying the objective of prison industries as the production of a strong work ethic in prisoners for their eventual release into the workforce, the 1973 *Report on Prison Industries Re-orientation* loosely proposed a plan for the creation of a prison industries program in Canadian federal penitentiaries (SGC, 1973). The report noted that vocational training in prison industry had been to the detriment of industrial production, as prisoners had little incentive to work (SGC, 1973, p. 9). In light of such, the report proposed several recommendations, including the

remuneration of prisoners (though not at minimum wage, but a rate that allowed for industry profit to be reinvested back into the penitentiary system), the organization of prison industries to simulate industrial conditions in “free world” competitive and profitable facilities, and the appointment of a brand name for the industry (“CANCOR” was suggested at the time) (SGC, 1973, pp. 11-31).

Though most of the recommendations outlined in this report were taken up by the Canadian Penitentiary Service, the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs (SCJLA) report on Canada’s penitentiary system of 1977 found that prison industries were still “not producing at anything like their potential” (pp. 107-108). Prisoners were found to be unmotivated to work, using “outdated modes of production” and subject to low pay (p. 108). “At present” the report notes, “an inmate working in the various shops is sometimes earning only seventy-five cents a day” (SCJLA, 1977, pp. 108-109). Echoing the past, the SCJLA (1977) called for an establishment of a prison industries corporation that was both profitable and aligned with job sectors in demand of workers, and a graduated system of pay was used to incentivize prisoners to work (pp. 109-110). It was also recommended that the training in workshops should be monitored by outside trade groups, and that these programs be licensed and certified so that accreditations may be transferable to work outside of the prison (p. 112).

Consequently, CORCAN Industries began operations, trademarked in 1980, for the marketing of products and services made by prisoners in Canada’s federal penitentiaries (SGC, 1981, pp. 66-67). In 1981, CSC implemented an Inmate Pay Plan to incentivize prisoners to participate in employment and other types of training and education programs (SGC, 1981, p. 66). The pay scale was amended to allow for a graduated system of five levels of pay depending

on the level of skill required for each job; prisoners at the top pay level were to receive \$7.55 a day for their labour (Carson, 1984, pp. 18-19).

The types of CORCAN employment changed over time, as did CORCAN into a SOA. Prior to attaining this status, CORCAN was also known as the “Industries” division of CSC in which prisoners made clothing for CSC staff, office furniture, mail bags, shoes and other clothing, and mail transfer boxes (e.g. SGC, 1983, p. 67). It is uncertain whether the automated document processing service, which is usually separated from CORCAN Industries in reports, was included in the Industries division for the 1982/1983 fiscal year, as its activities were merged with the Industries section of this report (see SGC, 1984, p. 66). In fiscal year 1984/1985, printing, as well as the manufacturing of computer workstations and lockers were added to the Industries division workload (SGC, 1985b, p. 66). The education and training division, automated document processing services and agricultural operations of CSC were separate from CORCAN before 1992, although they were often found within the same branch of CSC activities (e.g. SGC, 1990a, p. 52).

CORCAN was designated a Special Operating Agency in 1992, which “allows it to operate in a business-like manner” (CSC, n.d.c, para. 2). The status of an SOA purportedly grants CORCAN more managerial flexibility to focus on improving business management, innovation, and performance (CSC, n.d.b; Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, n.d.). It was during this transition that all industries and farm activity were transferred to CORCAN operations (CORCAN, 1993, p. 3). This included work in manufacturing, printing services, telemarketing, textile production, laundry services, and agribusiness (for more examples, see CORCAN, 1994, p. 11). In fiscal year 1994/1995, construction was added as a business line to CORCAN activities (CORCAN, 1995, p. 13). From this point until the discontinuation of

farming operations noted in a report from 2008/2009 (CORCAN, 2009), CORCAN's five business lines were manufacturing, textiles, services, construction, and agribusiness.

In a meeting of the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security (SECU) on February 17, 2015, Don Head, Commissioner of CSC, noted that over 4000 prisoners receive programming from CORCAN over the course of the year, with CORCAN shops present in 28 federal institutions across Canada. Today, prisoners participating in 'correctional programs' make a maximum of \$6.90 *a day* for their labour (CSC, 2014; CSC, n.d.a). The John Howard Society of Alberta (2002) observes that the "wage" for prison labourers has remained consistent since its inception despite inflation (p. 3). Operating four business lines - manufacturing, construction, textiles and services - the current stated mandate of CORCAN is to aid federal prisoners in their reintegration into society through employment skills and vocational training (SECU, 2015).

2.4 – Critiques against prison labour in Canada

Critiques of CORCAN and Canadian prison labour are in no short supply. In particular, Culhane (1991) critiques the role of CORCAN as a profit-driven enterprise. She contends that prisoners are conceptualized by the state as "liabilities" when the cost of imprisonment is considered, but as "assets" for the prison industry when contracts, jobs, and ultimately profits are absorbed not by the public, but by CORCAN (p. 128). Prison labour, however, does not only hold a material function. In an analysis of penal history museums across Canada, Kleuskens and Piché (2014) observe that prisoners provide manufacturing and maintenance work for the Keillor House Museum in Dorchester, New Brunswick, demonstrating how prison labour is employed to construct and uphold uncritical discourses of punishment and imprisonment.

Following the February 2009 decision by CSC to phase-out its prison farms by 2011 (CBC News, 2009), farmers, penal system practitioners, current and former prisoners and various social justice activists actively lobbied CSC and the federal government to preserve them, noting that the prison farms provided rehabilitative, as well as vocational opportunities for federal prisoners (Canadian Unitarians for Social Justice, n.d.; Epstein, Mackey, Foreman, & Swift, 2014; Lunau, 2009; Patterson, 2009, para. 4; Mahoney, 2010). Despite further opposition from the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security (2010), who disapproved of CSC's decision to close the prison farms without a full review of the program and a reporting of this review's findings, the Government of Canada (2010) announced that it would continue with its plans to close the farms, noting that the decision reflected their need to modernize CORCAN's programs for federal prisoners to be more applicable to current market needs.

In their writings, prisoners often paint a picture of Canada's prison industries that contrasts the rehabilitative mask worn by CSC (Rymhs, 2009). The arduous discipline of the prisoner-worker is demonstrated in the writings of Merson (1987), who through his observations as a prisoner discusses how "the assembly line has replaced the chain gang....I waste my days building modular desks for the state which I gleefully sabotage at every opportunity" (p. 46). Abbott (1987) discusses the fruits of CORCAN's prison labour, seeing "[m]any skins rubbed off. Many surfaces sanded smooth. Many years filled in. Many lives used up" (p. 105). In other words, CORCAN prison labour wastes human lives chiseled away by the penal apparatus (Rymhs, 2009). Similarly, Collins (2008) notes how at one point during his imprisonment, he was told to try to sell his artwork to demonstrate a "marketable skill....I understood this to mean that he [the prison employee] felt that to have value, art must be traded as a commodity or product in accordance with the capitalist's perspective" (p. 80). Yet when Collins (2008) had the

opportunity to run his own art business within the prison, he notes how CSC consistently presented him with barriers, such as censoring his work, as they were “more interested in denying real opportunities than they were in helping a prisoner develop the skills and tools to become a useful member of the community” (p. 81). Employment, education and training within CSC’s penitentiaries and with CORCAN, Collins (2008) claims, is a farce and an illusion. He writes: “It is without reservation that I recognize prison to be the worst classroom on the planet” (Collins, 2008, p. 77).

Additionally, Kilroy and Pate (2011) note that imprisoned women lack training and work opportunities that are meaningful (p. 94). Strimelle and Frigon’s (2011) interviews of imprisoned women in Québec reveal women’s frustration with the lack of variety of jobs and skills training in prison work; one woman identified as Edith notes, “I know how to wash dishes. There’s nothing meaningful about that” (p. 117). Some women also felt that prison labour contained gender-based segregation, as women had fewer work opportunities than men and lacked access to trades learning (Strimelle & Frigon, 2011). Moreover, the work offered to women in prison were found to still be based in stereotypical gender norms, including “household ironing, cooking, sewing”, which failed to prepare the women for jobs which require more specialized training (Strimelle & Frigon, 2011, p. 128). This frustration over the gendered inequality in Canadian penitentiaries echoes observations by Gayle Horii (1994) from over two decades earlier, who describes her struggle to obtain programs and services, particularly education, while incarcerated in a women’s prison, resources that she says male prisoners do not have to fight for (pp. 16-17).

2.5 – How the study addresses gaps in the literature on prison labour

Through a review of the literature, I demonstrated how analyses of prison labour often focus on its utility as means for economic advancement and profit maximization within a given society, contingent on the state's economic and social organization. The role of prison labour as a means of capitalist and industrial development has been explored in depth. These studies, however, largely focus on this phenomenon in the European and American contexts. As such, there is a dearth of knowledge situating the intersection of penalty and political economy within the Canadian context. Furthermore, many of the studies tracing the development of prison labour in Canada do so from a strictly historical, legislative, and "correctional" perspective. These studies are generally uncritical of the penitentiary and are often carried out or commissioned by actors of the Canadian state. Thus, they lack an interpretation of the transformations of punishment in Canada that would help us to uncover the broader political economic forces that influence shifts and continuities in the justifications and material conditions of prison labour. Additionally, studying a relatively new element of Canadian penalty (i.e. CORCAN) serves to contribute to the criminological literature on Canada's prison system.

As such, the current study addresses these gaps in the literature by asking the following question:

How do state annual reports on CORCAN legitimate the use of prison labour in Canadian federal penitentiaries since its founding?

Having a researcher independent of the CSC (formerly the Canadian Penitentiary Service) undertake this study provides the opportunity to analyze CORCAN's practices with a critical eye that is not biased by the demands of the agency to justify itself. This research exposes contradictions within CORCAN's stated goals and practices, contributing to abolitionist work

(see Chapter 3) that contributes towards the deconstruction of structures of oppression, whose benevolent and utilitarian rhetoric has preserved the legitimacy of incarceration thus far.

Chapter 3: An “unfinished” theoretical map

In the previous chapter, I outlined several ways researchers have conceptualized the uses of prison and penal labour throughout the ages. I also briefly discussed the history of prison labour in Canada. From this point, I turn to a discussion of the theoretical framework employed in this study and how it was used to make sense of the justifications provided by CORCAN for the use of prison labour in the Canadian federal penitentiary system. Before examining the abolitionist and political economic theoretical framework that I used to approach my object of analysis, I briefly discuss the role of theory in this research project, and how researchers can better understand the purpose of theory in deconstructing our social world and creating new ways of understanding it.

Mills (1959) observes the limitations of physical sciences in solving many social problems, necessitating the use of a *sociological imagination* to understand the intricacies and relationships between agency and society, individual factors and social structures, in order to better think about and negotiate these problems. Social theory allows the researcher to develop a deeper understanding of the world we live in and of its complexities and nuances (Craib, 1984). As it concerns my research area, social theory is necessary to understand and find a better solution to the modern-day penitentiary, complete with prison labour, as a means to address the systemic harms that this institution perpetrates and perpetuates within society (Sim, 2009).

One cannot, however, study a phenomenon without a schema to approach its investigation (Sayer, 1992). A theoretical framework allows the researcher to explore a concept in a new way than has previously been done, aiding them to be open to reinterpretations of the object of investigation, and of its intricacies and nuances (Sayer, 1992). In developing a theoretical framework for this study, I drew inspiration from McCotter’s (2001)

conceptualization of theory as a map to guide my research throughout the progression of my analysis. Using this metaphor, one can understand theory as a type of map, constructed of elements that the mapmaker chooses to make and include in the map, with other elements that they chose to ignore eliminated from view. The map, however, does not provide a route on which to travel, but a set of paths and a particular legend that one can use to explore a given phenomenon (McCotter, 2001). Drawing my own map to go places where no one has been before, I outline in the following sections the abolitionist and political economic theoretical framework used throughout this study to inform and guide my analysis.

3.1 – A penal abolitionist framework for understanding state justifications of prison labour

Abolitionism “is not merely a programme, but also an approach, a perspective, a methodology, and most of all a way of seeing” (Ruggiero, 2010, p. 1). In criminology, penal abolitionism comes from the normative standpoint that the prison, as well as other structures of oppression and dehumanization, must be abolished in order to alleviate social harms (Saleh-Hanna, 2008). The prison from this perspective functions as a site where we compartmentalize the issues and people that we are opposed to dealing with as a society (Davis, 2003). De Folter (1986) describes abolitionism as recognition that the penal system is a social problem, the only solution to which is its abolition.

Abolitionists such as Thomas Mathiesen (2006) have often sought to deconstruct the prison idea by demonstrating its futility as a social institution. He observes it to be “a fiasco in terms of its own purposes” (p. 141), as its purported goals (deterrence, incapacitation, rehabilitation, justice) do not hold up to scrutiny (Ruggiero, 2010). The ability for the prison to rehabilitate individuals to become productive members of society is not only quixotic, but

ultimately false (Mathiesen, 2006, p. 53). “The relative emphasis through time on the four components [work, school, moral influence and discipline] has been determined by system interests attached to the prisons rather than to any interest in actual rehabilitation of the prisoners” (Mathiesen, 2006, p. 53). In fact, Mathiesen (2006) argues that the prison is actually dehabilitative (p. 53), creating instead recidivists that reinforce its continued operation (also see Foucault, 1975/1995; Gosselin, 1982). Clemmer (1958/1970] notes how prisoners go through a process of “prisonization” (p. 479) in which they become assimilated into the value system and culture of the prison. Highlighting the paradox that is the practice of imprisonment, Gosselin (1982) notes how its reality presents rampant violence and unjust practices, though its justifications promote “justice and the protection of society” (p. 53).

As such, the abolitionist stance is one of saying “no!”; it is “a constant and deeply critical attitude towards prisons and penal systems as human (and inhumane) solutions” (Mathiesen, 2008, pp. 58-59). Mathiesen (1974) contends that “the alternative lies in the unfinished” (p. 13), that the solutions to social harms must be tackled in an infinite struggle for abolitions of structures of inequality, domination and harm. The alternative to our current system must both compete with and contradict the current system, lest it be deemed irrelevant or co-opted as another appendage of the penal apparatus (Mathiesen, 1974, pp. 13-17).

Despite these critiques, the prison continues as an institution shrouded in discourses of its necessity and legitimacy in the functioning of society (Davis, 2003; Mathiesen, 2006). The prison “is considered an inevitable and permanent feature of our social lives” (Davis, 2003, p. 9). “Positive reforms” are enacted to “build up” the system and renew its legitimacy, while in reality such reforms only aid the penal apparatus to function more efficiently in the infliction of pain (Mathiesen, 1974, p. 202).

Furthermore, Mathiesen (2006) identifies four ideological functions, grouped as the “supportive component” of prisons, which are used to inject the prison idea with legitimacy and an appearance of providing something useful to society. These are 1) the expurgatory function, that the prison rids society of those deemed objectionable; 2) the power-draining function, that the prison removes any dependence on or power to the prisoner; 3) the diverting function, which draws our attention away from the crimes of the powerful, to focus on “traditional” criminalized acts committed by marginalized groups; and 4) the symbolic function, whereby the prison allows society to distinguish itself from “bad” and stigmatized other, reinforcing our own moral superiority (pp. 141-142). To these four functions he discusses an additional “action function”, which is a way of penal functionaries demonstrating through the prison system that “something is presumably being done about law and order” (pp. 142-143).

Additionally, Mathiesen (2006) observes how the “negating component” of the prison upholds its ideological support and pretense of success; otherwise, the entire institution would be unveiled as one of irrelevance (p. 144). This occurs in the public sphere, as well as with groups and institutions whose business is the penal and carceral system (p. 143). This “negating component” deflects criticism towards the penal apparatus in a variety of ways, such as contending that the prison, though not always successful, is necessary. It does so by justifying the work done in prison as successful and by simply turning a blind eye to the failures of the institution as well as its inhumane conditions (p. 144). Mathiesen (2006) discusses how prison administrators use various neutralization techniques in order to negate, silence or neutralize opposition to the penal system and maintain the status quo (pp. 44-45). Functionaries “refer” to the rules of their superiors to put off claims that alternatives could be carried out, deem ideas “irrelevant” to the system’s goals, or deem new initiatives “impossible to implement” in the

current circumstances (pp. 44-45). Ideas for change may also be “postponed” or encouraged to be brought up at a later date, the idea “punctured” through empty acknowledgement, or “absorbed” into the system in a way that neutralizes any threat such an idea had on the status quo (p. 45). Gosselin (1982) observes this negation of the prison’s horrors in action, noting how inquiries and studies do not challenge the fundamental reasons and justifications for an institution itself, but resign any problems to administrative difficulties and replace a warden, initiate a new program, and the like as the beat goes on. (Gosselin, 1982, pp. 95-96).

In response to this failure, the abolitionist stance is interested in deconstructing the ideology and discursive practices of the penal system and its actors in order to expose its oppressive cogs (De Folter, 1986). The task becomes “creating an awareness of the deceptiveness of positive reforms” and exposing the unequal power relations in society manifested and perpetuated by the prison (Mathiesen, 1974, p. 205). Policy and research work through an abolitionist lens must attempt to counter the ideology of the prison, including counter-functional and counter-denial work (Mathiesen, 2006, p. 165). Specifically, counter-functional work must highlight the questionable practices of the prison, while counter-denial work must expose the denial of penal functionaries of the “fiasco” that is the prison (Mathiesen, 2006, pp. 165-166).

In order to assume an abolitionist stance on prisons, this type of counter-functional and counter-denial work was carried out in the realization of this study, as only in uncovering reality is untruthfulness unveiled, and this in the end “makes the world *more truthful*” (Mathiesen, 1974, p. 209). Furthermore, in this study I made careful effort to include the voices of prisoners in my discussion and analysis of CORCAN prison labour and prison labour in general, as their comments on their experiences both with imprisonment and prison labour are invaluable if we

are to fully understand the complexities and contradictions of Canada's penal system. This was done by mobilizing the voices of prisoners highlighted in academic articles (e.g. Strimelle & Frigon, 2011), CORCAN reports, and writings by former and current prisoners themselves in publications such as the *Journal of Prisoners on Prisons*. Mathiesen (2006) notes that making the prisoner visible to us is important so that we cannot ignore the abuse directed towards them (p. 166). Contact between prisoners and outside organizations (or in this case, using this work as a platform for their voices) is essential in deconstructing the "supportive component" of the prison (Mathiesen, 1974, pp. 76-78). In fact, the struggle that is abolitionism must use "crucial material supplied by the expelled" (Mathiesen, 1974, p. 208) if it is to perform the work of unveiling truth.

Lastly, an important aspect of this study was my own attention to the language I use to discuss the phenomenon under investigation. Mathiesen (1974) notes the relation between language and power and how the former can be an important tool in silencing discussions of alternatives to the prison (p. 18). He goes on to note:

[Language] is also active in structuring and defining the problem at hand. The more we use the language of the powerful, the more attuned we become to defining the problems at hand *as the powerful usually do*; in other words, the more integrated we become into the old system. (p. 19)

In light of such, this study was guided by a careful attention to the language used to describe the objects of investigation, constantly aware of what discourses are used by penal functionaries and how they come to influence our understanding of the social world. For instance, the analyzed reports refer to incarcerated individuals as 'inmates' or 'offenders'. On these labels, Peter Collins (2008) observes from his imprisonment:

There is an insidious labeling process that at once validates the prison system and invalidates prisoners as defective. They call us "offenders" as if this is all we are and

all we ever will be.... They call us “inmates” as if we are in a hospital and they are going to make us better (p. 73).

Echoing this sentiment, Little Rock Reed (1993) calls the label of “inmate” a “[n]asty word, that. / Denoting diseased / psychopath receiving treatment” (p. 119). Many current and former prisoners also recognize the euphemisms used by the prison system in order to sanitize its image (e.g. Collins, 2008). Of the term “correctional facility”, Little Rock Reed (1993) calls it “[a]nother antiseptic lie” (p. 119). “This is a prison”, he asserts, “We are prisoners / We are oppressed, / dehumanized, / repressed out of existence” (p. 119). “[I]nstitutional language softens the cruel reality [of prison]”, according to Gayle Horii (1994), as terms such as “self-abuse”, “institution”, “inmate”, “treatment”, and “go home” are used by penal functionaries in the place of “slashing”, “penitentiary”, “prisoner”, “punishment” and “go to your cage”, respectively (p. 14; see also Collins, 2008).

By not resisting the euphemization of punishment, we are in fact complicit in its realization and perpetuation (Little Rock Reed, 1993, p. 119). Reflecting on the damage and oppression incurred by the labels often used by CSC, as well as the problems they create in understanding our social world, my own discussion of incarcerated individuals refers to the human beings represented in CORCAN reports as *prisoners*, because such a term describes their material condition. Furthermore, this avoids the discriminatory and emotional meanings embodied by other labels such as “offender”, “convict” and “inmate” (Huckelbury, 2009, p. 25). While I discuss the various ways that CORCAN talks about prisoners and prison labour by referencing the language of the system (e.g. ‘rehabilitation’, ‘employment training’, ‘wage’), this discourse is consistently problematized and analyzed from a theoretical framework far removed from the goals of upholding the punitive status quo.

In sum, through such a lens CORCAN is *not* understood as a program of rehabilitation as its proponents claim, but as an oppressive initiative interested in its own perpetuation and that of the existing social order. Taking on an abolitionist stance towards state justifications of prison labour has, as demonstrated, provided me with a wide variety of tools to approach the penal apparatus and constantly unveil, deconstruct, and counter this leviathan in an unfinished process, all while answering the research question guiding this study.

3.2 - A political economic framework for understanding state justifications of prison labour

Mathiesen (2004) notes how political economic theory observes coercion inherent in the structure of the capitalist mode of production, not only for wage labourers, but also for the capitalists chasing profit maximization in order to remain relevant in the market (p. 10). Reflecting on this contention, Ruggiero (2010) observes the parallels between his discussion of how the social structure gradually silences dissent against the penal system and the Marxist paradigm emphasizing social control within the economic structure between the wage labourer and the owner of the means of production. From this reflection, an abolitionist stance pairs well with a political economic framework for analyzing prison labour, as both highlight the importance of social organization in influencing our everyday practices, including penal policies and practices (e.g. Piché, 2014). Indeed, Mathiesen (1974) observes that the prison is necessary for the maintenance of power relations in our society (p. 208), reproducing in the material realm social divisions on the basis of one's class, race, gender, sexuality, and even age (Sim, 2009, p. 8). "For abolitionists" notes Sim (2009), "the prison is a place of soul-crunching punishment and pain for the economically and politically powerless" (p. 8). The prison, therefore, is an important institution to unravel to eradicate unequal social arrangements.

As noted in Chapter 2, the fundamentals of a political economic framework of analysis include the perspective that the social organization and practices of society are chiefly shaped by the organization of its economic activity. In other words, “‘the economy’ – that sphere of activity which produces the material necessities of life – will always be the key locus of power in any society” (Garland, 1990, p. 85). Furthermore, all social institutions are understood to uphold the power of the capitalists (Garland, 1990), teaching the proletariat, or working class, the inevitability of the capitalist system and their wage labour and subsequent exploitation under it (Marx, 1867/1977). For example, Chambliss (1975) discusses how acts that threaten the power of the dominating capitalist class are criminalized in such a system of production. As such, criminal law is *not* a reflection of the morals and values of a society, but of state interests in protecting themselves and the capitalist system they benefit from (Chambliss, 1975, p. 151)².

For Marx (1867/1977), the capitalist system, putting worker against capitalist (and worker against worker, capitalist against capitalist), inevitably leads to the exploitation of the worker, who in his or her efforts to create surplus-value for the owner of the means of production, also succumbs to their own devaluing, as an increase in productivity comes at the cost of their well-being (p. 799). Competition among capitalists results in the lowering of the price for goods sold; “In order to sell more cheaply without ruining himself, he must produce more cheaply, i.e., increase the productive force of labour as much as possible.” (Marx, 1849/1933, p. 40). The results of this increased competition and reformation of the means of production in order to cheapen the production of the product, Marx (1849/1933) contends, leads to demands of one worker producing more than they had before, to a reduction in the workforce

² Additionally, we should note that the harms caused by corporations “are infinitely more harmful than the offences we usually think of as crimes” (Snider, 2015, p. 9), and yet such harms and their perpetrators often avoid the scrutiny of our legal and penal systems, leading us to question the very definition of ‘crime’ itself.

which inevitably puts workers against each other (pp. 44-45). Marx (1867/1977) describes the results of capitalism as such:

Accumulation of wealth at one pole is, therefore, at the same time accumulation of misery, the torment of labour, slavery, ignorance, brutalization and moral degradation at the opposite pole, i.e. on the side of the class that produces its own product as capital. (p. 799).

This accumulation of capital thus leads to the production of an “industrial reserve army” which is open to exploitation for further capitalist gain (Marx, 1867/1977, pp. 783-784).

Though not ascribing to Marxist thought, Foucault’s (1975/1995) discussion on the emergence of the prison points to the regime of the institution as one which seeks to transform and produce individuals useful to industrial production in the capitalist system. For him, prison labour was not envisaged as a means of ‘rehabilitating’ individuals, but instead of transforming them into a character playing its (proletariat) part in society (p. 242). “The prison is not a workshop” he notes, “it is, it must be of itself, a machine whose convict workers are both the cogs and the products” (Foucault, 1975/1995, p. 242). Likewise, he contends that wages are not given to the worker to remunerate their work, but to acclimatize them to their role as a wage-labourer in a capitalist regime (Foucault, 1975/1995, p. 243). These contentions are of interest to a political economic analysis as they point to the function of prison labour in *attempting* to maintain a capitalist social order through the production of workers while they are imprisoned. Similarly, Melossi and Pavarini (1977/1981) employ a Marxist framework to come to understand the prison not as a factory for the production of goods, but as an institution based on the work ethic of the factory so as to discipline the propertyless class into a world of capitalist domination, ultimately producing a proletariat worker ready to meet his or her fate (pp. 143-163).

From Melossi and Pavarini (1977/1981) and Rusche and Kirchheimer (1939/2003), the development of the prison and the characteristics of its punishment are intricately tied with the

economic conditions of the time periods in which they emerged, enforced largely for bourgeois capitalist gains rather than as projects of reform. Times, however, have changed from those analyzed by these theorists. Therefore, applications of a political economic theoretical framework to the study of CORCAN's justifications for prison labour must take into consideration transformations in the economic structure since at least the 1980's when it was put into operation.

Current examples of political economic analyses of the penal system include Gilmore's (2007) study of how transformations in California's economy set the stage for the state's prison boom starting in the 1980's. Furthermore, De Giorgi's (2006) recent work provides a revitalization of scholarship on the political economy of punishment. He observes that a new post-Fordist era blooming in the late 20th century has come to distinguish the nature of labour in western democratic nations, characterized by a workforce that is less employed in industrial and manufacturing jobs (as was the case during the Fordist era) and more in service-, technological- and finance-based sectors (De Giorgi, 2006). Post-Fordist employment tends to be unstable, while the demand for a mobile and flexible workforce required to work more hours grows (De Girogi, 2006). Thus, political economic theories of punishment, which take as their foundation the Fordist mode of production and its disciplinary function, are deemed inadequate for explaining current transitions in penalty (De Giorgi, 2006, p. 3). Though his analyses focus on the implications of this transition in the areas of mass imprisonment and migration, De Giorgi's (2006) observation and description of the emerging post-Fordist worker provides context in which current prison labour practices, including those in Canada, can be scrutinized. It raises an interesting question to be later considered: Is CORCAN claiming to discipline its prisoners to work within a Fordist capitalist system or control them in a time of post-Fordist transition?

While these examples of political economic analyses of penalty widely differ, their similarities lie in their attention to the economic structure as a key influence in the formation of penal systems and practices. Employing such a theoretical framework in my analysis, CORCAN's discourse is understood from this standpoint as a vehicle for the perpetuation not only of CSC and the prison idea, but also of the current capitalist system and the subjugation of the working class. In fact, De Giorgi (2014) notes that radical Marxism observes a symbiotic relationship between penal practices and capitalism: "the struggle against mass incarceration and the penal complex" he argues, "cannot be dissociated from the broader struggle against neoliberal capitalism" (De Giorgi, 2014, p. 28).

As such, the implications of the dominance of neoliberal economic policies globally since the 1980's (Clarke, 2002) are important if we are to understand the conditions underlying prison labour within the current economic system. Neoliberalism is best understood as a set of policies designed to allow the economic market to operate freely with minimal government interference, often resulting in the reduction of regulations concerning the activities of corporations (Snider, 2015; also see Clarke, 2002; Garland, 2001; O'Malley, 1999). More specifically, its policies champion deregulation and free trade, privatization, competition, spending reduction, profit maximization and spending and production efficiency (Clarke, 2002; Garland, 2001; O'Malley, 1999). McBride and Whiteside (2011) observe how neoliberal policies have been enacted in Canada through cutbacks in state spending, government downsizing, privatization, and a reduction in the welfare state. The impetus of the prison-industrial complex in shaping penal practices in the last 50 years can be understood when situated within a political environment employing neoliberal policies for the arrangement of our economic system (Dyer, 2000; Evans &

Goldberg, 2003; Schlosser, 1998; Thompson, 2012). Under this economic logic, profit motives have the potential to openly seep into penal practices.

As such, it was important during my analysis to base my understandings of CORCAN as a business and as a state entity within a neoliberal and capitalist economic environment. CORCAN's inception as a prison industries business, in addition to its later designation as a SOA in 1992 for increased managerial freedom and liberty to organize itself in the model of private industry, highlights the need for a political economic examination of this entity. Justifications outlining CORCAN's value as an agency can be situated, and subsequently problematized, within the tenets of the financial system and Canadian economy, whereby notions of government accountability, privatization and fiscal efficiency have taken hold.

3.3 – Mobilizing abolitionist and Marxist work together

In this chapter, I outlined my theoretical framework of analysis and highlighted how this framework will be applied to understand CORCAN's justifications of prison labour in a neoliberal, post-Fordist capitalist economy. Drawing from Mathiesen's (1974, 2006) work, I demonstrate the various ways in which reports legitimate the use of CORCAN prison labour and attempt to demonstrate its necessity in today's penal (and economic) formations. I also draw from the political economy of punishment literature, as well as the work of Foucault (1975/1995) to explore the role of economic transformations on the character of prison labour as dictated by CORCAN. By mobilizing these two bodies of literature together, I am able to undertake a more comprehensive analysis of CORCAN prison labour, widening the criminological lens of analysis. Political economic theory allows me to identify the sites of contradiction within CORCAN and SGC reports as it pertains to the capitalist system of production, while penal

abolitionism provides this research with a strategy to disassemble the penal apparatus – for example, identifying and deconstructing the supportive component (Mathiesen, 2006) of the prison. It is important to point out, however, that social conflict cannot be comprehensively explained from one perspective or be initiated by one cause (Craib, 1984), as each theoretical framework, taken on its own, is limited in understanding penalty in all of its complexities and nuances (Garland, 1990). Though I am mobilizing abolitionist and Marxist work together, this framework must be understood as one type of map that can be used to understand the phenomenon in question, and should not be taken as an absolute account that fully explains the state's justification(s) of prison labour. In the next chapter, I turn to a discussion on the methods used to collect and analyze the data from this aforementioned perspective.

Chapter 4: On researching prison labour justifications and method

Equipped with a political-economic-abolitionist theoretical toolbox to examine officially stated uses of prison labour within Canada's federal penitentiaries, this chapter outlines the methodological considerations taken in order to address this object of inquiry. But first, a revisit of the research question is called for:

How do state annual reports on CORCAN legitimate the use of prison labour in Canadian federal penitentiaries since its founding?

In posing this research question, I aim to expose how Canadian state entities such as CORCAN exercise power to construct official discourse and penal policy. By identifying and deconstructing these justifications, and by situating them within larger changes to the political, economic and social landscapes, academics and activists alike are better positioned to counter such discourses and highlight their contradictions and inconsistencies, which is imperative to eroding the prison idea.

4.1 – Epistemological framework

Rigakos and Frauley (2011) note that how we approach our object of analysis, and the assumptions that we hold about this object, colours the research process we undertake and the questions we ask (p. 246). Questions about the social structure and how it comes to influence the events that people experience, such as one which come from a political economic perspective, coincide with a metatheoretical position called *critical realism* (Morrow, 1994, p. 41). Ontologically, critical realists posit that “reality exists independently of human beings” and thus is “thing centered”, focusing on how observable phenomena emerge by theorizing about unobservable influences on these events (Rigakos & Frauley, 2011, pp. 248, 252).

This allows us to move towards a “post-empiricist criminology” (Rigakos & Frauley, 2011, p. 243), “reclaiming reality” by going beyond positivist thinking that takes ‘truth’ as that which human beings can observe (Bhaskar, 1989, pp. vii, 2; also see Morrow, 1994). Instead, critical realism moves beyond the observable to investigate the structures and forces that create such events (Bhaskar, 1989, p. 2). Rigakos and Frauley (2011) provide the example of “power relations” as something that critical realists may investigate, such being immaterial and not directly observable, though whose effects can manifest in observable and experienced phenomena (p. 274) such as prison labour.

This study is coloured by a critical realist perspective, asking questions about the unobservable forces behind the work of CORCAN that may influence how prison labour manifests itself today. Mindful of the abolitionist and political economic standpoint of this research, a critical realist position aids in making sense of our social world through an identification of the forces at play in generating the currently operating system (Bhaskar, 1989). In asking how CORCAN legitimates the use of prison labour, this study interrogates and reflects upon CORCAN’s ideological work to perpetuate the prison idea, thereby revealing the unseen structures that inform such rhetoric.

4.2 – Data collection

Garland (1990) points to government policy statements and annual reports as cultural texts in which the state justifies its use of certain penal practices to the greater public; these texts “signify”, or promulgate a certain ideological framework to its recipients (pp. 254-255). Inspired by Garland (1990), I collected a data set for this study in which to observe such official significations. For a text to be included in the study it had to communicate justification(s) of

CORCAN prison labour by CORCAN and/or CSC. I undertook purposive sampling to identify texts that met this criterion. This sampling included all of CORCAN's annual reports and, from years when these were unavailable, annual reports by the SGC, which includes a section on CSC activities when the organization was part of this larger ministry. Reports were collected as far back as CORCAN's creation in 1980.

These texts were specifically chosen because they encompass a comprehensive overview of CORCAN and its employment programs from different operational perspectives, such as its finances, employment and 'rehabilitative' goals and managerial concerns. Considering my interest in the justifications of prison labour, these texts were ideal units of analysis in order to observe the open communication and 'selling' of CORCAN prison labour to potential audiences such as the public, penal system functionaries and potential business partners. These texts amount to a data set containing 33 reports. I decided to analyze reports from all years of CORCAN's operations, and not just a sample of these texts, so as to carry out a comprehensive exploration of how the state legitimates the use of prison labour throughout CORCAN's operational lifetime. By observing the discourses that emerge throughout this thirty-plus year span, I was better positioned to observe shifts and continuities in these justifications.

Though CSC is a state entity liable to the Canadian public, collecting CORCAN's annual reports for analysis proved more difficult than anticipated. Firstly, no single complete database exists in which a researcher could access all of CORCAN's annual reports. As observed by Abrams (1998), the state is particularly savvy in evading the inquisitive eyes of others. As such, I had to employ multiple strategies in order to gather these reports, including document and archival research using national and departmental databases and catalogues, as well as contacting

representatives of CORCAN and Public Safety Canada, including librarians and archivists, to assist me in my search for these reports.

In order to obtain the eight annual reports listed on CORCAN's website, I was required to phone a CORCAN employee from a list of numbers provided. After contacting a representative in August of 2014, I was emailed a copy of these eight reports. The remaining reports of CORCAN as an SOA were obtained by searching the online catalogues of Library and Archives Canada and the Public Safety Canada Library to locate their electronic versions. Additionally, some reports were obtained by contacting the librarian of the Public Safety Canada Library, who was able to find and send me electronic versions of the remaining reports that I was still missing. In email correspondence with a CORCAN employee, I was told that there was no report produced for fiscal year 1998-1999³ and that the specific CORCAN report for fiscal year 1981-1982 was an exceptional production, with no reports produced for its specific activities prior to it becoming an SOA (personal communication, 28 August 2014). To address this lack of reporting on CORCAN prior to its attainment of SOA status, I obtained annual reports of the SGC, which my thesis supervisor Dr. Justin Piché had on file, as each report contained a section for reporting on CSC activities, including CORCAN Industries.

4.3 – Characteristics of the data set

The collected reports can generally be sorted into three time periods, each having similarities such as the topics covered and format, with some exceptions. The SGC reports from fiscal years 1980-1981 to 1991-1992 dedicated only a few pages, sometimes as little as one, to discussing prison labour, both inside CORCAN industries and in other areas of penitentiary

³ This may be attributed to the agency's restructuring after a damning report of its financial management in the 1999 report from the Auditor General of Canada (pp. 33.12-33.14).

operations (e.g. maintenance jobs). Many of these reports also had appendices containing information such as the number of prisoners working in federal institutions and revenues generated from prison labour. The exceptional CORCAN report for fiscal year 1981-1982 contained 47 pages and discussed the activities of the Industries division, as well as its performance and finances as a business. Though fewer pages were dedicated to highlighting CORCAN activities in reports published between 1980 and 1992 than there were in CORCAN reports when it operated as an SOA (1992-present), the SGC reports are still important to analyze in terms of what official justifications were communicated about prison labour.

Reports for CORCAN as an SOA from fiscal years 1992-1993 to 1996-1997 ranged from 23 to 42 pages, often including a CEO message and discussion of the ‘correctional’ and commercial objectives of CORCAN, highlights of the various business lines’ activities and prisoner programming, and financial statements for the agency. Exceptionally, the report for fiscal year 1997-1998 was only ten pages long and consisted of a brief CEO message, as well as financial statements. As noted above, there was no report for fiscal year 1998-1999. The report for fiscal year 1999-2000 was the only report solely available online in webpage format. A CEO message and highlights of the various types of skills training and jobs for prisoners, along with financial statements were common in reports from fiscal years 1999-2000 to 2012-2013, ranging from 21 to 45 pages long. As of the time of this writing, I have not received a response from my initial CORCAN contact regarding a request for reports for fiscal years 2013-2014 or 2014-2015.

4.4 – Content analysis

The content analysis approach involves the coding and analysis of communication texts in order to identify, describe, and interpret their various portrayed concepts, meanings, messages,

themes, trends and biases (see Bachman & Schutt, 2007; Berg & Lune, 2012; Bryman, Bell, & Teevan, 2012; Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Huang, Zhao, Brown, Wu & Waldron, 2010; Maxfield & Babbie, 2008; Neuendorf, 2010). Specifically, this study employed a qualitative content analysis by exploring themes, ideologies, and concepts (see Berg & Lune, 2012, p. 355) conveyed about CORCAN prison labour through an open coding of the reports. This study sought to identify the broader economic and social trends communicated in state *discourse* regarding its support of prison labour. State discourse is in and of itself a *message*, aimed at the public, penal system stakeholders, other civil servants and interested parties for undeterminable intentions, other than to communicate a message. A qualitative content analysis is useful in identifying and describing the nature of these messages through a systematic and in-depth reading of the texts, and thus was the most appropriate type of content analysis for this research.

The content analysis method is also useful for studying a process or trend that occurs over a given period of time (Babbie, 2007, as cited in Berg & Lune, 2012, p. 375; Bryman, Bell, & Teevan, 2012, p. 306). This method facilitated the research goal of studying the patterns and themes that emerge from the texts over the course of CORCAN's existence, and how they compare and contrast as they progress chronologically.

Public records and reports represent the face of the state, along with its agencies and departments, who are tasked with delivering a message from the government to the general public for impression management (Goffman, 1959) for purposes such as demonstrating government accountability and transparency in their use of public money. A content analysis of reports highlighting the work of CORCAN, through abolitionist and political economic lenses, allows me to identify themes and values that allow for the penal apparatus to be ideologically reproduced and legitimated in said reports.

4.5 – Coding

An important part of the content analysis process is coding the collected data, meaning the categorization of its elements, such as words, phrases, sections, and pictures, into various themes and categories. This can be done either inductively or deductively. Inductive research, as described by Abrahamson (1983), involves the immersion of the researcher in the data so that they are able to identify emergent themes that are significant to those that created the text itself (p. 286; also see Berg & Lune, 2012; Elo & Kyngäs, 2008; Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Morgan, 1993). This is in contrast to the deductive approach, which is more useful for testing a hypothesis, as codes and themes are decided before coding and are drawn from the theoretical perspective that the researcher seeks to test (Abrahamson, 1983, p. 286; also see Berg & Lune, 2012). Berg and Lune (2012) note that the inductive approach is beneficial for demonstrating the perceptions of those who produce the text itself (p. 358). As such, I undertook an inductive approach to coding my data as it best complemented the research question and goals of exploring how the Canadian state represents prison labour within their own publications. Using this approach meant reading the selected documents several times to explore the different concepts, themes, and patterns that emerge from the text as opposed to scouring the texts for pre-determined codes.

The reports were coded in a three-step process. Firstly, to gain an understanding of some of the prominent themes in the data, as well as to acquaint myself with the structure of the documents, I did a preliminary reading of seven of the reports (one every five years – 1980/1981, 1985/1986, 1990/1991, 1995/1996, 2000/2001, 2005/2006 and 2010/2011). By conducting these readings I was able to develop a set of preliminary themes of how CORCAN prison labour was justified to use as a starting point when conducting a thorough coding of each report in the next

two phases. These themes were: the creation of a disciplined worker; how CORCAN portrays ‘success’; how prison labour sustains the prison; prison rehabilitation as dependent on business/sales; the value of prison labour to Canadian taxpayers/society; prison labour as a non-threat to Canadian business; the prisoner as deficient, but as a potential contributor to society; prison labour as ‘real/realistic’ work; CORCAN business management; and the future of CORCAN. After this round of coding, I observed that CORCAN was consistently legitimating prison labour in reports by illustrating its *value* to different individuals, organizations, and sectors.

In the next step of the coding process, each text was reviewed in chronological order so that I would be prepared to observe any shifts and continuities occurring in the reports’ discourse. This first round of full coding was guided by the following set of questions that I generated after my observations during the preliminary round of coding:

- How is CORCAN prison labour justified (research question)?
- What is considered ‘successful’ as it relates to CORCAN prison labour?
- How is ‘rehabilitation’ discussed in the context of prison labour?
- What kind of individual is CORCAN purporting to produce through prison labour?

I was open-minded to finding new themes that had not been previously explored, as this was the first time that *all* reports were read in full. For example, the subtheme of types of jobs that prisoners obtained upon their release was not a prominent theme until most of the reports had been analyzed, as this notion was only discussed in reports from the 2000’s.

Taking inspiration from Elo and Kyngäs (2008, p. 109), I noted the different codes, comprising of themes and concepts that I observed in the texts, writing these thoughts directly onto the documents. Literal messages and concepts that were easily observed on the surface level

of the text (manifest content), along with symbolic and structural meanings that had to be interpreted from the texts (latent content), were coded. My observations from each report were recorded on a coding grid⁴ for that report, with my own analytical notes written while completing the coding matrix.

After this round of coding, I reviewed each report's coding document in order to develop a list of themes and subsequently attempted to group those themes together that shared commonalities. From this reorganization I came to develop three main themes, each with multiple subthemes. These three themes were organized along the basis of who was purported to benefit from CORCAN's prison labour: the prisoner, Canadian society, and the Canadian state/economy/labour market. Each subtheme answered the question as to what the alleged value of CORCAN was to each entity, demonstrating how prison labour is legitimated, while each subtheme covered a different facet of how CORCAN prison labour was purported to benefit each particular set of recipients.

In a final coding of the reports, again chronologically, I was able to take a more nuanced look at the data, which allowed me to carefully sort previous detailed observations into the themes and subthemes developed in the second phase of coding. Observations were recorded onto coding matrices for each theme and subtheme⁵ so that comparisons could be made of how each report represents a particular theme or not, as well as the shifts and continuities in these representations throughout all reports. These coding matrices, organized into three broad themes, served as the foundation for my analysis and discussion of the various ways in which CORCAN prison labour is legitimized by the state, later explored in Chapter 5.

⁴ See Appendix A.

⁵ See Appendix B.

The research process as outlined above, however, was non-linear. I took inspiration from Berg and Lune's (2012) "spiraling research approach", whereby each stage of the research process is continuously developed and refined as other stages of the research process begin, change, and thus influence the previous stages (p. 25). For my study, this means that I used new ideas, methods, and concepts that I came across throughout the research process to both guide the future stages of the study, as well as to refine the stages that had already been worked on, including refining the research question.

4.6 – Ethical Considerations

This research project did not require ethics approval from the University of Ottawa's Research Ethics Board as it does not involve human participants, but draws from data that is publicly accessible. Rather, the ethical considerations for this project are bound to its foundation in the radical and abolitionist traditions of criminology. Radical criminology, theoretically influenced by "neo-Marxist critiques of the state", has its roots in activism and struggles against state control that manifest themselves in the practices of institutions such as the legal system, the police, and the prison, to name a few institutions (Platt, 2014, p. 3; De Giorgi, 2014). Taking an abolitionist stance (Mathiesen, 2008) in addition to a political economic lens, I held myself to account during the research process to expose underlying structures of inequality, marginalization, and exploitation that presented themselves during the course of this study. Furthermore, this study is intended to be a starting point for future activism and advocacy for the humane treatment of those most oppressed in our society. As Mander (2010) notes, research that illuminates and draws on the experiences of others cannot be walked away from once the study is over. Indeed, my ethical responsibility extends past the last page of this thesis.

4.7 – (Moving beyond) Limitations to content analysis

Several limitations have been identified regarding the content analysis method. One main limitation is that the researcher is at the mercy of the texts that are provided by others; because the texts are created by another author, the researcher can only analyze the information that is presented, regardless of its form, and must rely on the accuracy of others' data collection and analysis skills (Bachman & Schutt, 2007, p. 345; Berg & Lune, 2012, p. 376; Bryman, Bell, & Teevan, 2012, p. 307). To address this limitation, I carefully analyzed the texts in order to determine if they were incomplete in any form. Contacting multiple individuals to obtain the annual reports analyzed, as well as ensuring that all the pages of a given report were accounted for were some of the ways in which I mitigated this limitation.

Another limitation of content analysis is that it cannot determine causal relationships; rather, it is useful for exploring *what* is being portrayed (Berg & Lune, 2012, p. 376). Given the critical realist standpoint of this study, however, I did not wish to claim the discovery of a universal "truth" as is contended by positivists, nor insinuate that my findings are generalizable to all prison labour programs. Instead, I explore how justifications are constructed from the viewpoint of CSC and CORCAN and what forces may contribute to the production of these contentions by connecting penal policies and practices to dominant ideologies and material production in society. In light of such, the ontological and epistemological position that I took for this research renders this 'limitation' irrelevant.

This brings us to an important discussion on the reliability of this study's findings. I undertook several steps to ensure that the process of how the data is treated and how findings were produced were carried out with consistency in order to strengthen their reliability. One concern is that I was the sole coder of the data, meaning that the possibility existed for me to

miss certain themes and concepts while coding that may be apparent to other researchers. Furthermore, there existed the potential for me to impose my own personal biases on the research process. These issues presented a problem to *intracoder* reliability. On reflection, I note that my education is in critical criminology traditions, and I personally hold strong negative feelings towards the use of a penal system to address conflict and harm. I took several additional steps, inspired by the work of Kelley, Demiris, Nguyen, Oliver, and Wittenberg-Lyles (2013, p. 675) to mitigate any negative effects that my personal disposition could have on this study's reliability. I sought to increase intracoder reliability by coding my data set twice after a preliminary coding of seven reports and comparing the results of each instance of coding. Any inconsistencies between the sets were then resolved. To be cognizant and reflective of my personal biases, I maintained a journal throughout the research process.

In sum, this project, informed by political economic and abolitionist thought, involved a critical realist engagement with state annual reports that addressed CORCAN prison labour. Through a multi-stage qualitative content analysis I identified key themes and sub-themes concerning the justifications marshaled by CORCAN and the SGC to legitimate the use of prison labour in Canadian penitentiaries and the role this contemporary form of slavery plays in the reproduction of the capitalist order. I unpack these findings in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Findings on state legitimations of CORCAN prison labour

Guided by an abolitionist and political economic lens, this chapter critically examines 33 annual reports authored by the SGC and CORCAN highlighting the work of CORCAN since its inception in 1980. From these reports we can glean how the CSC and CORCAN envision the lives of prisoners and the utility of prison labour, at least publicly, as they exist within Canada's penal institutions. In the following sections I highlight and unpack three prominent themes that describe how CORCAN attempts to justify its prison labour program as a significant and appropriate penal practice. These themes, to be explored in the following three sections, are: the value of prison labour to the prisoner-worker, the value of prison labour to Canadian communities and the value of prison labour to the Canadian state and economy.

CORCAN itself is part of the “negating component” (Mathiesen, 2006, p. 144) of efforts to uphold the prison idea, an invention refusing the notion that more prison labour is not the best policy option moving forward from the failures of imprisonment outlined in past official reports. Instead, eerily echoing the observations of Gosselin (1982), the findings included in studies and reports leading up to CORCAN's founding, which deemed prison labour in federal penitentiaries to be inadequate, did not propose less or the abolition of this instrument, but rather intensified its place in the penal system by proposing for the creation of an industry, and later a special operating agency, solely for prison labour in Canadian federal penitentiaries. Moving forward, I discuss the various faces of CORCAN that justify its practices and the prison itself.

5.1 – The value of prison labour to the prisoner-worker

In contrast to other western democratic nations that have undergone a “punitive turn”⁶ (e.g. the United States), Moore and Hannah-Moffat (2005) contend that Canadian penality has maintained its goals of prisoner ‘rehabilitation’ and reformation, albeit having transformed throughout the decades its tools for employing such goals. The results discussed in this section corroborate such findings concerning the rhetoric of the goals and benefits of CORCAN prison labour. Contrary to the original intentions for the use of prison labour within KP in a deterrent and punitive capacity (Select Committee on Expediency of Erecting a Penitentiary, 1831), SGC and CORCAN reports consistently justify the use of this practice by pointing to its value for the ‘rehabilitation’ and reintegration of prisoners into society as workers. In fact, throughout the 33 reports analyzed in this study, there is a marked absence of discourse that justifies prison labour on the basis of punishing prisoners for the acts they were criminalized for and deterring them from recidivating.

In a shift from past discourse, prisoners are described in some reports as ‘deficient’ in employment experience and skills, and consequently positioned as the beneficiaries of the various work and training activities of CORCAN. It is officially claimed that such tactics try to instill in prisoners a particular work ethic and general and specific job skills. These factors, CORCAN contends, help to increase the likelihood of a prisoner’s employment and reintegration, and to reduce their likelihood of recidivism. I argue that these examples of how prison labour is construed as a benefit to individual prisoners represents the “action function”

⁶ Briefly, the “punitive turn” thesis refers to developments in punitive practices in western democratic penal systems in the late twentieth century that turn away from ‘rehabilitative’ ideals and towards “more punitive mentalities” (Moore & Hannah-Moffat, 2005, p. 85). Some characterize this by developments such as mass imprisonment, the use of chain gangs, and austere prison conditions in certain countries (e.g. Garland, 2001).

(Mathiesen, 1974) of the prison, part of its “supportive component” to demonstrate that “something is presumably being done about law and order” (pp. 141-143).

5.1.1 – Value of prison labour to prepare the ‘deficient’ prisoner for work

Disregarding the prison’s failure throughout its history to ‘rehabilitate’ individuals and its often *dehabilitating* track record (Mathiesen, 2006) and resigning them to both the “pains of imprisonment” (Sykes, 1958, p. 63) and “prisonization” (Clemmer, 1958/1970), justifications for CORCAN prison labour in annual reports consistently focus on how it provides work to prisoners and prepares them for ‘reintegration’ into the community and labour market once released. This value was often represented by the sheer amount of prisoners employed and the services and goods delivered through this work. For instance, an early report for the fiscal year 1985/1986 put forth a performance goal of “[p]roducing gross revenue from the sales of industrial products of \$12.4 million. This goal is related to CSC’s objective of ensuring the continuous employment of 1,100 offenders in the CORCAN shops” (SGC, 1987, p. 62). Employment and “training opportunities” along with doing “meaningful work” (despite “meaningful” never being qualified) were often touted as benefits of CORCAN Industries to CSC’s mandate (e.g. SGC, 1984, p. 66; SGC, 1989, p. 56; SGC, 1990b, pp. 56-57). In another report, the ability of CORCAN to create new work placements for prisoners is again praised, making nostalgic references to the forced labour of prisoners in the past:

During the period where many of CORCAN’s historical employment activities must be restructured, there remains a high demand to develop alternate employment opportunities. CORCAN responded in FY 94/95 to this requirement by establishing Construction as a[n] operating division. In reality, this is hardly a new area for prison industries. For example, our first program was quarrying the stone used in the construction of Kingston Penitentiary – and that was in 1835! And today, using inmates to build prison structures is an “old” idea that is creating new work. (CORCAN, 1995, p. 4).

Furthermore, the success of CORCAN in employing prisoners was often measured by quantitative gains in the number of prisoners working in CORCAN shops and increases in hours of “training” over the previous year’s results. “Exceeding our goal by 25%”, boasts the 2001/2002 report, “we employed more than 5100 offenders, of which 96% successfully completed their assigned work” (CORCAN, 2002, p. 8). Similarly, another report fails to problematize that more training hours and more prisoners “employed” by CORCAN is in effect a ballooning of the amount of human beings subject to state control and exploitation:

The number of on-the-job training hours increased to 2.67 million, a gain of over 50,000 from the previous year and continuing a trend of year-over-year increases. Over 4,200 offenders benefitted from this training during the year. CORCAN saw an increase over last year in both the number of on-the-job-training hours as well as the number of offenders who participated in work assignments in the shops. (CORCAN, 2013, p. 7)

In addition to providing ‘employment’ to prisoners while incarcerated, reports from the early 1980’s purport that an objective of the “Education, Training and Employment of Inmates” activity (in which CORCAN is included) is to “prepare inmates for their return to the work environment by providing opportunities for employment” (SGC, 1983, p. 58; SGC, 1984, p. 57; SGC, 1985a, p. 53; SGC, 1985b, p. 57). Prison labour is valued for its goal of increasing an individual’s chance of reintegrating into society due to the learning of new skills and work experience (e.g. SGC, 1988, p. 48; CORCAN, 1993, p. 3; CORCAN, 2002, p. 18; CORCAN, 2006, p. 5; 2013, p. 9).

Often, quotes from prisoners, media articles and professionals are used to demonstrate this preparatory function of prison labour. A quote from one ex-CORCAN employee-prisoner identified as “Nancy” exclaims, “Before you couldn’t get me out of bed but now I get up at 6:30 in the morning and I’m showered and dressed and ready to come to work...It’s helped me get

ready for the outside” (CORCAN, 2001, p. 10). Similarly, another report quotes a news article in *The National Post*, which states:

We’re used to watching fictional prisoners on T.V. and movies fighting, escaping, killing and dealing drugs. The truth thankfully is a lot more mundane. National Post photographer visited several correctional institutions (and) looked at how offenders earn money and learn new skills in a variety of day jobs on the inside in preparation for a new life on the outside. (CORCAN, 2002, p. 18).

In these examples, we see how prison labour is offered not only as a tool for keeping prisoners busy while incarcerated, but also as a transformative instrument of the penal apparatus for preparing prisoners for their reintegration into the world of work.

Penal functionaries often link this transformative and preparatory valuing of prison labour to the importance of prisoners developing a work ethic. Consistently, CORCAN annual reports from the mid-1990’s until the most recent available report for fiscal year 2012/2013 frame CORCAN’s “employment” of prisoners as a means by which prisoners develop “good” and “positive” work habits⁷ (e.g. CORCAN, 1994, p. 12; CORCAN, 2012, p. 8), “attitudes” during and towards work (e.g. CORCAN, 1995, p. 23; CORCAN, 2006, p. 14; CORCAN, 2009, p. 4), and work ethic (e.g. CORCAN, 2010, p. 11; CORCAN, 2011, p. 5). For instance, one report (CORCAN, 1996) attempts to counter the “Myth” that “The only thing criminals learn in prison is how not to get caught again” (p. 4) by contending, somewhat contradictorily, that:

Sending someone to a federal institution is never the best way to make him or her a productive member of society. But when offenders are accepted as CORCAN trainees, they learn skills that are marketable in the workplaces of today and the future. They also learn just what it means to be an employee – skills like commitment, punctuality, self-control, and responsibility (CORCAN, 1996, p. 5).

Here, two elements stand out. Firstly, this quote highlights CORCAN’s own doubt that prison is the most appropriate solution for responding to criminalized harms. Secondly, it provides its

⁷ An exception to this can be found in the SGC report for fiscal year 1980/1981, which notes that the Inmate Employment Branch of CSC, which CORCAN Industries was a division of, has the goal “to foster good work habits” (SGC, 1981, p. 67).

audience with a construction of “what it means to be an employee”, essentially outlining a normative framework for the proper conduct of all citizens working in our society. In a thank-you note to CORCAN trainers, a prisoner identified as “Katrina” describes the jobs and programs of CORCAN as “what the women need in here for a proper future”, further noting that the lifestyle stressed by CORCAN “is what a pro-social life is: getting up every day and doing what every other human being does (goes to work!)” (CORCAN, 2008, p. 6). Again, the value of work and teaching prisoners how to be ‘good’, ‘pro-social’ employees for their employers is stressed in these two examples. Here, we see traces of the *productive* component of the prison that both Foucault (1975/1995) and Melossi and Pavarini (1977/1981) observe, which attempts to discipline prisoners into proletariat workers, who come to see their life as that of a labourer.

In addition to purporting how prison labour instills ‘pro-social’ attitudes in prisoners, rhetoric on CORCAN prison labour often takes a moral tone, framing the practice as a means of improving a prisoner’s character. Prisoners were purported to benefit from “dignity” and “self esteem” brought on by partaking in labour that was “meaningful” and “productive” (e.g. CORCAN, 2000, CEO message; CORCAN, 2003, p. 5; CORCAN, 2004, p. 4). One CEO remarks in his address that CORCAN instructors were the ones setting an example for prisoners’ conduct, specifically “what it means to put in an honest day’s work that one can feel good about” (CORCAN 2007, p. 3). “Work is good for people,” purports another CEO message, “whether they are offenders or not” (CORCAN, 1997, p. 1). Emphasis on the personal reformation that work purportedly brings to prisoners is consistent with past political and penal rhetoric of the transformative quality of prison labour (for example, see Beattie, 1977; Gosselin, 1982; SCJLA, 1977). From this perspective, it appears that not much has changed in official purposes of prison labour since its earlier uses in Canadian penitentiaries.

Additionally, reports from the late 1980's onwards stress the inadequacy of prisoners to face the world of work, bolstering CORCAN's legitimacy by contending that its prison labour program helps to address the inadequacies of each individual prisoner. For instance, reports from the 2000's often stress how CORCAN prison labour contributed to the "readiness" of prisoners to work upon their release. For instance, one report remarked that "[v]ocational training [was] restructured to enhance offender job readiness" (CORCAN, 2004, p. 5; see also CORCAN, 2002, p. 4; CORCAN, 2005, p. 5; CORCAN, 2008, p. 1). Along a similar line, a CEO message highlights that:

In 2004/2005, for the first time, CORCAN's business results were strong enough to enable a \$2 million investment in additional employment/employability programs. We expect this investment to significantly enhance the employment readiness of offenders at release and their subsequent ability to both find and retain suitable employment in the community (CORCAN, 2005, p. 3).

Similarly, some reports focus on CORCAN's value for making prisoners more "employable" (e.g. CORCAN, 1995, p. 10; CORCAN, 2011, p. 4).

In the late 1980's, a trend emerges whereby CORCAN prison labour is designated as a response to the 'needs' and 'deficits' of prisoners. This can also be found in Duguid's (2000) observation of a crisis in Canadian penitentiaries in the mid-1980's, which sought reforms to deal with inadequate institutional 'programs' for prisoners after Martinson's (1974) "nothing works" (Duguid, 2000, pp. 178-182). This saw the establishment of a neo-rehabilitative ideal in the penitentiary, as well as new means by which to predict prisoners' "risk" in order to impose "treatment" on this population (Duguid, 2000, p. 182). Specifically, in its objectives for the next fiscal year, the 1988/1989 report from the SGC (1990a) highlights how CSC would focus on "[i]ncreasing the level of offender participation in programs relevant to their needs", which includes work programs (p. 59). In fact, this was followed by the statement that "CSC recognizes

that offenders are responsible for their actions, but the CSC has a responsibility for helping them change” (SGC, 1990a, p. 59).

Such discourse reappears in the mid-1990’s and continues throughout most of the annual reports up until that most recently provided from 2012/2013. In these reports, prisoners are often described as lacking in both employment experience and skills, which is said to indicate that they have a high level of “needs” in the labour market domain. For instance, one report discusses how research was being done on the importance of CORCAN supervisors in “responding to the needs of the offender” (CORCAN, 1995, p. 22). Similarly, a chart in the 1996/1997 annual report notes the “Need Level for the Employment Domain” of prisons, which describes that “[t]hrough the CSC intake assessment carried out by the Correctional Service, we know that 76 per cent of federal offenders have significant problems in the area of employment” (CORCAN, 1997, p. 8).

Such ‘needs’ were often linked to one’s assessed employment record and ‘skills’. For instance, one report outlines the “reward” CORCAN experiences through prisoners’ pride in their work given that “the majority of offenders have no work experience and a low level of skill when they begin working with CORCAN” (CORCAN, 2006, p. 13). CORCAN is also valued for restructuring its Prairie region operations “to address employment gaps identified for Aboriginal and women offenders, those with mental health needs and all offenders with employment/training deficits” (CORCAN, 2008, p. 4). Prison labour, often euphemized by CORCAN as “Employment and employability training”, was consistently posed as the solution to such ‘deficits’ and ‘needs’, as is evident in the following quote: “Part of the assessment process when an offender first arrives at [the] penitentiary is to determine the extent to which an offender’s work history and experience suggests a need for employment and employment training” (CORCAN, 2009, p. 5).

As Sim (2009) notes, despite the failure of the prison to carry out its stated goals, “the institution has always been offered as the solution to its own problems” (p. 7). Prison labour’s historical legitimations for giving prisoners work, and that this work may provide them with a work ethic to prepare them for life outside of the institution, continues in this era, used in official reports to justify this practice, as well as CORCAN’s own existence.

A new trend in penal rhetoric, however, appears in reports from the late 1980’s onwards in that prisoners are increasingly conceived of as ‘deficient’ and suffering from ‘needs’ in both work skills and employment experience in order for them to successfully obtain work upon release. This mirrors recent transformations that both Duguid (2000) and Moore and Hannah-Moffat (2005) observe emerging in Canadian penal discourse and practice in the late 1900’s. Moore and Hannah-Moffat (2005) note how Canadian punishment has transformed to show a “neoliberal face” (p. 90), shifting towards targeting individual’s calculated “needs” that become the basis for ‘correctional’ programming thrust upon the prisoner (p. 91). Prisoners are not only subjected to the philosophy that they are deficient in their decision-making skills, but also managed via their “risk” for recidivism designation, which dictates to them which programs and services, and at what intensity, they are to be subjected to them (Duguid, 2000, pp. 190-200).

This inevitably responsabilizes prisoners, both for their ‘deficits’ leading to their criminalization and their ‘choices’ and ‘treatment’ within the penitentiary, regardless of structural factors such as poverty that may contribute to their circumstances (Moore & Hannah-Moffat, 2005, p. 92). CORCAN’s assertion and calculation of individuals’ employment ‘needs’ and ‘gaps’ reflect this logic that one’s criminality derives from their employment “deficits” (Moore & Hannah-Moffat, 2005, p. 93). Such is grounded in CSC’s uptake of the “Risk-Need-Responsivity” logic model implemented into federal “correctional programming” in the 1990’s

(Moore & Hannah-Moffat, 2005; see as well Andrews, 1989; Bonta & Andrews, 2007). As Moore and Hannah-Moffat (2005) contend, programs that hold individuals to account for their actions despite circumstances often out of their control (e.g. colonialism) are themselves punitive.

5.1.2 – Value of providing the prisoner with generic and specific job skills

In the previous section, I described how prison labour was presented as valuable for federally incarcerated prisoners by preparing them for employment upon their release and, from the late 1980's onwards, addressing their 'needs' as so-labelled 'deficient' human beings. *How* CORCAN contends that prisoners are prepared for the labour market is the subject of this section. Here, I discuss the transition of rhetorical representations of CORCAN programming in the 1990's which demonstrates that prisoners are positioned as gaining both general and specific job skills through prison labour for their eventual reintegration into the private-sector job market.

Firstly, understanding how CORCAN programming is valued for its provision of 'skills' to prisoners requires the acknowledgement that education and vocational training were distinct from CORCAN activities prior to it becoming a special operating agency, although both activities often fell under the same branches of CSC, such as the "Education, Training and Employment of Inmates" activity (SGC, 1983, p. 58) and the "Correctional Programming" section (SGC, 1992, p. 56). With the announcement of CORCAN becoming a SOA, the 1990/1991 report contends that the new structure of CORCAN will enable it "to take an integrated-comprehensive approach to the issues of motivation, occupational training and the employment of inmates under federal responsibility" (SGC, 1992, p. 58). As such, reports prior to CORCAN becoming an SOA, not surprisingly, lack discussion on vocational skills

development for prisoners. However, from its beginnings as an SOA onward, reports highlight how prisoners receive both generic and specific skills training throughout their time ‘working’ for CORCAN.

The provision of “employability skills training” for prisoners was consistently highlighted in reports beginning in the mid-1990’s (e.g. CORCAN, 1996, 2001, 2003, 2008). “Employability Skills Development” as it is called is summarized in the following excerpt from the 1996/1997 report:

The emphasis of CORCAN training is on the development of generic skills, attitudes and behaviours like problem solving, communication and teamwork; skills easily applied to essentially all forms of employment. These are not traditional vocational skills. Offenders do learn important vocational skills during CORCAN employment. But vocational skills are the least transferable to other employment positions. In today’s labour force, a large percentage of people work in an area outside their area of education or formal training, which stresses the importance of generic skills and adaptability. (CORCAN, 1997, p. 8)

This quote also demonstrates a focus of prison labour during this time on providing prisoners with *generic* skills to use in the workplace. Additionally, CORCAN notes that it developed an entire employability skills program in conjunction with the Conference Board of Canada, highlighting research on how the implementation of a pilot program for the project demonstrated positive improvement in prisoners’ work attitudes and beliefs, and was deemed “a valuable tool in our reintegration efforts” (CORCAN, 2005, p. 5; see also 1996, p. 5). These skills, highlighted in the 2005/2006 report, include “personal management skills: how to show positive attitudes and behave appropriately; how to be responsible, adaptable, manage emotions, learn continuously and work safely” and “Teamwork skills: how to work with others and participate in projects and tasks” (CORCAN, 2006, p. 14).

Though in some reports in the 1990's prison labour is valued for providing prisoners with *specific* vocational skills to prisoners,⁸ this emphasis mostly occurred in CORCAN reports from the early 2000's. A noted accomplishment of fiscal year 2002/2003 is how CORCAN “[c]ompleted regional strategies for delivery of employment/employability training for offenders. Implementation will commence June 2003 and will include employment programs and restructured vocational training” (CORCAN, 2003, p. 6). In subsequent reports, specific vocational training, apprenticeship hours and the attainment of certifications and other types of vocational accreditations were widely discussed as benefits provided to prisoners working for CORCAN. Some of these are highlighted in *Table 1*.

Table 1: Non-exhaustive list of vocational accreditations CORCAN provided prisoners

02/03	WHMIS [Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System] and worksite safety, high-pressure welding, electrical work, chainsaw operation, artificial insemination, cabinetry, upholstery, and oilfield safety (CORCAN, 2003, pp. 11-12)
03/04	Cooks training, forklift operation, and accounting (CORCAN, 2004, p. 5)
04/05	Basic food safety, WHMIS, industrial cleaning, Traffic Control Person, carpentry, and chainsaw safety (CORCAN, 2005, p. 6)
05/06	WHMIS, workplace safety, and forklift operation (CORCAN, 2006, p. 14)
06/07	Construction framing (CORCAN, 2007, p. 4)
07/08	Construction training, horticultural trades orientation (6), WHMIS, forklift operations (8), basic food safety, and first aid (CORCAN, 2008, p. 12)
08/09	WHMIS, construction safety and recognition, horticulture, culinary arts, welding, and forest fire fighting (CORCAN, 2009, pp. 5-6)
09/10	Welding, culinary arts, forklift operation, first aid, WHMIS, construction safety, forest fire fighting (CORCAN, 2010, p. 5), and retail meat cutting (p. 12)
10/11	General labour, construction trades, food services (CORCAN, 2011, p. 5), tailoring and garment creation skills, bricklaying skills, and industrial laundry skills (p. 6), AutoCAD training (p. 10)
11/12	Residential framing technician, welding, automotive painting, auto body repair, and cabinetry (CORCAN, 2012, p. 8)

⁸ For instance, the 1995/1996 report notes how “formal inmate training programs were given in construction safety and forestry (tree cutting)” (CORCAN, 1996, p. 11).

12/13	Carpentry (CORCAN, 2013, p. 11), WHMIS, confined space awareness, construction techniques, fall protection, sprinkler system installation, automotive painting, and automotive mechanics (p. 12)
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These various accreditations were woven into the work being done in CORCAN's business lines. Like claims about employing prisoners, CORCAN routinely presented the attainment of such accreditations in quantitative terms. For example, one report surmises:

Third-party certificates were issued to 6,739 offenders in 2007-2008: 1,452 to Aboriginal men, 4,689 to non-Aboriginal men, 188 to Aboriginal women, and 410 to non-Aboriginal women. The majority of certificates were in Basic Food Safety, WHMIS, safe start pre-employment, first aid, construction safety and recognition and NESP [National Employability Skills Program] (CORCAN, 2008, p. 12).

In other instances, the number of hours worked by prisoners is valued for its contribution towards apprenticeship hours for future certifications (e.g. CORCAN, 2011, p. 6). One report praises gains in the number of certifications earned, noting that the 17,646 third party vocational certifications given in fiscal year 2012-2013 “represents an increase of 23.89% from 2011-2012” (CORCAN, 2013, p. 12), praising the efficiency of the penal system for loading prisoners with accreditations to take into the world. CORCAN measures its success here quantitatively: how many certificates are given out, how many training hours worked. Little reference is given to the quality of the ‘training’ experience or the career aspirations of individual prisoners. Prisoners have noted how receiving certificates while incarcerated can be problematic, as their accreditations linking them with the penitentiary carry with them a physical stigma, rendering them nearly useless for obtaining a job upon their release (Strimelle & Frigon, 2011, p. 120).

In attempting to develop certain competencies in prisoners, CORCAN's reports from the time it became a SOA frequently made reference to how such skill development had links with employment in certain industries within the Canadian labour market. CORCAN purportedly works to “align the training we provide to offenders with job opportunities available to them in

the community” (CORCAN, 2012, p. 4). In one report, a Technical Support Centre employing “up to six prisoners” was seen to benefit these individuals, who are able to “develop computer literacy and computer assisted design skills that are highly marketable in today’s labour market, enabling them to apply for high-end, high-skills jobs upon release” (CORCAN, 2008, p. 14). Furthermore, following the announcement to close the agribusiness sector of CORCAN, the 2009/2010 report noted that “[a]s we implement the closure, we will be collaborating with our partners to identify replacement work and training for offenders that will ensure they are ready to find and keep a job in the labour market of the 21st century” (CORCAN, 2010, p. 4).

Skills and training provided to prisoners were frequently linked with emerging employment sectors. For instance, the 1993/1994 report remarks:

The current restructuring of the economy has resulted in a number of emerging industries, including high technology, environment and health-care. CORCAN will be focusing particular attention on these sectors as they provide the greatest opportunities for employment of offenders after release (CORCAN, 1994, p. 16).

How prisoners learn skills that could contribute to the healthcare sector, the environment, and the technology sector, however, is never discussed.

The reference to prison jobs being linked with *specific* labour market needs, however, is particularly prominent in reports dating from the mid-2000’s onwards, around the same time that annual reports discuss increased vocational skills training for prisoners. For instance, the 2004/2005 report notes that CORCAN was increasing “hard skills development opportunities in high employment demand areas” in addition to employability skills training already being carried out (CORCAN, 2005, p. 10). For instance, one report highlights that the positive results of a construction framing program with CORCAN would lead to resources being put into future projects “in employment sectors experiencing acute labour shortages, including construction, mining, and oil and gas” (CORCAN, 2006, p. 23). One project described as the “ECHO-

CORCAN Employability Initiative” was said to improve prisoners’ self-esteem through skills development “in selected trades, particularly in the construction industry, which is experiencing a skilled labour shortage” (CORCAN, 2010, p. 13). In another instance, CORCAN purports that it regularly consulted Statistics Canada’s monthly Labour Force Surveys (LFS) to determine what skills it should provide prisoners with so that they are in line with the demands of the labour market (CORCAN, 2012, p. 8; CORCAN, 2013, p. 11). The report for fiscal year 2012/2013 claims CORCAN training aligns with the needs identified in the LFS by providing employment in its manufacturing and construction business lines to just under 39% of prisoners working for CORCAN, as these two sectors were consistently “two of the highest in Canada” (CORCAN, 2013, p. 11)⁹.

On another note, though the emphasis from generic to specific skills training shifted throughout the 2000’s, reports from the time CORCAN became an SOA consistently describe having “realistic” work experience that specifically matches private sector employment conditions as beneficial for prisoners (CORCAN, 2008, p. 16; also see CORCAN, 1993, p. 8; CORCAN, 1994, p. 8). Furthermore, CORCAN’s programs were frequently described as aligning with these private sector conditions. For instance, the value of this sector is described in one report, noting “CORCAN must provide meaningful employment in an environment that emulates the private sector” (CORCAN, 1993, p. 5; also see CORCAN, 1994, p. 7).

The inclusion of private sector business within the prison labour program was valued for its ability “to provide an enhanced ‘real world’ atmosphere” (CORCAN, 1997, p. 26), which was

⁹ When the construction business line was first implemented in fiscal year 1994/1995, CORCAN noted that work in this sector “was a natural avenue to pursue”, one of the reasons being that it “is an ideal training ground for many inmates who, because of their education level and personal characteristics, favor [sic] demanding manual labor [sic] which involves a lot of dexterity and pays well” (CORCAN, 1995, p. 18). Such a contention brings to mind the racist and positivist assumptions post-Emancipation that Black prisoners were unintelligent and most suited for manual labour (see Lichtenstein, 1996, pp. 25-26). As my partner David would say, “Lombroso called, he wants his rhetoric back!”

purported to benefit prisoners who gained experience in industries with similar certifications as that of the private sector (CORCAN, 2001, p. 11). Furthermore, the notion that prisoners would ultimately be obtaining work in the private sector is conveyed in the following quote from the 2007/2008 report, discussing the training of Inuit prisoners on construction sites in a construction training program: “Each of the participants has been issued a card attesting to their certification by ASP-Construction, which will be valuable when they apply for work with private-sector employers” (CORCAN, 2008, p. 11).

Lastly, I observed how CORCAN’s presentation of prisoner work upholds sexist assumptions about traditional gender roles. With some exceptions, such as two photos, one with a man working with cloth and thread (CORCAN, 2006, p. 13), another of a group of women in construction clothing standing behind a sign reading “Traffic Control Training” (CORCAN, 2008, p. 21), discussions and representations of male and female prisoners frequently reproduce traditional gender roles, such as the male as the breadwinner and the female as the homemaker who cares for the children within a nuclear family (see for example Simonton, 1996; Stam, Verbakel & de Graaf, 2014). For example, one report notes how three female prisoners were employed as housekeepers for a hotel chain in Nova Scotia as a means of enhancing their “reintegration potential” (CORCAN, 2007, p. 18). The 2000/2001 report, in its breakdown of the sectors of work completed in each institution, reveals that only two women’s federal prisons had CORCAN programs; Joliette Institution in Québec had four “full-time equivalents” (the equivalence of four full-time prison labourers) working in the textile business line (CORCAN, 2001, p. 6), while the Edmonton Institution had six full-time equivalents working in the services sector (CORCAN, 2001, p. 20).

Visual representations of the genders also reinforced sexist conceptions of male and female work. Photos of male prisoners mostly present them occupying a traditionally male job, such as that of a farm worker (CORCAN, 1996, p. 2), bricklayer (p. 10), or metalworker (p. 14), whereas photos of female prisoners show these women using a sewing machine (CORCAN, 2006, p. 13) or working behind a desk, with a telephone and computer in front of them (CORCAN, 1996, p. 14). Perhaps most telling of the sexism inherent in CORCAN's programs, the 2004/2005 report highlights that the most common sector for male prisoners to work for within CORCAN was its manufacturing business line, encompassing 43% of this group; for female prisoners, the highest "employing" sector was the textile business line, encompassing 43% of this group (CORCAN, 2005, p. 10).

In these examples, women take up work in labour sectors closely related to traditionally domestic tasks (sewing, cleaning, laundry), founded in traditional gender roles and sexist assumptions that a woman's place is in the home. Male prisoners are featured in jobs traditionally linked with work outside of the home, such as farming, and other types of manufacturing-based work. While CORCAN may have no intention of being sexist towards prisoners, the different types of prison labour habitually thrust upon the men and women it manages reinforces gender stereotypes of work and sends the message that men and women are destined to take up different roles in society, both in domestic tasks and the labour market. The lack of diversity in work for female prisoners corroborates the contentions of the women interviewed by Strimelle and Frigon (2011), who describe prison labour as segregated between genders, with women having fewer opportunities than their male counterparts to work and access trades instruction (also see Kilroy & Pate, 2011). Furthermore, these findings also demonstrate the discursive side of CSC's discriminatory policies towards and lack of support for female

prisoners' needs, an inequality experienced by Gayle Horii (1994) during her time incarcerated in penitentiaries across Canada.

From this point, we are presented with the challenge of trying to explain two trends in annual reports: firstly, the trend towards presenting prisoners as future private sector employees from the 1990's. Rhetoric positioning prisoners as future *private sector* employees can be understood when situated within neoliberal discourses and practices emerging in Western capitalist economies, including Canada, in the late 20th century, whereby government downsizing and shifting production and services towards the private sector (McBride & Whiteside, 2011) was thought to promote the growth of the economy and additional private sector activity. Furthermore, the bureaucracy of government, seen as inefficient, is substituted in favour of private operations, touted as fiscally accountable and more effective in delivering services (see Schlosser, 1998; Thompson, 2012).

Secondly, we witness a shift in discourse about the skills prisoners learn throughout the 1990's and 2000's. In this shift we witness CORCAN valuing general skills development throughout the 1990's, to additionally in the early 2000's justifying prison labour as a means of providing prisoners with specific vocational skills, and finally towards the mid-2000's also valuing the notion that work skills learned in prison align with labour market shortages. As described here, each level of skills builds upon those previously discussed in annual reports.

Taking a political economic perspective on this transition, it is useful to refer to Canada's unemployment rate, as well as analyses of the Canadian labour market during the 1990's and 2000's. Following the recession in the early 1990's, national unemployment rates did not return to their pre-recession low (1989 – 7.5%) until 1999 (7.6%) (Statistics Canada, 2015). In the 2000's, however, the unemployment rate steadily decreased to its lowest point since pre-1980

levels, at 6% in 2007 (Statistics Canada, 2015). Furthermore, Sunter and Bowlby (1998) observe that “[o]nly since the beginning of 1997 has there been sufficiently strong job creation to nudge up the employment rate and average family incomes” (p. 15).

The unemployment rates of the last two decades are important in reflection on both Rusche and Kirchheimer (1939/2003) and Melossi and Pavarini’s (1977/1981) observation that prison conditions were historically guided by the principle of less eligibility, whereby a prisoners’ living circumstances must be poorer than those of the lowest tier of the working class in order that this class may be deterred from criminalized activity. In the context of prison labour, prisoners would be viewed as less deserving than ‘free’ workers in labour market eligibility. With this in mind, CORCAN’s rhetoric of skills development throughout the 1990’s and 2000’s accords with the principle of less eligibility, aligned with the rise and fall of unemployment rates throughout this time. I contend that conveying prisoners as eligible to receive specific skills training in a decade with relatively high rates of unemployment would be politically incorrect for the state to do. Conversely, when unemployment is at its lowest in the mid-2000’s, CORCAN reports tend to value vocational skills development that purportedly would address labour market shortages (which drive up wages as employers compete for workers). A relationship then can be seen between the extent to which skills development is specialized in CORCAN programming and the conditions of the labour market during this time.

This hypothesis is problematic, however, when considering how reports during and following the 2008-2009 recession continued to discuss prison labour skills development as valuable for prisoners to get jobs in sectors with labour shortages. One possibility for the continuity of this justification is that the 2008-2009 recession was relatively short-lived and less severe than those of the early 1980’s and 1990’s (Cross, 2011). As such, rhetoric legitimating

specific vocational skills development for prisoners could proceed relatively uninterrupted by the implications of the economic recession.

The skills development and type of work that CORCAN purports to provide for prisoners for their eventual reintegration into society, however, is problematic when we consider how the work and skills prisoners take on during their incarceration transfer to the Canadian labour market (or fail to do so). As De Giorgi (2006) notes, the post-Fordist transition emerging in the late 20th century starkly presents a very different picture of the characteristics of work in western democratic nations. Important for our analysis, he observes a rise in prevalence of the service, technological, and financial sectors, and a decrease in industrial and manufacturing jobs (De Giorgi, 2006). Similar characteristics are present in the Canadian economy and labour market that call into question the usefulness of specific skills gained by CORCAN prisoners during prison labour, particularly in the manufacturing and textile business lines.

For instance, Statistics Canada (2011) notes that 1 in 6 manufacturing jobs were lost between the years 2000 and 2007, a decrease by 4% of the sector's share of the labour market (p. 340). A similar decline occurred in the textile manufacturing industry, which has experienced a 60% employment decrease from 2004 to 2014 (Industry Canada, 2013). Wyman (2005) notes that the textile and clothing industry in Canada has been declining since the turn of the century, attributing this to the liberalization of trade. Furthermore, contradicting CORCAN's annual reports, then Acting Deputy Minister for Public Safety Graham Flack called out CORCAN's prison labour program for its disjuncture with labour market analyses in a memorandum¹⁰ to the Minister of Public Safety in 2012 (Public Safety Canada, 2012). The memorandum states:

One of the biggest weaknesses of Corcan [sic] is the absence of any correlation between either the work or the vocational training programs with labour market

¹⁰ This memorandum was graciously provided to me by Globe and Mail journalist Kim Mackrael, who originally obtained this document through an Access to Information request.

analyses. Training inmates for the jobs of yesterday, or for non-existent jobs, or for jobs in already over-resourced fields in competition with non-offenders is a waste of scarce resources and counterproductive to public safety (Public Safety Canada, 2012, p. 2).

Flack goes on to note: “Having five women cutting and sewing pillowcases is no more productive in terms of effective reintegration than the former farm operations” (Public Safety Canada, 2012, p. 2).

These findings are troubling, leading to the question of what CORCAN prison labour is actually doing if not giving prisoners useful skills to get a job upon release. From his own firsthand experience, Peter Collins (2008) notes that “there is nothing going on in CORCAN sweatshops that provide prisoners with useful marketable skills” (p. 85). In fact, CORCAN only provides a few prisoners with skills or credentials, all to benefit the functioning of CORCAN’s business lines (Collins, 2008, p. 85). The contradictions outlined by one of Public Safety’s own officials demonstrates how CORCAN has used its reports to sell the idea that the agency is contributing to CSC’s reintegration efforts, despite evidence to suggest the opposite. When prisoners are engaged in forced labour that upholds system interests (e.g. constructing new prisons, manufacturing office furniture for sale, sewing prisoners’ clothing), one must question whether the ‘skills development’ that CORCAN promotes is actually carried out behind closed doors. This is especially concerning as prisoners themselves have made it publicly clear that they perceive their work as prison labourers as monotonous, unhelpful for life outside the penitentiary, and designed to keep them under control rather than to provide them with skills (e.g. Abbott, 1987; Beattie, 1977, Collins, 2008; Merson, 1987). As such, CORCAN prison labour simply perpetuates incarceration and its goals as legitimate.

In this section, I have demonstrated the transition in how prisoner skills development is valued by CORCAN and have observed the trend in reports concerning its operations as an SOA

towards a discourse valuing private sector characteristics in prison work. Furthermore, using a political economic lens, I provided an explanation for why these trends occurred, contextualizing them within transformations to the Canadian economy. Lastly, I problematized CORCAN's legitimation of prison labour as a means of 'skills development', pointing to transitions in the economy and labour market, as well as internal government documents that suggest that CORCAN prison labour is outdated for preparing prisoners for today's economy. In the next section, I demonstrate how CORCAN contends its 'training' produces results for its prisoners.

5.1.3 – Value of prison labour to prisoner reintegration and job attainment

After skills have been obtained, deficits filled, and the prisoner purportedly reformed into an employable worker, prisoners under the guidance of CORCAN are presented to benefit from its prison labour program by reintegrating into the community, remaining out of prison, and obtaining some type of employment upon release. Though reports on CORCAN since its inception contend that prison labour prepares an individual for their reintegration into the community and the labour market, it is not until reports for CORCAN as an SOA in 1992 that penal functionaries promote the *results* of the agency.

Firstly, CORCAN's prison labour program was framed as a successful initiative for the 'rehabilitation', reintegration, and reduced recidivism of prisoners. In the 1995/1996 report, addressing the "myth" that "[y]ou can't rehabilitate criminals – They're just bad people" (CORCAN, 1996, p. 6), the "reality" of the situation is noted:

"CORCAN, one of CSC's programs, helps rehabilitate offenders every day. Each year about 3,000 federally-sentenced offenders work in one of our 32 sites. Research shows that if they spend six months or more with us, they are significantly less likely to return to custody than other offenders" (CORCAN, 1996, p. 7).

This as well as two other reports highlight the results from an internal study carried out on the recidivism rates of former prisoner-workers called “CORCAN participation and post-release recidivism” (see Motiuk & Belcourt, 1996).

An interview with a former CSC guard and instructor is featured in one report, who describes how a man who had worked on a prison farm came out of the penitentiary a changed man and had never been incarcerated again (CORCAN, 1997, p. 14). Another highlights how seven of the ten prisoners who graduated from a certification program were “still in the community and past their warrant expiry date. Of these, five found work, either in manufacturing and construction and remain steadily employed” (CORCAN, 2010, p. 17). In these examples, prison labour is justified as a means of enabling the prisoner to be ‘rehabilitated’, reintegrate into the community, and stay out of prison.

One report even notes that community employment training sites for CORCAN prisoners are important for prisoners as it allows them an “opportunity...to transition back into the community when employment opportunities might be limited due to their criminal record” (CORCAN, 2013, p. 13). This example is emblematic of new strategies in Canadian penalty previously discussed, whereby systemic or historical factors impeding an individual’s success outside of prison are acknowledged yet reduced to unchangeable life facts, shifting responsibility onto the individual to adapt to such inequalities (Moore & Hannah-Moffat, 2005, p. 94). Here, the stigma of incarceration is acknowledged and subsequently swept aside as the prisoner is responsabilized for his or her own reintegration into a reluctant, and even hostile, labour market.

The job prospects that a prisoner gains from their work as a prison labourer is also commonly used to justify the practice throughout reports from the late-1990’s and 2000’s. Furthermore, prisoners working for private sector partnerships are said to benefit from

networking opportunities accrued through such arrangements. For instance, a featured quote from a construction subcontractor notes that “[w]hen I [the contractor] started training CORCAN offenders to operate my backhoe, I was so impressed that I offered two of them jobs the minute they got out” (CORCAN, 2000, Perspectives section). Another report discusses the positive impression a prisoner had on her employer, noting that after seeing her job skills in action and her ability to assume responsibility to complete tasks, “[the company is] impressed with Katrina to the point where if and when she is ready to be employed, we would be honored [sic] to have her come join our team at J.F. Butler” (CORCAN, 2007, p. 22).

Success stories of prisoners who obtained employment are heavily featured in many reports, along with statistics showing how many CORCAN “graduates” had been employed after their release from prison. For instance, the success of one ex-prisoner was featured in a report, highlighting how he had attained a job at a “reputable restaurant” outside of prison and was also attending college for a Professional Cook certification. This opportunity is linked with his completion of a CORCAN Culinary Arts Program and his ability to earn credits for training hours, while working within the penitentiary (CORCAN, 2010, p. 19). Similarly, one individual identified as “D.P.” is said to have gained 10 certifications while working for CORCAN, which helped him to obtain work outside the institution as a bricklayer’s helper, as well as with an asbestos company (CORCAN, 2011, p. 21). In another report, an employer of a former prisoner praises CORCAN for providing him with a forklift training program, as “[t]his is X’s first real job and without your [CORCAN’s] assistance it would not have been possible” (CORCAN, 2001, p. 10). Here, CORCAN is positioned as a necessary entity within the penal system, without which this particular individual would not have been able to obtain the aforementioned job.

Furthermore, reports commend CORCAN's presence outside the prison through Community Employment Services and Coordinators for their ability to place prisoners in jobs upon their release¹¹. Reports of CORCAN activity in the early 21st century shifts to more acutely discuss the kinds of jobs ex-prisoners would take-up in the community, coinciding with its increased emphasis on specific vocational skills development in its reports. For instance, the 2003/2004 report notes that at the year's end, "1231 male offenders and 32 women offenders found employment using these services in the areas of construction, general labour, hospitality, janitorial services, manufacturing, call centres and food and beverage services" (CORCAN, 2004, p. 5). For fiscal year 2005/2006, the top job placements for prisoners using such services were as follows: males – 25% in labour, 21% in construction, and 30% in the category of "other"; for women, the top three placements were "Other" at 34%, labour at 14%, and food and beverage services at 14% (CORCAN, 2006, pp. 24-25). Manufacturing, warehousing, labour, construction, food and beverage service, shipping and handling, trade help, cleaning and janitorial work, retail, and customer service jobs were common full-time job placements for ex-prisoners (see CORCAN, 2007, p. 20; CORCAN, 2008, p. 9; CORCAN, 2009, pp. 7-8; CORCAN, 2010, p. 7; CORCAN, 2011, pp. 7-8; CORCAN, 2012, p. 10).

Lacking from these listings, however, is any discussion of whether these jobs are beneficial or fulfilling for prisoners leaving institutional life, nor do reports raise any questions about how such jobs may provide prisoners with financial stability and security. Many of these jobs would be characterized by De Giorgi (2006) as precarious occupations, sometimes seasonal and often requiring labourers to work shift work (e.g. food and beverage service, retail). Furthermore, these reports demonstrate that prisoners are left to carry out the "dirty" jobs in our economy (e.g. janitor, asbestos worker) or those requiring manual labour (e.g. warehousing, construction). Job

¹¹ It was not clear in these reports if all former prisoners had access to this service.

placements requiring university education¹² are notably absent, leading us to believe that ex-prisoners are relegated to work in certain sectors of the economy.

In sum, while SGC reports from 1980 to 1992 discuss CORCAN's use of prison labour in terms of its preparing prisoners to successfully reintegrate into society, they do not highlight the 'success' of their programming to this end. CORCAN annual reports from the time it achieved SOA status, however, consistently discuss the value of prison labour for its ability to reduce the rate of prisoners' recidivating, as well as its ability to provide prisoners with job prospects and job placements upon their release. The shift in the late 1990's into the 2000's to discuss CORCAN's "success" in placing prisoners in jobs may be emblematic of the economic environment of this time period, which had lower levels of unemployment than those periods around the recessions of the 1980's and early 1990's (see Statistics Canada, 2015). The concept of *less eligibility*, as discussed in the previous section, would then apply to rhetoric from the 1980's and 1990's, as penal functionaries may be more reluctant to boast about prisoners' job gains during the decades where 'free' labourers are themselves losing employment.

5.1.4 – CORCAN prison labour: Taking in prisoners, turning out employees

Overall, CORCAN reports are dominated by the voices of penal functionaries. It was thus illuminating to hear some of the voices of prisoners highlighted in a few reports, whose discussions about prison labour unveil how CORCAN's programs paradoxically help ease their experienced "pains of imprisonment" (Sykes, 1958, p. 63). One prisoner identified as "Offender

¹² University programs for prisoners offered in conjunction with the University of Victoria and Simon Fraser University in British Columbia were cut in 1993 for the purported reason of cutting costs, replaced by cognitive skills programming that targeted the "criminogenic needs" of prisoners, in the words of CSC (Duguid, 2000, pp. 190-200). Though still able to take university courses, prisoners note the difficulty in taking them by correspondence (Collins, 2008) and accessing education in women's facilities ("Petey", 2011). Furthermore, prisoners are faced with the additional barrier of having to pay for courses out of their own pocket (see CSC, 2011).

Barnes” is quoted wishing there were more CORCAN opportunities for prisoners, stating that he likes to work for CORCAN 24/7 as “it keeps you away from the other bull in the institution” (CORCAN, 2000, Perspectives section). The voice of a prisoner referred to as “Offender Rives” is also featured:

My bias is always to think in terms of getting out, the more connected you are the better and the more opportunities you have to make money. People go to CORCAN jobs to try to forget the institution. It broadens your horizons, enhances your humanity and generates real contacts, too, and it does lead to employment” (CORCAN, 2001, p. 10)

Another prisoner remarks how the pains of his life sentence in prison are alleviated through prison labour, noting:

As a lifer in a federal institution I could not think of a better place to work [than in his current position as an office clerk]. It provides me with a sense of normality in this insane place. I get to escape the institutional games and politics seven hours a day and work with people I have a great deal of respect for (CORCAN, 2007, p. 13).

Inherent in these human beings’ voices is a paradox: that the insanity of prison life is something that prisoners wish to forget and escape from, an escape which is found in another element of the penal system – prison labour – where they can feel normal and experience humanity. In addition to networking and job placements, prisoners in some instances gain sanity through work.

In the last three sections I have demonstrated, and subsequently problematized, how CORCAN and SGC reports consistently seek to legitimate CORCAN prison labour by pointing to its use for preparing prisoners for the workforce by providing them with a work ethic, employment, and at times both a general and specific skill set. Regardless of whether reports discuss prisoners gaining a ‘work ethic’, programming addressing their ‘employment gap’, or skills being developed that are desired in the labour market, discourse buttressing CORCAN consistently promoted prison labour as a means of *producing* workers, specifically for work in the private sector. This aligns with the contentions of both Melossi and Pavarini (1977/1981) and

Foucault (1975/1995) that the prison serves to *discipline* its captives into proletariat workers for exploitation in the labour market. As demonstrated, reports conceive prison labour as a means of inculcating prisoners with the ethic, skills, and discipline of a propertyless worker¹³. Nowhere is this disciplinary function clearer than in CORCAN's 1995/1996 annual report, which remarks that "it's the job of CORCAN instructors in our 32 sites to begin with 'offenders' and end up with 'employees'" (CORCAN, 1996, p. 5).

The quotes from prisoners at the beginning of this section may perhaps point to a conditioning method by which prisoners come to enjoy their status as labourers – it provides them with relief from the prison itself. This mirrors Foucault's (1975/1995) contention that the wages given to prisoners is not payment, but discipline in order to normalize them to their role as a wage labourer. In effect, CORCAN prison labour, at least as it is justified in its annual reports, can be conceptualized as a means of instilling upon prisoners the inevitability of both their status as wage labourers, as well as the hegemony of the capitalist system itself (Marx, 1867/1977).

Regardless, such evidence refutes De Giorgi's (2006) claim that the penitentiary now has a post-disciplinary function of punishment and control (p. 65). While this may be the case in other jurisdictions, state presentations of CORCAN prison labour consistently point to its value for preparing prisoners for jobs coinciding with the Fordist, assembly-line mentality, as is witnessed through the continuation today of its anachronistic manufacturing and textile business lines. Although I have demonstrated that CORCAN boasts of placing prisoners in jobs and job sectors that could be characterized as precarious at best, the disciplinary logic of its prison labour program can be witnessed in its publications' rhetoric. CORCAN represents a new face of

¹³ Future research could be carried out to investigate how prison guards and employers hiring prisoners from the CORCAN program perceive this disciplinary function in light of their experiences with prisoners.

Canadian prison labour; the disciplinary logic behind this practice, however, has shifted very little overall.

5.2 – The value of prison labour to Canadian communities

Incarceration is criticized as the antithesis of building positive communities. Clear (2007) notes how mass incarceration in the United States has the effects of destabilizing communities, ripping families apart both emotionally and financially, and taking attention away from important areas of development (e.g. infrastructure, social services) in dire need of political attention. Canada's Indigenous populations are greatly and tragically overrepresented in the penal system¹⁴. Like penal functionaries and prison developers who seek to win community support for the siting of a prison in one's community (e.g. Tully et al., 1982) it comes as no surprise that reports on CORCAN seek to justify its use of prison labour as beneficial contributors to Canadians and their communities. In this section, I illustrate how CORCAN legitimates its program as economically beneficial and cost-efficient for Canadian taxpayers, a contributor to safer Canadian communities, and beneficial for social and environmental issues throughout the country. CORCAN wishes to be perceived as valuable to and emanating the attributes of Canadians, as is made visible in the title of four of its more recent reports, "Canadian Values at Work" (see CORCAN 2007, 2009, 2010, 2011). As will be discussed, such ideological work unveils the "supportive component" (Mathiesen, 2006, pp. 141-143) of prisons operating through CORCAN programming. Outside of the goals of reforming and 'rehabilitating' the prisoner, CORCAN's rhetoric extends outside of the prison's walls to construct its image as one that roots its legitimacy and necessity in the community. Though

¹⁴ While only representing 4% of Canada's population, Indigenous people represent nearly 23% of Canada's total incarcerated population (Office of the Correctional Investigator, 2014, p. 44).

sometimes rhetoric regarding CORCAN practices can be situated within economic developments during the time period of the reports under scrutiny, analysis of the discourses unveiled in this section represent a shift from political economic analysis to that of abolitionist critique in order to understand how the prison idea is reproduced.

5.2.1 – Value to the taxpayer through accountability and cost-effectiveness

As discussed in the literature review, prison labour has been used in Canada throughout its history as a means of reducing the costs of imprisonment; even in the early days of CORCAN, the CSC section of SGC reports in the early 1980's emphasizes an objective of the "Education, Training and Employment of Inmates" activity (within which contained CORCAN as the Industries division) as ensuring "that inmates make a maximum contribution to defraying the overall cost of their incarceration" (SGC, 1983, p. 58; SGC, 1984, p. 57; SGC, 1985a, p. 53; SGC, 1985b, p. 57).

Garland (2001), however, observes that the New Right politics of the 1960's and 1970's in the US and the UK saw a shift specifically towards policies toting government efficiency and fiscal responsibility. Similar practices have occurred in Canada, such as through the privatization and rationalization of public services (McBride & Whiteside, 2011, pp. 60-61). So too does CORCAN as a government agency that portrays itself as fiscally efficient and accountable to Canadians, specifically in reports from the early 1990's onwards. In the opening pages of the first official CORCAN report as a special operating agency, the CEO purports:

It is with particular pride that our organization completed its first year with a small operating surplus and that our overall performance is consistent with our pro forma¹⁵ operating statements, meaning reduced cost to federal taxpayers....Canadians are

¹⁵ In this context, "pro forma" refers to financial statements prepared to see the expected outcome of an activity before it occurs.

entitled to cost-effective government and the assurance that their correctional systems do correct (CORCAN, 1993, p. 3).

This attention to government fiscal responsibility and efficiency of its services is emphasized in a quote from *The Calgary Sun* highlight in the “Media” section of the 2000/2001 report, stating:

[M]uch of the criticism directed at the prison system on the whole is often misplaced. The majority of federal prisoners work in CORCAN industrial shops and farms and also in maintenance, food services and other areas that reduce the cost to the public for their incarceration and in some cases generate revenue. Our prison system is far from perfect, but if our courts and parliament worked as well as our prison systems did, our country would be a lot better off (CORCAN, 2001, p. 11).

Here, not only is prison labour presented as cost-effective, but that other arms of government and the penal system should mirror themselves after CSC and CORCAN’s efficacy. Emblematic of the time period perhaps, the CEO message from the 2001/2002 highlights the constant change undergone at CORCAN, “as a living renaissance organization with an effective barrier against the forces of bureaucracy” (CORCAN, 2002, p. 4).

In fact, the justifications of prison labour focusing specifically on the value of prison labour to the Canadian *taxpayer* were particularly prevalent in reports from the 1992-2001. The importance of reducing costs to taxpayers for one’s incarceration, as well as using their money efficiently is discussed as an important aspect of CORCAN training (see CORCAN, 1993, p. 3; CORCAN, 1994, p. 3; CORCAN, 1995, pp. 3, 15; CORCAN, 1997, CEO Message; CORCAN, 2000, Perspectives section). For example, one report, with an entire section entitled “CORCAN as a Benefit to Taxpayers”, states:

The training and correctional fee was reduced in 1993-94 by \$500K and yet services levels provided by CORCAN to offenders actually increased in 1993-94. This demonstrates clearly that Canadian taxpayers are receiving greater value not only from a correctional perspective but also from a fiscal perspective (CORCAN, 1995, p. 16).

Similarly, the 1995/96 report with several pages featuring a “Myth” and “Reality” about CORCAN and prison labour refute the “Myth” that “[p]risoners are just a drain on honest, law-abiding taxpayers” (CORCAN, 1996, p. 8) by presenting the “Reality” of the situation from the perspective of the agency:

CORCAN trainees help reduce the cost of their training: by producing food and clothing used in correctional institutions and by working on construction projects within institutions; by producing goods and services which are sold to public-sector clients; and most importantly, by not returning to custody after release (CORCAN, 1996, p. 9).

One of the more recent reports of CORCAN, published in the wake of the 2008 recession, also touts CORCAN as a success for keeping prisoners out of federal penitentiaries and subsequently saving money from the cost of incarceration. The 2008/2009 report contends:

Since 2001, 9,000 offenders have found jobs with the assistance of our CEC’s [Community Employment Counsellors], and over 85% remain in the community today. This success not only contributed to safer communities, but saves you and me (as taxpayers) almost \$100,000 per year – the average annual cost per offender inside one of our institutions” (CORCAN, 2009, p. 4).

The above examples demonstrate an effort on the part of CORCAN to negate not only the drain of prisons on society¹⁶, but also to support its prison labour program as financially accountable to Canadian taxpayers. The prominence of discourse promoting CORCAN as a cost-efficient and accountable public service during the 1990’s and into the 2000’s may be reflective of the political shift during the time under which the public service suffered from extensive reforms and cutbacks under the neoliberal criticism that government is wasteful, inefficient, and a leech on taxpayers’ wallets (see Clarke, 2002; Garland, 2001; McBride & Whiteside, 2011; O’Malley, 1999). During a time where discourses of government fiscal restraint permeated the political

¹⁶ As if the human costs of imprisonment were not enough to convince us to find alternatives to this practice, Public Safety Canada (2013) reported that the average cost for imprisoning a male in 2011-2012 was \$114,289 per year; for a woman, that cost was almost double, at \$211,618 a year.

sphere, constructions of CORCAN programming seek to uphold the message that efficiency, accountability, and anti-bureaucracy are at the very core of the agency's work.

Though as Garland (2001) points out, neoliberal rhetoric took hold in the 1960's and 1970's in both the UK and the US, the emphasis on the fiscal responsibility of CORCAN as a government agency in the 1990's onward may be the result of the massive government restructuring carried out during the decade in hopes that the national deficit could be eliminated (Clarke, 2002). As special operating agencies were effectively a government creation as part of state managerial reforms following the recession in the early 1980's (Clarke, 2002), CORCAN discourse since becoming such an entity marks an effort to demonstrate just how fiscally accountable the state is with penal policy and practices. As such, discourses of neoliberal restructuring manifest themselves as well within penal rhetoric. Grounded in such contentions, CORCAN's efforts to legitimate its activities play on the economic insecurities of our time. In the agency's own words, "[w]e believe that Canadian citizens are the real shareholders of CORCAN" (CORCAN, 1993, p. 11). It must keep its shareholders happy, especially when neoliberal discourse puts the 'business' of government under threat.

5.2.2 – Value to public safety

In addition to ensuring that Canadian taxpayers get the most bang for their penal buck, CORCAN and its prison labour program frames its efforts as vital in the pursuit of public and community safety. It was not until the 2000's, however, that this discourse became prevalent in CORCAN annual reports. As previously noted, before this time prison labour was not specifically discussed as a public safety issue, but one of promoting prisoner employment and reintegration into society. Exceptionally in the report from 1996/1997, CORCAN's prison labour

program is described as beneficial for producing a “[s]afer society because offenders with CORCAN training are more likely to stop committing crimes” (CORCAN, 1997, CEO message). Often, efforts drawing upon discourse of public safety were situated within the larger public safety agenda of the Canadian government. The CEO message for the 2000/2001 report makes such a link:

A new session of the 27th Parliament of Canada opened this year. The Speech from the Throne placed public safety at the very centre [sic] of the government’s criminal justice agenda. Focusing on the direct link between public safety and the drive to make Canada a world-leading economy, the government’s priorities speak directly to the very core of everything we do at CORCAN in ensuring that offenders can safely reintegrate into society once they leave prison (CORCAN, 2001, p. 2).

A later report echoes this “contribution”, noting “[w]e are proud of the results highlighted in this report and are confident that we can increasingly make important contributions to the achievement of the Mission of the CSC and contribution to the public safety agenda of the Government of Canada” (CORCAN, 2005, p. 3; also see CORCAN, 2004, p. 11).

This protection-of-Canadians function was also incorporated into or presented as imperative in the fulfillment of visions and mandates, both for CORCAN and CSC, such as in the 2012/2013 report which notes how CORCAN fulfills its role within the criminal justice system as a contributor to public safety by supporting CSC’s mission and strategic outcome as part of its mandate (CORCAN, 2013, p. 9). Specifically, one report contends that CORCAN contributes to an operational priority of CSC, which is to promote the “[s]afety and security of staff and offenders in our institutions and in the community” (CORCAN, 2011, p. 5). Furthermore, in 2006/2007, the “Strategic Vision” of the agency includes “[c]ontributing to safer communities through innovative and effective client-oriented partnerships that help offenders to successfully reintegrate back into the community” (CORCAN, 2007, p. 5).

One such partnership was that with a contractor in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, who had contacted one of CORCAN's CEC's for prisoners who could do demolition work; "[t]his employer, an ex-RCMP officer, was committed to working with parolees in addressing their employability with the belief that providing employment and training opportunities would lead to safer communities" (CORCAN, 2007, p. 4). Whether they be with the government, community, a private company, or an NGO, partnerships are frequently highlighted as beneficial to public safety (or the perception of it by the public), as witnessed in one report: "[p]artnering adds new insights and experience essential to delivering concrete results to Canadians concerned about safe communities and reduced reoffending" (CORCAN, 2003, p. 4).

The above examples demonstrate how CORCAN constructs its prison labour program not only as financially accountable to Canadian taxpayers, but also as a facilitator of safe communities, "leading to the enhanced public safety that Canadians expect and deserve. (CORCAN, 2009, p. 4). CORCAN, not its prisoners who undergo such 'training', is commended for its contribution to public safety for Canadians, despite prisoners being held responsible for their behaviour upon release and ultimately left to navigate the communities they came from in the first place (Moore & Hannah-Moffat, 2005).

Though prison labour continues in Canada, this section demonstrates that its justifications are sometimes inconsistent and ebb and flow with political influences of the time. Reports prior to the 2000's rarely touted 'public safety' specifically as a benefit of CORCAN programming, but instead discuss prison labour in terms of its potential to aid in the process of community integration. In observing the prominence of public safety discourse in CORCAN reports from the 2000's, it is important to note that the Department of Public Safety was only created in 2003, demonstrating that the political climate leading up to this time was salient for discourses

promoting such ideals (such as those generated after the 11 September 2001 attacks).

Furthermore, the report from 2000/2001 makes a direct link between CORCAN's contribution to public safety and the Speech from the Throne of the time. In fact, the Speech from the Throne consists of an entire section entitled "Strong and Safe Communities" (Canada, 2001) discussing how Canadian communities need to be protected from 'crime'.

This demonstrates how penal discourse is not only influenced by economic imperatives, but also latches on to that of the current political environment. Ironically, CORCAN prison labour is justified on the basis that it makes communities *safer*, when in reality, as Mathiesen (2006) observes, imprisonment has a detrimental effect on prisoners, which can result in the communities they return to being much more *unsafe* spaces. Combined with other anxieties that Canadian citizens and residents face daily that are otherwise outside of their control (e.g. labour market, poverty, climate change, corporate harm), rhetoric justifying prison labour as a contributor to public safety functions, as noted by Mathiesen (2006), diverts our eyes away from these systemic harms, as well as to bolster the image of the institution as "an inevitable and permanent feature of our social lives" (Davis, 2003, p. 9).

5.2.3 – Value to social development and environmental sustainability

Through "doing time", a prisoner's incarceration is thought to repay their 'debt to society'. One way CORCAN annual reports seek to exemplify this function is by demonstrating how prison labour contributes to "societal stewardship" (CORCAN, 2002, p. 13), including prisoners' labour being used for community and social development projects. Furthermore, reports from the early to mid-2000's occasionally assert how CORCAN is contributing to the public policy agenda through caring for the natural environment (CORCAN, 2002, 2003). These

examples include both reactive efforts on the part of CORCAN to make its practices appear more environmentally friendly, as well as proactive projects that seek out ways to contribute to sustainable initiatives.

This environmental value allocated to prison labour stands in sharp contrast with the non-environmentally-friendly features of prisons in terms of their consumption of mass amounts of resources such as water and energy (Moran & Jewkes, 2014). Moran and Jewkes (2014) contend that such discourses promoting prisons as “green” and “sustainable” institutions, such as through the provision of “green” jobs to prisoners in the case of American prisons, actually serves to sustain the prison idea and its practices (pp. 345-349).

Exceptionally, several reports published in the early to mid-2000’s discuss how CORCAN projects align with an “environmentally friendly” mentality. For instance, business initiatives for the Westmorland agribusiness included replacing equipment to ensure that they were “environmentally sound” (CORCAN, 2005, p. 4), “leading the way in environmental management by using only compost, rather than manure, on its fields” to reduce contamination of ground water (CORCAN, 2003, p. 10). In other reports, CORCAN boasts of using “environmentally friendly materials”, such as paints and glues, for its manufacturing projects (CORCAN, 2002, pp. 13-14; CORCAN, 2003, p. 10).

Many prison labour initiatives were also highlighted for reusing or recycling materials, such as “recycling wooden pallets, chipping scrap wood into cattle bedding”, all part of CORCAN’s efforts “to protect and preserve the environment” (CORCAN, 2004, p. 11). Furthermore, CORCAN prisoners aid in cleaning parks and rivers, fighting forest fires (CORCAN, 2006, p. 15), managing nesting areas for ducks “to provide a safer environment for duckling rearing” (CORCAN, 2002, p. 15), and the like.

The appeal to potential environmental benefits of CORCAN is unsurprising given the political climate of the years when reports were published. During the years leading up to the turn of the century, international negotiations were carried out on deciding what type of global action should be taken towards the threat posed by climate change from human-made greenhouse gas emissions; these negotiations materialized into the Kyoto protocol, which sets emission targets for states ratifying the agreement (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change [UNFCCC], 2014). Canada was involved in these negotiations, signing the protocol in 1998 and ratifying it in 2002¹⁷ (UNFCCC, 2014). Subsequently, speeches from the throne after this ratification devoted entire sections to discussing the state's goals for protecting the environment (see for example Canada, 1999, 2001, 2002, 2004a, 2004b). As such, environmental discourse used to justify CORCAN prison labour during this period may be linked to state goals of abiding to political commitments. CORCAN is not only a reintegration program for prisoners, but a trick in the state's bag to carry out its own impression management (Goffman, 1959) as a contributor to global efforts against climate change.

The construction of prisons in Canadian and American communities has often been carried out in conjunction with public relations campaigns from penal functionaries aimed at garnering support for the new institutions within the communities in which they are built (for examples see Carlson, 1992; Grieco, 1978; Krause, 1992, Schicor, 1992; Tully et al., 1982). In a similar fashion, CORCAN reports from the time it began functioning as an SOA seek to bolster support for the agency by framing its activities as contributing to the development of local communities in which prison labour is carried out. Claims that CORCAN prison labour contributes to local communities, however, shift from discussing contributions to economic

¹⁷ This ratification was withdrawn in 2012 (UNFCCC, 2014).

stimulus and job growth in the mid 1990's, to discourse from the turn of the 21st century highlighting the various community projects that prisoners take part in through prison labour.

To illustrate, a section of the 1993/1994 report entitled "CORCAN's Economic Contribution to Local Communities" highlights various elements of how "CORCAN creates a great deal of economic activity for many local Canadian communities", including the purchase of 80% of the raw materials from Canadian suppliers and the awarding of transportation contracts to local companies valued at \$1.2 million (CORCAN, 1994, p. 20). This contribution was reinforced by noting that "[m]ost of the CORCAN sites are located in towns and cities that have limited business activity. CORCAN, therefore plays an important role in providing additional opportunities for the local economy" (CORCAN, 1994, p. 20). The agency presents itself as a "responsible corporate citizen" by engaging with the community in this fashion, including hiring local skilled trades workers for its projects (CORCAN, 1996, pp. 10-11). CORCAN purports that it enables a "human face" to prison labour by employing public servants and purchasing materials from businesses (CORCAN, 1997, p. 1).

Studies have demonstrated how penal functionaries have appealed to citizens' desires for jobs and economic stimulus for their community in order to gain support for the construction of new prisons and penitentiaries in their region (see for example Carlson, 1992; Grieco, 1978; Huling, 2002; Krause, 1992, Schicor, 1992; Tully et al., 1982). In a similar fashion, we see how CORCAN reports purport that prison labour programming contributes to the economic viability of Canadian communities, valuable rhetoric during a time of economic recession.

From the late 1990's to the most recent reports, depictions of CORCAN's community contributions also point to various projects completed by prisoners for schools, community services, and local infrastructure. Highlighted projects include refurbishing computers for

schools (CORCAN, 2006, p. 15), as well as “parks cleanup, log clearing from waterways, firefighting, soup kitchen and donating surplus produce to shelters” (CORCAN, 2002, p. 13). These activities were often accompanied by statements of how such projects were examples of prisoners giving back to the community. For example, the 2001/2002 annual report includes a letter from the Saskatchewan Department of the Environment, addressed to the Honourable Lawrence MacAulay, then Solicitor General of Canada. The quoted section states:

Recently the Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management Departments [sic] was the recipient of a welcome donation of forty picnic tables made by inmates at the federal penitentiary at Prince Albert. I understand the work was performed by aboriginal offenders who volunteered their time and energy. I commend this initiative of providing offenders with the dignity and self-esteem that comes from work and the sense of pride that comes from giving back to communities. We need more of this kind of common sense approach to rehabilitation. My congratulation on placing employment at the centre of your approach to federal corrections (CORCAN 2002, pp. 20-21).

Beyond contributing to these communities, CORCAN is also positioned as being in *partnership* with local communities or even as part of the community itself. Such is conveyed in the 1999/2000 report, which includes a quote from an “Eastern Ontario resident” noting how the “CORCAN farm is part of the community. During the ice storm, they donated lots of milk and food for the emergency shelters, and offenders on work release helped to repair damage” (CORCAN, 2000, Perspectives section).

Additionally, several reports highlighted work carried out by prisoners that contributed to the well being of some of Canada’s most marginalized and underprivileged populations. The report for 2006/2007 notes how prisoners at the Mission Institution worked in its textile shop to produce sleeping bags for homeless individuals in the community (CORCAN, 2007, p. 23). Furthermore, such benevolence was often couched in rhetoric about supporting public policy goals of other parts of the Canadian government. For example, one report accounts that:

Partnering with our colleagues in other government departments will enable us to identify social policy initiatives like homelessness and aboriginal economic development that can help us increase offender employment while contributing in a meaningful way to the social policy agenda of the government of Canada (CORCAN, 2003, p. 4).

Such 'win-win' efforts usually took the form of building houses for Indigenous communities, as well as low-income and homeless individuals through non-governmental organizations such as Habitat for Humanity (e.g CORCAN, 2002, p. 13). For instance, one report acknowledges that CORCAN addresses the "Aboriginal file" through "[c]ollaboration with Indian and Northern Affairs Economic Development to employ aboriginal offenders to build housing for aboriginal communities" (CORCAN, 2002, pp. 15-16). Another highlights an "Aboriginal Housing Project" whereby 19 First Nations prisoners at the Saskatchewan Penitentiary built a "ready-to-move" house on the prison grounds, which was later shipped to the Lac La Ronge Indian Band in Saskatchewan to be used by a First Nations family needing a home (CORCAN, 2010, pp. 17-18).

The attention of penal functionaries to the housing needs of Aboriginal communities was done without any mention of the systemic oppression of and discrimination against Aboriginal by the prison and other colonialist institutions since Europeans first colonized their land (Bracken et al., 2009). Here, Mathiesen's (2006) "diverting function" (pp. 141-142) of the prison is most evident, as the hands of the state are literally wiped clean of its colonial history and participation in the "cultural genocide" of Indigenous children through residential schools (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015, p. 1) and other white settler policies and practices. Furthermore, such efforts to frame prison labour as a contribution to Aboriginal communities, especially when such labour is done by Aboriginal prisoners, can be understood as a way for penal functionaries to responsabilize Indigenous people, not only to "treat" themselves

through imprisonment, but also to fix their communities, while ignoring their oppression at the hands of the state (Martel et al., 2011).

5.2.4 – CORCAN prison labour: Diverting our gaze

In this last section, I have demonstrated how CORCAN annual reports mobilize discourses of community development and environmental sustainability to legitimate the use of prison labour, both within penitentiaries and in the communities in which they are located. In the preceding sections I also discussed how CORCAN draws from rhetoric of community and public safety, as well as financial accountability for Canadian taxpayers in order to defend and justify its practices. Justifications that appeal to the benefit of prisoners' labour to Canadian communities are largely absent from annual reports from 1980 to 1991, which demonstrably focus on CORCAN prison labour in terms of its production and employment goals and achievements within Canadian penitentiaries. The reason behind lack of 'community building' rhetoric in these annual reports is difficult to place. One factor may be that during the 1980's, CORCAN was only still developing as an entity within CSC, focusing on its production and management as a prison industry in line with the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs (1977) report. In becoming an SOA in 1992, CORCAN activities were reported in a separate document by the agency, much longer and more detailed than the small section dedicated to CORCAN Industries in SGC reports prior to this time.

This understanding of why such discourses materialize in CORCAN annual reports when it became an SOA, however, is better understood when founded both within political, environmental, and economic shifts occurring throughout the 1990's and 2000's, such as the recession and government downsizing during the 1990's, the Kyoto protocol at the turn of the

century, and the creation of Public Safety Canada in the early 21st century. Nevertheless, these justifications of prison labour and CORCAN's operations as a whole, with the exception of the public safety function, can be conceived of as a reinvigorated effort by which "justice" is served. Through such a lens, the prisoner is purportedly able to contribute in some way to greater society through their labour, be it through community infrastructure development, caring for the environment, or simply reducing the costs of incarceration to taxpayers.

These claims are problematic for two reasons, the first being that such efforts reinforce the hegemony of the prison's necessity and legitimacy in society, and even in individual communities (Davis, 2003; Mathiesen, 2006). Secondly, positioning prison labour as a contribution to areas such as the economy, Indigenous communities and the environment *diverts* (Mathiesen, 2006) our attention from structural factors that play on the lives of human beings everyday, such as colonialism, capitalism, and poverty. Room for discussion on the injustices and insecurities generated by, for example, the Canadian state in the case of residential schools, or corporations in the case of polluting the environment are not only left unchallenged, but also consequently normalized as part of Canadian society. As such, the prison is reinforced as the solution to the harms we do to each other and to our world.

5.3 – The value of prison labour to the Canadian state and economy

As was seen in the literature review, prison labour has had a close and occasionally volatile relationship with the Canadian economy, from its production of government goods to its criticism from free labourers concerned about the competition it would pose for them. Similar to these past justifications, CORCAN reports often frame prison labour as an economically valuable asset not only for the CSC, but also for the needs of the Canadian government, the

national economy, and the labour market. Furthermore, I demonstrate how CORCAN as a special operating agency is positioned as a valuable *partner*, not competitor, with the private sector.

5.3.1 – Value of sustaining penitentiaries and the Canadian state

As explored by Beattie (1977), Lightman (1979) and Edwards (1996), beginning with the construction of KP the Canadian state has often sought to employ prisoners for its own benefit, be it for building penitentiaries or manufacturing goods to be sold to government departments. Continuing with this trend, I explore in this section how prison labour is likewise constructed in SGC and CORCAN reports as a mechanism to sustain Canada's penitentiary system, as well as other state departments. Prison labour is consistently positioned as a means by which the state accrues some sort of benefit. The nature of this benefit, however, shifts as the program develops throughout its thirty-plus years of operation.

As explored in a previous section, much of the work done by prisoners through CORCAN is goods manufacturing and services provision, which CSC itself consumes. In fact, reports often highlight how CSC benefits from clothing, housing and furnishings made by prisoners, including when CORCAN was called the "Industries" division of the Inmate Employment branch in its early years (SGC, 1981, p. 67). Several reports' commercial mandate sections note that "CORCAN's agricultural production is consumed primarily by CSC" and that the agency "will continue to respond to the needs of Correctional Service Canada for agricultural commodities" (CORCAN, 1994, p. 9; CORCAN, 1995, p. 9). Of course, this particular justification stands in stark contrast to the government's decision in 2008 to phase out the agribusiness operations, stating that the business line was losing over \$4 million per year (see

Lunau, 2009). Replacing the local production of milk, eggs and other goods produced through these farms and used to feed prisoners, CSC favoured taking up private contracts, pursuing “national and regional contracts for certain food commodities to realize economies of scale in the procurement of food commodities” (SECU, 2010, section 1535 para. 1).

Not only was prison labour valued in reports for its ability to feed the incarcerated before the closure of the prison farms, but also to build and furnish more cages for them, especially in times of an increase in the prison population. For example, the 1994/1995 report states that “the Correctional Service of Canada must renovate and expand prison facilities to accommodate the increase in the inmate population. CORCAN Construction can efficiently provide the construction-related products and services to CSC” (CORCAN, 1995, p. 18). Even more recently, one report notes that CORCAN’s “traditional construction activities have been provided solely to CSC” (CORCAN, 2012, p. 13). Furthermore, the 2009/2010 report celebrates that “[r]evenue from Textile operations grew to \$5.8 million in 2009-2010, up \$1.2 million from the previous year, with the growth attributable to demand for offender clothing within CSC” (CORCAN, 2010, p. 9). Such celebration is unsettling given that the nature of this “growth” is indicative of a continuation and expansion of the penal apparatus.

Providing CSC with goods and services, however, is not the only way in which prison labour is demonstrated to respond to the needs of Canada’s penitentiaries. Throughout most reports, a strong emphasis is placed on how work programs and the revenue generated from them offset the costs of operating CORCAN and CSC, which seeks to present prison labour as an economically sustainable practice. To illustrate, one initiative of the CSC outlined in the 1983/1984 SGC report was “to increase the emphasis on work plans that will generate revenue from third parties, helping offset the operating costs of the Service or contributing directly to its

self-sufficiency” (SGC, 1985a, p. 64). A report for CORCAN Industries in 1981/1982 notes that it was able to accomplish its goal “to improve CORCAN’s ability to contribute more toward reducing costs of the service” through revitalizing the Industries division, including increasing prisoner productivity in its factories (SGC, 1983, pp. 67-68). This interest in offsetting operational costs was justified in a 1993/1994 report as a way to support the training and employment programs offered by CORCAN for the benefit of prisoners (CORCAN, 1994, p. 3). Similarly, several reports from the turn of the century praise the success of prison labour in generating revenue for the agency (e.g. CORCAN, 2003, p. 7; CORCAN, 2007, p. 10; CORCAN, 2009, p. 9). Effectively, CORCAN prison labour is portrayed as both an end and a means of perpetuating itself.

Not only is the efficiency, productivity and cost-effectiveness of CORCAN deemed a positive for taxpayers, but for the agency itself. For instance, the 1995/1996 report points out that the training of CORCAN supervisors to use “transformational leadership styles” to encourage prisoners to exceed rather than meet goals is thought to “increase productivity in CORCAN shops significantly” (CORCAN, 1996, p. 5). From this quote we see how the perceived benefit of such training efforts is not to aid prisoners in their “rehabilitation” and reintegration, but to increase their productivity as workers. In a similar fashion, the 2011/2012 and 2012/2013 reports present a measurement of CORCAN program performance through a cost-benefit analysis of revenue made per prisoner per hour, highlighting a decrease in ‘correctional’ training fees (see CORCAN 2012, p. 6; CORCAN, 2013, p. 7). Of course, revenues and increased productivity are often framed as beneficial for contributing to prisoner employment. This contribution, however, was often presented in terms of quantitative gains in the number of “training” hours provided to CORCAN prisoners (e.g. CORCAN, 2009, p. 9). Ironically, however, Peter Collins (2008)

presents CORCAN as “a financial sink hole through which taxpayers are thoroughly gouged” (p. 85). The “training” from CORCAN industries, he argues, is given to very few prisoners in each penitentiary, and serves the purpose not to provide the individual with job skills, but to equip them with the expertise needed so that the industrial plant runs smoothly, thus limiting its benefits to the provision of money for the institution with less staff oversight (p. 85).

As noted, the shift of CORCAN from an Industries ‘training’ and employment program to an SOA in 1992 was purportedly done for the purpose of increasing the agency’s flexibility and control to purchase and sell goods and services, arrange contracts with the private sector and reinvest its revenues in its own program (see SGC, 1992, p. 58). This change can be understood as a means of increasing the agency’s efficiency. In fact, one report notes that “[w]e at CORCAN consider part of our mandate to be working toward financial sustainability while maintaining the high employment and rehabilitation goals set for us by the Correctional Service” (CORCAN, 1996, p. 23). This confluence of commercial and ‘correctional’ efforts was commonly ascribed as imperative for CORCAN’s success moving forward. As one report states:

The future of CORCAN lies in the marriage of commercial and correctional efforts – not in their separation. Our challenge is to engage every stakeholder – wardens, customer both internal and external, staff, and others – in making this marriage a happy one (CORCAN, 1996, p. 1).

In addition to boasting about how its efforts contribute to the sustainability of CSC, CORCAN reports also highlight how much of the work carried out by prisoners went towards providing goods and services for other federal government departments. This was a consistent feature in most available annual reports throughout the 35 years of CORCAN’s operation. During CORCAN’s first year, 80% of its sales were to the federal government (SGC, 1981, p. 67). In its latest publicly-available report, 91% of revenues from CORCAN’s Manufacturing business line – the largest of the four, accounting for \$44 million out of CORCAN’s \$68.6

million in revenues for the year – came from government departments, including CSC and the Department of National Defence (DND) (CORCAN, 2013, pp, 5-6). In a confluence of the prison-industrial complex and the military industrial complex, reports note how DND purchased CORCAN products ranging from office and dormitory furniture to gun racks, to services including military vehicle repair and refurbishment (see CORCAN, 2008, p. 14; CORCAN, 2011, p. 4).

Particularly, many of CORCAN's annual reports from the 1990's often highlighted the value of prison labour for its ability to adapt to changes in and restructuring of economic relations, specifically as it related to federal government downsizing. For instance, CORCAN's (1993, 1994, 1995, 1997) annual reports for fiscal years 1992/1993, 1993/1994, 1994/1995, and 1996/1997 situated prison labour as the solution for increased demand of certain products and services due to government downsizing. One report notes:

The Agency will develop and provide the best mix of goods and services that respond to a wide range of requirements of its major clients – the Correctional Service of Canada and other federal government departments. For example, CORCAN will react to public sector downsizing by taking advantage of government outsourcing of services, such as telemarketing, distribution, laser imaging and refurbishing (CORCAN, 1993, p. 9).

Another report purports that such cuts benefit CORCAN's service business line, noting that “[l]ong-term, we expect distribution services demand to increase dramatically as federal departments try to cope with reduced budgets and staffing by outsourcing to credible alternatives” (CORCAN, 1997, p. 22). One public sector worker's loss is CORCAN's gain, as these jobs are no longer public in the traditional sense, nor private, but penal. These examples, which legitimate the shift of government jobs into the penitentiary, fits within neoliberal restructuring of state activity, justifying ideas that the state and its bureaucracy are crippling, and

that governments must work to be more efficient and accountable to their citizens (Clarke, 2002; Garland, 2001; McBride & Whiteside, 2011; O'Malley, 1999).

In sum, this section demonstrates how prison labour throughout CORCAN's lifespan is consistently valued not only for the goods and services it provides to CSC, but also for its efficiency in sustaining the services of other state departments. Despite its alleged 'reformatory' capacities, justifications for prison labour, like those made in the past, greatly emphasize how prisoners can occupy their time with projects that decrease the costs of the state. Furthermore, in the 1990's CORCAN was positioned as a solution to government downsizing by employing prisoners in the jobs that public service employees lost. Though CORCAN itself is a relatively new agency in Canada's penal history, it still walks to the beat of the same drum played during the construction of Kingston Penitentiary almost two centuries ago.

5.3.2 – Value of prison labour for private sector and labour market needs

In the past, the extent of prison labour in Canada involved in activities outside of penitentiary work was influenced by the voice of free labour arguing that prison labour impeded their capacity to work and be paid fairly (Lightman, 1979). For instance, prison industries were retracted from private sector activity in 1913 as a result of arguments from workers who felt that this prisoners' labour unfairly competed with the industries in which they worked, threatening their livelihoods (Edwards, 1996). Lichtenstein (1996) observes similar contestations by free labourers in the American South post-Emancipation when prisoners' labour was leased to private contractors.

With this history in mind, CORCAN's annual reports from 1992/1993 to the late 1990's often emphasize the *lack* of threat posed by CORCAN's prison labour program to the private

sector. In fact, reports attempt to temper the idea that prison labour would compete with free labour by appealing to the benefits of forging partnerships between CORCAN and private enterprise. For example, the agency states that:

New business ventures are being researched in conjunction with Canadian enterprises. CORCAN believes that, rather than being in competition with the private sector, it has much to offer as a partner. Avenues of partnership are being explored, such as sub-contracting, joint ventures and shared product development (CORCAN, 1993, p. 9; see also CORCAN, 1994, p. 8; CORCAN, 1995, p. 9).

Furthermore, some reports seek to demonstrate how prison labour does not present unfair competition to this sector, nor have any advantage over private industry, illustrated in the claim that “CORCAN holds itself accountable to Canadians in ensuring...that its industries and services do not create any unfair competition to Canadian businesses” (CORCAN, 1993, p. 11). One report seeks to dispel the “Myth” that “Canadian business is hurt by prison industry” by discussing tactics taken by the agency to mitigate this problem, such as pricing its goods and services similar to those of the private sector and by remaining small-scale – “our sales don’t even amount to 0.1% of our total market” (CORCAN, 1996, pp. 20-21). This rhetorical work is clear in the 1996/1997 report, which explains how by working with private sector partners, CORCAN can “decrease the likelihood of complaints about unfair competition”, as well as become involved in previously unattainable business opportunities (CORCAN, 1997, p. 26).

Furthermore, CORCAN’s threat to private industry was further negated by reports contending that having prison labour in Canadian penitentiaries keeps (prison) jobs in Canada that would otherwise be outsourced. For instance, the 1995/1996 report states:

The main focus of the Services line in 1995- 96 was the acquisition of offshore business in the data entry and imaging fields. These businesses offer important advantages to CORCAN. If we successfully ‘repatriate’ work that would otherwise be done outside of Canada, we are having no negative effects on Canadian business (an important concern for CORCAN). (CORCAN, 1996, p. 14).

In another example, CORCAN's office furniture manufacturing operations are praised by the CEO for providing a "net benefit" to Canada's economy that would not be possible if the work was taken up by the private sector, therefore negating any harm done to private enterprise. He contends:

This year, we asked researchers at the Queen's University School of Business to prepare an economic-impact study of one of CORCAN's most contested areas of operation – office furniture. The findings suggested that CORCAN created more economic activity than would be created by the private sector – that CORCAN was a net benefit to the economy. And this conclusion assumed in a world without CORCAN, the business we now do would be captured by the domestic furniture industry – a brave assumption in a business that is over 70 per cent foreign dominated. The Queen's report stated in part: "It has been demonstrated that throughout a shift in production from CORCAN to private industry, a monetary loss of more than \$4,000,000 in the Canadian economy would occur...it is safe to assume that using even the most conservative measures, the existence of CORCAN has a net benefit on the Canadian economy (CORCAN, 1997, p. 1).

These two quotes touch on an important feature of Western economies, being that the rise of neoliberalism and increased globalization transformed the nature of capital into a global entity (De Giorgi, 2006), with Canada entering into free-trade agreements such as NAFTA contributing to such internationalization of capital (McBride & Whiteside, 2011). A result of this neoliberal and globalizing trend has been the outsourcing of jobs, particularly those in the industrial and manufacturing sector, to developing countries where the workers are not required to be paid as much as those working in Canada would be (see Evans & Goldberg, 2003). In this context, contentions that CORCAN is helping to "repatriate" jobs to Canada are seen rather as a means of keeping capitalist production close to home, while still exploiting an oppressed workforce (see Evans & Goldberg, 2003).

Yet on a larger scale, the impacts of such restructuring of the economy, such as the shift from industrial to service and information-based work (De Giorgi, 2006) is effectively ignored. This has important implications for the preparedness of prisoners for the current labour market,

as their being trained in job sectors increasingly outsourced (data entry, manufacturing, textile-making) does not accord with CORCAN's goal of reintegrating prisoners into the labour market. Furthermore, CORCAN fails to acknowledge the human side of such restructuring, being that the agency gains in job opportunities came at the cost of other individuals losing their livelihoods. Without reflecting on this, CORCAN positions itself as the solution to economic shifts rooted in the moving of labour to areas where it is cheaper, be it overseas or within the prison.

A transition in this rhetoric occurs in reports dating from the late-1990's up until the last available report, when CORCAN's discussion about private enterprise shifts to emphasize the *benefits* of CORCAN to businesses partnering with this sector, instead of simply neutralizing concerns that its prison labour is in competition with them. "By working with the private sector", one report states, "CORCAN is able to maximize offender training opportunities cost-effectively" (CORCAN, 2006, p. 16).

In fact, in reports throughout the 2000's, the emphasis is on how prison labour is useful not only for Canadian employers, but for the Canadian economy as a whole. For instance, prisoners working for CORCAN are both figuratively and literally sold to potential private partners as a reliable source of hardworking labourers that businesses can take advantage of. For example, the 2005/2006 report advertises that:

Companies that partner with CORCAN can tap into a reliable, motivated and increasingly skilled pool of labour, gain access to ISO-certified plant facilities and equipment and negotiable flexible working arrangements to fit their individual needs while contributing to the development of skilled, responsible workers for the future (CORCAN, 2006, p. 16).

In fact, such partnerships were often conveyed as a mutual benefit to businesses, buyers, and prisoners. In one report, CORCAN's partnership with Mr. Wrought Iron was presented as a

“win-win situation” by a spokesperson of the company (CORCAN, 2006, p. 15). Another commoditizes prisoners, noting that:

They [CORCAN customers] understand that our real product is a trained employable offender and that, in effect, is what they purchase when they purchase our products and services: that, and the guarantee that they are purchasing top quality products and excellent service at a competitive price (CORCAN, 2010, p. 4).

Furthermore, prisoners working for CORCAN were valued for their obedience to their employers. One testimonial from an individual representing the company Ultra Transmission in Manitoba remarks that “[t]he selfish part of management is that we have found a reliable source of employees that know how to take direction from others” (CORCAN, 2008, p. 10). In another report, a letter from the President/Owner of a furniture company called Calstone Inc. explains how CORCAN employees are “a great source of general labour....Some we have found to be better workers as they are determined to succeed and better themselves. They tend to follow direction well and work hard throughout the day” (CORCAN, 2011, p. 17).

Previously in section 5.1.2, I demonstrated how reports from the mid-2000’s onwards justify prison labour as a benefit to prisoners’ skill development for job sectors with a labour shortage. Conversely, this section demonstrates how some reports frame prison labour as a benefit to *employers*, who can take advantage of these skilled prisoners to address gaps in the Canadian labour market. For instance, one report contends, “Canadian businesses across the country are struggling to find qualified skilled tradespeople. When released into the community, offenders with employment skills training and registered apprentice hours help meet the needs of the Canadian labour market” (CORCAN, 2012, p. 8). Similarly, prisoners are conceptualized as an “untapped labour source for employers and have the potential to fill the needs [of employers]”, as “there is an identified skilled labour shortage leading employers to seek out other means to meet their needs including recruiting immigrants” (CORCAN, 2013, p. 11).

5.3.3 – CORCAN Prison labour: Tapping into an “industrial reserve army”

In this section, I have demonstrated how CORCAN’s prison labour program since its inception is consistently legitimized by contentions of how prison labour provides goods, services, and revenue to CSC and the state, consistent with aims of prison labour in the past (see Biggar, Nickle, & Draper, 1921; Goodenham, 1984; Gosselin, 1982; SCJLA, 1977; Select Committee on Expediency of Erecting a Penitentiary, 1831; SGC, 1973). Exceptionally, several reports from the 1990’s highlighted how prison labour under CORCAN plays a useful role in the Canadian economy, both by taking up jobs and providing goods and services needed as a result of government downsizing and outsourcing. Furthermore, these reports often seek to prove how merging private sector with penal activity is beneficial to employers looking for a good supply of labour, including in sectors in need of skilled workers. Prisoners are literally sold in these reports as an “industrial reserve army” of labour (Marx, 1867/1977, pp. 783-784) which both private and public agencies can exploit to address business needs and labour market gaps. Positioning prisoners as individuals to *profit* off of is perhaps the greatest corruption of the penal system today. Such rhetoric feeds into the mentality of the prison’s necessity, not only to reform prisoners and protect society, but also to address the needs of the capitalist economy.

5.4 – Legitimizing the “fiasco”

Why do we have prison labour in Canadian penitentiaries? Is it for prisoner reform? Profit? Discipline? Is prison labour environmentally friendly? Does it make us safer? Will it provide employers with a captive workforce to exploit? The answer to all of these questions, according to SGC and CORCAN reports on CORCAN prison labour, is yes. The prison really is the “fiasco” that Mathiesen (2006) observed it to be (p. 141). In this chapter, I have unveiled the

multiple, sometimes contradictory and often problematic discourses used by the state to justify the continued use of prison labour in Canada, along with the use of imprisonment more broadly as a response to harms and conflict. Though reports present multiple ways to conceive of prison labour in Canada, I have argued, drawing on the literature on the political economy of punishment and penal abolitionism, that this penal practice has not been primarily guided by ideas of reform or humanitarianism. Rather justifications for its continuation are often made in reference to upholding and supporting the capitalist and neoliberal hegemony of our society. As Marx (1867/1977) notes, the capitalist society is structured so that the control of the working class becomes the normative social order. CORCAN's reports represent textual examples of how such a mentality is structured into our penal system. This is consistent with Mathiesen's (2006) observation that "[t]he relative emphasis through time on the four components [work, school, morality, and discipline] has been determined by system interests attached to the prisons rather than to any interest in the actual rehabilitation of prisoners" (p. 53).

Furthermore, I contend that the implementation of CORCAN Industries and its later development into a special operating agency serve as what Mathiesen (1974, p. 202) calls a "positive reform", a change to the prison system that does not actually address its systemic problems, but instead only attempts to imbue the institution with more legitimacy. CORCAN reports have the tendency to divert (Mathiesen, 2006) readers' eyes away from the failures of the prison, as well as those of the state to provide for a more equitable and humane society. Instead, we are directed to focus on how prisoners' lives are worked upon through forced labour, which is presented as an endeavour of reformation.

In this chapter, I have demonstrated how reports on CORCAN's prison labour program attempt to legitimate itself and this penal practice through claims that it prepares prisoners with

skills and attitudes for work in the community upon their release, contributes to building safe, sustainable, and prosperous communities and addresses the needs of both the Canadian state and national economy. Though many of the justifications given for CORCAN prison labour are not particularly new relative to past discourse (reforming the prisoner, reducing the costs of imprisonment), these reports mark a transition in Canadian statecraft in which neoliberal discourses of personal responsibility, privatization, and government efficiency are increasingly present in penal rhetoric. Most importantly, such discourse serves as a means by which the prison and its penal practices are injected with legitimacy and purpose, particularly as a means by which prison labour attempts to *produce* workers that can be exploited in the capitalist system. Forced labour continues to occupy the public, private, and penal fields. In terms of finding ways to address society's harms and conflicts, *this is not 'progress'*, as the story has often been told, but "business as usual" (Cohen, 1985, p. 39).

Chapter 6: Future directions and conclusion

In a 1968 interview on the Dick Cavett show, American writer and social justice activist James Baldwin remarked, “I don’t know what most white people in this country feel, but I can only include what they feel from the state of their institutions”¹⁸. Although this discussion refers to the demonstrated racism against Blacks in the United States, Baldwin’s words echo into present considerations of other systems of oppression, including the goals and efforts of Canada’s penal institutions. The intentions of CSC employees and policymakers in addressing harm and conflict in Canada can never be fully known. Despite the moral compasses of these individuals and institutions (which I hope are empathetic to the struggles of human beings), Baldwin demonstrates how intentions are irrelevant in the face of the lived realities that such institutions manifest (see Wise, 2014).

Official justifications for policies and actions, however, are an important area of study to deconstruct and critically analyze how such discourses influence the lives of human beings. Sim (2009) notes that through “‘problematizing’ contemporary structures of punishment, scholars and activists conversely can make them unproblematic for the confined and thereby make a difference both with respect to the political complacency that surround them and the individual pain and collective misery that inhabits them” (p. 12). Engaging in counter-functional work (Mathiesen, 2006, p. 165), this study sought to achieve just that. Furthermore, I sought to address a gap in the literature regarding the relationship between prison labour and the political economy in the Canadian context. Through a content analysis of 33 annual reports by the SGC and CORCAN, and inspired by literature on political economic and abolitionist thought, this study set out to address this central research question:

¹⁸ To watch the video clip featuring Baldwin’s philosophizing, see Wise (2014).

How do state annual reports on CORCAN legitimate the use of prison labour in Canadian federal penitentiaries since its founding?

Guided by this research question, this study was able to identify several justifications used by the Canadian state to uphold the prison idea despite its “fiasco” (Mathiesen, 2006, p. 141). In revealing these justifications, I demonstrated the interconnectedness between penalty, the state, and ultimately our social and economic systems (Sim, 2009).

Firstly, the inception of CORCAN as a CSC program and agency for prison labour was demonstrated to be a “positive reform” of past penal practices, carrying out the “action function” of the prison that seeks to demonstrate some type of response on behalf of the state towards criminalized activity (Mathiesen, 1974, p. 202; Mathiesen, 2006, pp. 142-143). To this end, I found that CORCAN and SGC annual reports justify CORCAN prison labour using an ambivalent set of goals, actions, and results, some consistent throughout reports, others emerging during particular time periods. Generally, however, it was revealed that CORCAN prison labour was purported to benefit prisoners, communities, and state departments (including CSC), the national economy and labour market, and the private sector. Additionally, this rhetoric consistently presents prison labour as a means of *producing* prisoners as disciplined workers, consistent with explanations of the prison as a means of molding a proletariat worker for the capitalist market’s exploitation (see Foucault, 1975/1995; Melossi & Pavarini, 1977/1981).

Furthermore, many of the reports from the turn of this century onwards adopted the language of neoliberalism and capitalism to promote CORCAN prison labour as a benefit to society. This, I argue, problematically normalizes these economic and political systems into our daily words and actions, while failing to reflect on how the transitions to a neoliberal and post-Fordist order impacts our work, penal system, and ultimately the lives of all global citizens. For instance, De Giorgi (2006) discusses how these transitions have resulted in “deregulated labour

markets”, especially in developing economies, resulting in migrants fleeing from the horrible conditions of their homelands and into the countries and penal systems of so-called “developed” nations (pp. 113-114). In Western countries, many workers must take up precarious, low-wage jobs for their survival, if they are not already unemployed (De Giorgi, 2006, pp. 44-45). All the while, neoliberal policies, including the increased deregulation of the global financial market, has resulted in extensive harms to the middle and lower classes and the environment, as the upper class and corporations benefit from these policies through increased power and wealth (Snider, 2015). In turn, Davis (2003) notes, “[t]he prison has become a black hole into which the detritus of contemporary capitalism is deposited” (p. 16).

As such, the observations outlined in this study have important implications with regards to how our social, political, and economic institutions should be arranged if we wish to protect human rights and ensure a basic standard of living for all. Furthermore, justifications of prison labour as a source of disciplined labour for both the private sector and state agencies must be problematized and countered if we do not wish to go down the path of the United States, whose many public and private prisons have systematically developed a prison-industrial complex (Schlosser, 1998) to exploit the labour of prisoners for profit, instead of creating stable and well-paying jobs for its citizens (also see Christie, 2000; Dyer, 2000).

In analyzing rhetoric on CORCAN prison labour, I was also able to unveil irony and contradictions inherent in its justifications, such as how Indigenous prisoners are positioned to benefit from building houses for Indigenous communities, with no recognition of the state’s role in the colonization and oppression of Aboriginal peoples. Perhaps most unsettling is the described use of prison labour to make up for government services lost through the downsizing (laying off) of the public service (human beings) in the 1990’s. Despite many reports contending

that CORCAN prisoners are being prepared for the labour market, many of the jobs for prisoners outlined in the annual reports are in increasingly anachronistic job sectors such as textile-making and manufacturing. Nearly four decades after “the Archambault guys” demanded changes to the failed system of prison labour in Canadian penitentiaries, a Public Safety Canada memo likewise questions the reintegrative capacity of CORCAN prison labour, identifying an incongruence between the training prisoners receive and the opportunities available to them in the community (Public Safety Canada, 2012). Thus, discourses about CORCAN prison labour often served the “diverting function” (Mathiesen, 2006, pp. 141-142) of directing our gaze away from these contradictions and towards prisoners, who are responsabilized to address their own “needs” amidst social and economic inequalities (Moore & Hannah-Moffat, 2005).

These ideas are important to consider if abolitionists and other human rights activists aspire to abolish not only imprisonment as a social practice, but also other systems and institutions of oppression. In Canada, the reality is that, according to the most recent statistics available, 141 out of every 100 000 adults living in this country are incarcerated (Correctional Services Program, 2015). Correctional Investigator Howard Sapers observes that in the last decade, little has changed to address past concerns about the treatment of prisoners in federal penitentiaries, including in the areas of mental health, the mass incarceration of Aboriginals, and pay for prison labour (Office of the Correctional Investigator, 2014, p. 2). The revelations of this study regarding state justifications of prison labour are significant if we are to demystify incarceration and work towards addressing harms in society without penalty.

While this study contributes to the literature on prison labour in Canada, there is still much that it does not address. Already, current and former prisoners have criticized the use of prison labour in Canada on the basis of its monotony (see Abbott, 1987; Gosselin, 1982; Merson,

1987), problems applying prison labour work experience to jobs outside of the prison (see Collins, 2008; Gosselin, 1982; Strimelle & Frigon, 2011), unequal access to work programs for women incarcerated (see Kilroy & Pate, 2011; Strimelle & Frigon, 2011), and the exploitation of prisoners (see Collins, 2008; Merson, 1987). Extending upon this literature and this study's findings, future research should consider how current and former prisoners, their families, prison staff, and CORCAN employers perceive and experience CORCAN prison labour. This could include explorations of whether they experience it, for example, as a disciplinary project of the state, a 'rehabilitative' program, a business to address the needs of the government, labour market, and private sector, or an agency that whitewashes Canada's colonial history through its 'employment' of Aboriginal prisoners. Research looking into the discourse used by non-governmental groups (e.g. activist organizations) regarding prison labour would also be useful to understand how the prison idea is perpetuated or resisted in forums outside of direct state control.

The observations of these groups are invaluable for reflecting on how state justifications for prison labour are realized in practice. On the road to penal abolition, it is important to highlight resistance to the penal system, especially from those experiencing its harms (Mathiesen, 1974, pp. 76-78). Furthermore, knowledge of this resistance can be used to implement "negative reforms" of the prison system which "abolish or remove greater or smaller parts on which the system in general is more or less dependent" (Mathiesen, 1974, p. 202). A starting point could be removing prison labour that prisoners do not feel benefits their prospects of finding a good job upon their release. Additionally, resisting the forces of oppression that manifest themselves in prison labour also requires changes at the societal level, including how economic relations are organized, and how criminalization and social harm are conceived and resolved. So engrained is the prison idea in our minds that our society is often challenged to

come to terms with its alternatives (Davis, 2003). During my years as an academic, I have seen, and indeed felt the wrath of, ways of thinking that relegate abolitionist thought and the idea that we should develop alternative ways to deal with harm and conflict in non-punitive ways, as idealistic, utopian, unrealistic, naïve, and even ignorant. Yet in considering the continued failure of the prison to better our society, I cannot help but think that the ignorance does not lie with me.

A parable illustrating the irrationality of this logic tells the tale of an individual with an ailment – for example, a painful cough – for which he goes to the doctor in hopes that she will be able to cure it. After taking the medicine prescribed by the doctor to deal with this nasty cough, the man feels the same, maybe even developing worse symptoms than he had before his doctor’s visit. Returning to the doctor to request another way to combat the problem, the doctor replies that she does not yet know how to cure the ailment, and in the meantime tells the man to keep taking the same medicine that has not made him better (and in fact has made his cough more persistent)¹⁹. Currently, our policy makers still prescribe the same medicine for the problem of human conflict, including criminalization and punishment, despite mounting collateral consequences (Mauer & Chesney-Lind, 2002).

The good news for us, and perhaps the most significant final contention of this study, is that *the persistence of the prison is not inevitable*. These seemingly distant and utopian alternatives actually have real and demonstrable effects on how we can constructively deal with harm and conflict in our society. Initiatives such as Circles of Support and Accountability (COSA)²⁰ for individuals convicted of a sexual offence and Housing First²¹ for the homeless

¹⁹ This parable was told by Professor Kate Fletcher in a second-year criminology class I was a teaching assistant for in the fall of 2013.

²⁰ COSA involves the participation of volunteer community members and an individual convicted of a sexual offence (core member) in a group, where the core member receives ongoing support from the group members while these members hold the individual accountable to not engage in harmful behaviour. In doing so, future victimization and criminalization is prevented, and the core member’s dignity as a human being is upheld (Hannem & Petrunik, 2007).

demonstrate how humane and empathetic ways of dealing with social harms and conflict can have positive social, and even economic, results, preventing future victimization (see Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2014; Hannem & Petrunik, 2007). Furthermore, COSA represents an initiative whereby individuals who have caused harm to others can simultaneously be held accountable for their actions yet productively supported to live a life free from harm to others and themselves that are currently criminalized (Hannem & Petrunik, 2007).

Abolishing prison labour in Canada would be a productive first step in addressing the oppressive structures that permeate society, as well as revealing the fallacies and contradictions of our current economic and penal system. Mathiesen (1974, p. 209) notes how abolishing forced labour in Norwegian prisons revealed the country's problem of poverty, as imprisonment and forced labour were being used to control and hide the poor. As such, abolishing this practice in Canada could likewise have the effect of revealing how CORCAN prison labour, at least as it is justified by the state, represents a contemporary mutation of slavery to address shifts in the neoliberal capitalist economy and labour market. Despite the gravity of this goal, its pursuit is necessary to counter the forces of repression. We are left with the words of Little Rock Reed (1993, p. 119), who reminds us that we cannot be detached when pursuing social justice:

Resist.
 If we don't,
 we perpetuate
 the grinding forces
 that crush the spirit
 of those who do.
 Thus
 we become the oppressors,
 the dehumanizing
 agents of repression.

There is no neutral ground.

²¹ Housing First is an initiative that provides permanent housing, as well as support systems to individuals with a mental illness and without a home (Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2014).

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Appendix A – Annual report coding grid

Justifications of prison labour by CORCAN - Open Coding Grid - 1st coding

Date and Time:

Unit of Analysis:

Reference:

In-text citation:

Basic content of report:

Note on method:

Observations on what was not mentioned in report:

Notable Observations and potential themes:

Keep in mind:

- RI: How does CORCAN legitimate/justify/construct the use of prison labour?
- What was considered successful?
- How was “rehabilitation” discussed?
- What kind of worker are they trying to produce?

Observation	Potential theme

Analytical notes/thoughts:

Appendix B – Coding matrices by theme

SECONDARY CODING THEME 1: THE VALUE OF PRISON LABOUR TO THE PRISONER-WORKER

Subtheme 1: Making the prisoner employable/job-ready/ready for the work environment, reintegration-ready (objective of the program)

Report	Observation

Subtheme 2: Prisoner having an employment deficit/gap/skill shortage/needs of some sort

Report	Observation

Subtheme 3: Actual skills/certifications/training received, both specific and general, addressing their “criminality” in some way, development of pro-social and good habits

Report	Observation

Subtheme 4: Skills for labour market/certain jobs/certain people

Report	Observation

Subtheme 5: resulting value: (job prospects, reduced recidivism, increased reintegration, re-entry as safe and productive citizens, jobs they go into)

Report	Observation

Subtheme 6: Additional benefits to prisoner (keeps them busy, time, money)

Report	Observation

Subtheme 7: Jobs obtained (in prison)

Report	Observation

Subtheme 8: Employing prisoners

Report	Observation

**SECONDARY CODING THEME 2:
THE VALUE OF PRISON LABOUR TO CANADIAN COMMUNITIES**

Subtheme 1: Embodying Canadian values

Report	Observation

Subtheme 2: Cost-reduction/benefit to taxpayers (cost-efficiency/effectiveness of gov't), production

Report	Observation

Subtheme 3: Public Safety

Report	Observation

Subtheme 4: Societal Stewardship (“helping” Aboriginals, public policy agenda, helping community projects, benefit to community from CORCAN located there)

Report	Observation

Subtheme 5: Environmental Stewardship

Report	Observation

**SECONDARY CODING THEME 3:
THE VALUE OF PRISON LABOUR TO THE CANADIAN STATE AND ECONOMY**

Subtheme 1: NOT competing with the private sector (partnerships, mirrors private sector standards)

Report	Observation

Subtheme 2: Addresses needs of the Canadian economy (essential skills for employers, filling labour market shortage, contributing to clients' needs [e.g. DND], "customer-driven", downsizing of gov't)

Report	Observation

Subtheme 3: good investment for business (reliable workforce)

Report	Observation

Subtheme 4: Aids CSC operations (self-sufficiency, food, new prisons being built, revenue)

Report	Observation