



# PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

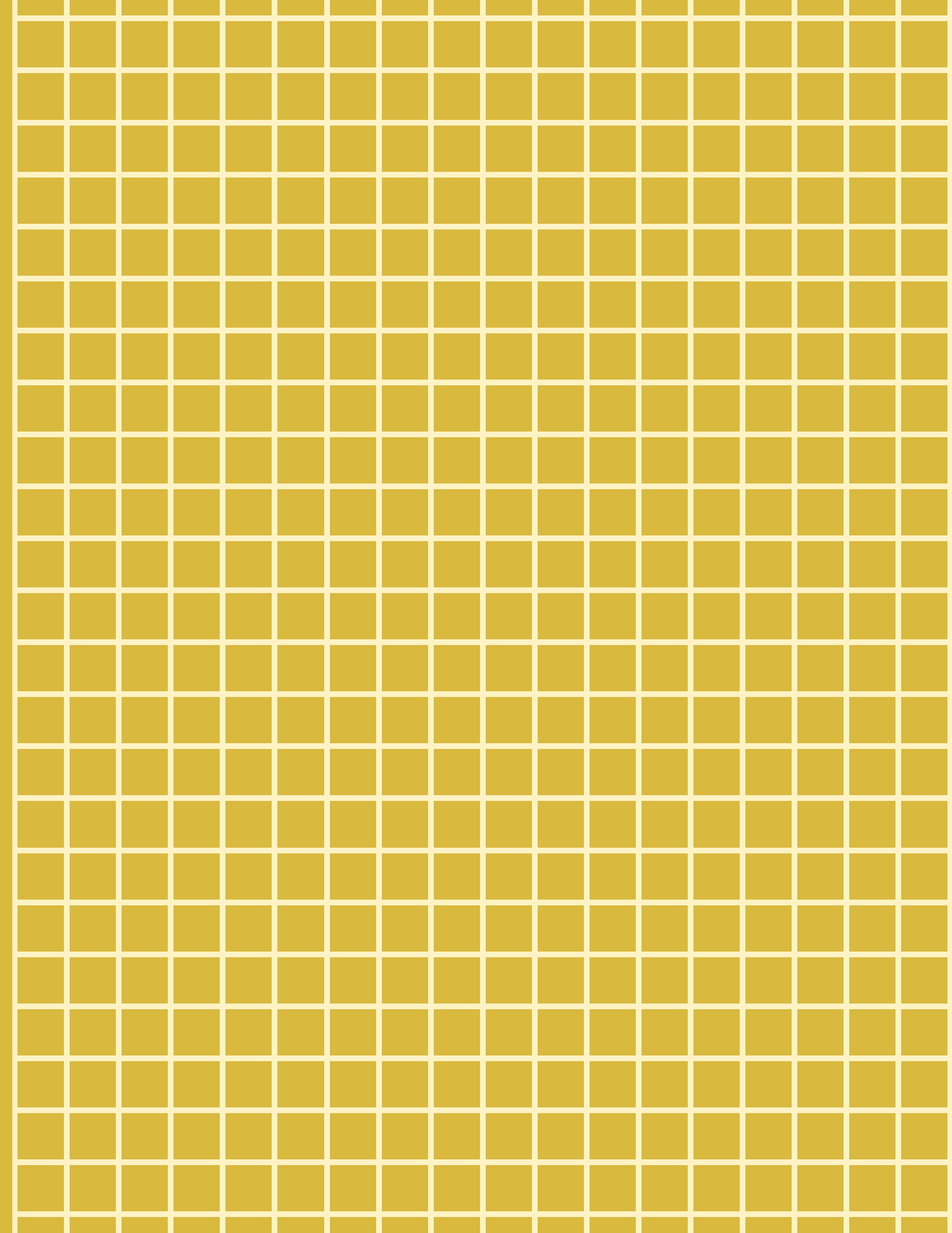
SYSTEM ANALYSIS & REDESIGN

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MASD 6510-20-F21



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# WHAT IS THE PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX?

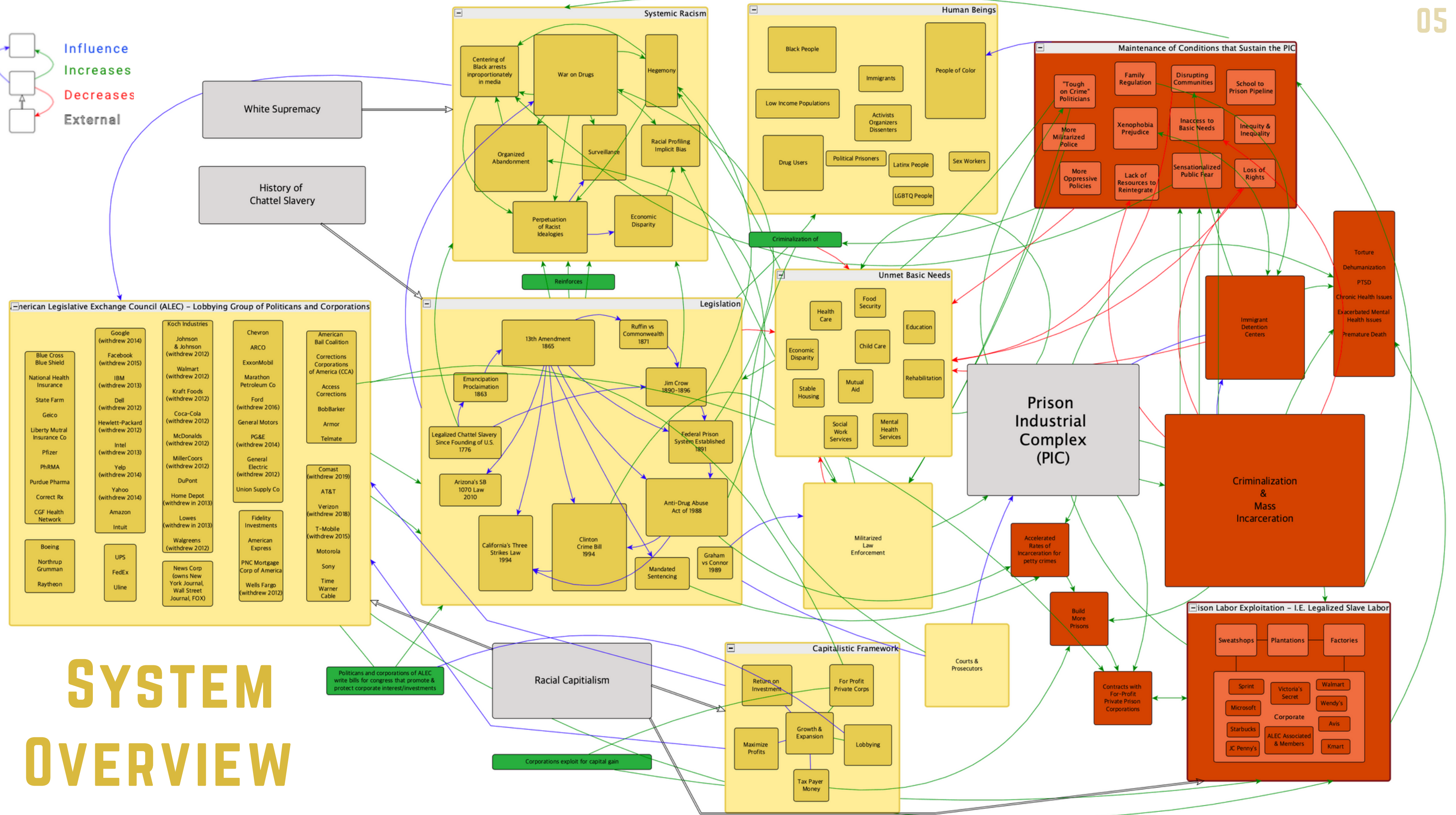
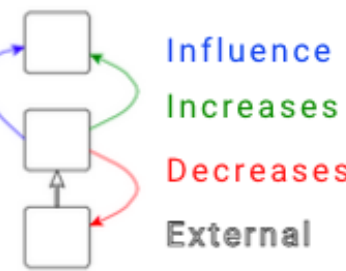
The Prison Industrial Complex (PIC) is a system that postures imprisonment as a solution to political, social, and economic problems while generating profit, persistence of racism, and disenfranchisement of marginalized populations.

The *function* of the system is to replace the loss of production from the end of chattel slavery and *behaves* by exploiting primarily Black labor for capital and control. Proponents of the PIC (namely its beneficiaries) will claim the function of the system is to reduce the rate of crime in the United States and that it behaves through our legislative and judicial processes.

It is critical to explore the system's components in detail to recognize all the elements at play in order to understand, redesign, and improve the ways in which we can effectively reduce harm and achieve foundational community safety.



Diagram: Critical Resistance



# SYSTEM OVERVIEW

“Like any enterprise that was born of a manufactured demand, prisons perpetuate themselves, and that requires the maintenance of conditions that foster crime.”

-Mariame Kaba  
*We Do This 'Til We Free Us*

# SYSTEM ELEMENTS

## SYSTEM BOUNDARY

The PIC is an enterprise borne of the overlapping stakes of government, politicians, private prison industries, corporations that extort prison labor, surveillance industries, construction companies, and law enforcement - these entities produce many of the system's inputs and maintain the system boundaries.

Factors that transcend the system boundaries include xenophobia, racial hegemony, and the historical oppression of minority groups. They act as both internal and external factors that influence other inputs within this system.

## INPUTS & OUTPUTS

For the system to function and sustain, it needs a consistent source of inputs. What Mariame Kaba, activist, grassroots organizer, and educator, describes is a maintenance of that production.<sup>1</sup> Many of the outputs of the PIC generate components that become the inputs for criminalization, restarting the cycle.

Dr. Angela Davis, political activist, professor, and author, analyzes, "the hidden danger of relying on incarceration as the major solution to behaviors that are often the byproducts of poverty, is that the solution reproduces the very problem it purports to solve".<sup>2</sup>

### Inputs:

- Tough-on-crime politicians that adopt bills which promote mass incarceration
- The American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) [see *Appendix, pg. 39*] who ghostwrites pro-business bills
- Human beings, not limited to: people of color, immigrants, poor people, drug users, sex workers, LGBTQ+, activists, and young people
- Police and prosecutors that criminalize targeted populations (BJS found in 2016, Black men consisted of 6.5% of the U.S. population, yet disproportionately make up 40.2% of the prison population.<sup>3</sup>)
- Social factors such as poverty, systemic racism, lack of resources, and political dissent
- Prison and detention institutions that detain the criminalized

### Outputs:

- Disenfranchisement, *i.e.* loss of voting rights, employment opportunities, access to public social benefits and housing, parental benefits, right to bear arms, jury service, and the ability to travel abroad
- Exacerbated physical and mental health issues from sustaining violence, torture, confinement, PTSD, suicide, premature death
- Disruption of communities and family regulation, *i.e.* custody, parenthood presence, immigration status
- Influx of prisoners resulting in erection of new institutions
- The **goods** manufactured, **services** performed, and **profits** generated through extorting prison labor **are the only components that exit the system**

[see *Appendix, pg. 40* for summary of corporations that exploit prison labor]

# SYSTEM ELEMENTS

## COMPONENT RELATIONS

Nixon's invention of the political tool, the War of Drugs (1971), a major input, kicked off a three decade political competition for who could be the most "tough on crime".

In a 1994 interview with Dan Baum of *Harper's Magazine*, John Ehrlichman, Nixon's top advisor, bluntly states,

"The Nixon campaign in 1968, and the Nixon White House after that, had two enemies: the anti-war left and Black people. You understand what I'm saying? We knew we couldn't make it illegal to be either against the war or Black, but by getting the public to associate the hippies with marijuana and Blacks with heroin, and then criminalizing both heavily, we could disrupt those communities. We could arrest their leaders, raid their homes, break up their meetings, and vilify them night after night on the evening news. Did we know we were lying about the drugs? Of course we did".<sup>6</sup>

The system conceals the inequalities it propagates.

This became the behavioral framework for all components within the system.

The War on Drugs produced an increase in tough-on-crime legislation proposed by presidents that utilized the bipartisan nature of this invention, directly militarized police, and created a for-profit industry around the nation's carceral system that occupies a privileged place in the global economy.

Private providers for health, food, communication, and transportation services sign contracts with prison institutions. Surveillance and monitoring industries become invested in the constant supply of prisoners and parolees. Building new prisons transforms into one of the most developed and profitable sectors in the construction industry. Add the extent in which private corporations take advantage of cheap prison labor, and now the PIC has become ingrained into the U.S. economy.

In examination of these inputs, Dr. Davis emphasizes "there are stakes other than the anti-crime stakes that keep the prison industry expanding. It's acquiring its own momentum. If we don't attempt to stop it now, we will become an increasingly incarcerated society".



AP Photo



# CHATTEL SLAVERY

## WHITE SUPREMACY

## RACIAL CAPITALISM

→ Produces  
 ..... Insufficient  
 - - - Excessive  
 ○ Harmful

13th Amendment

Federal Prison System Est. 1896

Xenophobia

Racial Hegemony

- People of Color
- Immigrants
- Low Income
- Drug Users
- Sex Workers
- Activists

Criminalization

Courts & Prosecutors

Nixon's War on Drugs

"Tough on Crime" Politics

Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988

1994 Clinton Crime Bill

1994 CA's 3 Strikes Law

Mandated Sentencing Laws

Militarized Law Enforcement

Mass Incarceration

Prison for Control    Prison for Profit

2010 AZ's SB 1070

Community Disruption

Family Regulation

School to Prison Pipeline

Premature Death

PTSD

Exacerbated Mental Health Issues

Basic Needs

Rights

Immigrant Detention

Exploitation of Prison Labor

Build More Prisons

Profit

More Legislation

Privatization of Prison Industry

Goods

Services

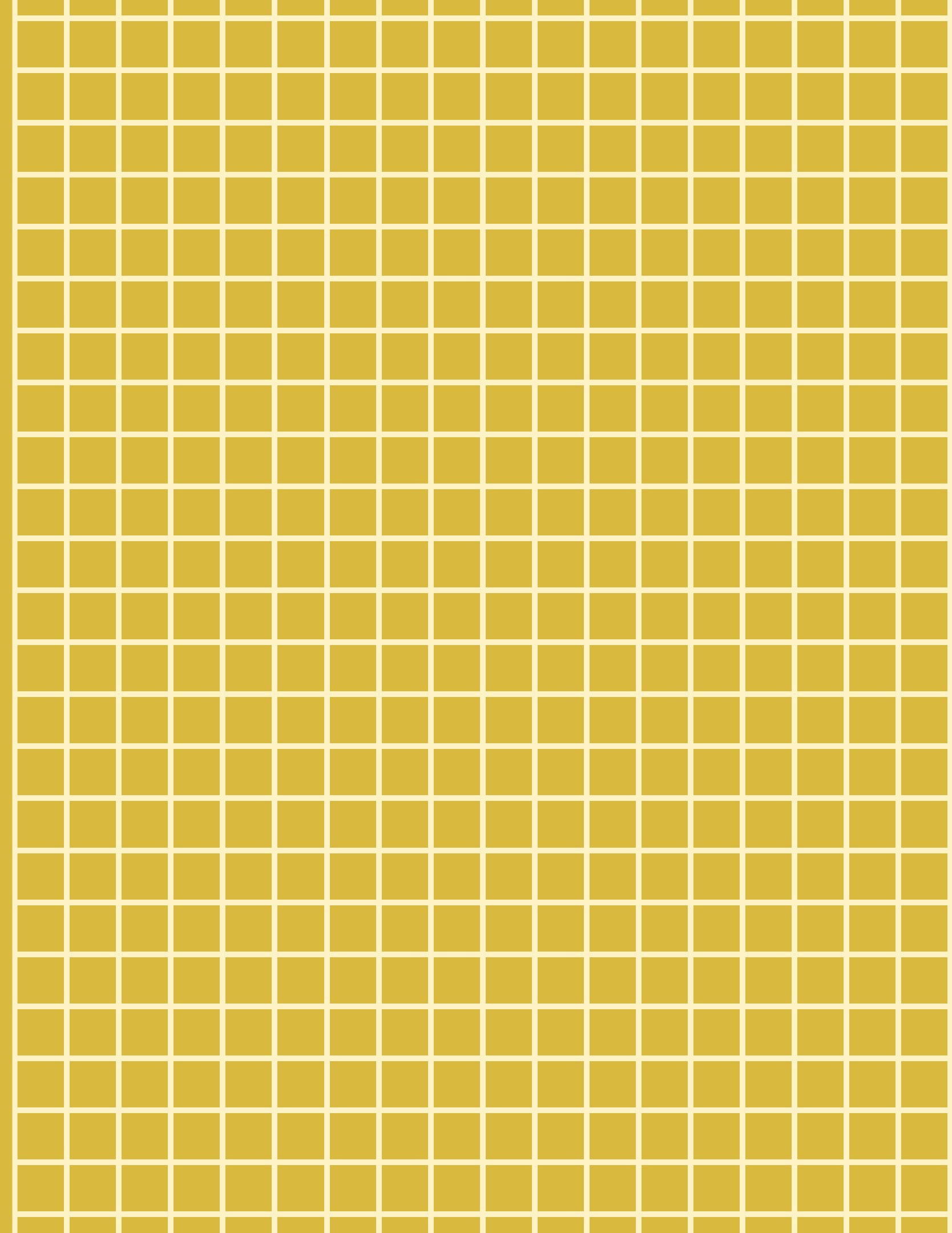
ALEC

# THE PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

"The hidden danger of relying on incarceration as the major solution to behaviors that are often the byproducts of poverty, is that the solution reproduces the very problem it purports to solve".<sup>2</sup>

-Dr. Angela Davis

**SOLUTION 1:  
OVERCOMING THE  
ARCHETYPE**





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# SYSTEM ARCHETYPE

## SHIFTING-THE-BURDEN

The Shifting the Burden Archetype captures the behavioral pattern between the development of symptomatic solutions to observable problems (e.g., crime, drug-use, poverty, homelessness) and fundamental solutions that address the root of the behavioral pattern. Without properly targeting change in the underlying structures that produce the symptomatic problems, maintenance of this cycle of behaviors will perpetuate.

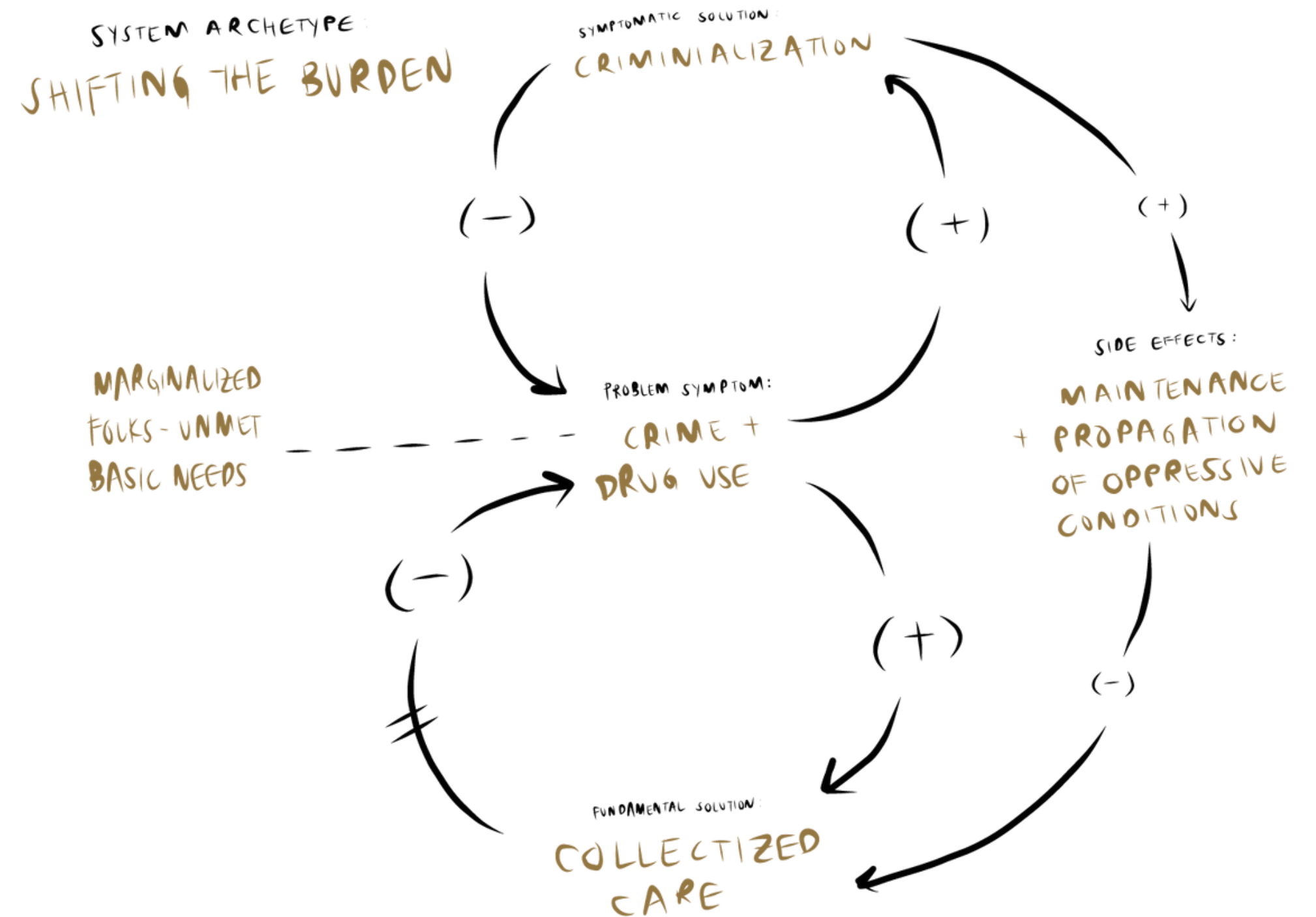
Fundamental solutions require deep understanding and learning about the underlying problem. The extensive time and resources necessary for researching, formulating, and implementing such change becomes the scapegoat rationale for developing a short-term symptomatic solutions (e.g., tough-on-crime policy, militarized police, mass incarceration, building more prisons, increasing police funding, immigrant detention). Symptomatic solutions are attractive because they demand far less understanding, are less expensive in the short-term, produce instant gratification - and most significantly, it detracts from paying attention to the real systemic problem.

## ESCALATION

### The Side Effects of Shifting-the-Burden

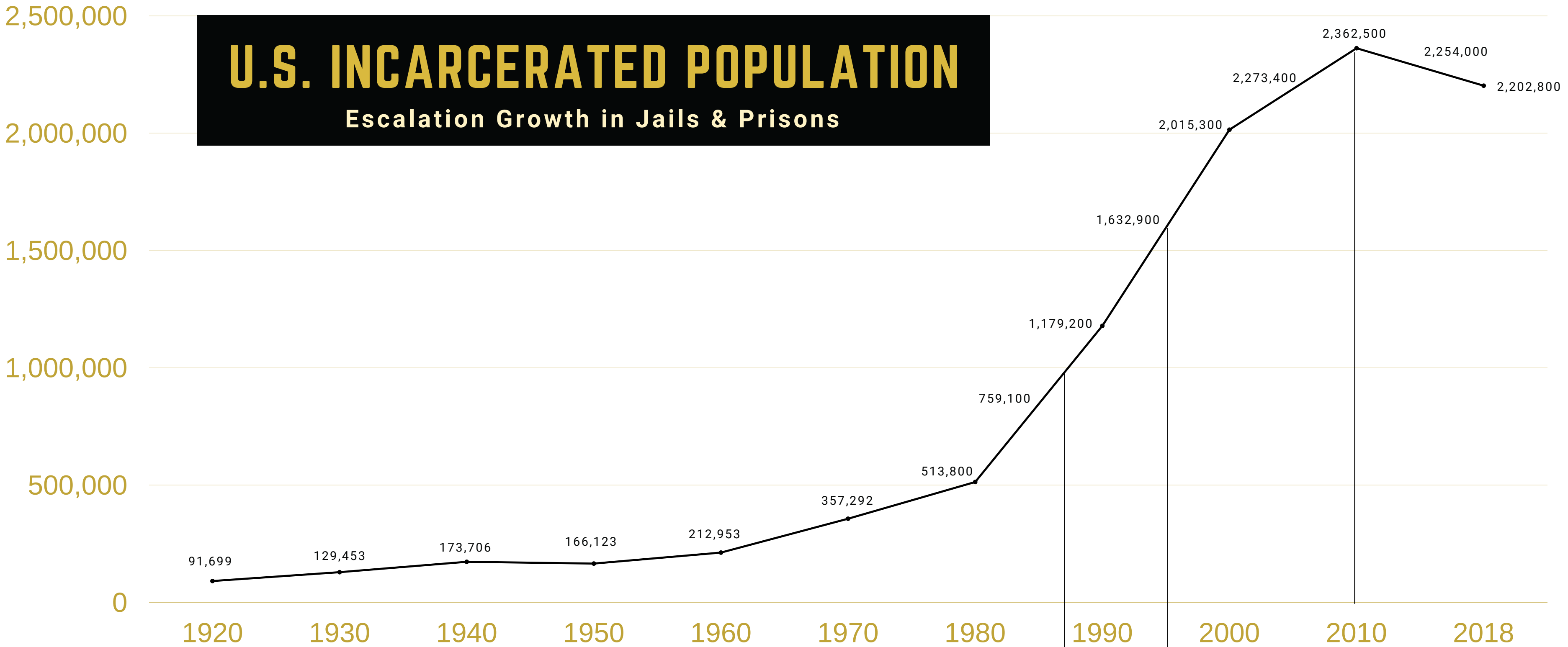
Shifting the burden causes a side effect: the maintenance and propagation of oppressive conditions. This creates an escalation model where reinforcing feedback loops create and sustain a causal cycle of exponential growth over time [see pg. 14]. The positive feedback loop is sustained by increasing criminalization, increasing policing and funding, which then increases criminalization, leading to militarized policing, and so on.

## THE PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX



# U.S. INCARCERATED POPULATION

## Escalation Growth in Jails & Prisons



**Civil Rights Movement**

1964 Vietnam War begins, Anti-War Movement starts

Nixon declares War on Drugs

1983 Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) is formed, prison economy privatized

1988 Anti-Drug Abuse Act: hyper-criminalization of crack cocaine

1994 Clinton Crime Bill

CA's Three Strikes Law

Clinton Era militarizes police

2010 AZ's SB 1070 Law: immigrant detention increases

2013 BLM Movement starts in response to the killing of Trayvon Martin (17 y.o.)

2020 COVID-19 Global Pandemic starts

Mar-Jun: expedited release of ~208,500 inmates

# OVERCOMING THE ARCHETYPE

"There were so many different points of entry for various people to fight against the abandonment that had resulted in, among other things, mass incarceration, but also austerity, outsourcing, underemployment, environmental degradation, and the capture of the state government by those who are only ever enhancing the ability of the well-to-do to get richer."

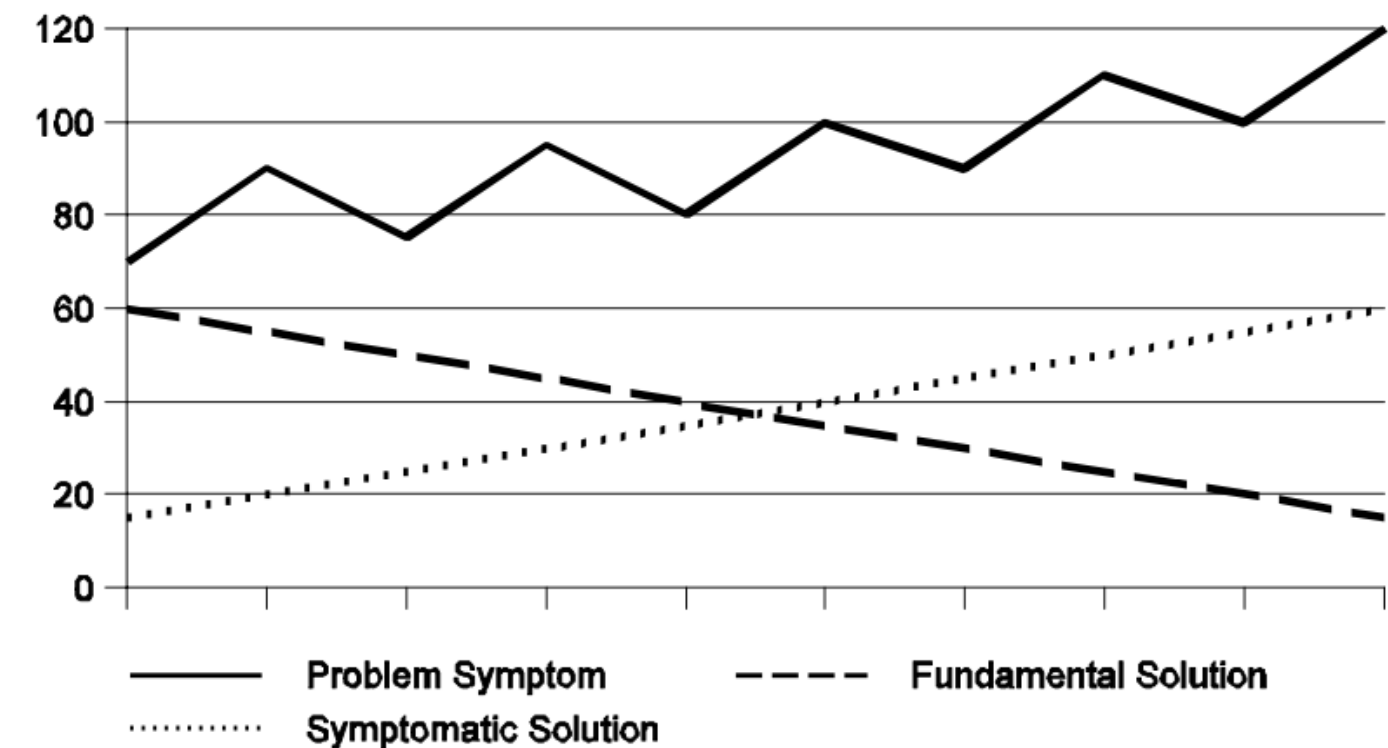
-Ruth Wilson Gilmore

As this model demonstrates, creating symptomatic solutions further exacerbates the original problem. When observing the Historical Events diagram featured in this presentation [see *Appendix, pg. 38*], one can trace the appearance of symptomatic solutions throughout the system's history.

The system is influenced by specific agents who make decisions that do not calculate for feedback loops. This describes the pattern of policies that continually shift the burden and misaddress the systemic issue.

In reality, the repeated implementation of one symptomatic solution to address another problem symptom (produced by the previous symptomatic solution) generates side effects that have a negative feedback loop on the fundamental solution - again, taking attention away from the underlying problem and shifts development towards perceived solutions.

Graph: William Braun



## Behavior Over Time

William Braun's *The System Archetypes* (2002) offers a prescriptive set of actions for overcoming the Shifting the Burden Archetype:

- Focus on the fundamental solution.
- Elicit multiple viewpoints to differentiate between fundamental and symptomatic solutions and to gain consensus around an action plan.
- Use the archetype to explore potential side-effects of any proposed solution.

# OVERCOMING THE ARCHETYPE

## 1. Identify the original problem symptom:

Desperation to secure access to basic needs through acts deemed criminal. The underlying problem is a byproduct of poverty.

## 2. Map all “quick fixes” that appear to be keeping the problem under control:

Tough-on-Crime politics, militarized police, surveillance, building more prisons

## 3. Identify the impact of the symptomatic solutions on other parts of the system:

Mass incarceration, immigrant detention, exploitation of prison labor, premature death, perpetuation of conditions of oppression

## 4. Identify fundamental solutions. Develop multiple perspectives:

Collectivized care of marginalized groups through community based organizations and programs. If deep understanding is required for a fundamental solution, full comprehension of the history of a community is the critical perspective that should lead efforts for solutions.

Divest from police funding and reallocate budget towards life-sustaining resources such as health care, education, food and housing security, social work, mental health treatment, child care, etc. These are the foundational factors that can enrich a community and break the causal cycle of symptomatic problems long-term.

# SHIFTING THE BURDEN: SEVEN ACTION STEPS

## 5. Map side-effects of quick fixes that may be undermining the usability of the fundamental solution:

The side effects of criminalization further disrupt community resilience, separate families from one another, and cause sensationalized public fear. These factors become tools for confirmation bias that the marginalized group fits a “criminal” stereotype.

## 6. Find interconnections to fundamental loops. Find links between the interaction effects and the fundamental solution that may be causing gridlock:

A gridlock is reinforced by the ideology that imprisonment is the “solution” to political, social, and economic problems and the generation of profit from this approach. Because there is an enterprise built around the overlapping interests of stakeholders (e.g., government, politicians, private prison industries, corporations that extort prison labor, surveillance industries, construction companies, and law enforcement), incentive to move away from this behavioral system is grid-locked. This takes away valuable resources from developing fundamental solutions, and worse, discredits its validity.

## 7. Identify high-leverage actions from both perspectives:

Create feedback policies for feedback loops. The short-sighted and reactionary pattern of policy making as a response to crime does not lead to long-term solutions.

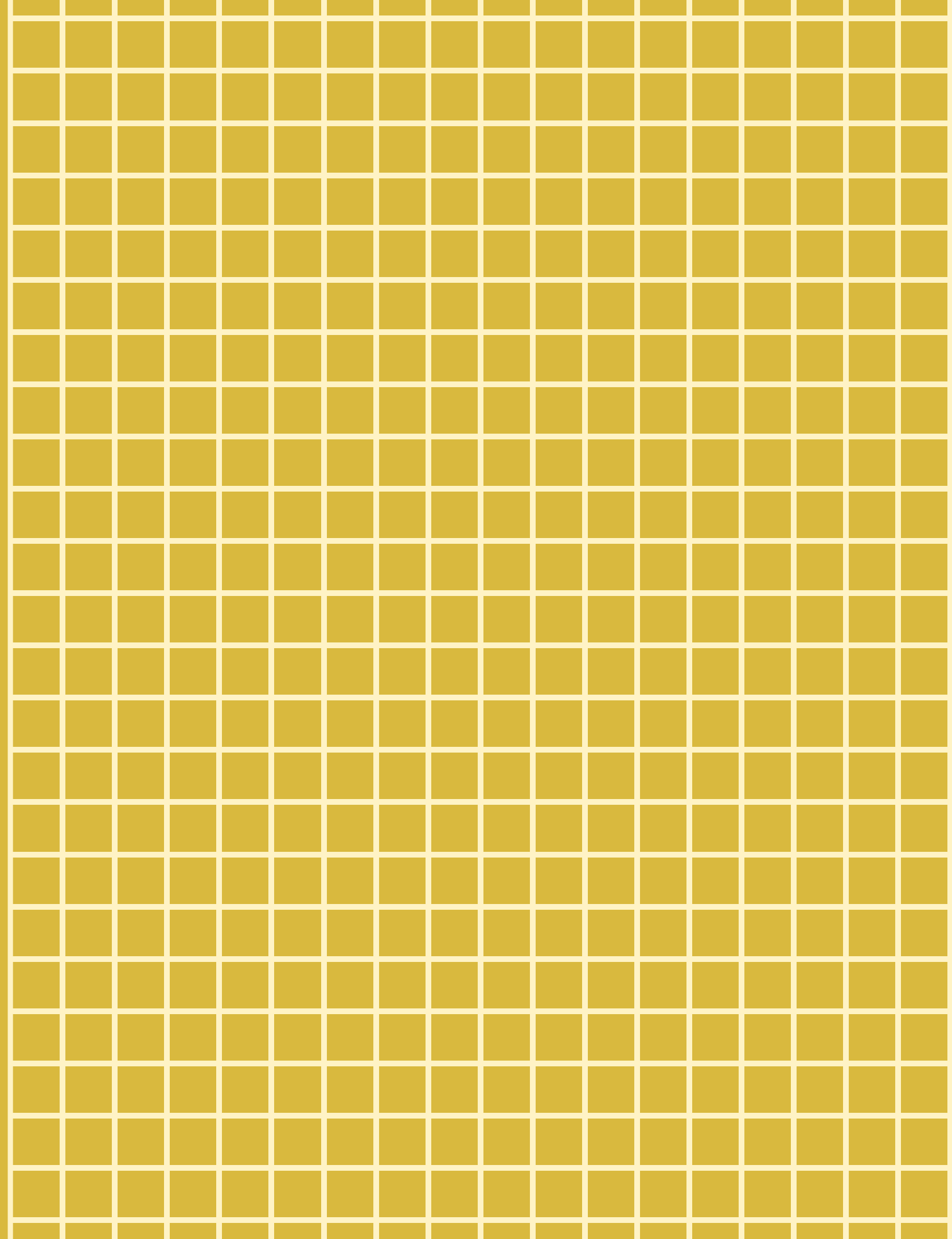


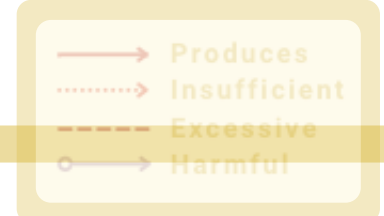
“You can imagine why a dynamic, self-adjusting feedback system cannot be governed by a static, unbending policy. It’s easier, more effective, and usually much cheaper to design policies that change depending on the state of the system.

Especially where there are great uncertainties, the best policies not only contain feedback loops, but meta-feedback loops—loops that alter, correct, and expand loops. These are policies that design learning into the process.”

- Donella H. Meadows  
*Thinking in Systems*

**SOLUTION 2:**  
**BIOMIMICRY**





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# THE PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX



# BIOMIMICRY IN THE SYSTEM

Collectivized care means securing basic needs for everyone in a community. As mentioned in overcoming the Shifting the Burden Archetype, this includes stability in housing, food security, clean water, education, health care, mental health resources. Further access to resources that improve social welfare such as social work, child care, mutual aid, and good jobs can enrich communities, restore autonomy, and build resiliency. The notion "survival of the fittest" has pervaded the ways we operate our society, making our dynamics competitive rather than optimizing. Competition takes too much energy and does not promote mutualistic relationships - a crucial element to how organisms survive.

Feedback loops provide critical information for organisms in a system to be locally attuned and responsive. Decision makers within this system would benefit immensely from adopting frameworks of mutual support that have evolved the planet for the last 3.8 billion years. Many animal communities are location-based. The place connects the members of an ecosystem - this does not exclude humans. The interactions within these community systems are what define the wellbeing of all inhabitants. The following natural strategies can provide a guide reimagining the future of collectivized care, alleviate the harmful impacts of the PIC, and disrupt the cycle of causality.

# BIOMIMICRY IN THE SYSTEM

## ECOSYSTEMS RECOVER FROM DISTURBANCE

- Forests (and other ecosystems) can return to their stasis even after large disturbances by “remembering” what their composition was like prior to the disaster. The information is stored in the structure of biological legacies, mobile links, and support areas.
- Biological legacies include the organisms that inhabit the forest, patterns, or structures that exist through the disturbance. Large living trees or dead tree hosts provide seeds, rhizomes, roots, and nutrients to regenerate damaged areas and species. Some of these legacies might be survived by well-adapted and resilient organisms that outlast the disturbance.
- Mobile link organisms move between habitats during a disturbance. Upon returning to the ecosystem when the disturbance is over, they can help restore a lot of the key operations that will lead to regeneration. By completing tasks such as pollination, seed dispersal, nutrient translocation, they reconnect the severed areas of the forest.
- Support areas are the spaces that help sustain the mobile link organisms while the disturbance is happening.
- Together, these three interacting components create a resilient network of supporting pillars (*i.e.* ecological memory) and make reorganization possible. Memory is a key component of rebuilding and adapting after large disturbances. The participating members of this habitat adapt over time to the “characteristic disturbance regime” - implying that disturbances are inevitable, but the back-up plan and support of the rebuild is what resiliency is made of.



# SYSTEM RELATIONS & BIOMIMICRY

- Decentralized communication and leadership
- Performing functions by designated roles
- Efficient information exchange
- Attuned and locally responsive
- System set up to have defaults when disturbances or irregularities occur
- Effective communication conserves energy, passes knowledge, increasing fitness
- Allows for complex collaboration and interdependence, group consensus and problem solving
- Passage of information to the closest node allows response to be expedited
- Passing on knowledge allows for higher efficiency
- Uses information, leverages feedback loops and responsiveness to context
- Leverages interdependent relationships
- Creates opportunities, community-based relationships, fosters emergent relationships
- Co-evolves with other parts of system
- Optimizes information and carries out multiple functions

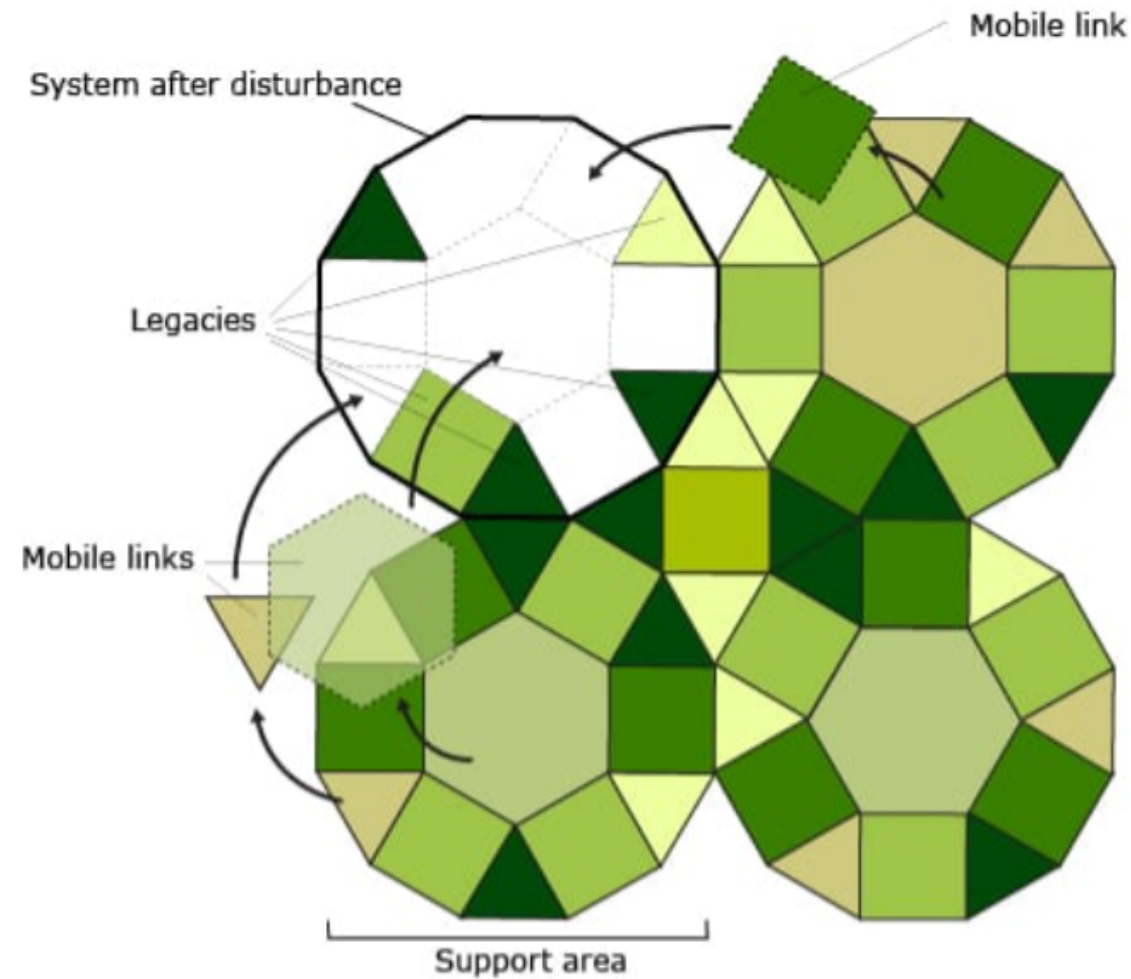
## TAKEAWAYS

If something is important, it should be decentralized and distributed throughout the system so one hit doesn't take it out. These are the principles of how to organize.

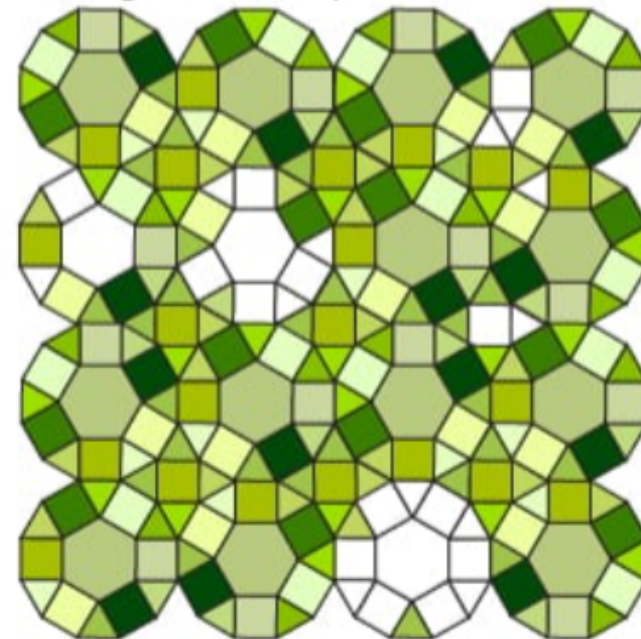
Grassroots organizing employs the same principles, however communication, execution, and distribution can always be increased - thus building more resiliency.

How do we optimize reach in the demographics we want to support, influence, and reinforce?

# IMPLEMENTATION



Resilient system in different stages of recovery



Created by Emily Harrington, <http://www.ehillustration.com>

Collectivized care can be designed to resemble the forest's system for reassembling after disturbances. Forests can return to status even after large disasters because of the robust structure in which information and resources are stored (legacies, mobile links, support areas). Providing access to basic needs through a system of back-ups plans, alternative resources, and feedback loops will foster community resiliency.

**Legacies** (agents, patterns, or structures that uphold the system behavior, survives the vital information for next generations): People throughout the system, infrastructure, organizations, institutions of education and healthcare, written works of organizers, mutual aid, good jobs, housing, food security, clean water, education, health care, mental health care, social work programs, child care.

**Mobile Links** (agents connect severed areas of system and restore operations for regeneration): Activists, community organizers, educators, leaders of nonprofits, grass-root organizations, social workers, health care workers, therapists, emergency response personnel, local politicians, voting residents, child care providers, food workers, builders.

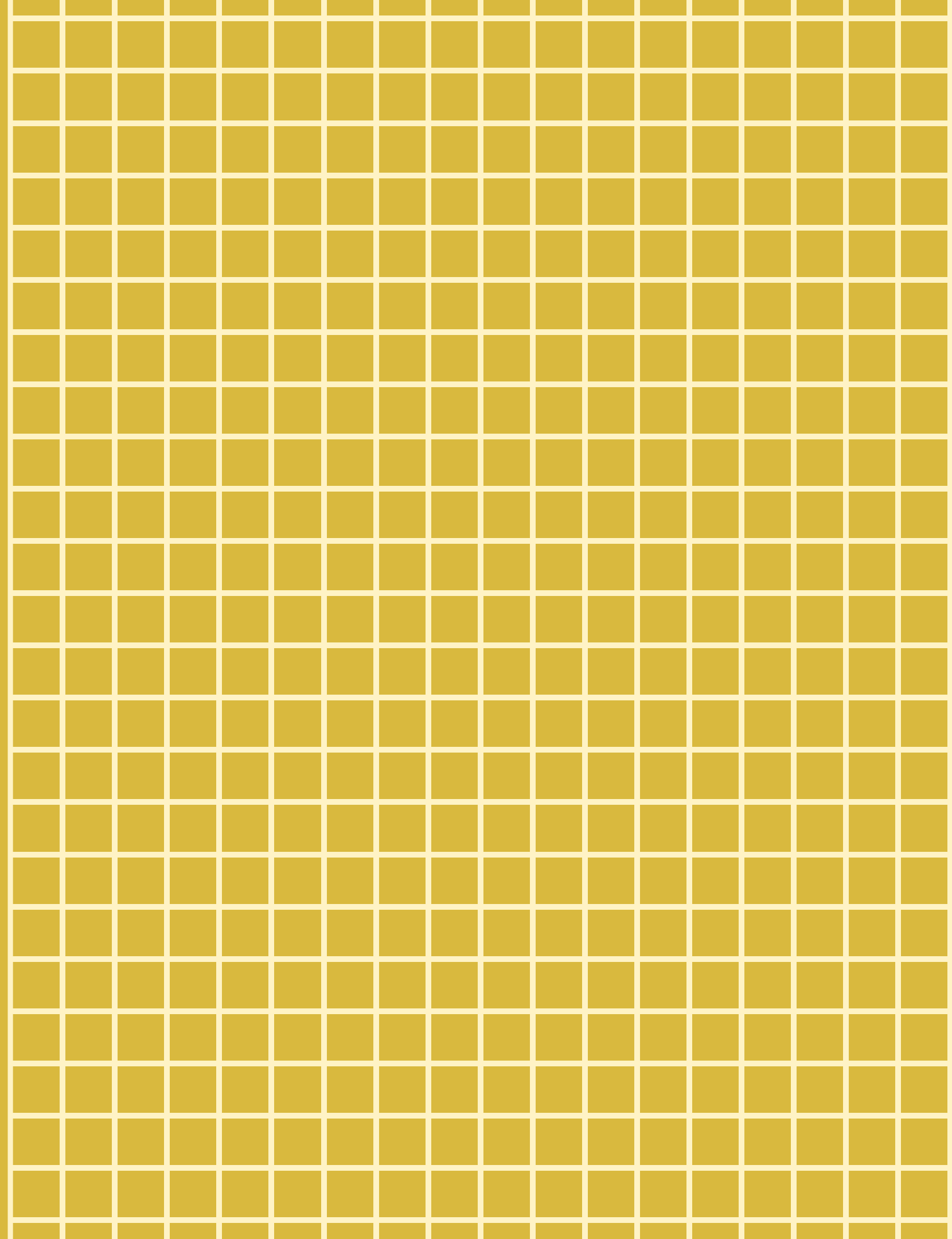
**Support Areas** (spaces that help sustain the mobile link agents): Shelters, soup kitchens, local farms, community centers, free clinics, hospitals, nonprofits, donation stores/organizations, tiny homes.

“Liberation under oppression is unthinkable by design.”

-Erica Meiners



**SOLUTION 3:**  
**REGENERATIVE**  
**DESIGN**



# THE SYSTEM ISN'T BROKEN. IT WAS BUILT THIS WAY.

Meiners' aphorism astutely captures how the PIC was manufactured to produce these results. As many activists, organizers, and critics have examined, the perpetuation of prisoners is the product that sustains the *demand*, and the *strategy* is maintaining the conditions that foster crime.

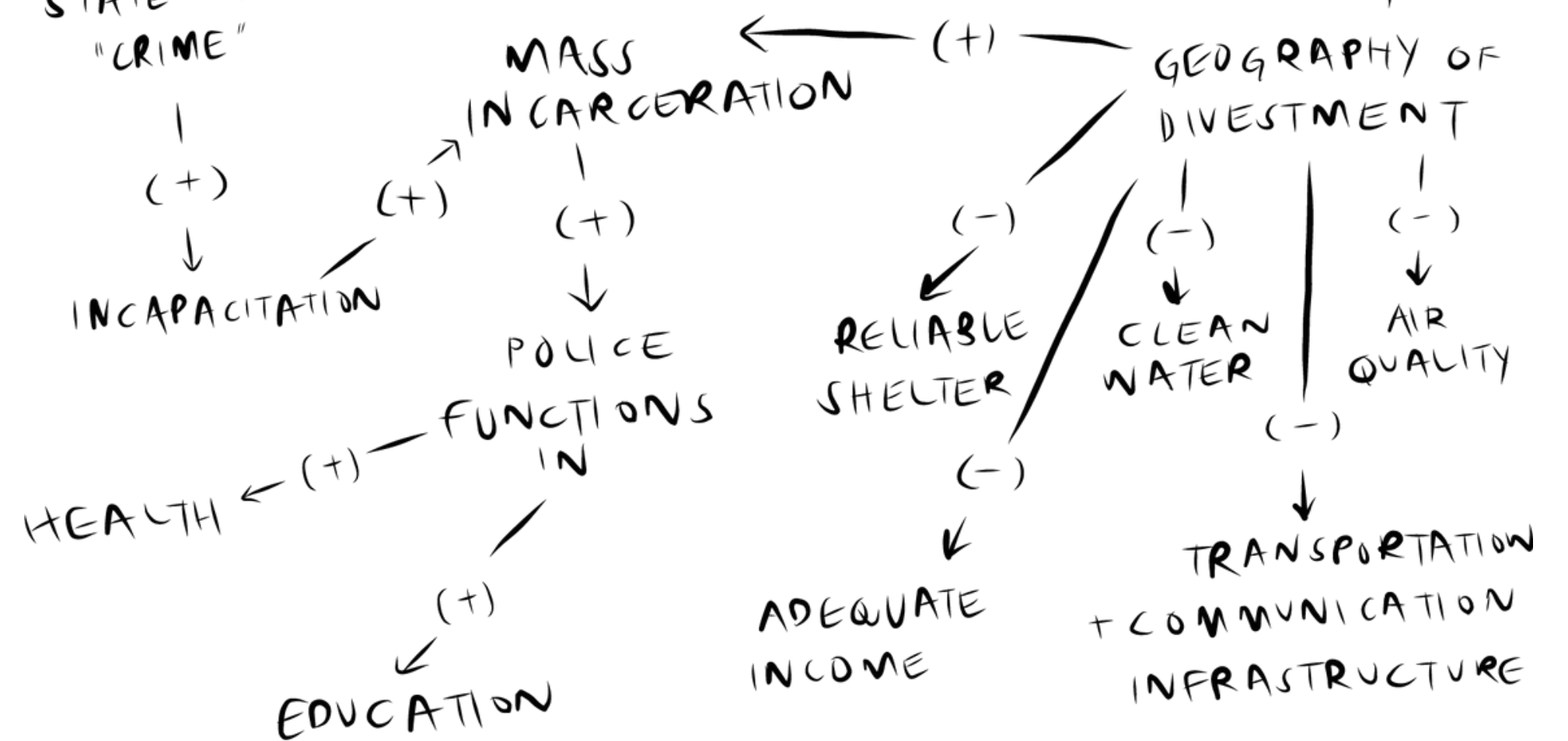
If the *purpose* of a system is what it does, then the PIC damages more than it claims to reduce. Although it might appear to be built with one set of intentions, the effects on relations rippling throughout its sub-systems, parallel systems, and super-systems define the actual function: to quiet political dissent, maintain the control for those in power, and exchange punishment for profit at the cost of human lives.

The governing rule of Life's Principles is "life creates conditions conducive to life". What is sustainable, and what is capable of evolution, demands these conditions. The PIC's design leverages manipulation of such conditions to produce its artificial sustainability, and strips our societal consciousness of any creativity to imagine something alternative.

WHAT ARE THE CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH IT IS MORE LIKELY THAT PEOPLE WILL RESORT TO USING VIOLENCE + HARM TO SOLVE PROBLEMS?

- ← (+) — POVERTY
- ← (+) — INACCESS TO OPPORTUNITIES
- ← (+) — UNSAFE CONDITIONS
- ← (+) — LACK OF RESOURCES

HOW THE CARCERAL STATE DEFINES "CRIME"



If there is no such thing as a sustainable product, perhaps only a sustainable product system, the emphasis falls on the operations that ensure its sustainability - true sustainability. From scholars Fred Moten and Stefano Harney, we must seek "abolition as the founding of a new society". Design is the problem, but it can also be the solution.

# REGENERATIVE DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## WORKING FROM POTENTIAL

We must start by understanding the system and its elements to the location, precisely the purpose of all the system maps featured in this presentation. There are connections that ripple out into supersystems and subsystems; without a proper understanding of the patterns of behavior and history, changes often fail to have regenerative effects, or worse, have adverse ones. The impacts of adverse side-effects are observable in the hast to generate symptomatic solutions.

By perceiving the carceral system as “broken”, we reaffirm reform and close our imagination to any other paths towards Regenerative Design. Ideological formations are massive drivers in decision making and define what is acceptable discourse. **Working from potential challenges us to question dominant ideological formations about “justice”.**

Mapped (in the previous slide) are emerging relationships between the conditions that make people vulnerable to interpersonal violence and the abandonment of vulnerable communities through geographical divestment. If what is essential is to reduce harm - rather than “crime” - we must focus efforts on reducing the factors that increase the likelihood of using harm as a means to solve problems.

Michael Zinzun, late member Black Panther Party for Self-Defense and founder of the Coalition Against Police Abuse (CAPA), inadvertently became an environmental justice activist because he was an anti-police violence activist purely by virtue of his dedication to reducing premature death. Zinzun **mapped the emerging relationship** between children growing up in projects dying of asthma and the dismal maintenance of public housing (vermin infestation, mold, and pesticides increase incidence of asthma). As activist Ruth Wilson Gilmore reflects, “he was against the police because police were shortening lives. He became an environmental justice activist because the environment within the living spaces for these young people was literally killing them. And so he became, as it were, a model” for what regenerative design can look like when we take note of feedback loops.

Around  
the  
System

Future

Decouple Police From  
Social Infrastructure

Disarm Law  
Enforcement

Reduce Contact  
Between People and the  
Criminal Legal System

# REGENERATIVE DESIGN PRINCIPLES

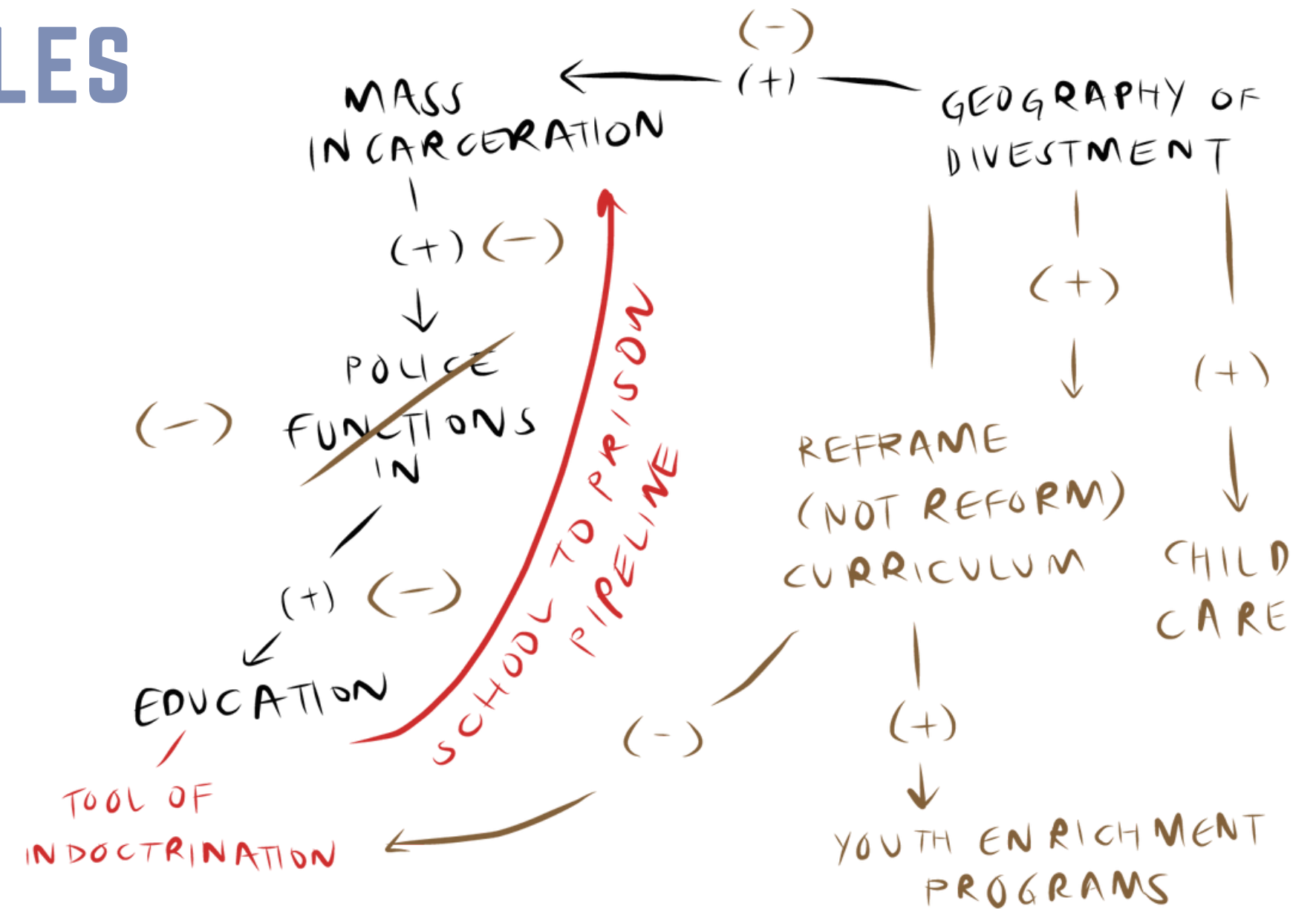
## DESIGN FOR EVOLUTION

The performance of regenerative goals are measured in terms of the intended contribution of the socio-ecological environment and the members within it (a living context). Goals should be place sourced and place specific (*i.e.*, one design will not fit all contexts) and implement aspects that will improve the system long-term.

Designing for evolution means designs are not fixed, but dynamic. As Meadows points out in *Thinking in Systems*, “the best policies not only contain feedback loops, but meta-feedback loops that alter, correct, and expand loops”. The key here is learning from the process, which evolves the system as it progresses. This principle calls for the implementation of roles rather than services.

### What do we want the roles in our communities to look like?

Ruth Wilson Gilmore argues, “police and other systems of organized violence do not arise out of any concern for public safety. Instead, these institutions became fixtures in our society so that the powerful could guarantee their right to exploit labor and enforce social hierarchy as modern society became more complex”. Who else can provide the role for enriching public safety? These roles are highly interpersonal and touch intimately on the development of physical and mental safety for those in a community, especially for the youth. Societal criminalization of children starts in classrooms and funding police presence in educational institutions creates a positive feedback loop (indicated in red). To enhance the visibility of the system as it spreads up to the next level, we must eliminate the presence of police in education institutions, reframe education curriculums, and increase funding in youth enrichment programs (indicated in brown).



## VALUE-ADDING ROLES

Agents coming across a piece of resource (*i.e.*, knowledge, tools, funding) can be assigned roles that match their resource to another point in the system. In sharing the things that we find, the collection of knowledge can evolve and build, eventually becoming organizations that serve larger populations within the community, hubs that provide support and build resilience.

Variation is necessary in our approaches to addressing human needs. Each community will differ in their parameters and needs - it is up to those who are a part of that ecosystem to find the right combination that leads to a common goal through decentralized strategy.



# REGENERATIVE DESIGN PRINCIPLES

## PARTNERING WITH PLACE

The regenerative project can assign new roles for both people and places, creating partnerships between elements within the location. This is done through operational capacity goals (systemic functional effectiveness), organizational capacity goals (the character and culture of a system and its location), and aspirational goals (creating meaningful opportunities to contribute). The culmination will amount to hopefully a new way of thinking, decision making, and resonance - a paradigm shift.

## CO-EVOLVING MUTUALISM

Regenerative designs are tasked to develop progressively mutualistic relationships between the humans in the system and their environment. It is a process of aligning communities with larger patterns and it is a dynamic process. The pulse of the system ecosystem must be taken as influencing factors change inevitably through time. This principle values biodiversity, develops relational connections, and redefines what constitutes wealth.

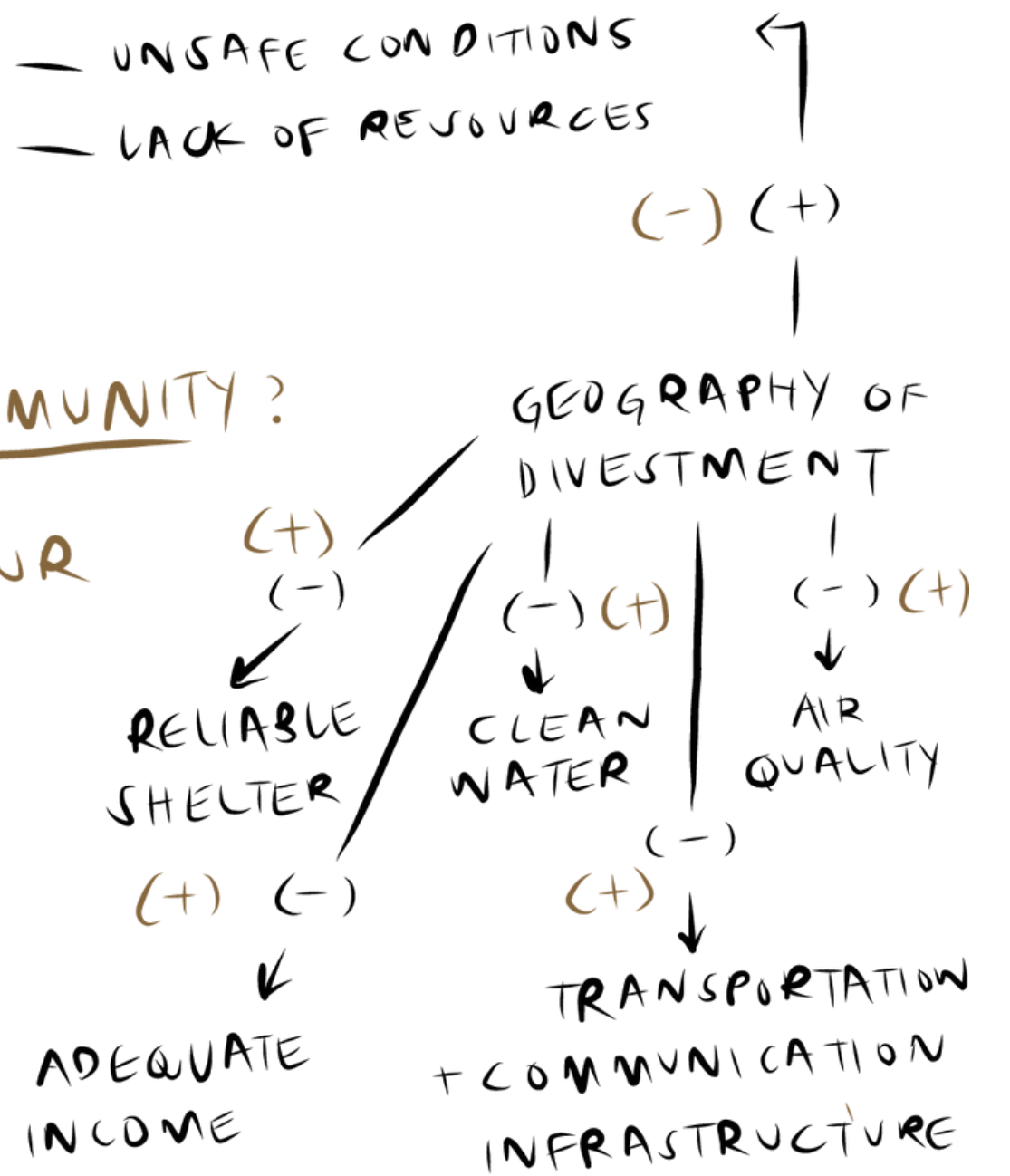
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- ← (+) — LACK OF RESOURCES

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE FOR OUR COMMUNITY?

WE UNDERSTAND OUR OWN NEEDS FROM LIVED EXPERIENCE.

ORGANIZE AROUND LOCAL WISDOM.



“Abolition has to be “green.” It has to take seriously the problem of environmental harm, environmental racism, and environmental degradation.

To be “green” it has to be “red.” It has to figure out ways to generalize the resources needed for well-being for the most vulnerable people in our community, which then will extend to all people.

And to do that, to be “green” and “red,” it has to be international. It has to stretch across borders so that we can consolidate our strength, our experience, and our vision for a better world.”

-Ruth Wilson Gilmore

Future

Decouple Police From Social Infrastructure

Disarm Law Enforcement

Reduce Contact Between People and the Criminal Legal System

Collectivized Care

Investment in Education, Housing, Food Security, Clean Water, Health Care, Mental Health Treatment, Social Work, Child Care, Mutual Aid, Good Jobs

Around the System

System

Within the System

# REFLECTION

## REGENERATIVE DESIGN IS GREEN, THEREFORE ABOLITION IS GREEN.

Sustainability within the Prison Industrial Complex is already happening. The cycle was designed to sustain itself and has been at the cost of vulnerable communities. We must be critical of who and what ideologies determine the definition of sustainability within this system. The current ideology sets goals to only perpetuate cycles of harm, guised as symptomatic solutions.

**The collection of these system-frameworks prompts imagination for how agents can become activated in their environment to change a problematic pattern of behavior.**

PIC abolition does not look like a centralized one-size-fits-all framework; that is the problem with policing, incarceration, and surveillance. Rather, it is through the process of building localized programs that we find what best serves each community. We must engage in what Mariame Kaba coins: **a million experiments.**

Context is the foundation for why these struggles are happening and how we can actually address them with human needs at the forefront. As Kaba posits, “people want to treat ‘we’ll figure it out by working to get there’ as some sort of rhetorical evasion instead of being a fundamental expression of trust in the power of conscious collective effort” - yet our societies are conditioned to see discomfort in uncertainty.

The capitalist mindset is not centered around process, it commands a substitution for one product in the place of another. While certain industries such as high-tech or banking revere and normalize failure, it is only with missions for social transformation where suddenly failure is not supported or be spoken about - or it discredits ideas as if they do not have merit.

Kaba tries to steer away from the notion that models for social transformation exist, as if there is some “correct” way to bring about change. She urges organizers, activists, and community members to think about what their ecosystems need. What might be “effective” for one group of people may not translate into another - which is why we need creative and generative processes that reiterate from learned experiences.



ABOLITION IS REGENERATIVE

ABOLITION IS CREATIVE

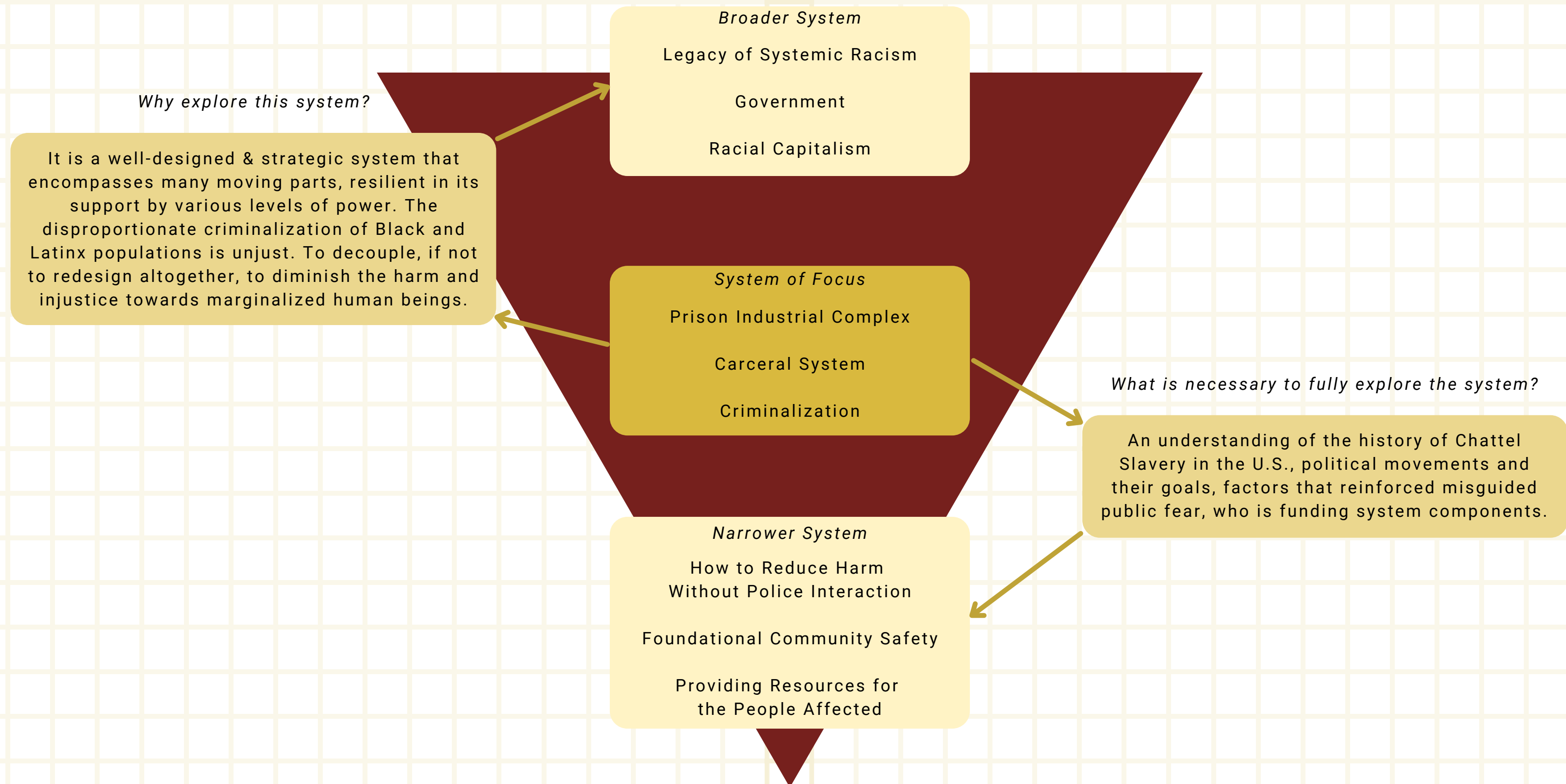
ABOLITION IS **GREEN**

"Everything worthwhile is done with others."

-Mariame Kaba

# APPENDIX

# SYSTEM EXPLORATION



# SYSTEM ELEMENTS

## EXTERNAL FACTORS

The PIC exists within encompassing systems of *white supremacy* and *racial capitalism*, complexes developed through settler-colonialism. Racial capitalism, the extraction of social and economic value from a person of a different racial identity by a dominant group, is the foundation for chattel slavery.

These factors *heavily* influence the outlined inputs. By understanding the history of chattel slavery in this country, we can start to trace the system's signals and triggers.



H. Tees

Major events that paved the framework for modern concepts utilized in the PIC:

- **Eli Whitney's invention of the cotton gin in 1793:** This revolutionized the efficiency of picking cotton, solidifying race-based slavery in the U.S. By 1840, the U.S. supplied 75% of the world's cotton. By 1860 enslaved people were valued at ~\$3.5 billion, equivalent to ~\$75 billion today.<sup>7</sup>
- **Banning of imported enslaved persons in 1808:** The end of the international slave trade triggered a response to develop a robust domestic slave trade network, meaning, so as to avoid being euphemistic, the sexual abuse and impregnation of enslaved women to produce future generations of enslaved peoples.
- **Fugitive Slave Act of 1850:** In addition to existing fugitive slave organizations (*i.e.* modern police grew directly out of vigilante slave-catchers), this act required all federal judges, including those in free states, to abide in the return of escaped enslaved peoples to their legal "owners". However, the falsely accused could not testify on their own behalf, nor could they ask for a jury trial, leading to the enslavement of many free people - setting precedent for phenomena observed in contemporary law enforcement such as implicit bias and racial profiling.

\*original names of organizations are used for the purpose of clarity

# HISTORICAL EVENTS

## That Led to the Creation of the PIC Enterprise

Public Enemy Number One: Nixon Era marked a moment in history where a group of people define by race & class was marked as the 'enemy'. Hyper-criminalization of crack cocaine vs powder cocaine with disproportionate sentences on crack cocaine users; mandated minimum sentencing enacted.

The strategy of mass incarceration is utilized against immigrant populations and institutions of family regulation. AZ passes a law that allows for police to stop anyone that looks like an immigrant. People are detained for indefinite periods of time without trial. This converts immigration into criminalization with an undertone of counterterrorism tactics, a strategy influenced by the War on Terror.

Chattel slavery's 400 year history informs many of the influencing factors that feed the PIC today. The end of the international slave trade triggered a response to develop a robust domestic slave trade network. The origins of policing was developed through the Fugitive Slave Act, and emulates phenomena observed in contemporary law enforcement like implicit bias and racial profiling.

Graham vs Connor Supreme Court ruling allows for police killing in claim of defense if they fear for their life.

First African captives brought to Jamestown 1619

Chattel slavery is legalized into the establishment of the U.S. 1776

Eli Whitney invents the cotton gin 1793

13th Amendment 1865

Ruffin vs Commonwealth 1871

Vietnam War begins, Anti-War Movement starts 1964

Civil Rights Movement 1954-1968

Reagan Era 1981-1989

1988 Anti-Drug Abuse Act: hyper-criminalization of crack cocaine

Graham vs Connor 1989

Arizona SB 1070 Law 2010

COVID-19 Global Pandemic starts 2020

Expedited release of ~ 208,500 inmates Mar-Jun

Chattel Slavery

1808 End of International Slave Trade

1850 Fugitive Slave Act

1861-1865 Civil War

1896 Federal prison system established

1870-1896 Jim Crow

1983 Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) is formed, prison economy privatized

1971 Nixon declares War on Drugs

1994 Clinton Crime Bill  
California Three Strikes Law

2001-2009 G.W. Bush Era

2013 BLM Movement starts in response to the killing of Trayvon Martin

Whitney's invention revolutionized the efficiency of picking cotton, defining the solidification of race-based slavery in the U.S. By 1860 enslaved people were valued at ~\$3.5 billion, equivalent to ~\$75 billion today.

In merely four decades, the total prison population *increases 6.6 times* from the start of the Nixon Era (357,292 ppl) to the end of the Bush era (3,362,500 ppl).

Emancipation only extended to states that had seceded from the Union. As a means to replace the loss of production and protection of property from abolition, the post-Civil-War hegemony continued the exploitation of Black labor through racial capitalism, racial caste system, and penal labor.

13th Amendment *i.e.* Legalized Penal Labor: Institution of slavery ends, "except as punishment of crime". This created a loophole to extort forced labor under criminalization. Ruffin vs Commonwealth establishes an incarcerated person as a "slave of the state".

The 1994 Crime Bill federally extended death penalty to 60 new crimes, increased sentences, offered financial incentives for building new prisons, enforced mandatory sentencing and truth-in-sentencing laws, eliminated higher education for inmates, and militarized law enforcement - all leading to the acceleration of mass incarceration. CA builds 24 new prisons in a 23 yr span.

# SYSTEM ELEMENTS

## INPUTS & OUTPUTS

### WHAT IS ALEC?

The American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) is a lobbying firm that acts as a private club of politicians and corporate executives. The purpose of this firm is to draft model bills that are pro-capital for legislators to enact through Congress. ALEC has played a prominent role in helping pass legislation that repeal environmental regulations, deregulate beneficiaries' industries, privatize education, and shape voting rights in the U.S.<sup>4</sup> The bills are cleansed of any reference to ALEC before introduced publicly, although there have been multiple instances where lawmakers have submitted the model bill verbatim for review, forgetting to erase the ALEC watermark.

In 2011, the Center for Media and Democracy (CMD) exposed 850 model bills ghostwritten by ALEC since the 1970s. Lisa Graves of CMD asserts, "the fact is, is that these bills have, in essence, been pre-approved by some of the biggest global corporations in the world, and then, in essence, they are ratified by the politicians who lead ALEC, and then they are put out throughout the country".

For more information on ALEC, please visit [alecexposed.org](http://alecexposed.org), a comprehensive wiki compiled by the Center for Media and Democracy.

## Profit for punishment.

Corporations from the industries of healthcare including pharmaceuticals, banking, insurance, multi-industry consumer goods, tech giants, fossil fuels, defense contractors, conservative news outlets, and private prison industries are current or former members of ALEC.<sup>5</sup>

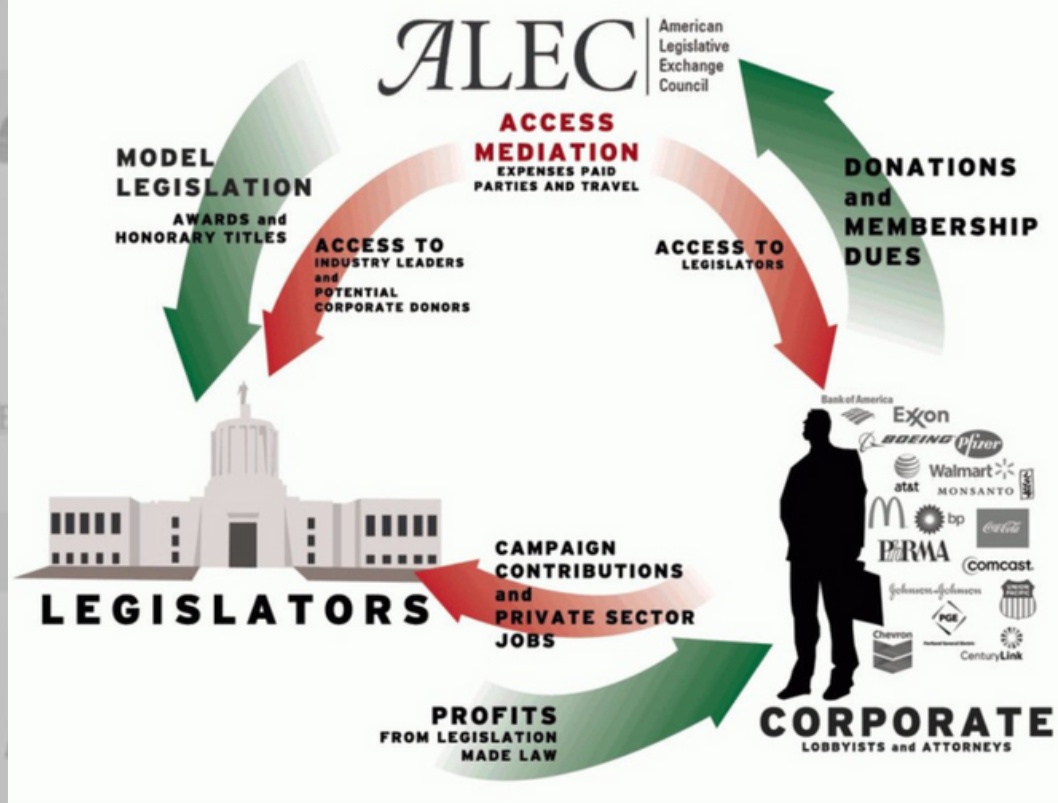
### ALEC WITHIN THE SYSTEM

Corrections Corporation of America (rebranded to CoreCivic in 2016) and other private prison companies are a part of ALEC's agenda. In 2021, CoreCivic's total assets are worth \$3.8 billion.

The economic model of the PIC depends on the inputs of criminals.

ALEC is responsible for the set of hyper-criminalization legislation that unleashed the growth of mass incarceration: California's Three Strikes Law (1994), the Federal Crime Bill of 1994 (*i.e.* Biden & Clinton Crime Bill), mandated sentencing bills, and truth-in-sentencing bills.

Tactics from the War on Drugs are also weaponized against other populations like immigrants, enacted by Arizona's SB 1070 bill (2010), which ALEC also drafted.



Many corporations exited ALEC in 2012 after its exposure by CMD and the killing of Trayvon Martin which led to public revelation that ALEC was behind Florida's Stand Your Ground law (2005).

This law exonerated George Zimmerman from murdering Martin, 17 years old and unarmed, in claim of self defense, even though Zimmerman initiated the armed pursuit.

- |                             |                                 |                                                             |                                  |                                           |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| Blue Cross Blue Shield      | Google (withdrew 2014)          | Koch Industries                                             | Chevron                          | American Ball Coalition                   |
| National Health Insurance   | Facebook (withdrew 2015)        | Johnson & Johnson (withdrew 2012)                           | ARCO                             | Corrections Corporations of America (CCA) |
| State Farm                  | IBM (withdrew 2013)             | Walmart (withdrew 2012)                                     | ExxonMobil                       | Access Corrections                        |
| Geico                       | DeI (withdrew 2012)             | Kraft Foods (withdrew 2012)                                 | Marathon Petroleum Co            | BobBarker                                 |
| Liberty Mutual Insurance Co | Hewlett-Packard (withdrew 2012) | Coca-Cola (withdrew 2012)                                   | Ford (withdrew 2016)             | Armor                                     |
| Pfizer                      | Intel (withdrew 2013)           | McDonalds (withdrew 2012)                                   | General Motors                   | Telmate                                   |
| PhRMA                       | Yelp (withdrew 2014)            | MillerCoors (withdrew 2012)                                 | PG&E (withdrew 2014)             |                                           |
| Purdue Pharma               | Yahoo (withdrew 2014)           | DuPont                                                      | General Electric (withdrew 2012) | Comast (withdrew 2019)                    |
| Correct Rx                  | Amazon                          | Home Depot (withdrew in 2013)                               | Union Supply Co                  | AT&T                                      |
| CGF Health Network          | Intuit                          | Lowes (withdrew in 2013)                                    |                                  | Verizon (withdrew 2018)                   |
|                             |                                 | Walgreens (withdrew 2012)                                   | Fidelity Investments             | T-Mobile (withdrew 2015)                  |
|                             |                                 |                                                             | American Express                 | Motorola                                  |
| Boeing                      | UPS                             | News Corp (owns New York Journal, Wall Street Journal, FOX) | PNC Mortgage Corp of America     | Sony                                      |
| Northrup Grumman            | FedEx                           |                                                             | Wells Fargo (withdrew 2012)      | Time Warner Cable                         |
| Raytheon                    | Uline                           |                                                             |                                  |                                           |



# SYSTEM EXPLORATION

## ASCENDANCY THROUGH COLONIALISM

Super-System

Parallel System



Jon Cherry/Getty Images

System of Focus



Parchman Farm

Parallel System



Soohee Cho/The Intercept, Getty Images

## WHITE SUPREMACY

**Sub-Systems:**

- Xenophobia
- Racial Caste Hierarchy
- Maintenance of Oppression
- Racial Capitalism

## PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

**Sub-Systems:**

- Domestic Repression of Dissent
- Coupling Carceral System & War on Drugs
- Militarized Police

## WAR ON TERROR

**Sub-Systems:**

- Indefinite Detention
- Subsuming Immigration with Counterterrorism
- Expansion of Surveillance Opportunities

# SYSTEM EXPLORATION

## THE PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX

Super-System

Parallel System



### WAR ON DRUGS

**Sub-Systems:**

- Tough-on-Crime Politicians
- Domestic Repression of Dissent
- Hyper-Criminalization of Crack Cocaine
- Sensationalism and Disproportionate Black Arrests

System of Focus



### CRIMINALIZATION

**Sub-Systems:**

- Disenfranchisement & marginalization of POC, immigrants, political dissenters, poor people, LGBTQ. Protects interests of politicians, private prison industries, law enforcement.

Parallel System



### MILITARIZED POLICE

**Sub-Systems:**

- Responding to potentially non-violent situations *with* violent force: homelessness, drug addiction, domestic dispute, political dissent, mental illness crisis, fear, noise complaints, traffic regulation.

Template developed by Curt McNamara with the Biomimicry Institute

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