

THE HIGH INCARCERATION RATE

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## The High Incarceration Rate

### Introduction

Despite the reduction in national crime rates, incarceration has increased gradually over the past few years. A high number of offenders in the United States have been imprisoned in federal prisons, state prisons, local jails, and privately-operated facilities. The increase in incarceration rates has resulted from the rise in the likelihood of imprisonment and longer prison sentences. The rates of incarceration in low-income areas are higher as compared to the wealthier neighborhoods due to high crime rates. Also, drug crimes have remained a predominant reason for the rise of incarceration. Additionally, mandatory minimums and the fight against drugs have also increased in prison populations.

**Thesis statement:** The main problems originating from increased incarceration rates are high budgetary costs, poverty, and reducing probation periods and jail term lengths will assist in cutting down the scales down to manageable figures.

### Hypothesis

The problem of incarceration results in high budgetary and human costs. The individuals on probation are not allowed to vote, and their ability to secure jobs and certain federal benefits has been affected. People convicted of criminal issues face severe challenges in finding decent and stable employment. Also, incarceration increases the levels of poverty for prior inmates and their household members. Additionally, incarceration results in profound harmful effects on the mental and physical health of the offender after release (Wildeman, C. & Wang, E. 2017, 1470). The communities are negatively affected in different ways resulting in damage of social relationships, social networks, and long-term life chances. Moreover, imprisonment has also affected the functioning of families and changes in the political and economic infrastructure.

One of my working resolutions to the problem is urging legislators to reduce the length of prison terms and probation periods. Policymakers can change unreasonable punitive sentencing policies that include mandatory minimum sentences and truth-in-sentencing requirements. Moreover, earned time and good time policies can be utilized to lessen the sentences of inmates. In states where the rate of granting parole has remained low, the programs that allow inmates meeting specific requirements to get favorable decisions can be expanded. Changes in court orders and policies can result in a steady decline in prison populations, hence, helping in solving the high imprisonment problem. Reducing the prison terms and probation periods can ensure that only a few prisoners are held in jails in a certain period.

#### Measurement and Analysis Approach

During my research, one of the key points to study will be whether technology can be the critical key to unlocking the substitutes to long-term prison punishments. My research will also be aimed at testing whether the Global Positioning System (GPS) devices and ankle bracelets are useful in monitoring individuals convicted with nonviolent offenses. Additionally, I will aim at establishing whether individuals released under mandatory minimums use mobile devices to keep in touch with probation officers. I will use booking log and forms to gather data on the individuals arrested and confined in the incarceration facilities. I will also use classical screening forms to collect legal status, criminal history, and recommendation regarding the prisoners. Besides, other data collection sources like arrest report and jail lists will be of importance during my research. I will analyze the collected data to get the frequency distributions by diving all the data points into a series of categories such as age, number, and percentages. Additionally, I will make use of measures of central tendency to get the mean, mode, and median of jail populations.

### Applicable Sources

Altice, F.L., Azbel, L., Stone, J., Brooks-Pollock, E., Smirnov, P., Dvorak, S., Taxman, F.S., El-Bassel, N., Martin, N.K., Booth, R., and Stöver, H., 2016. The perfect storm: incarceration and the high-risk environment is perpetuating transmission of HIV, hepatitis C virus, and tuberculosis in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. *The Lancet*, 388(10050), pp.1228-1248.

In the article, the authors outline the high levels of imprisonment having resulted from the primary injection of opioids. Most of the people who abuse the drug are infected with tuberculosis, hepatitis C virus, and HIV and are crowded in prisons. The source provides useful information relevant to the topic on the high incarceration rate and the associated problems such as the spread of overlapping epidemics in prisons through injections.

Beckett, K., Knaphus, E., and Reosti, A., 2016. The end of mass incarceration? Mapping the contradictions of criminal justice policy and practice. *Mapping the Contradictions of Criminal Justice Policy and Practice (January 12, 2016)*.

The authors explain the reasons behind high imprisonment rates, despite a reduction in crime and the policies that can be used to reduce prison populations. The discretion of criminal justice actors is identified as a primary way of sustaining high incarceration rates. The information provided in the source is useful in identifying policy changes that can be used to curb the problem of high imprisonment rates.

Mauer, M., 2017. Incarceration rates in an international perspective. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Criminology and Criminal Justice*.

The author of the article explores the broader societal factors that contribute to a state's rate of imprisonment. Also, Mauer explores the policy initiatives that can be used to

control crime, cultural values, and racial ambitions about crime. The source provides relevant and useful information to the causes of high imprisonment rates and methods of controlling crime.

Moore, R., 2017. *The new Jim Crow: Mass incarceration in the age of colorblindness*. Macat Library.

The contents of the book address the racial bias that exists in the American prison system. The author discusses the problem of racial segregation, where races are not treated equally. The author reveals that most of the inmates in many prisons are African-American men who are a primary target to the police and receive long sentencing for their crimes. The source provides reliable information on the topic of high incarceration rates and associated problems.

Van der Geest, V.R., Bijleveld, C.C., Blokland, A.A. and Nagin, D.S., 2016. The effects of incarceration on longitudinal trajectories of employment: A follow-up in high-risk youth from ages 23 to 32. *Crime & Delinquency*, 62(1), pp.107-140.

In the article, the authors address the adverse effects of imprisonment on the employment prospects of an individual. The source is a peer-reviewed article and outlines incarceration effects on future employment. It is a reliable source and provides relevant information on the impacts of being convicted and how incarceration affects the offenders' future employment opportunities.

#### Ethical Standards

During the research, I will utilize different ethical and legal responsibilities to ensure that the final report will be of the highest ethical standards. The study will provide a moral framework across all the activity cycle. I will apply integrity in the research work, and

consultations will be built with the stakeholders in implementing the research. Also, I will make efforts to ensure that the study complies with the department guidelines for conducting research. Research findings will be communicated in a manner that is respectful and sensitive to the religious and cultural differences among the participants in the study.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, several problems result from high incarceration rates such as poverty, and a working solution to the challenges is needed. One of the primary results is the increase in the level of poverty to the affected families. The problem has also resulted in high budget costs, damage to social networks, and difficulties in securing decent job opportunities for those affected by incarceration. Reduction in the time of parole periods and prison terms can be utilized as a working solution to solve the challenge of confinement in prison populations.

References

- Altice, F.L., Azbel, L., Stone, J., Brooks-Pollock, E., Smirnov, P., Dvorak, S., Taxman, F.S., El-Bassel, N., Martin, N.K., Booth, R., and Stover, H., 2016. The perfect storm: incarceration and the high-risk environment is perpetuating transmission of HIV, hepatitis C virus, and tuberculosis in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. *The Lancet*, 388(10050), pp.1228-1248.
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- Wildeman, C., and Wang, E.A., 2017. Mass incarceration, public health, and widening inequality in the USA. *The Lancet*, 389(10077), pp.1464-1474.