

# CS475 Senior Project Literature Review

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## 1 Literature Review

<https://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1037context=themis>

At San Jose State University, research was conducted upon "Human Cattle: Prison Overpopulation and the Political Economy of Mass Incarceration." Here, we take a deeper dive to look into the costs and impacts of prison overpopulation and mass incarceration on society as a whole, individuals, families and communities. Prison overpopulation is growing at an alarming rate, where in 1980 it was reported that 500,000 Americans were incarcerated. That number grew to 2.3 million in 2010. Even with increased public funding, the system is no longer sustainable due to the amount of funding needed to maintain living conditions. In 2006, an estimate 68.7 billion dollars was spent on correctional systems. Then in 2008 that number increased to 75 billion dollars, combining federal states and local governments. Not only are the financial costs a rising issue, but the social costs as well. Mass incarceration contributes to increased poverty and income inequality. Incarceration has a negative impact of an individuals economic prospects, meaning inmates are experiencing a decrease of 11 percent in hourly wages. In some cases, inmates are the primary source of family income. For some families, this means it is an added responsibility to find a new source of income, and cover the costs of communication. After the release of an inmate, it can be difficult to find employment, and the financial burden continues of post-eviction penalties that preclude them from qualifying for subsidized housing or obtaining a job. Many negative stereotypes are pervasive to this day. They are perceived as "morally incompetent, unredeemable" and likely to continue engaging in criminal activity. In addition, racial stigmatization is likely due to high crime rates in ethnic minority neighborhoods. Changing the culture of mass incarceration in America is not a simple task. The costs of maintaining sustainable living conditions outweigh the benefits derived from correctional systems. On the surface it may appear that it is serving in purpose, when in most cases it is no longer sustainable to maintain that purpose. Larger populations lead to even larger prison populations and expenses on the individuals and their families.