



Terrorism Recidivism Study

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Research Question

What does the population of Guantanamo Bay look like? Are alleged terrorists released from Guantanamo Bay recidivating? If so, what does the population of recidivists look like? What does the population of non-recidivists look like?

Methods

We identified all individuals detained at Guantanamo Bay since it opened. We utilized publicly accessible sources, including declassified government documents, public databases, media articles, and systematic and web-based search engines. We collected information on the events that led to each subject's detainment at Guantanamo Bay, as well as the results during and after their time in custody. We coded case information on each detainee, using text based and numeric values. The resulting database was rigorously reviewed for quality before conducting the analysis presented here.

Point of Comparison

A study of apolitical offenders by Alper, Durose & Markman (2018) suggests that of those released from state prisons, 83 percent recidivated at least once within nine years. 68 percent were arrested within three years, which increased to 79 percent after six years.

Funding

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Total Population Variables

Guantanamo Bay has housed 780 male detainees. The population consists of:

- Average age: 29
- 342 Asian individuals, 87 Black individuals, 33 European White individuals, and 318 Middle Eastern individuals
- Most citizenship from Afghanistan, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia
- 525 violent offenses, 72 non-violent financial offenses, 255 non-violent non-financial offenses



Recidivism Variables

Recidivism variables are as follows for a population of 54 or 6.9% of the total population:

- Average age: 29
- 14 Asian individuals, 12 Black individuals, 12 European White individuals, 16 Middle Eastern individuals
- Bulk of citizenship from Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Russia, and Yemen
- 35 violent offenses, 5 non-violent financial offenses, 22 non-violent non-financial offenses

Non-Recidivism Variables

Non-recidivism variables are as follows for a population of 726 or 93.1% of the total population.

- Average age: 29
- 328 Asian individuals, 75 Black individuals, 21 European White individuals, 302 Middle Eastern individuals
- Bulk of citizenship from Afghanistan, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia
- 490 violent offenses, 67 non-violent financial offenses, 233 non-violent non-financial offenses

Results & Discussion

Based on the data, many characteristics are similar between the total population, recidivist population, and non-recidivist population, but a few stand out.

- Proportionally, 36.4 percent of European white detainees have recidivated, in comparison to 4.1 percent of Asian detainees, 13.8 percent of Black detainees, and 5.0 percent of Middle Eastern detainees
- Additionally, 8.6 percent of those who committed a non-violent, non-financial crime recidivated, in comparison to 6.7 percent of violent crimes, 6.9 percent of non-violent financial crimes.

Lastly, the Guantanamo Bay population is recidivating at a much lower rate (6.9 percent) than apolitical offenders (83 percent).

References

Alper, M., Durose, M. R., & Markman, J. (2018, May). 2018 Update On Prisoner Recidivism: A 9-Year Follow-Up Period (2005-2014). Washington DC; Bureau of Justice Statistics.