

# **The Effect of Prior Convictions on Recidivism**

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## *Abstract*

This paper empirically investigates the effect of prior convictions on the duration of time until a parolee relapses into criminal activity and is rearrested—recidivism. Various factors related to recidivism have been observed and analyzed to determine causal relationships. Determining these causal relationships can make important implications because recidivism can be used to measure the effectiveness of corrections. This analysis uses data from a 1977 case study of parolees in North Carolina who were released and tracked for three years. This analysis uses Difference in differences research design to determine if the difference between the treatment group (parolees who had prior convictions) and the control group (parolees who had zero prior convictions) is significant. The results concluded that relative to the control group, time spent outside jail before being re-arrested if a parolee had a prior conviction is less by 17.7%. This suggests that parolees with more prior convictions will spend less amount of time until they are rearrested.

*Key words:* Recidivism; Difference in Differences; Accelerated Failure Time Model

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