

Criminal Recidivism after Prison and Electronic Monitoring

Rafael Di Tella

Harvard Business School, CifAR and NBER

and

Ernesto Schargrodsky

UTDT

This draft: December 28, 2012

Abstract

We study criminal recidivism in Argentina by focusing on the re-arrest rates of two groups: individuals released from prison and individuals released from electronic monitoring. Detainees are randomly assigned to judges, and ideological differences across judges translate into large differences in the allocation of electronic monitoring to an otherwise similar population. Using these peculiarities of the Argentine setting we argue that there is a large, negative causal effect on criminal recidivism of treating individuals with electronic monitoring relative to prison.