

# Life or Death: What Factors Impact the Decision?

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## Abstract

Death penalty cases are among the more controversial and costly. There are numerous factors that may influence the outcome of a capital trial. This study considers offender demographics, district attorney characteristics, local political climate, and county financial condition to gain a more holistic understanding of death penalty outcomes. Using a multilevel logistic regression model, Texas death penalty cases from 2007-2018 (N=397) were analyzed. Findings suggest that smaller counties may be limited in their pursuit of the death penalty due to financial constraints. Type of offense, when the crime was committed, age of the defendant, and the time between the crime and trial all had weak but statistically significant results.