Does US law enforcement serve everyone equally?

Jón Jónsson

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In a speech in 1963 arguing that economic growth improves living standards for the disadvantaged as well as the affluent, John F Kennedy said 'A rising tide lifts all boats'[1]. In fact, in the years since we have seen that this is only *partially* true: living standards increase but the increases are spread unequally, with the richest in society gaining the most.

As in economics, so in society as a whole. Inequality is one of the most important problems we face today. Using data from the Guardian I intend to explore racial and age inequalities in people killed by police and other law enforcement agencies in the United States. In exploring the data I hope to answer the following questions:

1. Are some racial groups more likely to be killed by police than others?
2. Are some age groups more likely to be killed by police than others?
3. How does the data differ between states and counties across the United States?
4. Does the data compare favourably or unfavourably between the United States and other developed nations?

My primary data source will be The Counted dataset from the Guardian[2]. This consists of two tables containing around 2,300 observations and fourteen variables. The data is *almost* in a tidy structure and I predict it will be trivial to collect and clean it.

To enable sub-national comparisions I will collect state and county populations from data the US Census Bureau makes available as Excel spreadsheets[3]. Again, this data, comprising around 3,000 observations and a handful of variables, is in good order and I predict little effort will be required to collect and clean it.

Data on deaths by police in countries around the world is more difficult to come by, but I plan on using data on six countries collated by the Guardian[4]. To aid the international comparisions I will collect country population data from the World Bank

[1] The American Presidency Project, "Remarks in Heber Springs, Arkansas, at the Dedication of Greers Ferry Dam," accessed February 7, 2017, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=9455.

[2] The Guardian, "The Counted: People Killed by Police in the United States," accessed February 3, 2017, https://www.theguardian.com/thecounted.

[3] US Census Bureau, "County Population Totals and Components of Change: 2010–2016," accessed January 30, 2017, https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2016/demo/popest/counties-total.html.

[4] Jamiles Lartey, "By the Numbers: US Police Kill More in Days Than Other Countries Do in Years," accessed June 9, 2015, https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/jun/09/the-counted-police-killings-us-vs-other-countries.

API[1]. This structure of the API means this will easy to collect and clean. It consists of a handful of observations and variables.

I anticipate that the main difficulties in piecing the data together will lie in converting the street address of each death in the US into a latitude and longitude so that they can be assigned to a county. This I will do using Geocodio, a reverse geocoding service[2].

[1] World Bank, "Population, Total," accessed January 30, 2017, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL.

[2] "Geocodio," accessed February 9, 2017, https://geocod.io/.