Taking Money: The Politics of Asset Forfeiture

By: Chad Hedman
Asset Forfeiture

- What is it?
- A powerful tool
- Greatly debated
- Metro Gang Strike Force
History

- Comprehensive Drug Abuse and Control Act of 1970
- Organized Crime Control Act of 1970
- Civil Asset Forfeiture Reform Act of 2000 (CAFRA)
Different Opinions

- Arguments for asset forfeiture
- Arguments against asset forfeiture
  - Reduce their budget
  - Increase anti-drug policing
  - Decrease in other areas
  - Go for the most cash instead of most drugs
  - Policing for profit
Sheriff Phil Hodapp

- Where the money goes
- What they can seize
- Certain crimes
- County Attorney
Questions?

- Is there a reason
  - Social factors
  - Economic factors
Methods and Analysis

- Built a data set - minority, education, income, number of officers, forfeiture incidents, drunk driving statistics
- Minnesota State Auditor
- Minnesota Geospatial Information Office
- F.B.I.
Figure 1: Incidents per Capita compared to Poverty
Figure 2: Incidents per Capita compared to Officers per Capita
Figure 3: Incidents per Capita compared to Percent Minority
Conclusions

- No statistically significant relationships
- Complicated issue
- Needs further research
An important issue

“Our basic approach is to follow the lead of the law enforcement agency handling the forfeiture. We pretty much always forfeit drug money. The reality with DUI cars is that they either have a bank lien on them and can’t be forfeited or they are crappy and we don't want them and will allow the owner to buy them back.”