Taking Money: The Politics of Asset Forfeiture

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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

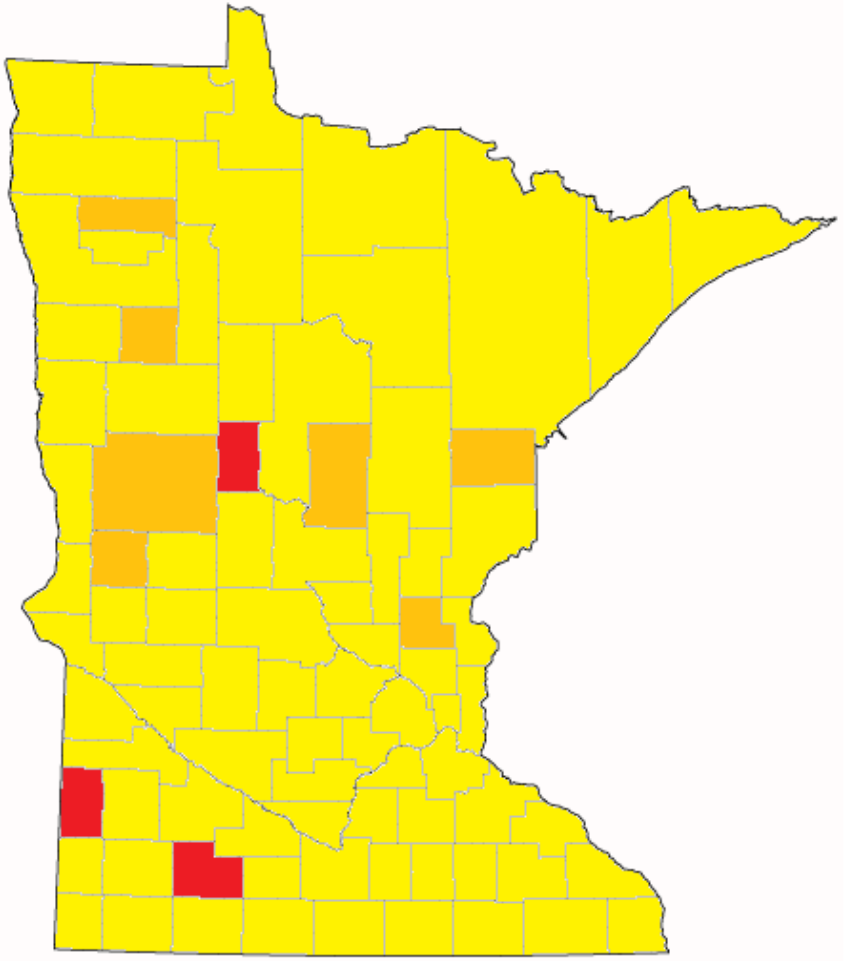
- Where the money goes
- What they can seize
- Certain crimes
- County Attorney

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.



Number of Incidents Per Capita

0-9

10-29

30+

Figure 1: Incidents per Capita compared to Poverty

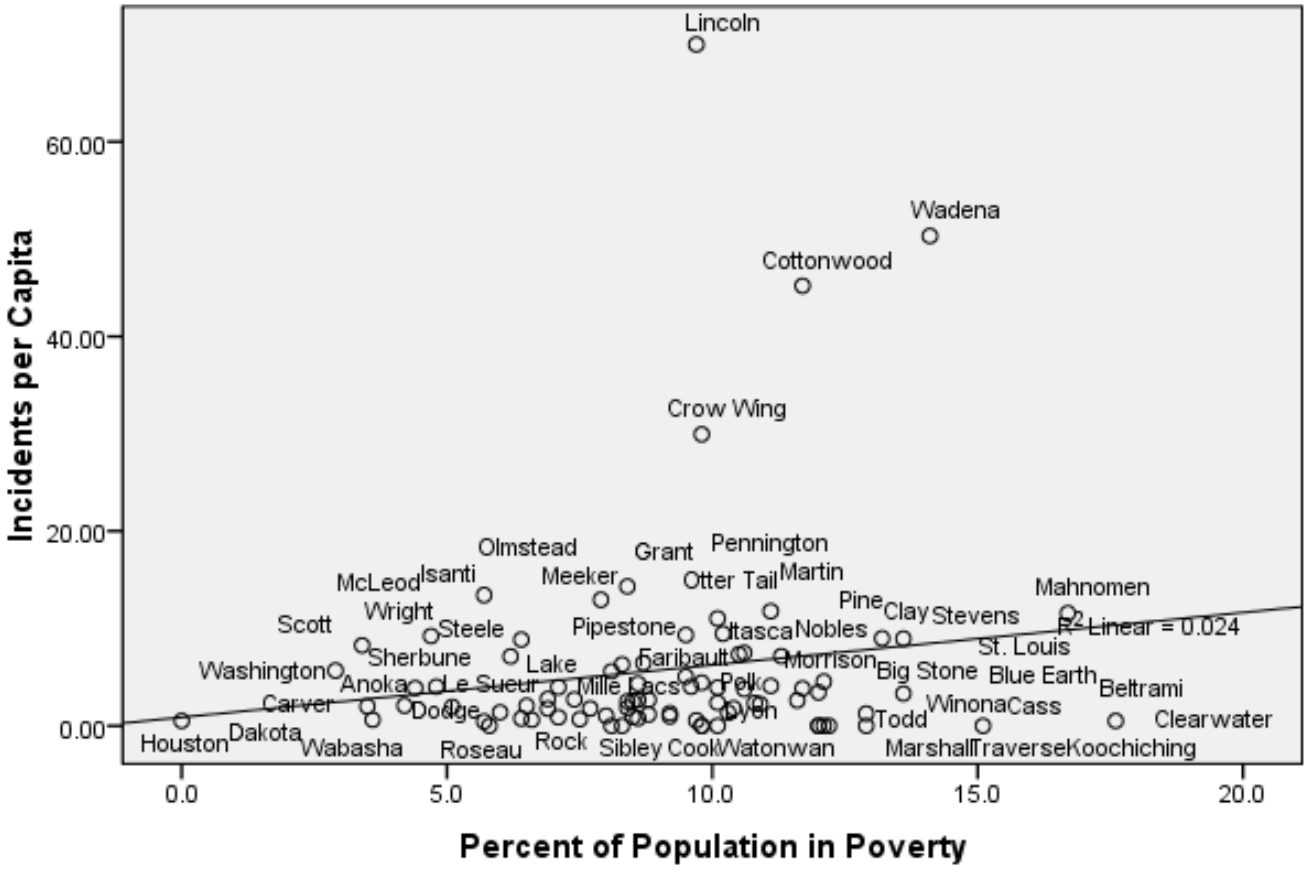


Figure 2: Incidents per Capita compared to Officers per Capita

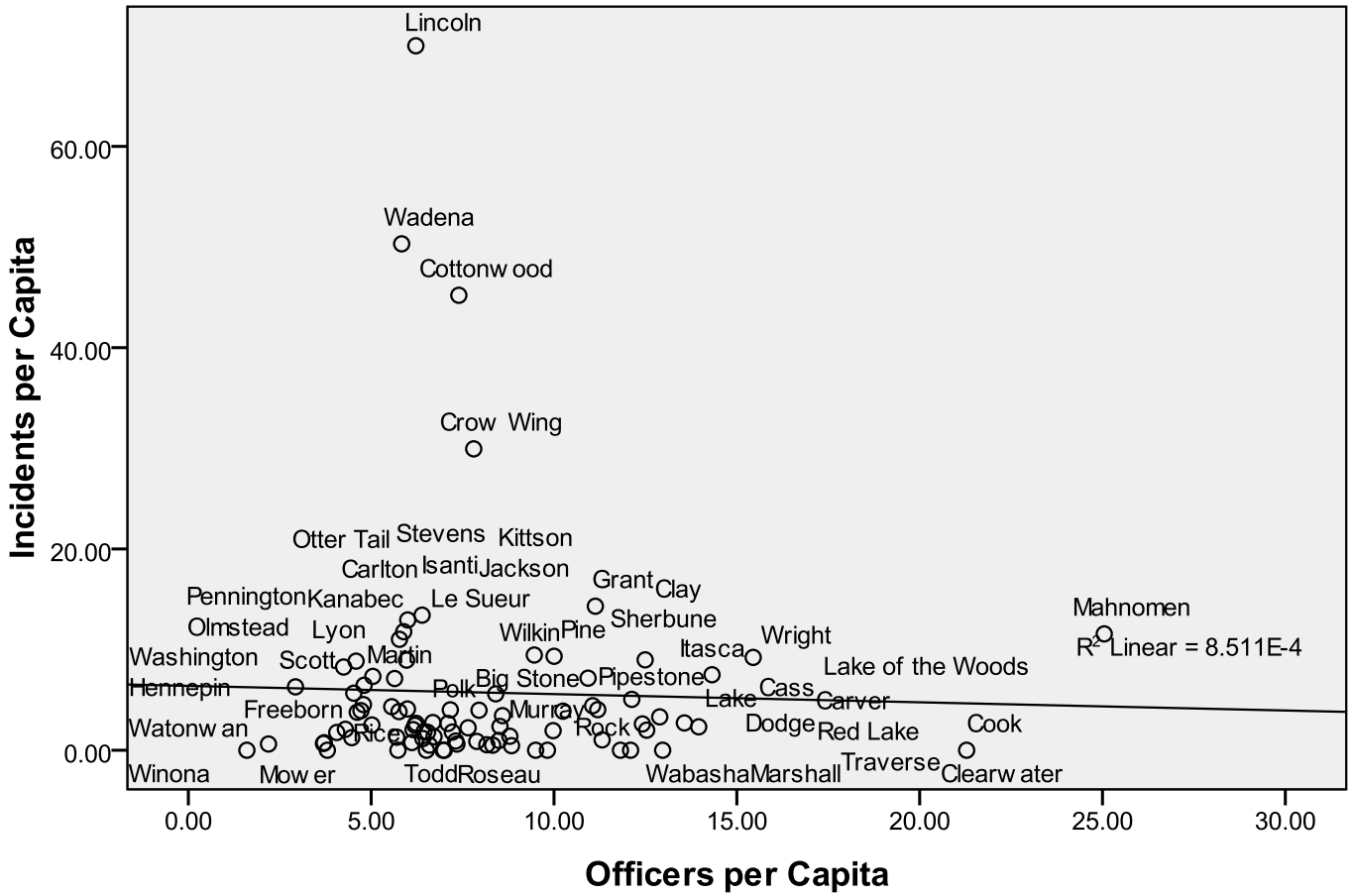
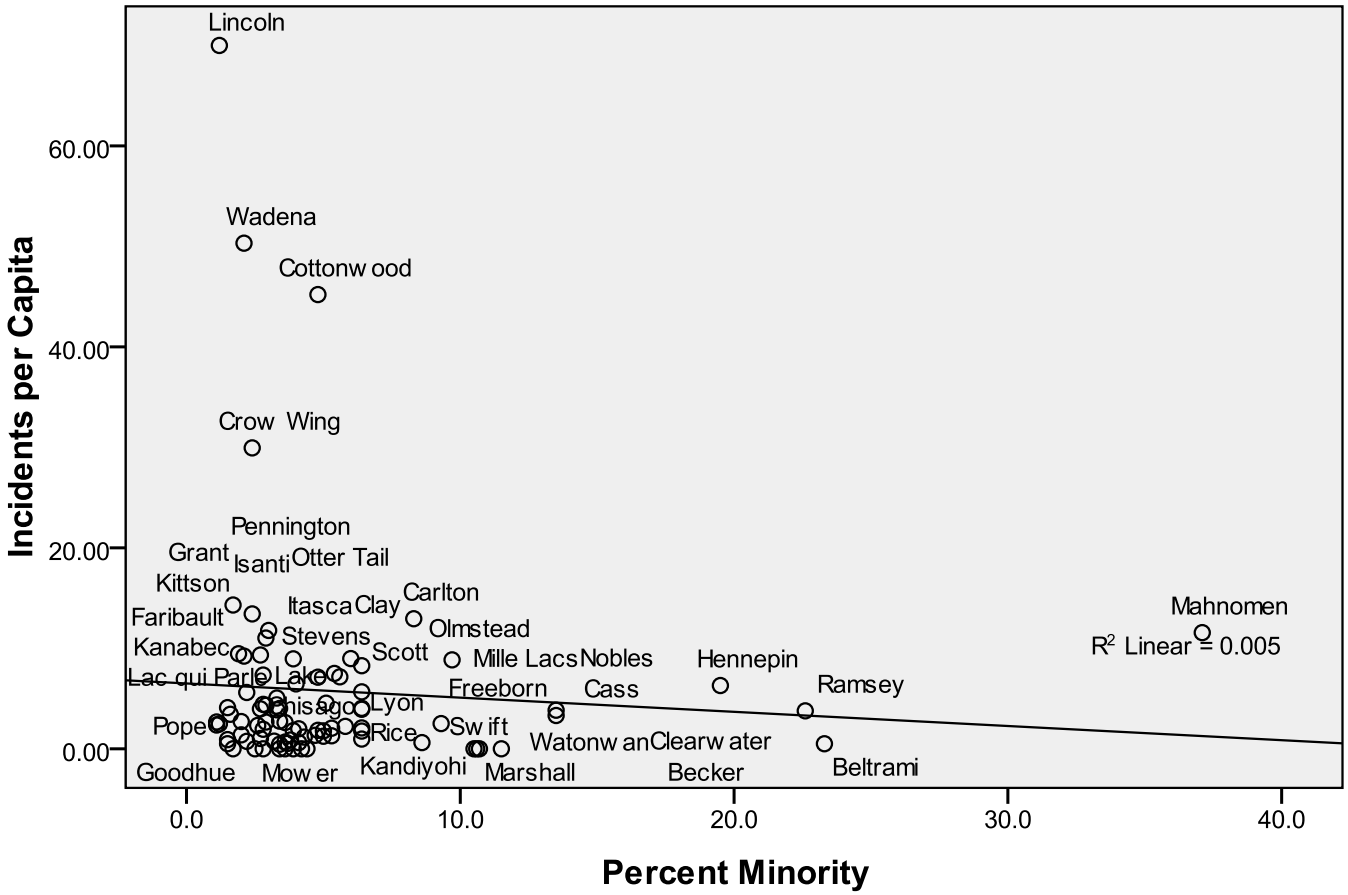


Figure 3: Incidents per Capita compared to Percent Minority



Conclusions

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

Final Thoughts

- 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.”