

# Assessing HIDTAs and Vehicle Stops in Narcotics Trafficking Research

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The efficacy of drug interdiction methods raises important policy questions regarding programs designed to achieve stated organizational goals. High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) entities are one example of a program that has come under fire in the last several years due to a lack of productivity in drug enforcement output goals (e.g., possession or sale arrests) hampered by a diffusion of resources across the nation to target local drug epidemics. HIDTA is a multijurisdictional task force endeavor that is charged with drug interdiction in 28 high-level drug distribution jurisdictions across the country. Drug arrests derived through searches and seizures during traffic stops also make up a significant number of total drug interdiction incidents; however, few empirical studies have compared organizational outputs for these two interdiction methods. Data for this study were gathered in a U.S.-Mexico border jurisdiction, one of the HIDTA areas initially funded by the Byrne Grant Program to stop drug trafficking. The study offers a comparison of vehicle drug-related arrests and HIDTA arrests and provides policy implications and suggestions for future research in narcotics trafficking research.

**Key Words:** HIDTA • vehicle search • drug arrests • multijurisdictional task force

The essential function of a drug task force is to unite resources from various federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to dismantle high level drug distribution networks. Some research, however, has shown that these entities have been ineffective at reducing serious drug offending (Smith, Novak, & Frank, 2001; Schlegel & McGarrell, 1991). Multijurisdictional task force regions are more likely to have greater resources, thus the increase in drug seizures and arrests may not be attributed to the existence of task forces in particular (Brewer, Jefferis, Butcher, & Wiles, 2007). Further, specific jurisdictions such as High-Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTAs) have been allocated significant funding to combat drug distribution and trafficking (Office of National Drug Control Policy [ONDCP], 2003). Additionally, a significant number of drug seizures take place during routine police patrol efforts, which raises questions about the efficiency of drug task force investigations in specific jurisdictions. For example, data obtained from the 2000 Operations Pipeline and Convoy indicate that federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies seized a high volume

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of 66,248 kilograms of illicit substances from private and commercial vehicles traveling on Texas thoroughfares (Department of Justice [DOJ], 2003).

Two significant movements have enhanced the effectiveness of police patrol efforts during the last two decades. First, the professionalization of policing movement, characterized by the transition from reactive to proactive models of policing, has become the preferred strategy to reduce community fear of crime (Bayley, 1994; Goldstein, 1990; Greene, 1987; Smith, Novak, & Frank, 2001). A second significant change deals with the legal system's response to the war on drugs and policy changes that have occurred in the courts that broaden police power to search for illicit contraband during routine police vehicle stops.

This article discusses the effectiveness of multijurisdictional task forces in HIDTA jurisdictions—in this case the U.S.-Mexican border. It begins with a review of the structure and purpose of drug enforcement operations with specific emphasis on the assessment of multijurisdictional HIDTA drug task forces. To demonstrate the utility of undercover drug enforcement operations in this area, this study compares outcome productivity measures with a comparison sample of drug arrests and seizures derived through vehicle stops. A review of factors affecting search and seizure laws and research regarding police discretion during traffic stops reveals a comparison of these drug interdiction methods. The southwest border area is particularly salient as a study site for assessing drug enforcement due to the current social and political climate of this region.

### **Literature Review**

During the 1980s law enforcement agencies responded to the war on drugs by implementing organized efforts to dismantle drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) thought to be responsible for much of the increase in violent crime. The official response was the development of interagency collaboration among local, state, and federal agencies to target high-level drug distributors and transportation networks (Smith, Novak, Frank, & Travis, et al., 2000). Although many political leaders lauded multijurisdictional task force initiatives, police officials soon realized that law enforcement priorities differed between agencies over specific crime and drug crises. Law enforcement developed specialized operations such as task forces to address these new demands (Brewer et al., 2007).

#### *Measuring Task Force Effectiveness*

Research on organizational effectiveness has employed a variety of methodological approaches, including goal attainment models, process models, and structural models (Klofas, Stojkovic, & Kalinich, 1990; Smith et al., 2000). These different approaches suggest that there is a multidimensional approach to understanding drug task force

operations. For example, the process-centered approach emphasizes the relationships among the agencies that make up the task force. Further, it stresses the importance of certain factors such as communication, cooperation, and resource management for productivity purposes (McGarrell & Schlegel, 1993). By enhancing the quality of task force inputs, it is hoped that attitudes and perceptions among task force members will also improve. Self-assessment measures of work productivity and beliefs about the organization's effectiveness are often employed to gauge aspects of success (Hall, 1991).

Strengthening morale and communication among agency participants fosters higher levels of productivity and enhances outputs, namely, drug seizures and arrests. Previous research on task forces has suggested that process-oriented factors such as communication and collaboration among participating task force members are an advantage to task force membership (Ruboy & Coldren, 1992; McGarrell & Schlegel, 1993). However, police administrators and political officials remain focused on end-product measures of success, such as drug cases, to justify expenditures, particularly in situations where resources are limited.

Due to limitations of the process-centered approach, task force evaluation research has focused on goal attainment measures of effectiveness. Defining agency outputs and quantifying measures provides clear evidence of the agency's effectiveness (Damanpour & Evan, 1984). Studies on the efficacy of criminal justice operations routinely focus on goal attainment models of success (Smith et al., 2000). In the case of task forces, the goal attainment model is feasible due to the uniqueness of crime problems and the organization of the agency itself. For example, fugitive task forces and car-jacking task forces can be assessed by measuring the reduction of overall crime in a particular jurisdiction, the number of arrests, and types of arrests.

Although the concept underlying the goal attainment model appears straightforward, it is often difficult to define agency priorities and measures of success. For example, agencies frequently have contradictory goals, which make it difficult to satisfy every agency (Wycoff & Manning, 1983; Hall, 1991). Additionally, goal attainment is subject to external scrutiny from political entities and citizens (Whitaker & Phillips, 1983). The goal attainment model is prefaced on a rational school of thought where decision making is geared toward measurable objectives and outcomes. However, "conflicting goals, a lack of integration, and overlapping jurisdictions that promote inequities of justice and create inefficiencies" (Wright, 1994, p. 210), limit organizational success according to the rational model.

*Overview of the HIDTA Program*

According to national statistics, multijurisdictional drug task forces appear to be effective at increasing arrests and drug-related asset seizures. One of the main federal initiatives to combat drug distribution was the establishment of the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988, which authorized funding for the creation of task forces such as HIDTAs. Often led by representatives of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) or Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), HIDTA initiatives involve the efforts of local and state law enforcement to facilitate drug interdiction efforts. As of 2004, 28 in the United States have been designated HIDTAs (ONDCP, 2004). The Office of National Drug Control Policy has established HIDTAs to assist state and local law enforcement agencies with drug trafficking interdiction and enforcement. HIDTA participants are typically from the FBI or DEA but also include representatives from other federal agencies such as the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF), Internal Revenue Service (IRS), U.S. Marshals service, U.S. Postal Inspector, Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), and the U.S. Attorney's Office. HIDTA representatives help facilitate communication and cooperation among local and state agencies and provide necessary tools to local agencies for investigative purposes. In this regard, HIDTA members do not investigate drug trafficking activity directly but provide the infrastructure that is needed to improve drug interdiction efforts involving a multijurisdictional component. According to the 2006 South Texas HIDTA Report, multiagency efforts led to 2446 drug-related arrests and asset seizures topped \$321 million (ONDCP, 2006). Despite these positive results, HIDTA entities have been criticized as a waste of federal tax revenue due to political motives to channel HIDTA funding away from target drug trafficking jurisdictions such as border areas.

Most HIDTA drug task forces are structured hierarchically to follow standard law enforcement chain of command and lines of authority (Buhler, 1999). Because these entities have multijurisdictional enforcement responsibilities, they employ a variety of investigative and preventive techniques to accomplish their goals. HIDTA Drug Task Forces are generally led by an executive board consisting of administrators such as a chair, vice-chair, and director (ONDCP, 2004). Administrators hold law enforcement positions in federal, state, and local agencies (Russell-Einhorn, Ward, & Seeherman, 2000). The administrators of the drug task force are responsible for appointing personnel to the unit, mapping out goals and objectives, and providing supervision. In most cases the executive board appoints a supervisor who manages day-to-day operations of the task force and disseminates information to the participating agents. Law enforcement officers belonging to the task force serve as a liaison for their respective agencies, facilitating investigative objectives such as serving arrest warrants, conducting surveillance, and developing informant contacts (Buhler, 1999).

*Police Discretion and Searches in Traffic Stops*

Police discretion is a powerful tool for law enforcement to search for drug contraband, determining case outcomes and seizure rates (Engel, 2008; Garrett, 2001). Various ideologies are used to explain police decision making as it relates to vehicle stops and search rates. The three main viewpoints include the legalistic, social, and economic perspectives (for a review, see Engel, 2008). Although a full review of these perspectives is beyond the scope of the current study, it should be noted that explanations regarding search and seizure outcomes are based on a range of theories about police behavior.

Academicians attempting to explain police search and seizure outcomes from the legalistic perspective focus on concepts of fundamental fairness and the distribution of police power and advocate the need for equity in police procedure. Much of this research on police discretion and searches in traffic stops has focused on the issue of racial bias among the police (Ayers, 2002; Knowles, Persico, & Todd, 2001). Whether police officers engage in racial profiling of suspects is a dominant policy issue facing police administrators, social activists, and researchers across the country (Engel, 2008). In response to social concerns about gang-related violence and drug trafficking, the police have developed measures to increase "hit rates" (i.e., percentage of searches that yield illicit substances) associated with drug-related searches (Engel & Johnson, 2006). However, courts have repeatedly rejected the view that search rates show definitively that the police are engaged in discriminatory practices (see *U.S. v. Stanley*, 2003, *U.S. v. Barlow*, 2002, *Chavez v. Illinois State Police*, 2001, and *Anderson v. Cornejo*, 2004.)

Scholars espousing the social perspective toward police search and seizure rates maintain that specific risk factors are the primary determinants of police decision making. One's risk of being stopped and searched by the police during a traffic stop is contingent on contextual variables such as location of incident, hour of day, purpose of stop, vehicle description, and the individual's verbal and nonverbal behavior during the incident (Engel, 2008). Research has demonstrated that communication and nonverbal cues of suspicious behavior routinely influence police decision making as it relates to pedestrian searches (Vrij & Winkel, 1991; Engel & Johnson, 2006). Additionally, studies on social and cultural behavior patterns show that signs related to attire, modes of travel, and recreational behavior affect police decisions to conduct traffic stops and searches (Brown & Washton, 2002; Connors & Nugent, 1990). Finally, research on demographics shows that residential characteristics and vehicle type affects police perceptions of drug courier profiles (Remsberg, 1997). Furthermore, conclusions about police decision making related to drug searches and arrests during traffic stops must account for pedestrian behavior in addition to demographic factors.

The rational, or “economic” perspective, posits that police power is distributed equally across all demographic and racial groups according to their proclivity toward criminal behavior (Persico & Castleman, 2005). This perspective is analogous to the goal attainment model, where police emphasize the importance of outputs relative to inputs. In the case of vehicle searches, the view suggests that the police are completely justified when targeting certain offenders during vehicle stops. In this way, police focus their investigative resources on racial and ethnic group members known to engage in criminal behavior at higher rates but routinely use minor infractions as a pretext for vehicle stops (*Whren v. U.S.*, 1996). For example, if Hispanics are believed to engage in drug trafficking at higher rates compared with Whites, then the search and seizure hit rates for Hispanics would legitimately be higher than those for Whites. Similarly, if police are believed to arrest young males more frequently during vehicle drug-related seizures of contraband, then they are said to be effectively using their organizational resources.

An analysis that compares productivity measures of vehicle drug-related arrests and undercover narcotics investigations expands the current literature on police organizational efficiency. From a goal-attainment perspective, we would hypothesize that more serious drug offenders are apprehended through undercover (HIDTA) task force operations compared with vehicle stops. We would also expect more arrests to take place in connection with undercover operations, although a greater frequency of drug arrests would presumably take place through vehicle stops. From an economic perspective, it is unclear whether demographic factors, apart from race or ethnicity (e.g., age and gender) influence police arrest decisions relative to undercover operations.

## **Methods**

### *Data Sources*

The current study consisted of a total sample of 348 offenders arrested for felony drug offenses for the years 2004 through 2006. Data were obtained from a High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area located along the Texas-Mexico border encompassing two border counties. According to the Department of Justice, 71% of the Texas population is defined as Caucasian, 11.5% African American; and 14% are defined as another race or more than one race (DOJ, 2003). Thirty-two percent are defined as Hispanic. Combining the data for both counties surveyed in the current study, most of the population was of Hispanic origin (94.4%). Accordingly, the demographics of the study sample were commensurate with those of the region— 97% of the offenders were Hispanic; 3% were identified as non-Hispanic.

Table 1 contains descriptive data for the sample. The information on each case was collected through case files and court records made available to the public through the

District Clerk's office. Data on all records were obtained through the office of one District Clerk due to the fact that the larger of the two counties has court jurisdiction over both jurisdictions. All case files were ordered sequentially by year and by case number, which allowed for identification and review of all referred cases by law enforcement to the District Attorney's office. By using a random systematic sampling method, every third case was reviewed either through the case file, computer or a combination of both.<sup>1</sup> In some instances case files were not arranged sequentially, which caused the sampling interval to vary somewhat. In cases where original files could not be located or data were missing, the next case file was selected by sequence. In total, 15 cases were omitted due to problems associated with missing data and 9 cases were excluded because the suspects were non-Hispanic. This allowed the research team to focus on an ethnically homogenous sample so groups could be compared across the remaining independent variables.

Table 1. *Demographic and Case Characteristics by Investigative Source*

Offender Characteristics	Vehicle Stops			HIDTA		
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>Mean</i>	<i>n</i>	%	<i>Mean</i>
Total Cases	186	63.7		106	36.3	
Age (Range: 17–77)			28.65			32.3
Gender						
Male	13	7		15	14	
Female	173	93		91	86	
Felony Level						
First	6	3		16	15	
Second	49	26		55	52	
Third	70	38		23	22	
State Jail	61	33		12	11	
Drug Type						
Cocaine	155	83		59	56	
Marijuana	31	17		47	44	
Number of Arrests/Incidents	275		1.48	253		2.39
Number of Charges Filed	210		1.13	138		1.3

*Independent Variables*

The “seriousness of the offense,” measured as drug type and weight, was used as a control variable in the analysis. Texas has a four-level felony scheme comprising a first, second, third, and state jail felony. The seriousness of the offense is dictated by the weight and type of

controlled substance possessed. For example, the possession of a controlled substance in the range of 200 to 400 grams of cocaine is considered a first degree felony; 4 to 200 grams is a second degree felony; 1 to 4 grams is a third degree felony; and less than 1 gram is a state jail felony. Similarly, possession of 50 to 2000 pounds of marijuana is a second degree felony, 5 to 50 pounds is a third degree felony; and 40 ounces to 5 pounds is a state jail felony. Heroin and other forms of controlled substances are classified according to a similar structure. Whether the case involved distribution or possession of narcotics, this aspect of the offense was also controlled for in the charging scheme. The offense variable was reverse-coded and rank ordered to reflect the relationship between the seriousness of the offense and the felony grade. In cases where an offender was charged with more than one offense, only the most serious offense was counted.

The variable "drug type" was dichotomously coded (0 = marijuana, 1= cocaine) and included separately to measure its effect in the overall analysis. The variable "age" was measured as a continuous variable in years. Gender was coded dichotomously (1 = male, 0 = female). The variable "number of arrestees" was measured as a continuous variable reflecting the number of additional subjects (up to 4) that were arrested in the incident. Likewise, the variable "number of charges" (up to 4) was calculated for each case and coded as a continuous variable.

#### *Dependent Variable*

The sample was separated according to the method in which the drug investigation was initiated, e.g. HIDTA drug task force or vehicle stop. After excluding cases involving missing data, the research team excluded 32 task force cases that did not involve HIDTA.<sup>2</sup> Binary logistic regression was used to test the multivariate effects of the independent variables on the odds that a drug arrest would be initiated through a vehicle stop or HIDTA task force.

### **Results**

Table 2 displays results from the logistic regression analysis. The model was a fairly good fit to the data, accounting for 46% of the variance in the dependent variable. The model also significantly improved the hit ratio from 63.7% to 79%. Of the four productivity measures examined, the analysis showed that multijurisdictional task forces yielded significantly more arrests and more serious cases than did vehicle searches and seizures. Specifically, each increase in arrest increased the odds ratio that a case would be classified as HIDTA by a factor of 2.57. Additionally, as the seriousness of the offense increased by felony grade, the odds ratio for HIDTA classification changed by a factor of 2.34. The number of charges did not significantly vary according to task force or patrol



investigation. However, the study findings revealed that task forces were more likely to seize marijuana, and vehicle arrests were more likely to involve cocaine seizures.

Table 2. *Binomial Results for Offender and Offense Variables*

Type of Investigation (1 = HIDTA, 0 = vehicle)	<i>b</i>	Odds Ratio
Age	.08	1.08*
Gender	-1.5	.22*
Offense Seriousness	.85	2.34*
Drug Type	-1.06	.35*
Number of Arrests	.95	2.57*
Number of Charges	.03	1.03

*Note.* *N* = 292; Nagelkerke, *R*<sub>2</sub> = .46; -2Log Likelihood: 266.26; Overall Hit Ratio: 78.8 (null model = 63.7), Hosmer and Lemeshow Chi-square = 8.87, *p* = .35. For each independent variable, the odds ratio reflects the change in the odds that a case will be classified as a HIDTA case.

For the demographic variables reviewed, the study indicated that both age and gender affected investigative classification, although in different directions. Specifically, as the suspect's age increased, the odds that a case would be classified as HIDTA as opposed to a vehicle search slightly increased (odds ratio = 1.08). Therefore, relative to undercover operations, it appears that police are slightly more likely to arrest younger suspects during vehicle stops (odds ratio = .22). In summary, the findings showed that younger males were more likely to be arrested for less serious offenses involving smaller quantities of cocaine, and fewer subjects were less likely to be arrested per incident during vehicle stops compared with HIDTA investigations. Likewise, HIDTA investigations had more impressive productivity measures, as would be expected, yielding more arrests and serious charges of larger amounts of marijuana rather than cocaine. Additionally, the study showed that older females were more likely to be arrested in HIDTA investigations than in vehicle stops.

### Discussion

In multijurisdictional task force research, two divergent models—goal attainment and process-centered—have emerged. Each of these models emphasizes different measures of productivity based on their underlying assumptions about organizational effectiveness. Likewise, profiling research has traditionally focused on the issue of race and ethnicity as factors determinative of search and seizure decision making (Anwar & Fang, 2006; Knowles et al. 2001). The purpose of this study was to compare productivity measures commonly

associated with a goal attainment model controlling for demographic factors such as age and gender in two localized methods of drug interdiction (e.g., vehicle arrests and HIDTA arrests). Table 3 summarizes the findings from the logistic regression analysis.

Table 3. *Summary of Results*

Factor	Vehicle Stop	HIDTA
Age	-	+
Male	+	-
Female	-	+
Offense Seriousness	-	+
Cocaine	+	-
Marijuana	-	+
Number of Arrests	-	+
Number of Charges		

*Note:* The positive and negative symbols indicate that the variable increased or decreased the odds that a case would be classified as either a vehicle stop or a HIDTA case. The variable "number of charges" had no effect on the odds of case classification.

The implicit objective of drug task forces is that increased cooperation between law enforcement agencies will positively affect the quality of drug enforcement outputs (Levine & Martin, 1992). To this end, the study findings provide support for the goal attainment model in that HIDTAs yielded more arrests and more serious drug cases than did vehicle searches and seizures of drug contraband. Specifically, HIDTA operations were more likely to yield large seizures of marijuana as opposed to cocaine. Similarly, the study showed that younger males were less likely to be arrested in task force operations compared with vehicle-related arrests.

The HIDTA program has been criticized as an inefficient crime control program that has led to a waste of federal tax dollars (Office of Management and Budget, 2007). Much of this concern has been directed toward the expansion of HIDTA to 28 U.S. jurisdictions, which has shifted the focus away from target jurisdictions such as the U.S.-Mexican border. The current evaluation took place in such a jurisdiction and offers specific insight into measuring task force goals. In this study, roughly 36% of the cases reviewed were initiated through HIDTA with an average of 2.39 vs. 1.48 arrests made per incident.

Additionally, HIDTA investigations led to more serious arrests relative to vehicle arrests. These findings suggest that HIDTA operations are effective measures of dismantling drug trafficking organizations. A similar measure of a goal-attainment model is a return-on-investment (ROI) analysis, which is based on a calculation of the street value of drugs and seized assets associated with HIDTA cases. Jurisdictions such as the New Mexico Region HIDTA have reported comparable outcomes, resulting in an ROI of \$21.00 per dollar allocated (ONDCP, 2006). The present study provides further support that the goals of multijurisdictional efforts are achieved when interdiction efforts are targeted in border areas.

Steffensmeier and Demuth (2001) suggest that judgments about criminal responsibility or offender “dangerousness” should incorporate an even appraisal of three focal concerns: culpability, protection of the community, and practical constraints and consequences. Courts have traditionally regarded crack and cocaine offenders to be a more serious social concern to the safety of communities, which explains why these offenders are overrepresented among all drug offenders in state and federal prison populations (Sevigny & Caulkins, 2004). However, the results of this study show that high level task force operations do not systematically target cocaine distributors, in contrast to marijuana distributors. Accordingly, the results suggest that HIDTAs are less concerned about the danger associated with cocaine trafficking (Steffensmeier & Demuth, 2001; Steffensmeier, Ulmer, & Kramer, 1998) relative to marijuana and adhere to a stricter, nonbiased interpretation based on the legal elements of the offense. These results provide support for the economic model with emphasis on generating revenue through asset forfeiture measures that provide for the continued existence of these agencies.

Research on vehicle search and seizure rates has traditionally focused on issues related to discrimination and a lack of fundamental fairness in police decision making (Garrett, 2001). In a similar way, this study sought to explore the effects of demographic factors such as age and gender on arrest outcomes in vehicle stops. By using an exclusive sample of Hispanic drug offenders, the results indicated that the age and gender of the subject significantly affected the odds that a case would be initiated through a vehicle stop and not a task force. While younger suspects were more likely to be associated with drug seizures and arrests through patrol stops, older suspects were more prone to arrest during HIDTA operations. With regards to gender, females were more likely to be arrested during HIDTA investigations compared with vehicle related investigations. Therefore, younger males were more likely to be arrested in connection with vehicle patrol stops. If we assume that a valid “hit” during a search for drug contraband leads to the arrest of the suspect, then we can infer that younger males were more likely to be searched during patrol stops rather than task force investigations.

One measure of police discretion to search and thereby arrest suspects is the “outcome test” (Anwar & Fang, 2006; Ayres, 2002; Knowles et al., 2001). The outcome test is a means to assess whether search and seizure rates vary according to economic, legal, or social motives. However, the outcome test assumes that only searches involving police discretion are considered (Fridell, 2004). Furthermore, there are some conceptual problems concerning the use of the outcome test as a means of assessing police discretion. The police may be required to arrest some suspects for drug possession when a search takes place incident to arrest, or subsequent to vehicle impoundment. Additional legal factors such as consent and plain view exceptions to the normal search requirement complicate assessments about the motives for arrest outcomes. We must assume that there is more discretion to arrest suspects during vehicle stops rather than HIDTA investigations due to investigative complexity and resources devoted to undercover operations. However, we had no comparison sample of “no-arrest” vehicle stop cases, and therefore, these results should be judged only as they relate to task force cases. That being the case, the present study shows that being a young male in possession of cocaine (rather than marijuana) increases the likelihood that the police will arrest that suspect during a narcotics-related vehicle stop.

### **Conclusion**

This study compared investigative outputs for vehicle and HIDTA narcotics arrests. The results provide insight into Smith et al.’s (2000) suggestions regarding the need to explore effects of multijurisdictional task force agencies on specific types of cases. Future research should explore sentencing patterns associated with task force investigations to determine whether conviction rates are similar to non-task force cases. Research should also examine task force outputs in other border jurisdictions and target areas that originally provided the stimulus for HIDTA funding. Similarly, studies on drug-related vehicle stops should attempt to differentiate between arrest outcomes controlling for legal factors that trigger drug seizures irrespective of police discretion. This study is a step in that direction, and one hopes it will stimulate researchers and policymakers to re-examine the efficacy of these programs so resources can be managed appropriately.

### **Notes**

1. Each offender’s driver’s license was queried in the county’s criminal history record base. In most cases this information was matched on drivers’ license number, but in some instances case information was cross-referenced with date of birth and arrest date to the official case report.

2. These cases were investigated by the local police narcotics unit, sheriff's department, or district attorney's office. Most cases involved HIDTA task force members due to civil asset forfeiture advantages, which is a lucrative source of income for local law enforcement agencies. Additionally, extant research shows that task force membership does not affect the quality of drug enforcement output goals (e.g., possession or sale arrests) (Smith et al., 2000).

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