

# **Suspect Citizens**

## **What 20 Million Traffic Stops Tells Us about Policing and Race**

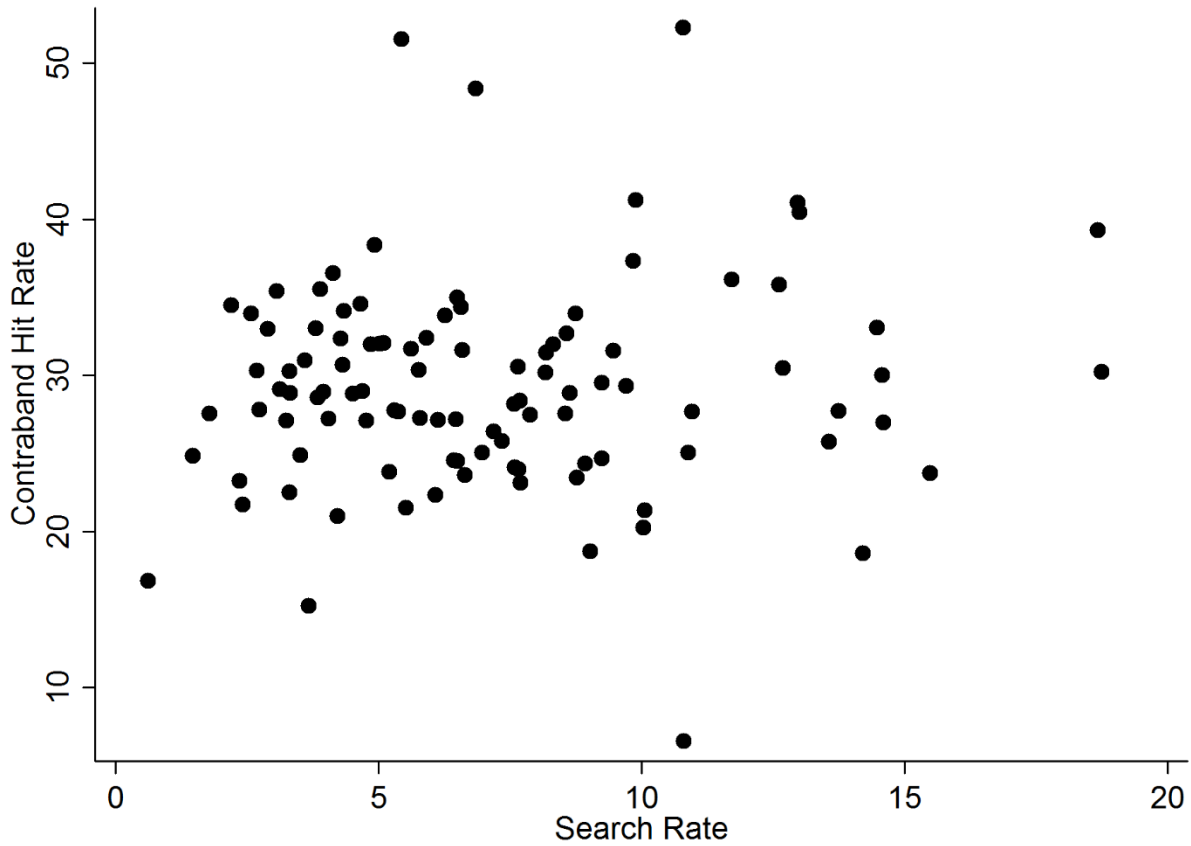
Frank R. Baumgartner, Derek A. Epp, and Kelsey Shoub  
Cambridge University Press, 2018

### **Appendix to Chapter 5**

#### **A. Variation in Agency Hit Rates**

Figure A5.1 replicates Figure 5.2 at the agency level. Once again, we see that there is great variability in both search and contraband hit rates, evidence supportive of the idiosyncratic oversight hypothesis. Regardless of whether we look at the officer- or agency-level, the predominant impression is one of randomness. There does not appear to be any statewide searching standards to which agencies adhere.

Figure A5.1. Agency-Level Search and Hit Rates Compared



Note: based on the 103 police agencies that searched at least 1,000 motorists.

### **B. Arrest Rates by Amounts of Contraband**

Table 5.3 reveals that even after police discover contraband on a motorist, an arrest is far from certain. In fact, more often, motorists found with contraband are issued either a citation or a warning. This suggests that the contraband that is discovered is often not especially serious, as it is hard to imagine drivers found with hard drugs or unauthorized lethal weapons being allowed to drive away with only a ticket.

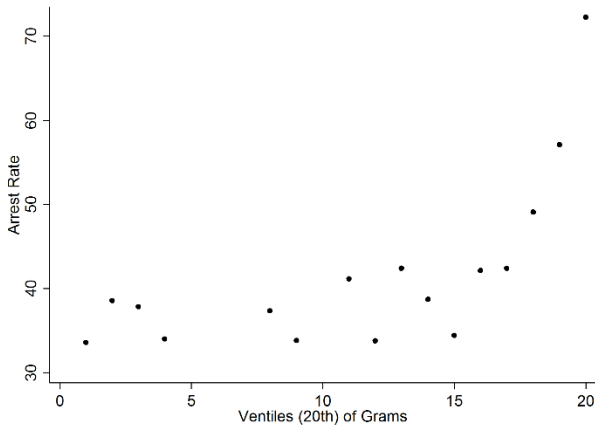
This appendix looks at how amounts of contraband correlate with arrest rates.

Presumably motorists carrying more contraband should be more likely to be arrested. And this does appear to be the case, as Figure A5.2 (which looks at grams, ounces, dosages, and pints)

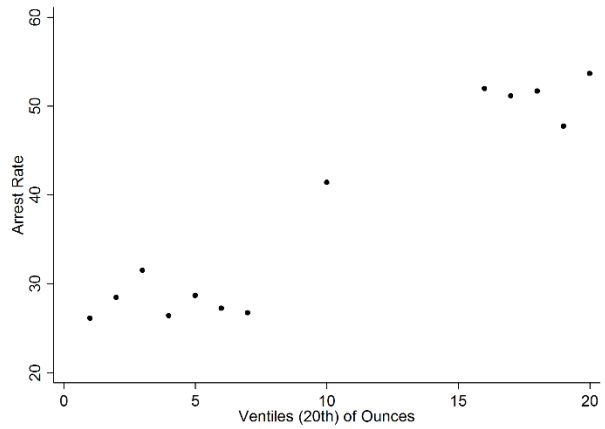
reveals. For each type of contraband, amounts are grouped according to ventile (20<sup>th</sup>s of the data distribution), with higher ventiles corresponding to more contraband. Thus, amounts grouped in the 20<sup>th</sup> ventile correspond with the 95<sup>th</sup>-100<sup>th</sup> percentiles. Each scatter plot shows an upward trend moving from left to right across the x-axis, indicating higher arrest rates for larger amounts of contraband. Note, however, that even at the highest ventiles, arrest is far from guaranteed. For grams and dosages, around 70 percent of contraband hits in the 20<sup>th</sup> ventile lead to an arrest, but only 45 percent of ounces discovered in amounts consistent with the highest ventile lead to an arrest, and only 34 percent of pint discoveries. Clearly then, much of the contraband that is discovered on North Carolina motorways is not especially serious. So, even when contraband is discovered, it does not necessarily mean that officers are finding hard drugs or illegal weapons.

Figure A5.2. Arrest Rates, by Contraband Amount

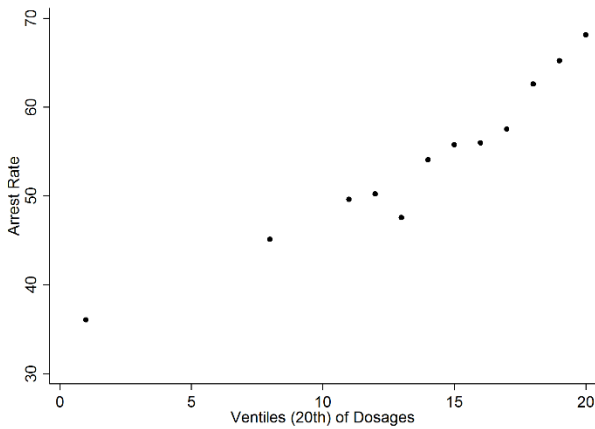
A) Grams



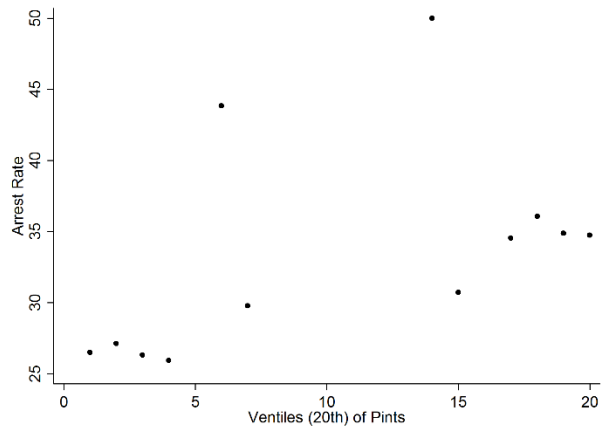
B) Ounces



C) Dosages



D) Pints



Note: (A) Grams were found a total of 33,461 times in amounts ranging from 0.01 to 970. (B) Ounces were found a total of 29,840 times in amounts ranging from 0.01 to 7,165. (C) Dosages were found a total of 18,767 times in amounts ranging from 1 to 22,000. (D) Pints were found a total of 18,376 times in amounts ranging from 0.01 to 5,002. The figures excludes 209,148 searches that took place “incident to arrest,” as in these cases the arrest precipitated the search, rather than the search determining the outcome. Each of the variables is divided into 20 categories with equal numbers of observations in each category. Divisions of 20 are “ventiles.”