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**UNDER PRESSURE? PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF POLICE OFFICERS AS AN INCENTIVE TO CHEAT: EVIDENCE FROM DRUG CRIMES IN RUSSIA****Abstract:**

A recently published report on drug crimes in Russia (Knorre 2017) reveals startling statistics on the distribution of criminal cases across drug seized quantities. The statistics suggest the bunching of offenders who were arrested with an amount of heroin just above the threshold, which is enough to be convicted for a more serious crime. At the same time, there is missing mass of cases just below the threshold. This might be evidence of planting drugs by the police, which so far has only been supported by various media reports. Our paper provides a theoretical framework and statistical analysis of possible manipulation with drug seized amounts, using a unique dataset that contains full information on drug crimes committed during 2013-2014 in Russia. We apply recently developed bunching technique (Diamond and Persson 2016) to identify the mean characteristics of victims of manipulation and the effect of being framed on sentence length. We test the hypothesis that low-status individuals are more likely to be manipulated by police officers; however, they are punished less severely, conditional on being manipulated, due-to higher probability of pleading guilty. In addition, we study the effect of the social status of the offender, defined by occupation, on law enforcers' decision. The paper contributes to the literature on the role of law enforcement discretion in generating disparities in punishment decisions and has implications for policy design.

**Keywords:**

drug crimes, heroin, bunching, police, performance evaluation, discrimination