Patterns of Support in Minneapolis’ Police Charter Amendment

Ryan Larson, Ryan LeCount

Minneapolis, MN has undergone a reckoning in terms of policing and public safety in response to the police murder of George Floyd on May 25th, 2020. In the 2021 election, Minneapolis balloted an amendment to the city charter that would have replaced the Minneapolis Police Department with a department of public safety employing a more comprehensive public health approach to crime. Using a uniquely constructed precinct-level dataset leveraging Minnesota Secretary of State Voting Data, U.S. Census Data, and Minneapolis Police Department Data, we examine the correlates of support for the 2021 charter amendment in Minneapolis. Results from lagged spatial autocorrelation models reveal that support was weakly responsive to racial demographics, with precincts with higher Hispanic populations associated with more support and precincts with higher Black populations associated with less support. Additionally, indicators of police behavior such as uses of force, police stops, and officer involved shootings were not associated with amendment votes. Our results highlight the complex, and counterintuitive, patterns of voting support for alternatives to modern urban policing.