

ARE POLICE LEADERS HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR PERFORMANCE?

Jessica Persano, Stanford

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- Affects quality of life, personal freedoms, trust in government

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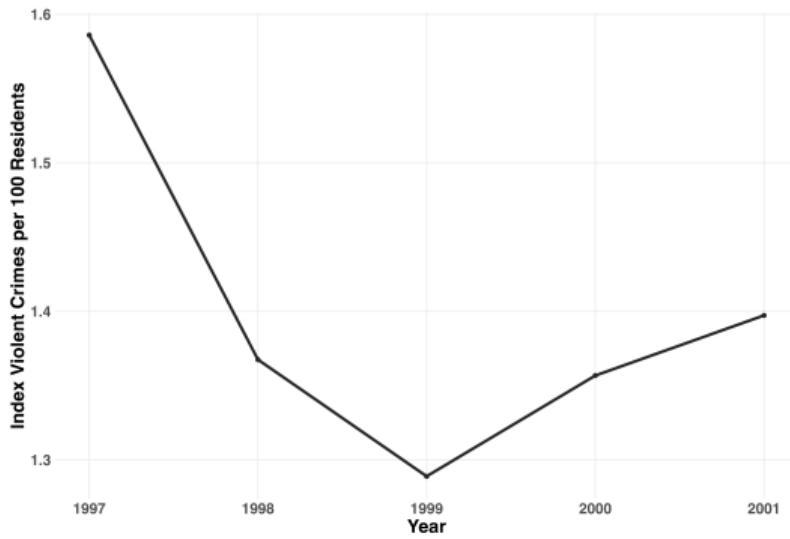
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Public informs policing through chain of agency relationships

- Public elects mayor, council ⇒ elected officials appoint/fire police chief
- Standard view: election-motivated mayors fire underperforming chiefs



Bernard Parks
Los Angeles Police Chief
1997 - 2002



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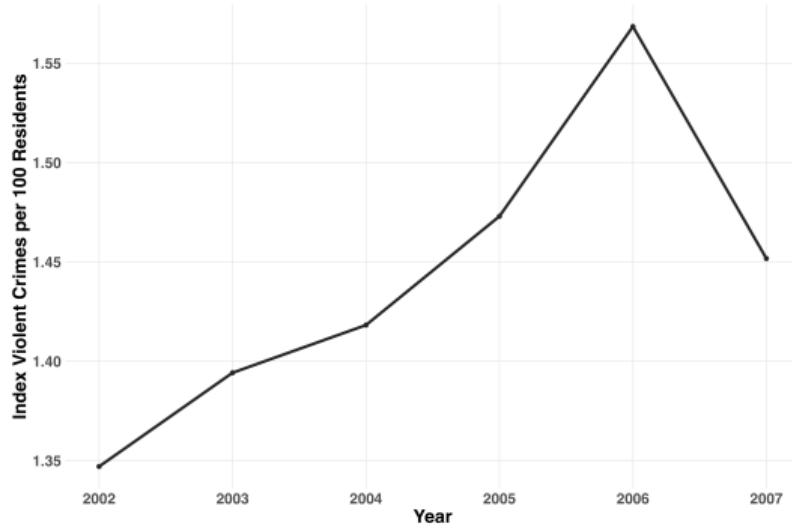
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Three potential weaknesses

- friction in finding better replacement
- mismatch between what matters and what is measured
- replacing chief may bring attention to mayor's failure



Sylvester Johnson
Philadelphia Police Commissioner
2002 - 2008



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Goal: Describe relationship between police performance and turnover

Approach:

- New data on tenures of police chiefs in over 1,200 cities from 2000 to 2022
- Link to FBI crime data
- Compare turnover when crime is higher vs lower using panel analyses
- Case study on DOJ investigations of police departments

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Results:

- Chiefs no more likely to leave when crime is high
- Yet, turnover is higher following DOJ punishment

NEW DATA ON POLICE CHIEF ACCOUNTABILITY

- Digitized police chief directories, 1990 to 2022, 47k chiefs in 12k municipalities

BOLTON 01740 Vincent Altano Chief 697 Main St Worcester County 978/779-2276 Fax 978/779-6079 Otr: 9 Pop: 4,500	BROOKLINE 02445 Daniel C O'Leary Chief 350 Washington St Norfolk County 617/730-2249 Fax 617/730-8454 Otr: 140 Pop: 60,000	CHESTER 01225 Tim Garner Chief 99 Church St Berkshire County 413/743-1501 Fax 413/743-1944 Otr: 10 Pop: 3,500	DEDHAM 02026 Michael Wdr Chief 600 High St Norfolk County 781/751-9300 Fax 781/751-9330 Otr: 74 Pop: 24,000
BOSTON 02120 Ed Davis Commissioner 1 Schlesinger Plz Suffolk County 617/943-4200 Fax 617/943-5003 Otr: 2,050 Pop: 604,000	BUCKLAND James T Hicks Chief 69 1/2 Conney St Shelburne Falls 01370	CHESTER 01031 Ronald T Minor Chief 15 Middlefield Rd Berkshire County 413/54-8222 Fax 413/54-6619 Otr: 10 Pop: 2,000	DEERFIELD 01373 Michael J Wozniakewicz Chief 8 Converse St Franklin County 413/65-2606 Fax 413/65-2269 Otr: 14 Pop: 4,900
BOURNE 02532 Earl Baldwin Chief 175 Main St Barnstable County 508/759-4420 Fax 508/759-0603 Otr: 30 Pop: 16,428	BURLINGTON 01803 Francis Hart Chief 45 Center St Middlesex County 781/270-1914 Fax 781/270-1920 Otr: 62 Pop: 23,000	CHICopee 01020 John R Ferraro Jr Chief 110 Church St Hampshire County 413/592-6341 Fax 413/594-1725 Otr: 12 Pop: 57,000	DENNIS Michael Whalen Chief 90 Bob Crowell Rd S Dennis 02660 Barnstable County 508/394-1311 Fax 508/394-5750 Otr: 35 Pop: 13,994
BOXBOROUGH 01719 Richard Vance Jr Chief 520 Mass Ave Middlesex County 978/263-2628 Fax 978/635-0116 Otr: 8 Pop: 5,000	CAMBRIDGE 02139 Robert Haas Commissioner 5 Winter St Middlesex County 617/349-3300 Fax 617/349-3007 Otr: 254 Pop: 100,000	CHILMARK 02535 Timothy S Rich Chief 15 State Rd Dukes County 508/645-3310 Fax 508/645-3101	DIGHTON 02715 Robert L MacDonald Chief 151 Somerset Ave Bristol County 508/699-6711 Fax 508/699-6740 Otr: 9 Pop: 8,516
BOKFORD 01921 Gordon A Russell Chief 285 Lewish Rd Essex County 978/887-8135 Fax 978/887-8138 Otr: 12 Pop: 7,850	CANTON 02021 Kenneth Berkowitz Chief 1492 Washington St Norfolk County 781/821-5095 Fax 781/821-2549 Otr: 50 Pop: 20,000	CLINTON 01510 Laverne Lure Chief 175 Chestnut St Worcester County 978/365-4111 Fax 978/365-4105 Otr: 26 Pop: 13,000	DOUGLAS 01516 Patrick T Foley Chief 29 Depot St Worcester County 508/476-3333 Fax 508/476-3210 Otr: 15 Pop: 8,500
BOYLSTON 01505 Anthony Sahagian Chief 215 Main St Worcester County 508/699-2463 Fax 508/699-2360 Otr: 10 Pop: 4,200	CARLISLE 01741 John Sullivan Chief 41 Lowell St Middlesex County 978/369-1155 Fax 978/369-1819	COHASSET 02025 James M Hussey Chief 62 Elm St Norfolk County 781/383-1212 Fax 781/383-1213 Otr: 18 Pop: 7,700	DOVER 02030 Joseph Griffin Chief 3 Wapole St Norfolk County 508/785-1130 Fax 508/785-0683 Otr: 16 Pop: 5,200
BRAINTREE 02184 Paul H Frazier Chief 282 Union St Norfolk County 781/794-8651 Fax 781/794-8698 Otr: 100 Pop: 35,232	CARVER 02330 Arthur Parker Chief 1126 Main St Plymouth County 508/866-2000 Fax 508/866-4538 Otr: 15 Pop: 12,000	COLRAIN 01340 Carl Herzog Chief 55 Main Rd Franklin County 413/625-8200 Fax 413/624-3024	MASSACHUSETTS

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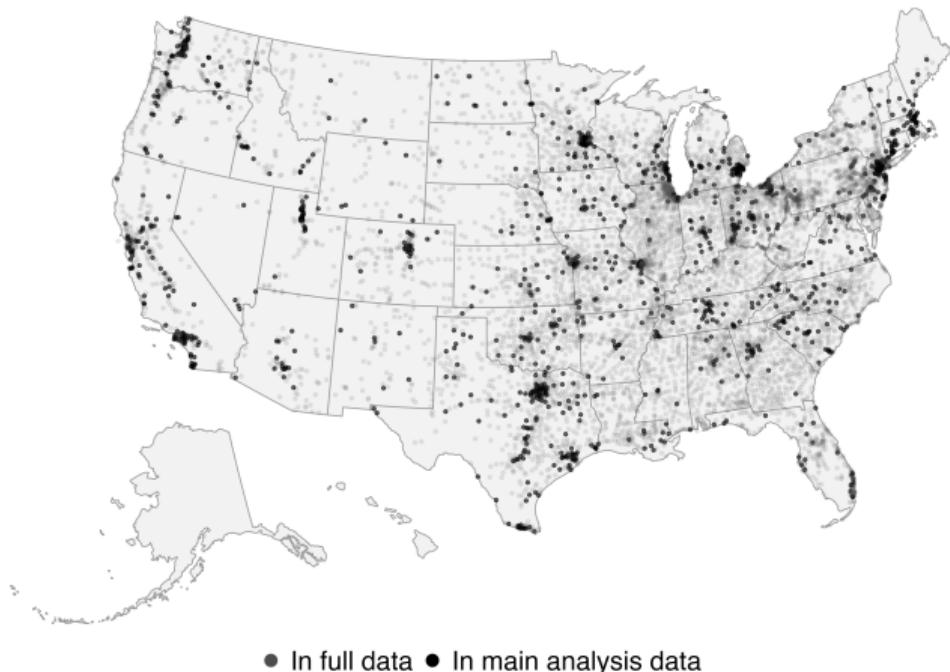
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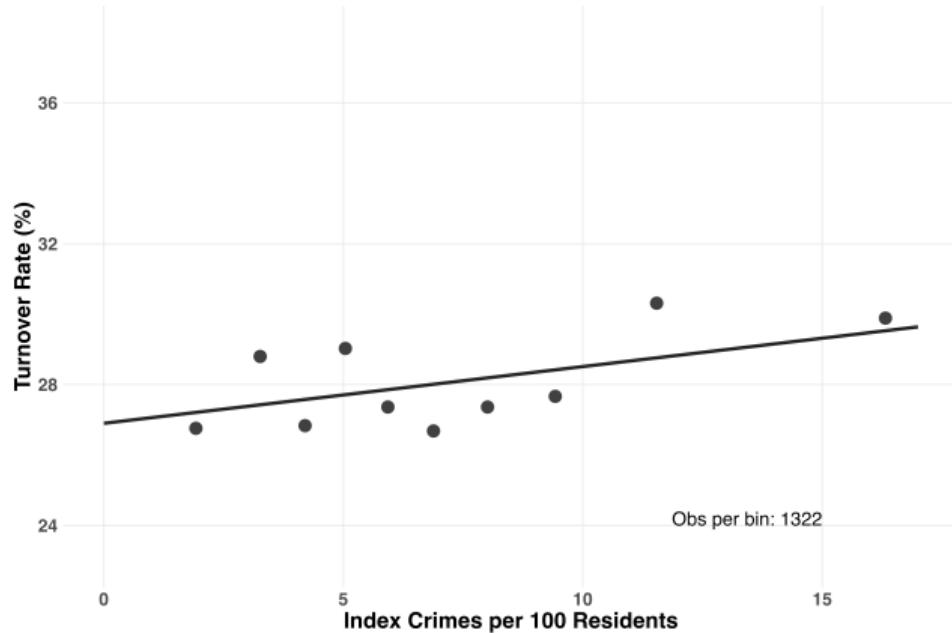
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- Limit to 2000 on and balanced panel \Rightarrow 4.5k chiefs in 1.2k municipalities



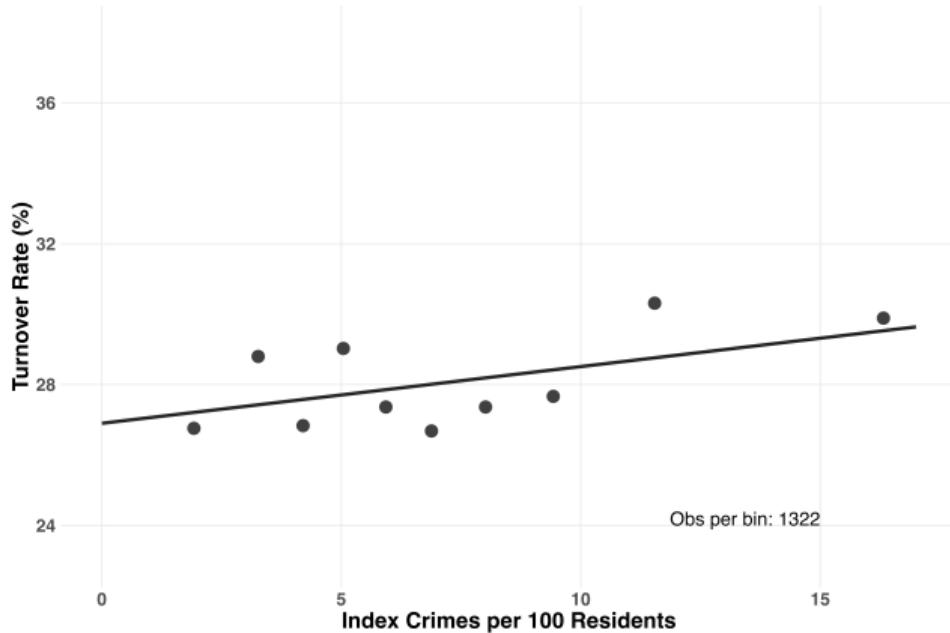
VERY MODEST RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CRIME AND TURNOVER

- Similar turnover in low- and high-crime cities (27% vs. 30%)



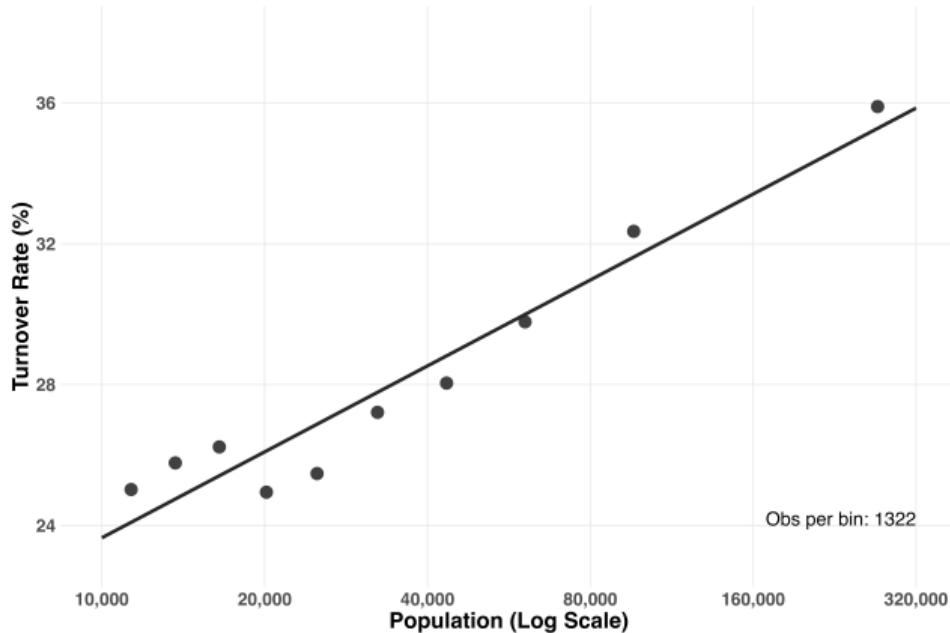
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- Crime 8× higher in high-crime cities



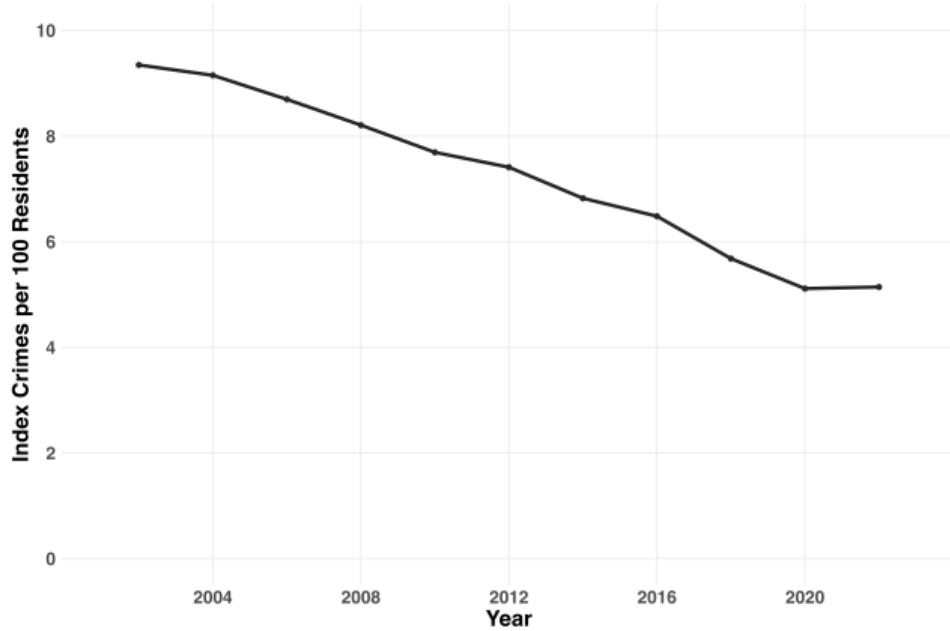
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- Similar turnover in low- and high-crime cities (27% vs. 30%)
- Crime 8× higher in high-crime cities
- Turnover noticeably higher in largest cities (25% vs 36%)



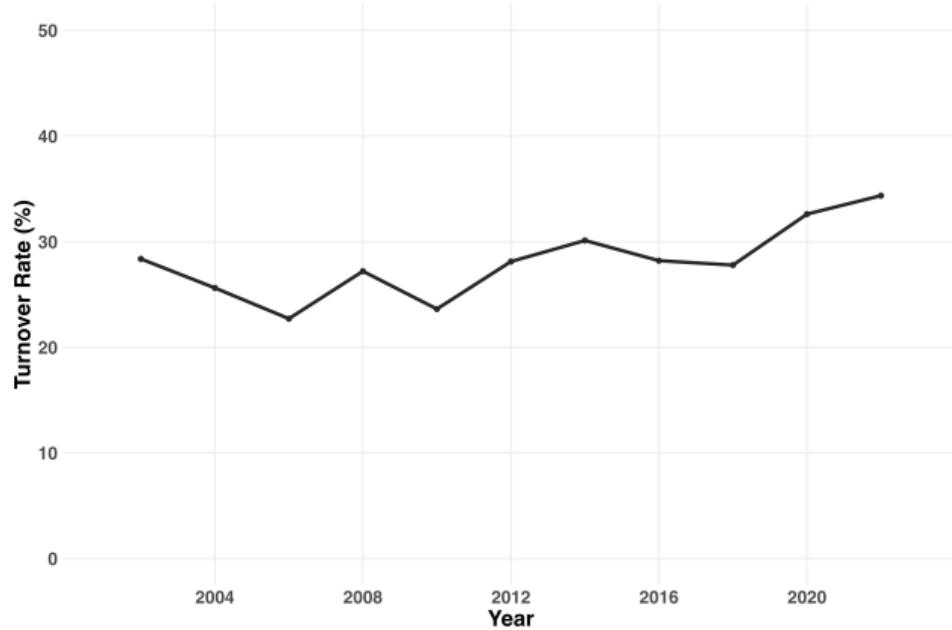
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- Turnover rates have very modestly increased

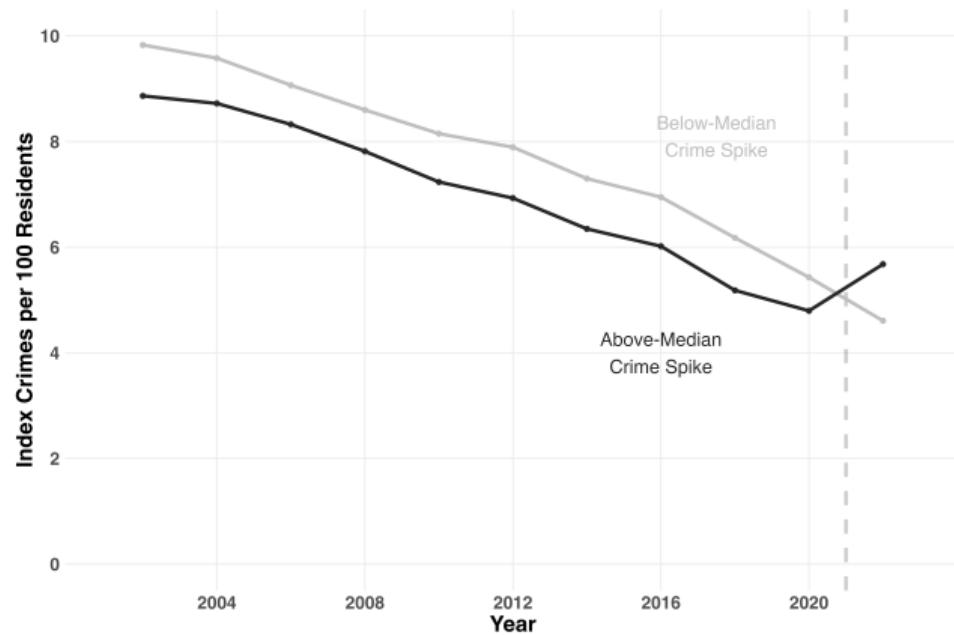


	Turnover	
	(1)	(2)
Crime per Capita	-0.10 (0.25)	-0.10 (0.39)
Lagged Crime per Capita		0.24 (0.39)
Num Municipalities	1,202	1,202
Num Years	11	10
Num Observations	13,222	12,020
Municipality FEs	Yes	Yes
Year FEs	Yes	Yes

Robust errors clustered by municipality reported in parentheses. Data is a balanced panel of municipalities in even years.

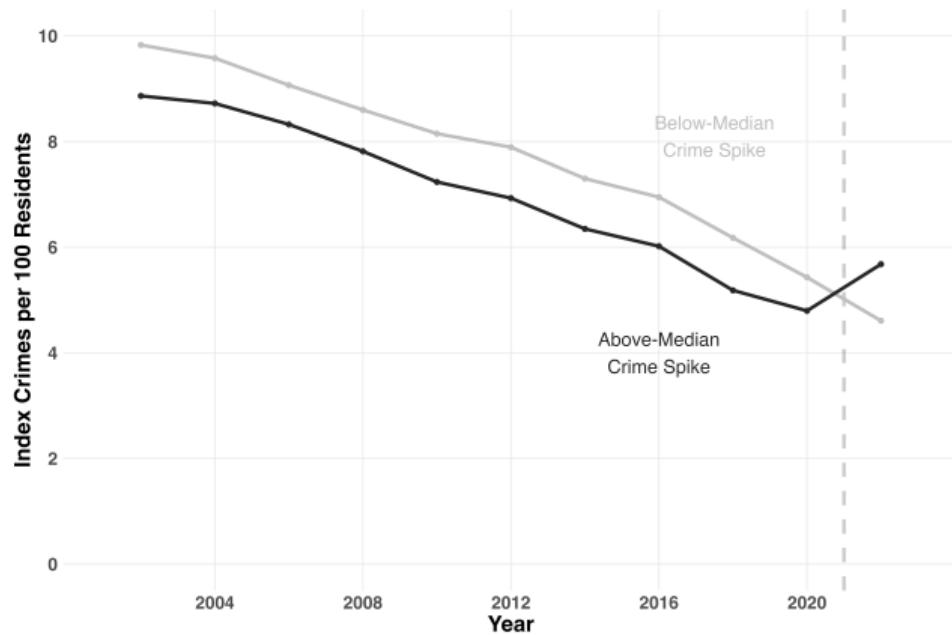
COVID CRIME SPIKE DID NOT DRAMATICALLY INCREASE TURNOVER

- Crime increased during Covid in a subset of munis



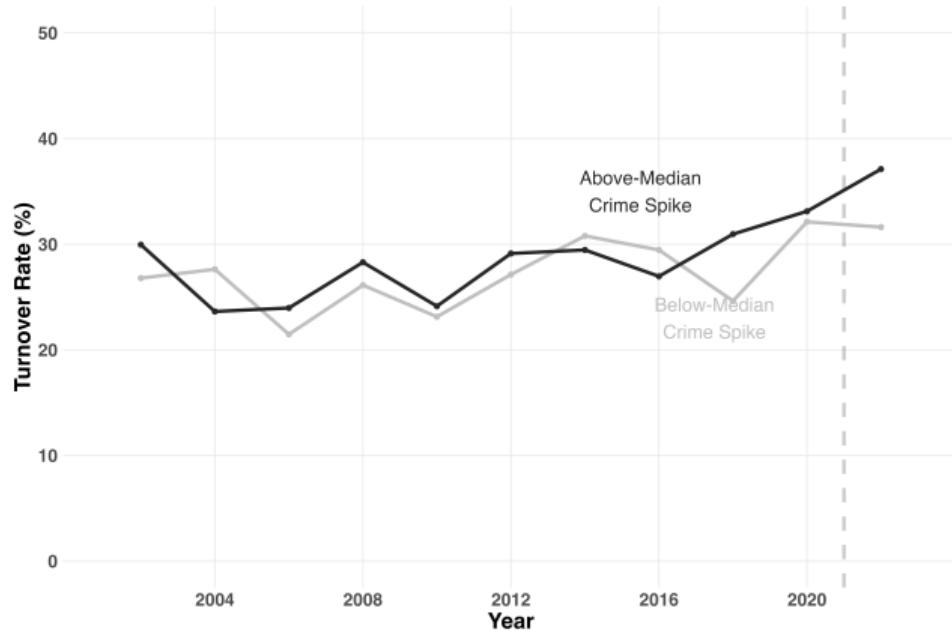
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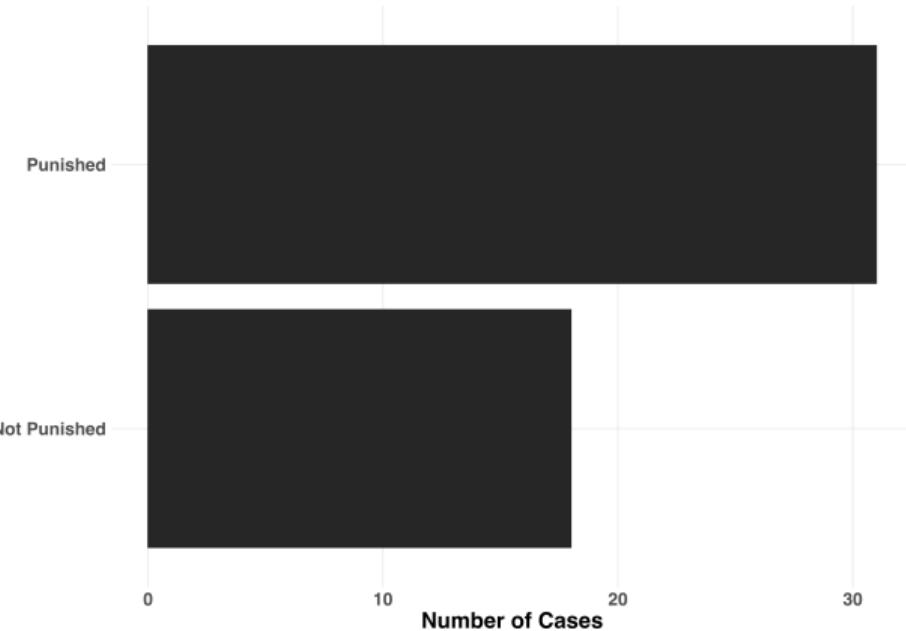
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- Split munis by median Covid spike in crime
- No strong evidence for large increase in turnover (fewer than 1 in 20 chiefs, but noisy)



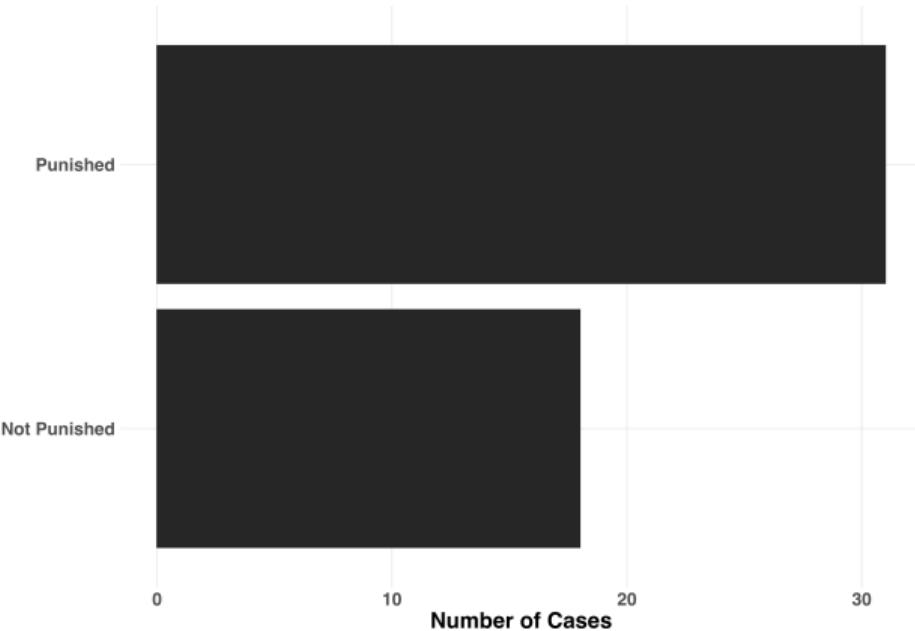
TURNOVER HIGH ONLY AFTER FORMAL PUNISHMENT

- We reviewed 49 DOJ police dept investigations



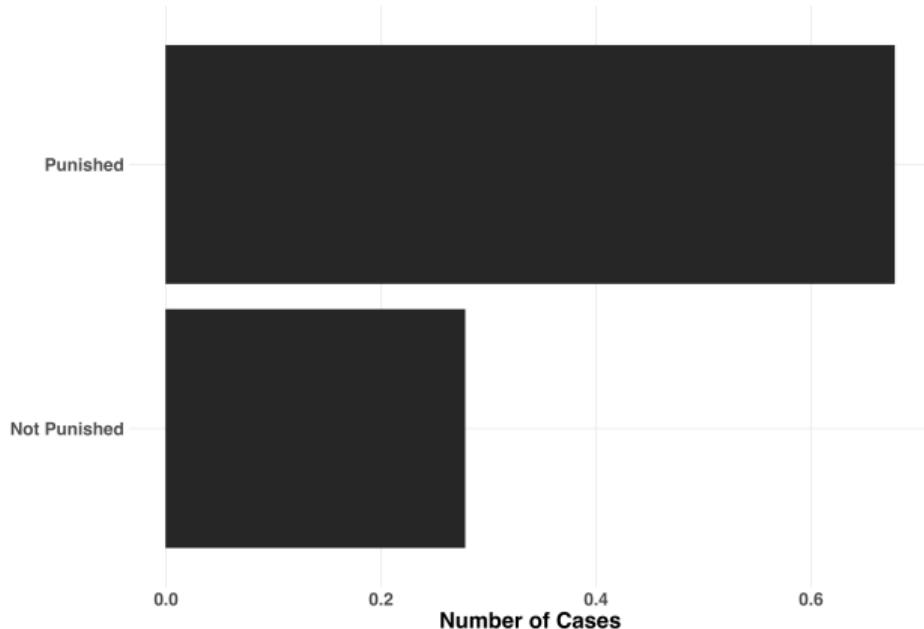
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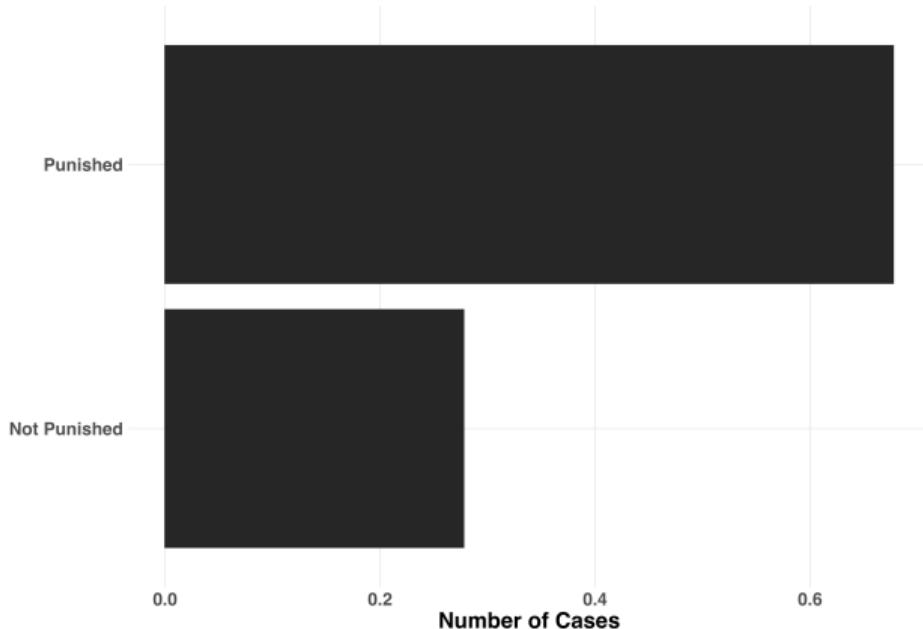
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- DOJ punished 60%
- Munic not punished have baseline turnover
- Major difference in turnover for punished cities (68% vs 28%)



GOING FORWARD

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What should we do next to establish the performance → turnover pattern?

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- new estimation strategies?

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Why does low performance not dramatically increase turnover?

- friction mechanism: large vs small labor markets
- signaling mechanism: local media saturation
- others?

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New large panel dataset of police performance and leader turnover.

Chiefs not substantially more likely to leave when crime is high vs low

Yet, turnover is higher following DOJ punishment

Suggests there may be barriers to removal

- May weaken incentive for police leaders to perform