

Governmental Efforts on Homeland Security and Crime: Public Views and Opinions

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Abstract This paper examines views of the respondents regarding homeland security and traditional crime in the United States. Using questions from the 2007 Penn State Poll, a sample of 862 Pennsylvanians participated through a telephone interview. Participants were questioned about their concerns regarding the effectiveness of homeland security, their fear of crime (white-collar, property, violent and terrorist attacks). The results revealed that citizens were satisfied with the effectiveness of homeland security since the September 11, 2001, attacks. The results indicate that fear of crime is different for demographics, and we were able to show that those that thought homeland security had been effective increased the likelihood of fear of white-collar crime. We were also able to show demographic differences for national spending on crime. In addition, we were able to show that those who believed that homeland security was effective did not believe that national spending was at the proper level for property, violent, or white-collar crime. The implications of these results are discussed.

Keywords Homeland security · Fear of crime · Public opinion · Terrorism

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Introduction

The events of September 11, 2001, hereafter referred to as 9/11, thrust the question of national security and preparedness to the forefront of Americans' consciousness. Along with the scores of media coverage, a federal government commission commenced to research the event. The 9/11 Commission asked two basic questions: "How did this happen and how can we avoid such a tragedy again?" (9/11 Commission 2004, p. xv). The Commission's conclusions and suggestions were lengthy, but focused on the absence of interagency cooperation at the federal level as well as the lack of imagination to prepare for an attack the magnitude of 9/11 (9/11 Commission 2004). Additionally, less than four years after 9/11, Americans once again watched the inept response by government officials at all levels as Hurricane Katrina ravaged New Orleans and other parts of the Gulf Coast Region. Again, another commission was convened and its conclusions were that the response to Hurricane Katrina fell far short of how all levels of government should respond to a national disaster (Townsend 2006). These displays of government inefficiency and lack of preparedness less than four years apart left Americans filled with feelings of uneasiness and fear that another event of national significance would occur (CBS News 2006).

Defusing the potential of terrorist attacks and the impact of natural disasters as well as other threats represents the central foci of the Department of Homeland Security. In reality, the potential for being a victim of an act of terrorism is dwarfed by the likelihood of being a victim of street or white-collar crime. From 2001 to 2005, there were 38 terrorist incidents in the United States (U.S. Department of Justice 2006a). In 2005 alone, there were 1,197,089 violent acts and 8,935,714 property acts known to the police (U.S. Department of Justice 2006b). Yet issues related to homeland security, such as terrorist threats, natural disasters and epidemics have gained such national attention that an entire federal agency was created to address these threats, the Department of Homeland Security. Conversely there is no overarching federal government agency with the mission to deter all street and white-collar crime; rather this responsibility is shared and controlled through the efforts of thousands of criminal justice agencies at the federal, state, local and tribal levels. As street, property and homeland security threats are realities for all Americans, this research investigates crime perceptions of Americans using a sample of citizens from Pennsylvania.

Homeland Security: 9/11 to Present

Overall, the United States has enjoyed relative peace from a foreign attack. Perhaps, because of its superpower status and geography, it has had few catastrophic attacks (e.g., Pearl Harbor, 1993 World Trade Center bombing and the Oklahoma City bombing) on its soil. But, as warned in September of 1999 by the United States Commission on National Security/21st Century:

states[nations], terrorists, other disaffected groups will acquire weapons of massive destruction and mass disruption...Americans will likely die on

American soil, possibly in large numbers [in the next twenty-five years]... Deterrence will not work as it once did” as the United States’ technological, geographic, military and diplomatic abilities will be ineffective to stop the new threats to American citizens. (United States Commission on National Security/ 21st Century 1999, p. 8)

This warning, two years before 9/11, provided notice of an impending attack on the United States. Sadly, few changes were made and the country experienced one of its greatest tragedies. From that day forward, homeland security has become a commonly used word in the United States. Homeland security has also become a government priority that has dipped into the resource that has traditionally been used to support efforts to combat street and white-collar crimes. In 2002, the newly created Department of Homeland Security brought together 22 federal agencies and more than 180,000 government employees (Department of Homeland Security 2007). The Homeland Security Act of 2002 articulated the following missions for the Department of Homeland Security:

- ❖ To prevent terrorist attacks within the United States
- ❖ To reduce the vulnerability of the United States to terrorism at home
- ❖ To minimize the damage and assist in the recovery from terrorist attacks that occur
- ❖ To act as the focal point regarding natural and human-caused crises and emergency planning (Homeland Security Act 2002)

From these Department of Homeland Security directives, it is quite clear that terrorism was a primary focus from 2002 to 2005. Terrorism is defined as a violent act that violates criminal laws of the United States as a means to intimidate or coerce a government, the civilian population or any segment of the population to further political or social objectives (U.S. Department of Justice 2006a). Responding to the focal threat of terrorism especially after September 11, 2001, provides some explanation for the shortcomings of government agencies when responding to the Hurricane Katrina disaster of 2005, which was the worst natural disaster in United States history (Penn 2007). Before Hurricane Katrina, the worst damage caused by a natural disaster were the combined losses, in 2004, from Hurricanes Charley, Frances, Ivan and Jeanne, at 46 billion dollars. Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast Region leaving 1,330 dead and 96 billion dollars worth of damage. Comparably, 9/11 left 2,900 dead and 19 billion dollars worth of damage (Penn 2007). The 2006 Hurricane Katrina Report praised the response of the American people but stressed the need to have seamless coordination of local, state and federal agencies in times of a national emergency. Today the comprehensive response to threats to the homeland of the United States can be found in the National Response Framework (NRF; Department of Homeland Security 2008). This public document provides specific guidelines on how individual, local, state, federal and non-government/private sector entities should respond in the event of a threat of national significance. These events of national significance include weapons of mass destruction (WMD), CBRNE (chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and explosive attacks) and weather-related emergencies.

With these every looming homeland security threats to the United States, the perceptions held by American citizens are of interest for one primary reason. Within

the National Response Framework is the principle that homeland security is local (Department of Homeland Security 2008). Thus, it is the responsibility of local and city governments to be able to protect, respond and recover from emergencies. In the case that the threat is most grave to the county (as in the case of terrorism), state and federal resources are to be used. Because local preparedness is the foundation of homeland security, the perceptions of individual citizens are worth researching as a means to better prepare the United States.

Interestingly, those who live in urban areas are most likely to face a terrorist homeland security threat. For terrorist attacks costing more than 1 billion dollars and fatalities of over 100, modeling shows New York represents 65% of the risk and Chicago 12% of risk. The top eight cities of population in the United States account for 95% of the model risk of being a target for terrorism (Wills et al. 2007).

Since 2001, there has not been a major terrorist attack in the United States, although other homeland security threats related to nature occur annually. The findings of this research compare perceptions of homeland security as well as traditional crimes. Thus, a short review of current trends in traditional crimes (white-collar, property and violent) will take place below.

Traditional Crimes: 1980s to Present

Following the onset of the dramatic rise in crime (particularly index offenses), scholars and policymakers alike scrambled to get at the heart of the crime problem (Wilson and Petersilia 1995; Sherman et al. 1997). Some scholars felt a moral decline was to blame for the increasing crime rates (Bennett et al. 1996), while others suggested the violent crack cocaine drug trade was at the heart of the problem (Grogger 1998). Whatever the cause, citizens demanded a response, and policymakers, in turn, responded with a variety of approaches including enacting more aggressive approaches to law enforcement; instituting community policing; and enacting more punitive sentences that, in the end, resulted in the incarceration of a record number of offenders (Mauer 1999; Parenti 1999).

However, just as the most calamitous projections for the future were being presented, there was a precipitous crime drop across the country from the mid 1990s into the third millennium (Blumstein and Wallman 2000). Again, scholars and policymakers alike scrambled—but this time to understand what caused this momentous decline. Predictably, many of the aforementioned policies that were instituted during the rise in crime received some or all of the credit for the decline (Blumstein and Wallman 2000). In addition, the strong economy and higher wages were thought to have played a critical role (Grogger 2000). In general, though, scholars remain enamored with the decline and, as a result, continue to produce works that weigh in on its potential causes (Blumstein and Wallman 2006; Conklin 2003; Zimring 2007).

As the street crime decline debate continued, an emergence of white-collar crime gained national consciousness. Not since the savings and loan and insider trading scandals of the late 1980s and early 1990s (see Stewart 1992), had there been such a focus on white-collar crime and its devastating impact on Americans. The high profile scandals involving Enron, Rite-Aid, Arthur Anderson and others, brought to

Americans' attention the billions of dollars lost by investors, including retirees, some of whom lost their entire retirement funds when Enron collapsed (Rosoff et al. 2007; Simon 2006).

Given the magnitude of losses pertaining to white-collar crime in the last three decades, recent research has suggested that citizens now believe that the damage and severity of white-collar crime is almost equal to that of street crime, especially when fraud is compared to robbery (Schoepfer et al. 2007). In one study, the respondents felt that street criminals were more likely to be caught and sentenced more harshly than white-collar criminals. Taking into account one's education and income, however, revealed a split of opinions, with those with less education and lower incomes believing that street criminals were less likely to be caught than white-collar criminals (Schoepfer et al. 2007; see also Holftreter et al. 2008).

The above research demonstrates how white-collar crime has moved into the vocabulary of being a traditional crime in the United States, as public opinion shifts to the belief that these offenses are becoming as dangerous to the public. As threats to the homeland have gained national attention since 2001, understanding American's opinions related to homeland security are important as a precursor to this research.

Public Opinion of United States Homeland Security

Since 2002, the National Center for Disaster Preparedness has conducted annual research on the topic: Where the American Public Stands on Terrorism, Security and Disaster Preparedness. In the 2006 survey, conducted five years after 9/11 and one year after Hurricane Katrina, the findings revealed a serious erosion of trust in the federal government's ability to protect Americans from terrorist attacks. The American public's confidence in whether the federal government could protect them from a terrorist attack dropped from a high of 62% in 2003 to only 4% by 2006. Additionally, there are no signs of confidence in areas of protecting public transportation, shipping post, and confidence in a set of priorities on terrorism and disaster preparedness. When specifically addressing the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), only 38% expressed having confidence in DHS Secretary Michael Chertoff's ability to lead and organize a response to a major disaster. Comparably, former DHS Secretary Tom Ridge had a 65% confidence rating in 2004 (National Center for Disaster Preparedness 2006).

Equally interesting were the analyses by race and political affiliation. Thirty-six percent of African Americans, 44% of Whites, and 49% of Latinos expressed confidence in the ability of the government to protect the area in which they live. African Americans also believe the risk of a disaster in their area is great, with 73% having concerns about a natural disaster or emergency weather event in their community, with 58% of Latinos and 50% of Whites expressing a similar concern for their respective communities. When posed with a question regarding the likelihood of a terrorist attack occurring in their community, 66% of Blacks, 60% of Latinos and 36% of Whites expressed a concern about such an event occurring in their community (National Center for Disaster Preparedness 2006). These concerns are warranted since the three most likely disaster scenarios as predicted by the DHS include nuclear device detonations, pandemic influenza and a major earthquake. All

of these are predicted to occur in large urban metropolitan areas, such as New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, and Houston, where there are large urban areas heavily populated by minority populations (Penn 2007).

Turning to politics, only 37% of those affiliated with the Democratic Party expressed confidence in the government's ability to protect their community. In comparison, 43% of those affiliated with Independents and 53% of Republicans expressed the same sentiment. When it comes to fiscal priorities, only 22% of Democrats are confident in the government's ability to oversee spending and set fiscal priorities. Thirty-five percent of Independents and 50% of Republicans felt such confidence. Finally, in terms of being prepared for a terrorist attack, 58% of Republicans, 49% of Independents and 39% of Democrats believed the United States was prepared for a future attack (National Center for Disaster Preparedness 2006). Political polls from past presidential elections clearly demonstrate rural areas are largely Republican; conversely urban areas are largely in favor of the Democrats (McKee 2008).

Current Research

The current research expands the previous findings by focusing on a demographically rich state to derive Americans' beliefs on national security, traditional criminal offenses, and their concerns about the likelihood of another event of national significance. Through a statewide poll the researchers sought to determine whether Pennsylvanians believed that spending levels aligned with these potential threats.

The use of a statewide poll from Pennsylvania presents an opportunity to examine the views of residents from a diverse state. It also provides a glimpse into what Americans are thinking as related to crime and homeland security issues. This research is particularly timely considering that traditional crime is now on the rise, and some believe that the competing issues of homeland security and preventing traditional crime are beginning to cause both fiscal and personnel strains (see Lehrer 2007). The current research expands past research by focusing on citizens' views about national security and more traditional criminal offenses. In addition, the research investigates the level of concern citizens have regarding a potential terrorist attack or natural disaster. Furthermore, with scholars asserting that efforts to prevent homeland security have produced fiscal and personnel strain on policing agencies (Lehrer 2007), our research aims to see whether citizens are also struggling with these complex issues. Further, since both traditional crime and homeland security depend heavily on the active participation of citizens for prevention and response, determining the public's views can be useful for governmental plans and programs in the future. The following hypotheses were examined:

- H1 Americans believe the United States government has been effective in securing the homeland.
- H2 Americans believe that a terrorist attack is the most likely homeland security threat that will occur within the next 12 months.
- H3 When comparing the fear of traditional crimes (white-collar, property and violent crimes) to terrorist attacks, there will be no difference based on race, education, income and other demographic information.

From an analysis of these findings, determinations can be presented to better prepare citizens and government agencies about deterring and responding to traditional crimes and homeland security threats.

Methodology

This research is based on data collected from the 2007 Penn State Poll conducted by Penn State Harrisburg's Center for Survey Research. The Center makes use of computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) which is used in conjunction with random digit dialing. In 2007, the response rate for the poll was 42%. In total, 862 Pennsylvanians throughout the state participated in the poll. The Center checked the representativeness of the poll by comparing the demographics of the respondents to Pennsylvania data from the United States Bureau of the Census. To further ensure representativeness, weighting based on age and gender was applied to each case. The full details of the poll's methodology can be found at <http://csr.hbg.psu.edu/docs/PennStatePoll2007-FinalReport.pdf>. Other studies have used single states to gain an understanding of public perceptions about important criminal justice issues. For instance, Gabbidon and Higgins (2007) used a sample of individuals from Pennsylvania to understand consumer racial profiling. Our use of a single location is not to generalize these findings to the entire population of Americans, but to provide a first step in understanding how the perceptions of homeland security affect citizens' fears of crime and national spending on crime issues.

To investigate the hypotheses, several questions pertaining to respondents' feelings towards homeland security, fear of traditional crimes and terrorist acts, and perceived major threats to the United States were added to the poll. The responses to these questions are presented in the results section.

Results

Demographics of Sample

Females were slightly more represented in the sample than males (52.4% vs. 47.6%). Data reveals a fairly highly educated sample of participants, with most of them having at least a high school education or above (95%). Further, 36% of the sample had completed a four-year degree and/or had some level of graduate education. Even with these high levels of education, one-third of the respondents reported being unemployed. In terms of the participants' marital status, more than half of them (56%) were married or living with a partner. Most households had four or less residents (86.2%). Moreover, 92% reported that only one or two generations of a particular family were living in the household. Whites represented the largest share of the respondents (n=780; 90.5%), with Blacks (n=31; 3.6%) representing the next largest group of respondents, and Latinos (n=17; 2%) following next. Incomes for the respondents were fairly mixed. Fifty-four percent of the respondents reported income below \$75,000. At the ends, 3.9% had an income under \$10,000 and 4.3% reported an income above \$150,000. The modal category was \$40,000 to \$59,999

with \$16.2%. The participants were evenly split between those who identified themselves as being Republican (35.3%) and Democrats (35%). The largest share of the remaining participants classified themselves as being an Independent (18.5%).

In responding to the first hypothesis about the U.S. government's effectiveness in securing the homeland, nearly 70% of the respondents felt that the government had been effective in securing the nation since 9/11 by responding "strongly agree" or "agree." Just over half (54.2%) "agreed" with the statement. About 29% responded "disagree" or "strongly disagree."

Descriptive Results of Substantive Questions

Data also presents a picture of what event, if any, respondents believed was most likely to occur in the United States over the next twelve months. It is important to note that terrorism was not the most frequent response. The rank order was "natural disaster" first with 49.7%, followed by "none of the above is likely" at 22.8%. "Suicide bombing" was at 8.8% followed by "large-scale terrorist attack" fourth with 7.2%. Rounding out the list were "Flu pandemic" with 5.9%, "Don't know/Not sure" 2.4%, "Nuclear bomb detonation" 2.2% and 1.0% of the respondents refused to answer the question. The respondents' satisfaction with the current approach to terrorism was also evident in the finding that 58.8% of the respondents felt that current spending to prevent major terrorist acts was at appropriate levels.

To contrast the participants' views on homeland security, specifically terrorism against more traditional offenses, such as violent offenses, property crime and white-collar crimes, they were asked a series of questions that examined their satisfaction with current expenditures to prevent each of the aforementioned crimes/incidents. In addition, they were also queried about their level of fear concerning each of the offenses. First, the level of satisfaction with current expenditures to prevent the more traditional offenses peaked at 54.5% (for property crimes). After that, the level fell off considerably with only 43% of the respondents stating that the current level of spending for both assault/murder and white-collar crimes were at appropriate levels.

In terms of the fear generated by potential terrorist attacks and more traditional criminal offenses, most people, in general, weren't fearful of any of the crimes/incidents posed to them. Illustrative of this fact are the following figures, which point to the percentage of respondents who indicated they were "fearful" or "very fearful" of each of the offenses/incidents posed to them: property crime (20%), major terrorist act (16%), violent crime (15%) and, white-collar crime (14%).

To address the second research question, Table 1 presents the results of four logistic regression analyses.¹ The first logistic analysis examines influence of the demographic measures on the fear of white-collar crime occurring when considering the respondents' agreement to the effectiveness of homeland security. This analysis indicates that Whites are less likely than Blacks ($b=-1.69$, $\text{Exp}(B)=.18$) to believe that government is doing enough for white-collar crime. Further, the respondents that agree with the effectiveness of homeland security are fearful of being a victim of a white-collar crime.

¹ The distribution of the dependent measures indicated that the items be dichotomized. The specific results of this analysis are available from the second author on request.

Table 1 Logistic regression analysis of the demographic factors and traditional crime

Measure	White-Collar Crime	Property Crime	Violent Crime	Terrorist Attack
White	-1.69* (.18)	-1.03* (.36)	-1.04*(.35)	-.25 (.78)
Education	.00 (.99)	.05 (1.05)	-.00 (.99)	-.02(.98)
Married	-.34 (.71)	-.43(.65)	-.98 *(.38)	-.28(1.26)
Employed	-.76* (.47)	-.40(.67)	-.24 (.78)	-.44(.64)
Number of Individuals in Household	-.01 (.99)	.00 (1.00)	-.00 (.99)	.21*(1.24)
Number of Generations in Household	-.18 (.84)	.10 (1.01)	-.03 (.97)	-.39*(.68)
Income	.02 (1.02)	.00 (.98)	-.10 (.90)	-.06(.94)
Male	-.02 (.98)	-.39 *(.68)	-.07 (.93)	-.41(.67)
Political Affiliation	.38(1.46)	.03 (1.03)	.06 (.94)	-.30(.74)
Homeland Security	.34*(1.40)	.03(1.03)	-.17(.85)	-.14(.87)
Nagelkerke R-Square	.08	.05	.10	.06

* $p > .05$; parantheses (ExpB)

The second logistic analysis in Table 1 examines the influence of the demographic measure on the perceptions of fear of property crime when considering the effectiveness of homeland security. The results indicate that Whites are less likely than Blacks ($b = -1.03$, $\text{Exp}(B) = .36$) and males ($b = -.39$, $\text{Exp}(B) = .68$) to be fearful of a property crime. The third logistic analysis in Table 1 examines the influence of the demographic measures on the fearfulness of violent crime when considering the respondent's level of agreement with the effectiveness of homeland security. The results indicate that Whites are less likely than Blacks to be fearful ($b = -1.04$, $\text{Exp}(B) = .35$) of a violent crime. The fourth logistic analysis in Table 1 examines the link between the demographic measures and the fear of terrorist attacks when considering the respondent's agreement with the effectiveness of homeland security. The results indicate that the larger the number of individuals in the household ($b = .21$, $\text{Exp}(B) = 1.24$) the more likely they are to be fearful of a terrorist attack, as, too, the number of generations in the household ($b = -.39$, $\text{Exp}(B) = .68$) are less likely to be fearful of a terrorist attack.²

Table 2 presents four logistic regression analyses that examine the link between the demographic measures and the perceptions of national spending for four types of crimes, while considering the respondent's agreement of the effectiveness of homeland security. For national spending on property crime, the results indicate that the larger the number of individuals in a household, the more likely they are to believe that national spending is at the proper level ($b = .15$, $\text{Exp}(B) = 1.16$); but the number of generations in a household were less likely to believe that national spending is at its proper level ($b = -.53$, $\text{Exp}(B) = .59$). Further, those that agreed with the effectiveness of homeland security are less likely to believe that national spending is at the proper level for property crime ($b = -.36$, $\text{Exp}(B) = .70$).

² For each of these dependent measures, bivariate analysis that included cross-tabs and ANOVA were performed. While they are not shown here, the bivariate analyses are available from the second author on request.

Table 2 Logistic regression analysis of the demographic factors and spending on crime

Measure	National Spending on Property Crime	National Spending on Terrorism	National Spending on Violence	National Spending on White-Collar Crime
White	-.34 (.71)	-.31(.73)	.11 (1.12)	-.91*(.40)
Education	.01 (1.00)	-.07(.93)	-.07(.90)	.15*(1.16)
Married	.15(1.16)	-.04(.96)	.08(1.09)	-.04(.96)
Employed	.11(1.11)	-.04(.96)	-.08 (.92)	-.26(.78)
Number of Individuals in Household	.15* (1.16)	.24*(1.28)	-.04(.97)	.21*(1.23)
Number of Generations in Household	-.53* (.59)	-.54(.59)	-.20(.82)	-.52*(.59)
Income	.03 (1.04)	.03(.97)	-.01(1.01)	.00(1.00)
Male	.12 (1.13)	.17(1.18)	.47(1.61)	.30(1.34)
Political Affiliation	.26 (1.29)	.38*(1.47)	.45*(1.56)	.08(1.08)
Homeland Security	-.36*(.70)	-.79(.45)	-.49*(.61)	-.58*(.56)
Nagelkerke R-Square	.06	.17	.11	.11

* $p > .05$; Paratheses (ExpB)

The second logistic regression analysis shows that households that had a large number of individuals were more likely to believe that national spending was at the proper level ($b = .24$, $\text{Exp}(B) = 1.28$). In this analysis, the individuals that were more conservative were likely to believe that national spending was at its proper level ($b = .38$, $\text{Exp}(B) = 1.47$). The third logistic regression analysis shows that political affiliation (i.e., more conservative) were more likely to believe that national spending was at the proper level for violent crime. Further, those that agreed with the effectiveness of homeland security were less likely to believe that national spending was at the proper level ($b = -.49$, $\text{Exp}(B) = .61$). The fourth logistic regression indicates that Whites ($b = -.91$, $\text{Exp}(B) = .40$), number of generations in household ($b = -.52$, $\text{Exp}(B) = .59$) and agreement of the effectiveness of homeland security ($b = -.58$, $\text{Exp}(B) = .56$) are less likely to believe that national spending for white-collar crime is at the proper level. In this analysis, it also shows that individuals with more education ($b = .15$, $\text{Exp}(B) = 1.16$) and those that live in households with a large number of individuals ($b = .21$, $\text{Exp}(B) = 1.23$) are more likely to believe that national spending for white-collar crime is at the proper level.

Discussion

This research explored several research questions pertaining to homeland security and more traditional offenses. Pennsylvanians overwhelmingly stated that they felt the government has been effective in securing the homeland. It is plausible that such strong support is likely tied to the absence of any major acts since 9/11. That is, while other countries such as Great Britain have had attacks, the United States has been successful in averting such incidents. What should be noted is a belief by almost half of the respondents that a natural disaster is likely to occur. Support for this finding is substantiated by major hurricanes such as Katrina, Rita, and recently Ike. Thus, with homeland security inclusive of all threats to the homeland, such as those of natural and

human origin, it appears the concern for an act of terrorism has significantly declined. This, too, is supported by the low number of poll participants who believe a major terrorist attack is likely to happen in the next 12 months. Also, because respondents were largely satisfied with current spending levels, it suggests that the overall governmental approach of the United States government in general and the Department of Homeland Security, specifically, has received a favorable response from Pennsylvanians.

Since September 11, 2001, with such a high priority of attention and expenditures on homeland security, we also wanted to gauge whether citizens felt that there was a drop-off in support for current levels of expenditures that address personal crime, property and white-collar offenses. Here we did find that respondents seemed more satisfied with the expenditures related to preventing homeland security, more so than for other types of offenses. However, on the low end of agreement, were expenditures for violent and white-collar offenses (about 47% agreement with current expenditures). And as noted before, there was very little fear expressed about being a victim of the various offenses. Thus, even with the recent high profile white-collar crimes such as Enron, very little fear is apparently generated by such criminal activities.

A series of multivariate analyses provided additional context for the poll results. Most notably, the analyses suggested that there were differences in how white-collar crime is viewed by race. Blacks don't see the government as doing enough for white-collar crime. Here, it might be that crime in the Black community (largely street crime) receives so much attention, that they are sensitive to the minimal attention that white-collar crime receives. As for race and gender, the analyses showed that White males were more likely than females and Blacks to be fearful of homeland security than traditional offenses. This could be tied to Blacks not seeing themselves as a target of homeland security activities—even if they do reside in large metropolitan areas. As for the gender differences, it could be that since men comprise the largest share of the military and public law enforcement (federal, local and state), they have a greater sense that a terrorist act is imminent. The results regarding violent crime align with the belief that because Whites have much lower violent victimization rates than Blacks, it makes sense that they would be more fearful of homeland security incidents than Blacks.

In terms of the multivariate analyses related to spending. A few findings warrant comment. Being conservative reduces the agreement that spending for property crime and violent are at appropriate levels likely indicates that they are likely to want more spending to combat these issues. Given the “law and order” persuasion of conservatives, they often want more—not less money spent on crime and justice issues. Even so, when it comes to white-collar offenses, the results suggest that conservatives don't see it as warranting additional expenditures. This aligns with conventional wisdom that conservatives tend to give powerful corporations a pass when it comes to investigating and pursuing crimes occurring in the corporate sector. This represents an interesting area for additional research.

Conclusion

This paper found that citizens are generally satisfied with the way in which the government has handled homeland security issues since 9/11. In addition, it revealed

that citizens were generally not fearful of potential terrorism or more traditional criminal offenses. However, there were differences by assorted demographic characteristics. Nonetheless, the research had several notable weaknesses. First, the respondents were from one only one state, Pennsylvania. Although it is the sixth most populous state with over 12 million residents, the findings are not generalizable to the United States population. Second, although a 42% response rate is acceptable, it does leave us wondering whether the non-respondents might differ from those who participated. Finally, there were very few non-White participants. With over 90% of the respondents being white, our race-related findings are useful but should be viewed with caution because of a non-representational sample from the Pennsylvanian population.

These limitations aside, we see this research as a starting point for the discussion regarding how monies are being allocated for the various concerns related to homeland security and more traditional forms of crime. This paper sparks the debate of expenditures, as limited governmental resources appear to be on the horizon due to fiscal shortfalls at the national, state and local levels. The United States has been most fortunate to have avoided an attack from foreigners since 2001, but annual threats of natural disasters and a rise in some index crimes, along with added national attention to white-collar crimes, show threats to the homeland go far beyond terrorism. Economic uncertainty along with political attention make the findings of this research timely and relevant. Protecting United States citizens from the greatest threats is without a doubt a responsibility of government. Thus, gauging citizens' fears about the various types of criminal/national security-related activities provides data that allows researchers and policymakers to consider which threat areas will receive critical funding. As such, criminologists and political scientists are invited to weigh in on the policy debate by pursuing large-scale public opinion studies modeled on the one provided above.

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