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STATE of the STATE Survey

State *Of the* State Survey

*The Threat of
Terrorism and
Michigan Public
Opinion*

By:

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Briefing Paper No. 2004-53

CONTRIBUTORS TO THE STATE OF THE STATE SURVEY

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The Threat of Terrorism and Michigan Public Opinion

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Background

As part of its quarterly State of the State Survey (SOSS) of public opinion in Michigan, Michigan State University's (MSU) Institute for Public Policy and Social Research (IPPSR) began to monitor the impact of the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 (9/11), on Michiganians. Beginning in January 2002, a major focus of the survey questions has been on people's level of anxiety or sense of threat. In a project directed by MSU political science professors Darren Davis and Brian Silver, IPPSR also conducted two nationwide surveys on the impact of the 9/11 attacks on the U.S. World Trade Center and the Pentagon on people's support for civil liberties, which focused on whether people's sense of threat may affect their readiness to give up civil liberties for greater safety and security.

This paper reviews some of the central findings from the SOSS surveys in Michigan. Additional and related findings from the nationwide Civil Liberties Survey can be found online.¹ IPPSR's previous releases of major findings on this topic can also be found online.²

The data for this report are drawn from nine SOSS surveys conducted between January 11, 2002 and March, 11 2004.³ Each survey includes the answers of approximately 1,000 Michigan residents to random-digit dialing (RDD) telephone surveys of approximately 20 minutes in length. The questions on terrorism analyzed here are only a small part of the questionnaires in each survey. The samples from each round are weighted to be representative of the adult population of Michigan. The sampling error for each survey is ± 3.1 to 3.2 percent.

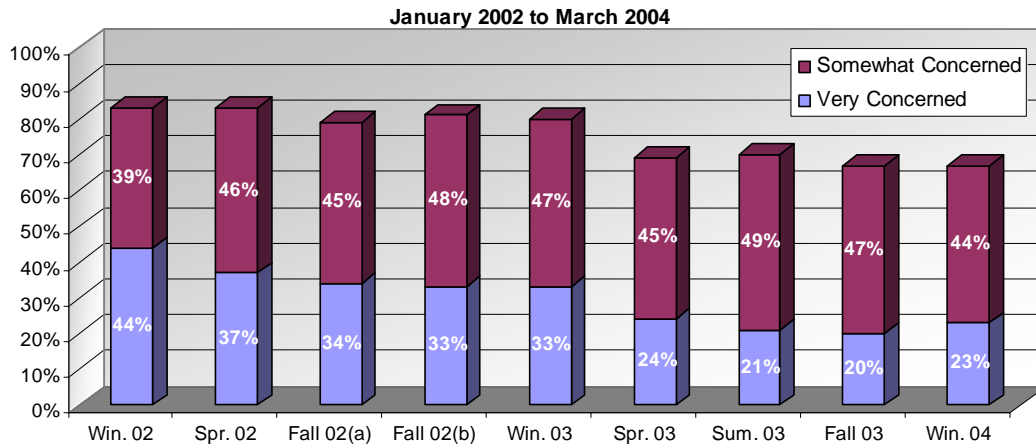
Further information about the survey samples and technical procedures can be obtained from the IPPSR website at www.msu.edu/SOSS/SOSSdata.htm.

Concern about Another Terrorist Attack

Concern about another terrorist attack on the United States declined significantly in Michigan between January 2002 and March 2004, but remains high.

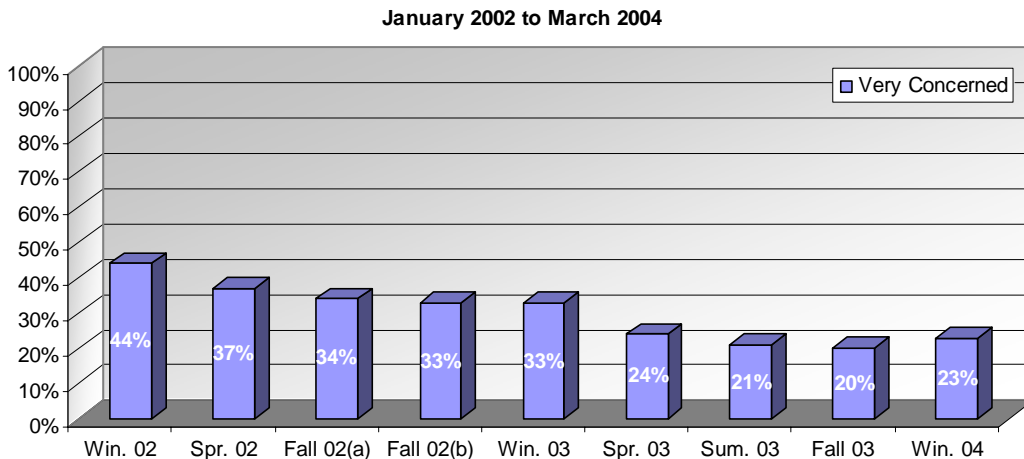
- In winter and spring of 2002, shortly after the 9/11 attacks, 83 percent of Michigan residents were "somewhat" or "very" concerned that another terrorist attack on the United States might occur in the next three months (Figure 1).
- Nearly as high a level of concern (about 80 percent) persisted through winter of 2003.
- Shortly after the fall of Baghdad to U.S. and coalition armed forces, however, the level of concern about terrorism in the United States began to decline. By March 2004, only two-thirds of Michiganians were concerned that another attack would occur in the next three months.
- The percentage of people who were "very" concerned about another terrorist attack shows a sharper decline. Whereas in winter 2002, 44 percent of Michigan residents were very concerned about another attack, after the fall of Baghdad in April 2003 this percentage was cut in half and remained at this lower level through early March 2004 (Figure 2).

Figure 1. Percent Somewhat or Very Concerned about a Terrorist Attack in the U.S. in the Next 3 Months



Note: Based on SOSS respondents who said they were very concerned or somewhat concerned (as opposed to not very concerned or not at all concerned). From SOSS 24, 25, 27, through 33.

Figure 2. Percent Very Concerned about a Terrorist Attack in the U.S. in the Next 3 Months



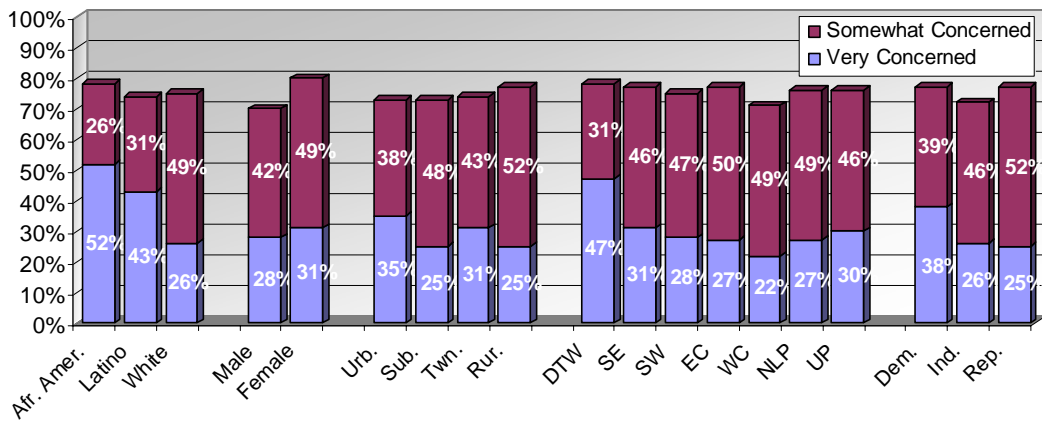
Note: Based on SOSS respondents who said they were very concerned (as opposed to somewhat concerned, not very concerned, or not at all concerned). From SOSS 24, 25, 27, through 33.

Demographic Differences in Concern about Terrorism

- Based on data combined across several surveys, there was little variation in the level of concern about terrorism across Michigan's regions (Figure 3).
- Although overall racial and ethnic differences in the level of concern ("somewhat" or "very" concerned) were modest, African Americans (52 percent) and Latinos (43 percent) were much more likely to be "very" concerned than were Whites (26 percent). Thus, perceptions of serious threat differed greatly by race and ethnicity.
- Women (80 percent) were much more likely than men (70 percent) to express at least some concern about another attack, but the differences in being "very" concerned were small (31 percent versus 28 percent).

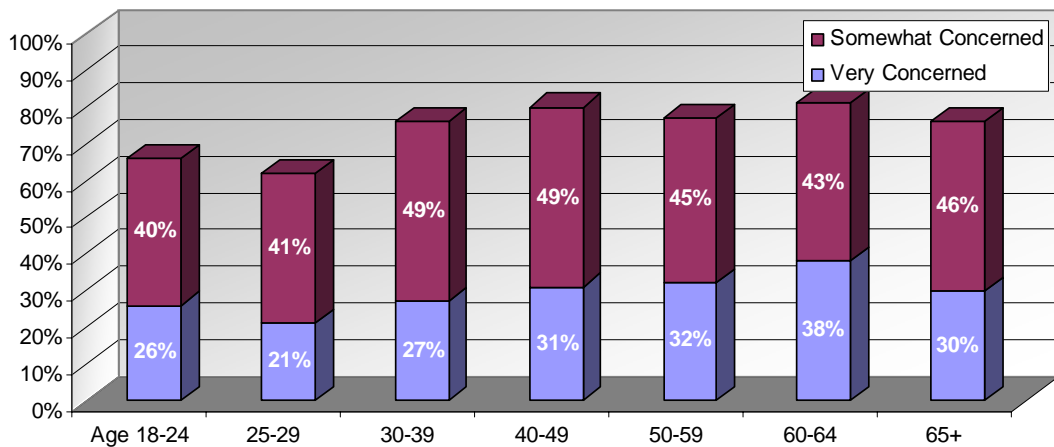
- Although regional differences were small overall, almost half (47 percent) of the population of Detroit was “very” concerned about another terrorist attack.
- Overall concern about terrorism differed little by political party identification, but Democrats (38 percent) were much more likely to be “very” concerned than were Republicans (25 percent).
- Young people (under age 30) were substantially less likely to be concerned about terrorism than middle-aged or older Michigianians (Figure 4).

Figure 3. Percent Somewhat or Very Concerned about Another Terrorist Attack, by Social-Demographic Background
January 2002 to March 2004 rounds combined



Note: Based on SOSS respondents who said they were very concerned or somewhat concerned (as opposed to not very concerned or not at all concerned). From SOSS 24, 25, 27, through 33 combined.

Figure 4. Percent Somewhat or Very Concerned about a Terrorist Attack, by Age
January 2002 to March 2004 rounds combined



Note: Based on SOSS respondents who said they were very concerned or somewhat concerned (as opposed to not very concerned or not at all concerned). From SOSS 24, 25, 27, through 33 combined.

Endnotes

¹ For findings from the nationwide Civil Liberties Survey, see www.msu.edu/~bsilver/CivLibPage.htm.

² For IPPSR's previous releases of major findings on this topic, see IPPSR Policy Brief (April 2002): "Americans Protect Civil Liberties" www.ippsr.msu.edu/Publications/PBCivilLiberties.pdf

IPPSR Media Information page (September 2003)
www.ippsr.msu.edu/AboutIPPSR/CivilLiberties.htm

Gisgie Gendreau, *MSU Today* (9/15/2003): "People remain willing to trade civil liberties for safety, security"
msutoday.msu.edu/research/index.php3?article=12Sep2003-5

³ The last interview for this study was completed on March 11, 2004, the day before the terrorist bombing in Madrid.

⁴ For comparisons of results from the two waves of the national survey, see www.msu.edu/~bsilver/ContinuityAPSA2003.pdf.

⁵ For a research report focusing on this issue, see www.msu.edu/~bsilver/RootsMarch25-Final.pdf.

About SOSS

The State of the State Survey (SOSS) is a statewide survey conducted by the Office for Survey Research at Michigan State University's Institute for Public Policy and Social Research (IPPSR). Administered quarterly, SOSS provides current information about citizen opinions on critical issues such as education, the environment, health care, crime, victimization and family violence, giving and philanthropy, governmental institutions, and specific community concerns.

SOSS surveys are based on stratified random samples of adults age 18 and older living in Michigan. The sample strata are based on the regions, as detailed below, established by Michigan State University Extension, with one exception: Detroit City is treated as a separate region. The data sets include "weights" to adjust the data so that they are representative of the adult population of Michigan. More information about SOSS, including codebooks and methodological reports for each round, are available online at www.ippsr.msu.edu/SOSS.

Regional Categories

Detroit:	City of Detroit
East Central:	Arenac, Bay, Clare, Clinton, Gladwin, Gratiot, Huron, Isabella, Midland, Saginaw, Sanilac, Shiawassee, Tuscola
Northern L.P.:	Alcona, Alpena, Antrim, Benzie, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Crawford, Emmet, Grand Traverse, Iosco, Kalkaska, Leelanau, Missaukee, Montmorency, Ogemaw, Otsego, Oscoda, Presque Isle, Roscommon, Wexford
Southeast:	Genesee, Lapeer, Lenawee, Livingston, Macomb, Monroe, Oakland, St. Clair, Washtenaw, Wayne (excluding Detroit)
Southwest:	Berrien, Branch, Calhoun, Cass, Eaton, Hillsdale, Ingham, Jackson, Kalamazoo, St. Joseph, Van Buren
U.P.:	Alger, Baraga, Chippewa, Delta, Dickinson, Gogebic, Houghton, Iron, Keweenaw, Luce, Mackinac, Marquette, Menominee, Ontonagon, Schoolcraft
West Central:	Allegan, Barry, Ionia, Kent, Lake, Manistee, Mason, Mecosta, Montcalm, Muskegon, Newaygo, Oceana, Osceola, Ottawa

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