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Homeland Security Administration and Finance: A Survey of Texas County Officials

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Homeland Security Administration and Finance: A Survey of Texas County Officials*

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Abstract

This article examines homeland security administration and finance in Texas county governments in the United States. A survey was conducted in the spring of 2006 to determine the extent of funding sources for homeland security and the perception by county officials on the effectiveness of financing homeland security. First, the results of this study indicate that as the size of the county government increases this impacts various aspects of homeland security finances. Second, county officials have indicated that increased funding for homeland security will come from existing revenue sources; raising property taxes is not a feasible option. Finally, there is a belief by county officials that there has not been a radical change in the existing county budget as a result of homeland security initiatives. Counties feel that they are well prepared in their financial management systems to deal with a possible terrorist attack.

KEYWORDS: homeland security, financial management, survey, county government

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Introduction and Background

The terrorist attacks in the United States of September 11, 2001 or 9/11 have put extra pressure on public officials and their agencies to avert and effectively cope with new threats (Rosenthal, 2003). Since September 11, there remains considerable fear and anxiety about future attacks. After 9/11 the idea of homeland security became a part of American ideology (Beresford, 2004). These emotions force public officials, especially those at the local level who are primarily responsible for public safety, to devote large sums of money to homeland security (West & Orr, 2005). Counties across the United States have been bearing a considerable portion of the burden of financing and managing homeland security in their locales (Caruson & MacManus, 2005).

The purpose of this article is to investigate the scope of homeland security, in particular focusing on its impact on administration and finances in county governments in Texas. This is done through a survey of Texas county government officials. In addition, there is an examination of the perceptions by county public officials on the effectiveness of the existing financial management system to meet the current and future demands of homeland security. This is a relatively unexplored area that has a substantial impact on local governments' homeland security preparedness (Caruson & MacManus, 2005).

For the purposes of this study, homeland security refers to domestic governmental actions designed to prevent, detect, respond to, and recover from acts of terrorism. This study uses this definition in a survey of county government officials. This article focuses on counties because these governments typically have closer political and administrative ties with state governments than do cities. Counties are representative of a broader electorate than cities which enables them to better mediate conflict (Waugh, 1994). Therefore, county governments may in fact be the most logical choice for homeland security functions because of their unique roles in state and local governance. While the federal government has a lead role in establishing national priorities and policies for homeland security, local governments arguably have the best knowledge of their territory and are best suited to address specific localized needs (Wise & Nader, 2002).

Adaptive management is a theory that can be used to explain the impact of homeland security on county government finance and administration (Wise, 2006). Adaptive management calls for the integration of science and management where public officials work collaboratively with each other and with the public and learn together (Graham & Kruger, 2002). Adaptive management attempts to incorporate the views of all interested parties to discuss management problems and then to develop models that express participants' collective understanding of how the system operates (Johnson, 1999). This approach differs from traditional forms of management by emphasizing the importance of feedback in shaping

policy, followed by further evaluation (Wise, 2006). Adaptive management may be a possible route for counties to pursue to be more responsive to their stakeholders, at the same time meeting homeland security needs.

This article is divided into several sections in order to explore the scope and effectiveness of homeland security and financial management in Texas county governments. The following section specifies the research questions that will frame the discussion of the survey results. This is followed by a detailed illustration of the survey methods and results. The conclusion provides a re-examination of the research questions of this study, limitations, and future research.

Research Questions

There are three research questions that are addressed in this study that have been derived from the existing literature. These questions deal with county government size, funding methods and sources, and effectiveness of homeland security finance and administration.

1. Does the size of the county have an impact on homeland security funding in Texas counties?
2. What are the common methods of financing homeland security in Texas counties?
3. How effective are financial management policies on homeland security in Texas counties?

The first research question deals with county government size as one possible factor identified in the literature that can be used to explain homeland security initiatives (Baldassare and Hoene, 2002; Gerber et al., 2005; MacManus & Caruson, 2006). The literature has maintained that larger local governments will be more advanced in their homeland security preparedness. For example, a survey of Florida cities' and counties' officials showed that larger jurisdictions reported federal or state information sources as a critical outlet for terrorist threat data than smaller cities (MacManus & Caruson, 2006). In a national survey of homeland security preparedness it was found that large cities had a greater perceived likelihood of attack on their locality than smaller and medium-sized cities (Gerber et al., 2005).

The second question examines sources of homeland security funding, which has been examined in previous research of Florida cities and counties (Caruson & MacManus, 2005). The last question deals with an application of the adaptive management model to homeland security (Wise 2006). This study specifically applies this theory to county government administration and finances. Before this article addresses these important research questions, it examines the survey data collection methods.

Survey and Methods

The authors of this study conducted a Web survey of Texas county treasurers and county judges in the spring of 2006. In order to get more candid responses the public officials were assured confidentiality of their responses. Because county judges and treasurers are actively involved in county government finances they were a logical choice to send a survey to.

A county judge is the chief elected official in county government in Texas. His or her position is defined according to the Texas Association of Counties (<http://www.county.org>) as having broad judicial and administrative powers over the county government. This official presides over a five-member commissioners' court, which has budgetary and administrative authority over county government operations. Four commissioners, each elected from a quarter of the county's population, serve along with the county judge on the commissioners' court. In financial management, the county judge has a significant role in the preparation of the county budget. Commissioners vote with the county judge to set the budget for all county departments and adopt a tax rate.

The county treasurer, also an elected official, is the county's banker and the chief custodian of county finances. This official receives all monies belonging to the county; keeps an account of all monies in a designated depository; and pays disbursement of all monies as directed by commissioners' court. Both officials, given their respective roles, have an important impact on county finances.

A comprehensive mailing list of county treasurers and judges, including their email addresses, was provided by the Texas Association of Counties. This research surveyed only counties serving populations of 10,000 or greater, because of the desire to focus on medium to large-sized governments and their adoption and views on homeland security issues. There is a total of 254 counties in Texas, with 166 of them serving populations of 10,000 residents or greater.

First, a cover letter was emailed introducing the project with a Web link to the survey. This was followed in three weeks by a reminder email sent to county officials who did not respond to the initial mailing. Out of 166 officials who were sent a survey, 95 counties responded, which is a response rate of 57%. This is an above average response rate compared to International City/County Management Association (ICMA) surveys of local government officials which usually is around 35%.

The methods used in this article were descriptive and summary statistics of the survey responses. The coding for the questions are located on the top of the columns in the tables and the average response category is the mean value of the coded responses. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) statistics was conducted to determine whether there were statistically significant differences between being a

larger-sized county government and the responses to the survey questions. Before we can explore the research questions of this study, the following section summarizes the characteristics of the counties, their governments, and the officials surveyed.

Texas Counties, their Governments, and Officials

In order to gain a better perspective of the counties that participated in the survey Table 1 presents summary statistics with this information. In terms of the fiscal capacity of Texas counties, which is defined as the ability of the county government to raise taxes given political and legal limits (such as a balanced budget law), there was an average response of -0.47. This was calculated by averaging the scaled responses to whether county officials believed that they had a favorable to unfavorable fiscal capacity (2 points assigned for very favorable, 1 point for favorable, -1 point for unfavorable, and -2 points for very unfavorable). This implies, because of the negative score, that Texas counties may not have a lot of resources for activities such as homeland security. However, the county officials have a more favorable view of economic development in their locality (which is defined as job growth and its impact on the county), with an average response of 0.36. In addition, the political climate is favorable, which is the political relationship between county commission and its citizens having an average response of 0.68.

Table 1
Information on Counties and their Governments

<i>Full-time equivalent (FTE) employees</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>	
99 or less	23	27.4	
100 to 499	42	50	
500 to 999	8	9.5	
1,000 to 4,999	10	11.9	
5,000 or more	1	1.2	

<i>County Characteristics</i>	<i>Very Favorable % (2)</i>	<i>Favorable % (1)</i>	<i>Neutral % (0)</i>	<i>Unfavorable % (-1)</i>	<i>Very Unfavorable % (-2)</i>	<i>Average Responses</i>
Fiscal capacity	2.4	16.9	27.7	37.3	15.7	-0.47
Economic development climate***	12	41	22.9	19.3	4.8	0.36
Political climate	9.8	59.8	19.5	11	0	0.68

Notes: ***significant difference of employee size and this variable at the 0.01 level; for average response calculation the coding is in parenthesis.

There was also information in the survey on the size of counties surveyed in terms of full-time equivalent (FTE) employees. This is a measure of size that can be used to determine whether larger-sized counties have differing views on homeland security-related issues. The results in Table 1 showed that 77.4% of counties surveyed had less than 499 employees. In addition, 50% of the counties surveyed were in the 100 to 499 FTE employment range. There was only one very large county that responded to the survey having 5,000 or more FTE employees. There were 10 counties that responded having 1,000 to 4,999 employees. The results show that this study is more representative of small to medium-sized counties. Therefore, the findings should be interpreted with caution given the types of counties in the sample.

ANOVA was used to determine whether FTE employment size had an impact on many of the measures examined in this study. A more favorable economic development climate was statistically related to being a larger-sized county government. This may be explained by smaller counties typically being more fiscally restrained than larger county governments because of lack of resource capacity to attract and retain businesses.

Table 2 shows that the typical county treasurer or county judge who responded to the survey was in the age range of 45 to 64. There was 58.8% of the sample composed of males. Only 20.7% of officials surveyed had a graduate degree. Finally, of officials that responded to the survey, 55.8% were county judges and the remainder treasurers.

Table 2
Information on County Government Officials

<i>Age Range</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percent</i>
25-34	2	2.4
35-44	12	14.5
45-54	26	31.3
55-64	32	38.6
65 and over	11	13.3
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	47	58.8
Female	33	41.3
<i>Graduate Degree</i>		
Yes	17	20.7
No	65	79.3
<i>Position</i>		
County Judge	53	55.8
County Treasurer	42	44.2

With this information on the counties that were surveyed, and officials who responded to the survey, the following section provides data on the extent of homeland security preparedness and planning in Texas county governments.

Homeland Security Preparedness and Planning

The degree of homeland security preparedness and planning information provides the extent to which counties view themselves as being prepared for a possible terrorist attack (Table 3). In terms of county governments' current homeland security preparedness, the average response was 2.44, which implies that counties are in the range of low to high in terms of their perception of preparedness. This finding shows that as county size increases the perception of being more prepared rises as well. Second, in terms of the probability of being a future terrorist target, there is a perception of this being a low probability for most counties. However, as the size of the county increases there is a belief in a greater likelihood of being a future terrorist target. Finally, the managerial capacity to coordinate and control homeland security spending is viewed favorably with an average response of 2.64, which is in the low to high range. In terms of preparedness of counties in

Texas, officials believe that they are prepared. There is the perception of a low probability of a terrorist attack within their county. Counties have high managerial capacity to coordinate and control homeland security spending.

Table 3						
Homeland Security Preparedness and Planning						
<i>How would you assess your county's:</i>	<i>Very High % (4)</i>	<i>High % (3)</i>	<i>Low % (2)</i>	<i>Very Low % (1)</i>	<i>Non Existent % (0)</i>	<i>Average Response</i>
Current homeland security preparedness**	4.5	47.7	38.6	5.7	3.4	2.44
Probability of being a future terrorist target***	5.7	14.8	45.5	26.1	8	1.84
Managerial capacity to coordinate and control homeland security spending	10.1	57.3	23.6	4.5	4.5	2.64
<i>Your county government:</i>	<i>Strongly Agree % (2)</i>	<i>Agree % (1)</i>	<i>Neutral % (0)</i>	<i>Disagree % (-1)</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree % (-2)</i>	<i>Average Response</i>
Has employed a set of performance measures that allows county decision-makers to know if they are improving homeland security preparedness	4.5	39.3	29.2	22.5	4.5	0.17
Is more secure against homeland security threats than it was prior to September 11, 2001	16.9	52.8	16.9	9	4.5	0.69
Has benchmarks for progress in improving homeland security preparedness	4.5	40.4	34.8	16.9	3.4	0.26
Has coordinated its homeland security planning with the cities and counties within its region**	21.3	52.8	16.9	6.7	2.2	0.84

Notes: significant difference of employee size and this variable at the (**) 0.05 level or (***) 0.01 level; for average response calculation the coding is in parenthesis.

Delving further into the theme of homeland security preparedness and planning this research found that only 39.3% of counties have performance measures that allow for the improvement of homeland security preparedness (Table 3). However, 52.8% of county officials believe that they are more secure against a terrorist attack than prior to September 11, 2001. In addition, 40.4% of respondents are in agreement that they have benchmarks for progress in improving homeland security preparedness. The results show that 52.8% of counties have actually coordinated homeland security planning with cities and counties in their respective region.

What do the results mean overall for homeland security preparedness and planning in Texas counties? First, there is a perception that Texas county officials are more secure against a terrorist attack than prior to September 11. Counties have coordinated homeland security planning in their respective region. However, there was less agreement of having performance measures and benchmarks in place to evaluate homeland security preparedness. Although current homeland security preparedness and planning of Texas county governments is critically important, the following section provides information on where the homeland security funds are coming from and where they are going.

Homeland Security Funding

A core issue of this article is the examination of homeland security finance. As an illustration of its importance, the greatest homeland security concern was lack of money according to 73% of county officials who responded to the survey (Table 4). Personnel limitations were cited by 65% of counties as a major concern. Technology interoperability was viewed as a concern by 53% of Texas county officials. Of the governments surveyed, larger counties have greater concerns over lack of internal cooperation within their organization than smaller counties.

Table 4	
Homeland Security Funding	
<i>What are your county government's greatest homeland security concerns?</i>	<i>Percent</i>
Lack of money	73
Personnel limitations	65
Technology/Interoperability	53
Lack of health care capacity	33
Lack of clear plan/roles	27
Lack of external cooperation	18
Lack of internal cooperation**	7
We don't have concerns	4
<i>How will your county government pay for its portion of homeland security costs (i.e., that portion not covered by federal and/or state grants)?</i>	
Existing budget/revenue funds	53
General fund	49
Reallocate/cut spending	34
Raise property taxes	24
Asset seizure funds	7
Other***	5
Issue bonds	1
<i>Which, if any, of the following types of equipment has your county government purchased to complete its homeland security goals?</i>	
Communications	76
Hazardous material suits, apparatuses*	40
Information technology**	24
Surveillance devices	16
Identification technology	15
Access control devices*	8
Other	7
<i>Has your county government requested federal or state funding for any of the following homeland security-related programs and needs?</i>	
Equipment**	38
Disaster response***	27

Disaster mitigation/preparedness	25
Drills and training exercises**	17
Physical surveillance/security systems**	15
Medical public health surveillance systems	11
Staffing	11
Public education*	9
Information technology	8
Cyber security	2
Other	1

Notes: significant difference of employee size and this variable at the (*) 0.10 level, (**) 0.05 level, or (***) 0.01 level.

Another question that was asked was how the county government will pay for its portion of homeland security costs not covered by homeland security grants (Table 4). Fifty-three percent of counties would pay for their costs through existing budget/revenue funds, while 49% of counties would use the general fund to cover homeland security costs. Only a few counties would actually raise property taxes (24%). Therefore, most of the funding for homeland security, not coming from grants, is from the existing budget line items. Raising taxes does not seem to be a popular choice among county officials.

An open-ended question at the end of this survey supports this conclusion, with many county officials noting that there is no political appetite for tax increases to fund homeland security. Therefore, other programs may have to be cut to fund homeland security spending. This perception of lack of support for new taxes and fees to fund homeland security is not just an artifact of Texas counties; it is pervasive across cities of all sizes and regions in the United States (Baldassare & Hoene, 2002).

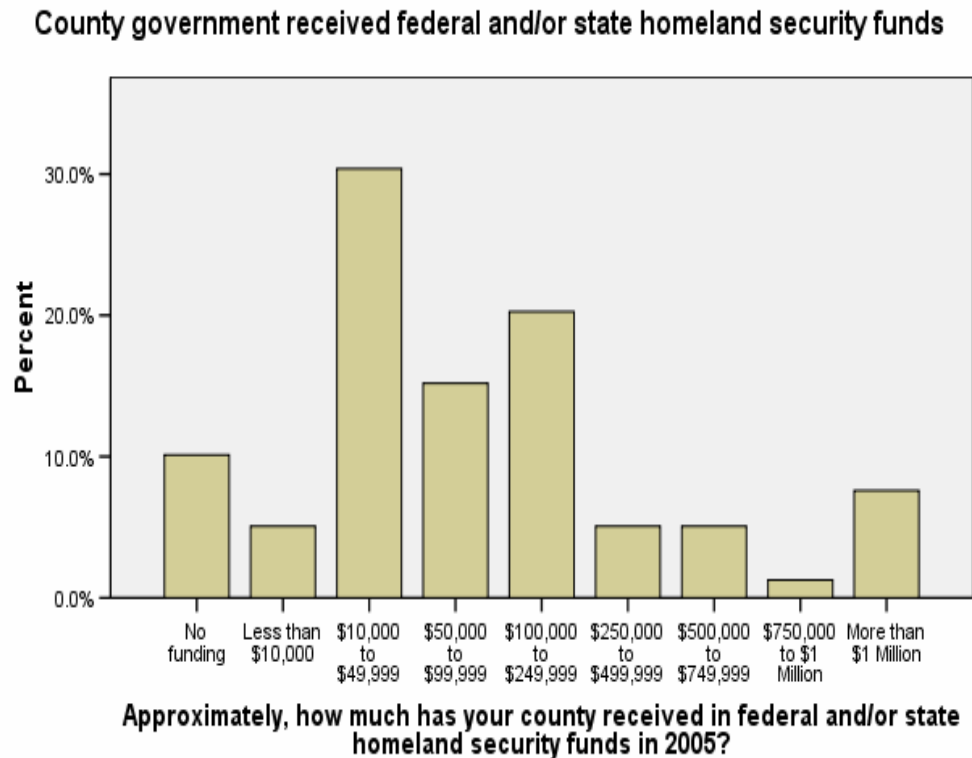
What kinds of equipment has the county government purchased to reach its homeland security goals (Table 4)? The results for this question indicate that communication devices are most commonly purchased by counties (76%). These local governments are trying to address one of the most frequent problems in responding to a terrorist attack, having a good communications network. Finally, hazardous material suits and apparatus were purchased, according to 40% of counties.

Table 4 provides information on the requests for grant funding for homeland security. The most commonly requested external funding was for equipment according to 38% of county officials. Disaster response funding was

the second most frequently requested grant. There were statistically significant differences with larger counties being more likely to request money for equipment, disaster response, drills and training exercises, physical surveillance/security systems, and public education. As the statistical results indicate, the size of the county has a direct bearing on many homeland security initiatives.

Figure 1 provides information on how much these counties actually received in homeland security grant funding from federal and/or state governments. The average amount of funding received was very small between \$10,000 and \$49,999. Very few counties received more than one million dollars in external funding. There were around 20% of counties that received \$100,000 to \$249,999 in grant funding. The amount of grant funding received by Texas counties was very highly correlated with size of county government at the 0.01 significance level (not shown). Not surprisingly, larger counties typically received more grant funding.

Figure 1



Intergovernmental Aspects of Homeland Security

A major dilemma posed with homeland security is the vast number of agencies involved at all levels of government (Wise & Nader, 2002). Table 5 provides information on the intergovernmental aspects of homeland security in Texas counties. It should be noted that there was no independent verification of the county officials claims for some of the questions in Table 5 of how “good a job” they are doing. The findings indicate that county officials believe that traditional emergency preparedness functions may be shortchanged because of homeland security funding. Counties are of the opinion that they are the logical choice for coordinating homeland security. According to county officials, non-governmental entities such as the Red Cross would prefer to coordinate with counties rather than

cities. In addition, intergovernmental service agreements can only do so much to mitigate a small portion of the homeland security funding issues. There was disagreement that low population, low risk counties were being shortchanged in terms of homeland security grant funding.

The results in Table 5 showed that counties believed that they have become an integral part of the homeland security equation. However, non homeland security projects are getting shortchanged in funding. There is agreement that having an intergovernmental service agreement can only do so much to minimize homeland security costs.

Table 5 Intergovernmental Aspects of Homeland Security						
<i>Homeland security from federal and/or state grants:</i>	<i>Strongly Agree % (2)</i>	<i>Agree % (1)</i>	<i>Neutral % (0)</i>	<i>Disagree % (-1)</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree % (-2)</i>	<i>Average Response</i>
Fail to recognize the importance of county coordination	17	37.5	22.7	22.7	0	0.49
May improve security against terrorist acts at the expense of traditional emergency preparedness concerns	9.1	46.6	23.9	20.5	0	0.44
Should not be used to make up for pre-existing shortfalls in police, fire, rescue, and hospital capabilities	11.4	47.7	19.3	18.2	3.4	0.45
Shortchange high-population, high-risk areas by overfunding low-population, low-risk ones*	4.5	21.6	25	39.8	9.1	-0.27
Do not provide enough funds for overtime expenses*	9.2	39.1	40.2	11.5	0	0.46
Are too easily commingled with traditional first responder funding to assess their impact on homeland security preparedness	3.4	36.4	35.2	23.9	1.1	0.17
<i>In their respective regions:</i>						
Counties are the logical choice for coordinating homeland security	23	55.2	10.3	10.3	1.1	0.89
Non-governmental entities such as hospitals and the Red Cross would prefer coordinating homeland security activities with counties rather than individual cities	7	48.8	38.4	4.7	1.2	0.56
Security sensitive activities such as airports, seaports, and power generation should come under the homeland security purview of counties rather than cities	9.3	39.5	37.2	11.6	2.3	0.42
Intra-governmental service agreements can minimize only a small portion of the increased homeland security outlays county governments will need to make in future years	4.6	64.4	24.1	6.9	0	0.67
Notes: significant difference of employee size and this variable at the * 0.10 level; for average response calculation the coding is in parenthesis.						

County Government Financial Impacts and Homeland Security

Table 6 provides information on the perception of county officials on the effectiveness of the financial management impacts of homeland security. There was an average response of -0.08 that capital budgeting priorities have changed as a result of September 11, 2001, implying that counties believe that this has not occurred. There was also a divergence in views that homeland security expenditures are displacing outlays in traditional civilian functions. There was disagreement that county residents are willing to pay for increased homeland security. In addition, a disagreement was found for county residents being willing to pay increased taxes to fund homeland security spending.

<i>As a result of September 11, 2001 or "9/11":</i>	<i>Strongly Agree % (2)</i>	<i>Agree % (1)</i>	<i>Neutral % (0)</i>	<i>Disagree % (-1)</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree % (-2)</i>	<i>Average Response</i>
Capital budgeting priorities in my county have significantly changed	3.2	27.4	33.7	29.5	6.3	-0.08
Overtime outlays for first-responder (i.e., emergency personnel called to the scene of a crisis) training and deployment have increased dramatically	5.3	31.6	36.8	22.1	4.2	0.12
Homeland security expenditures are displacing outlays in traditional civilian functions such as general government services*	4.2	25.3	29.5	35.8	5.3	-0.13
Homeland security expenditures are being tied to strategy and risk assessment rather than to specific threats or special events (e.g., VIP visits, national holidays, etc)	12.6	50.5	24.2	9.5	3.2	0.6
<i>In my county government:</i>						

Homeland security funding should be focused more on disaster/terror prevention than response and recovery	9.5	28.4	32.6	27.4	2.1	0.16
Accounting and financial reporting facilitate comprehensive analysis of homeland security preparedness**	4.2	36.8	36.8	18.9	3.2	0.2
There is the infrastructure (e.g., equipment, IT, communications) needed to coordinate homeland security activities	12.6	52.6	13.7	15.8	5.3	0.52
<i>Our county residents:</i>						
Are willing to pay for significantly increased homeland security outlays because of a heightened concern over terrorism**	2.1	9.6	24.5	50	13.8	-0.64
Are willing to accept county government tax increases to fund homeland security preparedness**	1.1	9.6	21.3	48.9	19.1	-0.76
Believe homeland security preparedness is the primary responsibility of the federal government and should be funded accordingly*	20.2	53.2	16	10.6	0	0.83
<i>Our county elected officials:</i>						
Are providing good oversight of homeland security preparedness spending	15.8	49.5	21.1	10.5	3.2	0.64
Have the expertise needed to oversee homeland security outlays	8.4	38.9	23.2	24.2	5.3	0.21
Are willing to invest in critical homeland security infrastructure*	3.2	34	36.2	21.3	5.3	0.09
Notes: significant difference of employee size and this variable at the (*) 0.10 level or (**) 0.05 level; for average response calculations the coding is in parenthesis.						

There was general agreement that homeland security had an impact on financial management in Texas counties (Table 6). One of the most interesting finding showed that according to half of county officials, homeland security expenditures were being tied to strategy and risk assessment rather than specific threats. This supports the long-term strategic view of the adaptive management model. According to 52.6% of county officials, there is a high level of consensus of the need for infrastructure to coordinate homeland security activities. Over half of respondents believe that homeland security preparedness is the primary responsibility of the federal government, and should be funded accordingly. This finding was also confirmed by a General Accounting Office (GAO) survey which indicated that state and local governments perceived that the fight against terrorism to be generally a federal government responsibility (GAO, 2003). There were 49.5% of officials who are of the opinion that they have provided good oversight of homeland security preparedness spending.

The results in Table 6 show overall that traditional functions in the county budget have not substantially changed because of homeland security spending. There is a general agreement that residents are unwilling to have their property taxes increased to fund homeland security. These officials believe that they are good stewards of homeland security resources, but question why the federal government is not taking on more responsibility for homeland security funding.

Conclusion

The purpose of this article was to examine the scope and effectiveness of homeland security with a particular focus on administration and finance. Returning to the three research questions outlined earlier in this article the results confirmed that size of the county did have a bearing on various aspects of homeland security initiatives. For instance, the perception of being more prepared for a possible terrorist attack increases in larger counties. Lack of internal cooperation is more prevalent in larger counties than in smaller counties. Residents are more willing to pay for and accept tax increases to fund homeland security in larger-sized counties.

In terms of methods of funding homeland security, the most pressing issues here are lack of money and personnel limitations that counties face. The funding sources for homeland security will not come from increased property taxes or other fees. Existing budget lines have been reallocated to pay for homeland security. Equipment is the most common homeland security purchase for Texas counties. External homeland security grant funding is surprisingly small with an average in the range of only \$10,000 to \$49,000.

Finally, the adaptive management model was applied to homeland security administration and finance. There is a very high level of collaboration and coordination of homeland security planning with cities and counties in their regions, which is one of the key components of this model. However, the extent of providing benchmarks and performance measures to improve homeland security preparedness was not as prevalent. Most importantly, there seems to be agreement among county officials that homeland security expenditures are being tied to an overall strategy and risk assessment, a significant sign of progress using an adaptive management approach.

There are some limitations of this study that should be noted. First, this research uses a survey to collect information and opinions about homeland security and there is no independent verification of the claims made by these public officials. This is especially the case for some of the questions on whether county officials are doing a “good job” in homeland security administration and finance. Second, the definition that was used in this survey of homeland security may not be shared by county officials, which may skew the responses in a manner to overstate their perceived level of preparedness. Third, this is a study that relies on data from a single state and, therefore, the results may not be generalizable to all counties in the United States. However, despite these limitations this research has provided a basis for future studies of financial and administrative aspects of homeland security in local governments. This is an especially important issue given the large amount of resources devoted towards this area and the critical role that counties play in homeland security.

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