
“Anything That Can Be a Danger to the Public”: Desire to Extend Registries Beyond Sex Offenses

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Abstract

Registries are no longer limited to sex offenders, as other types of registries, such as a dangerous dog registry and a gun offender registry, have appeared. This study investigated public perceptions about extending registries to other crimes and what types of registries are desired. Data were obtained from more than 700 Michigan residents using a random digit dialling telephone survey. More than half indicated wanting more public registries in addition to sex offender registries. Viewing the sex offender registry, supporting sex offender registries, and being convicted of a crime were factors affecting support for other registries. Respondents who desired additional registries reported most support for registries of those who committed crimes against people. Implications of extending registries to other types of crimes are considered.

Keywords

crime control policy, public opinion, sex offender notification

Introduction

Since Megan’s Law, which allowed for sex offender registries to become public, was passed in 1996, sex offender registration has become part of the criminal justice landscape. The commitment to such registries was reaffirmed in 2006 with the signing of

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the Adam Walsh Act, which further tightens registry requirements. Some jurisdictions are now moving beyond keeping registration exclusive to sex offenders. These jurisdictions have taken a further step of extending the registration to various types of other crimes. In October 2007, the mayor of Baltimore signed legislation to form a city registry for those who are convicted of gun crimes, while New York City implemented a similar registry earlier in 2007 (Gun Offender Registration, 2007; Malik, 2007). The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services maintains a dangerous dog registry, where owners of dogs deemed to be dangerous must register and include items such as a picture of the dog, the breed, and the act committed by the dog that required the dog to be on the registry (Regulations Pertaining to the Establishment of a Dangerous Dog Registry, 2007). The Meth-Free Tennessee Act (2005) created a methamphetamine offenders registry. This registry, which is maintained by the Tennessee Bureau of Investigations, provides only the name and conviction of those listed (2005). Representative Mary Bono, in 2009, has sponsored the Managing Arson Through Criminal History (MATCH) Act (H.R. 1727), which would require convicted arsonists to register their work and home addresses. Registries, both those already implemented and those that have been proposed, have clearly moved beyond only encompassing sex offenders.

These new registries demonstrate a trend in increased use of criminal offender registries. For example, multiple cities are now considering implementing a gun registry like the one implemented in Baltimore (WBAL-TV, 2008). As the expansion of offender registration to additional offenses appears to be moving ahead without any known empirical studies to illustrate support or effectiveness, a careful analysis of the desire for and impact of such policies is warranted. The goal of this study is to examine the public support for the expansion of offender registration to other types of crimes.

With the increased number of registries, and the increasing numbers of people on the registries due to requirements having longer registration minimums (Adam Walsh Act, 2006), registries can require significant resources for maintenance from the responsible agencies. The proper maintenance of these registries is crucial for their utility. If registries are not up to date, or there is incorrect information posted for the public's consumption, it can hinder their effectiveness. As empirical research on registries have focused exclusively on sex offender registries, it is important to incorporate sex offender registration literature into the discussion. Tewksbury (2002) found that in Kentucky one fourth of addresses listed on the sex offender registry were incorrect due to various errors including there being no such address, the address belonging to a business, or the address being an empty lot. In another study, more than 50% of sampled registered sex offenders acknowledged that some information about them listed on a registration Web site was incorrect (Levenson & Cotter, 2005).

Even when a registry listing is current and correct, the public's utilization and awareness of nearby registered sex offenders is limited. In an examination of an active notification jurisdiction, Zevitz (2003) found that less than 50% of neighborhood residents were aware of a registered sex offender, while Craun (Online First) found that

under one third of respondents in a passive notification county were aware of someone in the neighborhood being arrested for a sexual offense.

Recent research examining the law's ability to reduce sexual crime is mixed. For example, Duwe and Donnay (2008) completed a comparison of three groups in Minnesota: (a) registered sex offenders who were subject to widespread notification under Megan's Law, (b) sex offenders who would have been subject to notification, but were convicted before Megan's Law was signed into law took place, and (c) sex offenders who were not subject to notification due to their lower risk assessment. The results indicated that community notification did reduce sexual recidivism for those offenders subject to such notification under Megan's Law (Duwe & Donnay, 2008). Prescott and Rockoff (2008) found that registration does not reduce recidivism of sex offenders, but deters first time offenders from committing a sexual offense.

However, research out of New Jersey suggests that the downward movement in the number of reported sexual assaults in New Jersey since 1994, when the sex offender registration and notification laws were implemented, may not have been due to sex offender registration and may have been an artifact of aggregation from county level data (Veysey, Zgoba, & Dalessandro, 2008; Zgoba, Witt, Dalessandro, & Veysey, 2008). Sandler, Freeman, and Socia (2008) and Craun, Simmons, and Reeves (in press) found limited prevention potential for sex offender registries. Sandler et al. (2008) conducted an extensive time-series analysis of all registerable offenses between 1987 and 2006 in New York to assess the differences in reoffending before and after the registry was enacted. The research found that approximately 95% of arrests were of people who had not previously been convicted of a sexual crime. No significant change in recidivism rates was found. The research is, however, somewhat limited in that arrest data cannot account for those who have offended but are not reported. In addition, arrests include those who have been arrested but never convicted of the crime (Sandler et al., 2008). Craun and colleagues (in press) found that less than 4% of cases seen at a sexual assault resource center had offenders listed who were on the registry at the time of the assault. Vásquez, Maddan, and Walker (2008) examined the impact of the implementation of Megan's Law on monthly rape counts in 10 states and concluded that the evidence "does not offer a clear or unidirectional conclusion as to whether sex offender notification laws reduce rapes" (p. 187).

Beyond requiring resources to achieve the goal of public protection, registration can also lead to unintended consequences. Housing prices have been found to decrease on average US\$3,500 when a sex offender moves into a neighborhood (Pope, 2008). Studies have indicated that one third to one half of registered sex offenders reported some consequences to themselves and their family household members as a result of the registry (Levenson & Cotter, 2005; Tewksbury, 2005). Consequences reported by those on the sex offender registry include psychological consequences, such as shame and isolation, or practical consequences, such as the loss of a job (Levenson, D'Amora, & Hern, 2007).

Furthermore, ostracizing these offenders may have the impact of decreasing social support, which has been identified as a risk factor for recidivism (Cesaroni, 2001;

Guitierrez-Lobos et al., 2001). Concerns have also been raised that the registry may have other possible unintended consequences, such as making offenders afraid to seek treatment, and making victims hesitant to report crimes, particularly when the offender is a family member (Edwards & Hensley, 2001). Although previous research has been done exclusively on sex offender registries, one could surmise similar consequences for offenders listed on other types of registries as well.

Registries can also lead to the formation of additional policies based on their presence. For example, some states have implemented residency restrictions on registered sex offenders, which some have argued is counterproductive to the goal of keeping the public safe (Levenson & D'Amora, 2007; Tewksbury & Levenson, 2007). This type of restriction was shown in one county to reduce the area to which sex offenders can live to only 5% of residential parcels (Zandbergen & Hart, 2006). Using geographic analysis, Hughes and Burchfield (2008) identified that although registered offenders were restricted from residing in a higher proportion of the land area in economically disadvantaged communities, a disproportionate percentage of registered offenders lived in these areas than more affluent neighborhoods. Disadvantaged communities also had a larger percentage of offenders living within the restricted boundaries around schools, parks, and day care centers, likely due to housing density, limited available housing, and refusal to rent to a convicted sex offender in some locations. At the most extreme, this has resulted in "offender ghettos," with registered offenders living in clusters within trailer parks or even under bridges.

In the examination of crime characteristics of sexual offense recidivists in Minnesota, residency restrictions would not have prevented any previously convicted sex offenders from their sample from their second offense (Duwe, Donnay, & Tewksbury, 2008). These restrictions based on sex offender registration can also place an additional burden on probation and parole officers, who had previously reported that there was difficulty finding housing for sex offenders (Zevitz & Farkas, 2000a). These restrictions are not part of the Adam Walsh Act, which establishes guidelines for sex offender registration, and the restrictions can vary from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. According to the National District Attorneys Association (2007), residency restrictions vary from a 500-ft minimum to a 2000-ft minimum away from schools, parks, or other areas where children congregate.

Despite some of the drawbacks with sex offender registries, public support for sex offender registries remains strong (Anderson & Sample, 2008; Kernsmith, Craun, & Foster, 2009; Levenson, Brannon, Fortney, & Baker, 2007; Lieb & Nunlist, 2008; Mears, Mancini, Gertz, & Bratton, 2008; Phillips, 1998; Proctor, Badzinski, & Johnson, 2002). Depending on the type of offense for which the sex offender was convicted, support for public registration ranged from 97% for an adult who sexually abuses a neighborhood child to 65% for a person who engages in consensual sex with a 15-year-old minor (Kernsmith et al., 2009).

Moving beyond taking public support at face value, research is examining why support for registration of sex offenders is high. Residents surveyed in the state of Washington indicated the reason for their support was due to the assumption that

registration and notification of sex offenders would encourage the sex offenders to behave better, as the community now knew of their past crimes (Phillips, 1998). Even convicted sex offenders, who themselves are mandated to register, can appreciate the value that registries attempt to provide for public safety and can understand why the public supports their use (Tewksbury, 2004; Tewksbury & Lees, 2007).

As one would expect, registered sex offenders themselves have differing opinions on registries. In one sample of registered sex offenders, 70% stated that sex offender registration laws were at least somewhat unfair (Brannon, Levenson, Fortney, & Baker, 2007). Moreover, many registered sex offenders do not see registration as an effective tool for deterring future offenses (Zevitz & Farkas, 2000b). Tewksbury and Lees (2007) expanded on the raw percentages by interviewing registered sex offenders regarding their perceptions of the registry. Their research demonstrated that some sex offenders were questioning why sex crimes were targeted for registration among the many crimes that hurt others. A 63-year-old registered sex offender poignantly stated,

I wish we could do the same thing for burglars and drunk drivers and some of the others. My problem is that it seems like I committed the crime du jour. I mean had I got drunk and run over the same 12-year-old girl and killed her, I probably would have got 3 years (in prison) and it all would have been over with. (Tewksbury & Lees, 2007, p. 397)

The previous comment suggests the need for the current work. Moreover, Sample and Kadleck (2008) found that it was the combination of public officials' own perceptions about sex offending, perceptions of the public's desire for action, and the influence of the media that led to the formation of various sex offender laws, such as sex offender registration. These factors are likely to have a similar impact on decision making about other criminal justice policies. Sexual offenders, however, may also be uniquely feared and demonized by the public, resulting in perceptions and policy positions that are vastly different from those affecting other types of offenders.

As previous empirical work has focused on sex offender registration, the information on registration for other crimes is extremely limited. Though various types of registries are emerging in different jurisdictions, the authors know of no empirical work that has examined what percentage of the general population wants additional registries and, if the desire is present, which types of registries are desired. The comments of registered sex offenders and the number of jurisdictions considering other varying types of registries were the motivations for this research. The goal of this empirical work is to answer three main research questions.

Research Question 1: "What percentage of people supports the idea of expanding sex offender registration to encompass other types of crimes?"

Research Question 2: "Of those who want additional registries, what types of registries are desired?"

Table 1. Sample Description.

Variable	
Average support for sex offender registries ^a	4.2
% who have viewed the Michigan sex offender registry	36.7
% who know a victim of a sexual crime	26.7
% convicted of a crime	3.2
% with children in house	36.0
% female	67.3
Average age	49.3 years
% White	81.3
% African American	11.8
% Other race	5.4
% with a high school degree	94.9
% Married	56.9

Note: % race will not sum to 100 as some respondents refused to identify their race.

a. Variable scored from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) that various types of sex offenders (e.g., juvenile offender, marital rapist, etc.) should be required to register.

Research Question 3: “What are the predictors that are related to which respondents want additional registries?”

This information can be used by policy makers to determine if the push for other types of registries is publicly supported.

Method

Data Collection and Sample

To determine the desire for additional types of registries, random digit dialing, in combination with computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI), was used to survey 728 respondents throughout Michigan. Respondents were concentrated in the counties surrounding the Detroit metropolitan area; however, 72 of Michigan’s 83 counties (86.7%) were represented with respondents in the survey. The questions on perceptions of sex offender registration were only a portion of a larger survey on a variety of topics. Respondents had to have been at least 19-years-old to participate in the survey. The response rate for qualified phone numbers was 44%. The survey was offered only in English.

A description of the sample can be seen in Table 1. Females comprised a large portion of the study participants (67.3%). Nearly 82% of the respondents self-identified as White/Caucasian, with the second most populous race being identified as Black/African American. More than half of the respondents (56.9%) were married at the time of the survey, and slightly more than a third of respondents had children under

the age of 18 living in the household with them. About 95% of the sample had a high school degree.

The sample in this study is similar to the population for the state as a whole. According to the 2006 American Community Survey from the United States Census, 87% of Michigan residents have a high school degree, 50.1% of residents live in married households, 79.5% are White and 14.1% are Black or African American (2008a).

Dependent Variable

Questions were ordered to first determine support for additional registries beyond sex offender registries before exploring which types of registries were preferred. Respondents were asked the close-ended question, "Would you like to be able to access registries for offenders who have committed other types of crimes?" (Answer categories: Yes/No/Don't know). For the group comparisons and multivariate analyses, this question was recoded into two categories (Yes vs. No/Don't Know), due to the small percentage of respondents who replied don't know. When the respondents answered "yes" to the question on desire for additional registries, interviewers were prompted to ask the follow-up, open-ended question "what other types of criminal registries would you like to see?" Examples of respondents' answers included "anything that can be a danger to the public," "homicides," "burglaries," and "hate crimes." The open-ended answers provided by respondents were coded into four categories: crimes against people, property crimes, substance-based crimes (including responses such as "drug dealers," "drunk driving," and "drugs"), and a fourth category, called miscellaneous crimes, that collected responses that did not fit neatly into the other categories. Some examples of responses put in the miscellaneous category included "porn," "the mafia," and "illegal immigrants." Answers from respondents that included "any serious crime," "felonies," and "all criminals" were coded to belong in each category, as a serious crime could be a crime against a person, property, substance-based, or other type of crimes. As respondents were allowed to offer more than one suggestion for various types of registries, it was possible that respondents' answers were included in each category.

Open-ended responses were first coded by a graduate research assistant and then independently by the first author. It was important that the responses were coded independently to enhance the rigor and validity of the findings. The percentage agreement between the initial two coders reached 91.6%. For this initial coding, Cohen's kappa was used to assess interrater reliability for the coding process, as it accounts for multiple raters and considers that some agreement on items may be due to chance (Cohen, 1960). Cohen's kappa scores have a range from 0 to 1, where 1 indicates total agreement. For example, a score of 0.61 to 0.8 is characterized as a substantial level of agreement (Landis & Koch, 1977). The kappa was .74 for the category crimes against people, .66 for crimes against property, .79 for miscellaneous crimes, and .78 for substance use-related crimes. For those cases where there was a lack of

agreement between the two coders, the second author was brought in to code the discrepancy.

Independent Variables

Variables related to both the opinions of the participants and the demographics of participants themselves were included as independent variables. First, variables related to the sex offender registries were examined. Namely, respondents were asked if they had ever viewed the Michigan sex offender registry, to which less than half of the sample reported in the affirmative. Participants also were asked to provide a score from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) that various types of sex offenders should be required to register. Those sex offender types were someone who has sexually offended against their own child; a 21-year-old who has had consensual sex with a 15-year-old, which qualifies as statutory rape; a juvenile offender; an offender who commits rape within a marriage; a person who has sexually abused a nonrelated neighborhood child; a teenager who commits date rape; and a person who committed a sex crime more than 10 years ago. The average score of all of the responses to agreement with various types of sex offenders being required to register was the second variable and was labeled support for sex offender registries. Respondents' were also asked if they knew anyone, including themselves, who had been victimized by sexual crime, and if they had ever been convicted of a crime. A participant's age, race (White, African American, or other minority), gender, and whether they had children in the house (yes/no) were also included as study variables. Sample distributions for these variables can be seen in Table 1.

Data Analysis

Univariate statistics were run to determine the percentage of participants who desired other types of registries and to determine the distribution of the types of registries desired, along with the demographics of the sample. Group comparisons were run between all of the independent variables and support for additional registries. Finally, a logistic regression was used to determine statistically significant predictors of respondents who desired additional types of registries. Logistic regression is used to predict chances of an event occurring when the dependent variable is binary. To ensure that the presented model was not influenced by a violation of logistic regression assumptions, diagnostics for multicollinearity, specification error, influential observations, and goodness of fit were run. All diagnostics were appropriate.

For the group comparisons and logistic regression, all respondents who did not answer all of the questions representing the study variables were removed. The removal of these respondents ($n = 67$) changed the dependent variable by less than 1%.

Results

The results from the telephone survey indicated a split among respondents, with slightly more than half (53.2%) reporting they did want additional public registries, while

42.8% reported they did not want additional registries. The remaining participants ($n = 29$) reported being unsure on the proposition of registries for other crimes.

There was a wide variety in the types of different registries desired by the respondents to the telephone survey. An overwhelming majority of respondents who supported expanding registration (84.0%) provided answers that could be categorized as desiring registries for crimes against people. The support tapered off, however, for other types of crime, with 58.1% supporting registries from crimes against property, 27.8% for substance use-related crimes, and 41.9% for other miscellaneous crimes and responses.

When examining group comparisons, several indicators that were seen in previous articles as related to support for sex offender registration were also positively predictive of support for any type of additional registry. Specifically, respondents who reported higher average scores on support for the requirement of registration for various types of sex offenders were more likely to support the idea of additional registries, $t(659) = 3.61, p < .001$, along with those who indicated they had actually viewed the sex offender registry, $\chi^2(1, n = 661) = 13.55, p < .001$. When a respondent was a victim of sexual crime, or knew of someone who had been a victim of sexual crime, they were also more likely to support having a registry than those reporting they did not know any victims of sexual crime, $\chi^2(1, n = 661) = 5.22, p = .02$.

The respondents' demographics also tended to be connected to the desire for additional registries. Having children in the home, $\chi^2(1, n = 661) = 7.17, p < .01$, being African American (70% support for additional registries vs. 51.9% support from White respondents), $\chi^2(2, n = 661) = 9.12, p = .01$, and being younger, $t(659) = 4.89, p < .001$, were all variables that were positively related to desire for additional registries. It is important to note that females were not more likely than males to support additional registries, $\chi^2(1, n = 661) = 3.47, p = .06$, contrary to previous research on support for sex offender registries.

Finally, the only negative relationship in the group comparisons was the relationship between being convicted of a crime and support for additional registries for other crimes. As would be expected, people who were convicted of a crime were less likely to support additional registries than those who were not convicted of a crime, $\chi^2(1, n = 661) = 3.73, p = .05$.

When all variables were included in a logistic regression model, five of the nine variables were statistically significant (see Table 2). Support for the requirement of various sex offenders to register (44% higher odds, $p < .01$), along with having actually viewed the local sex offender registry, were both positively related to desire for additional public registries for crime (61% higher odds, $p < .01$). Younger respondents were more likely to support additional registries ($p < .01$). Race was significantly related to the desire for additional registries, with African American respondents having 93% higher odds of supporting additional registries ($p < .05$). Respondents who had been convicted of a crime had 63% lower odds of supporting additional registries ($p < .05$). Finally, in the logistic regression model, gender, having children in the house, and knowing someone who had been victimized by a sexual crime were not related to the desire for additional public registries for criminals ($p > .05$).

Table 2. Predictors of Support for Additional Registries

Variable	B	SE	OR
Support for sex offender registries ^a	.37	.12	1.44**
Viewed sex offender registry	.48	.18	1.61*
Know victim of sexual crime	.21	.19	1.23
Convicted of a crime	-.99	.50	0.37*
Children in house	-.05	.19	0.95
Female	.11	.18	1.12
Age	-.02	.01	0.98**
Respondent race ^b			
African American	.66	.28	1.93*
Other	-.19	.35	0.83
p value for the model			<.0001
Pseudo R ² (Cragg & Uhler's R ²)			.11

Note: $n = 661$.

a. Variable scored from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) that various types of sex offenders (e.g., Juvenile offender, marital rapist, etc.) should be required to register.

b. Reference group for respondent race is White. The variable as a whole was significant ($p < .05$).

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

For this analysis, Cragg & Uhler's R^2 was used, as it is a normed measure where the maximum value can be one if the model is a perfect fit (Long & Freese, 2006). This approach illustrates that the model is a better fit than a null model. Many factors still need to be considered, however, to produce a better fitting model.

To more precisely determine the ability of this model to appropriately predict which respondents were supportive of additional registries, a postestimation classification table revealed that the logistic regression model correctly classified 64.5% of the cases in the sample. To determine the scope of the improvement, an intercept-only model of the logistic regression was run, and it indicated only 54% of the cases were correctly classified. Therefore, this model improves the chances of correctly classifying a case when using the included predictors.

Discussion

Despite recent empirical work that is starting to illustrate the limitations to sex offender registries, the extension of registries to other types of crimes continues. The findings indicate that support among Michigan residents for the expansion of registries is split. Although overall support for sex offender registries was high with this sample, that support did not guarantee that respondents wanted registries to be extended to other types of crimes, as slightly more than half of respondents supported this expansion. This finding could be due to the fact that public rejection of sex offenders is more severe than public rejection of other types of criminals (Winnick, 2008). Perhaps, as sex offenders are more harshly labeled, the public views the need for registries to be mainly focused on those that commit sexual crimes.

Some characteristics of the residents statistically influenced support for additional public criminal registries. It appears as though the availability of public sex offender registries has affected respondents' desire for additional types of registries, as residents who had viewed the Michigan sex offender registry and who indicated support for requiring various types of sex offenders to register, were more likely to show a desire for more registries. Only two demographic characteristics, namely, being African American and younger in age, were related to the desire for additional registries. When considering the finding of significant differences by race, it is likely that community context plays some part in the findings. In Michigan, African Americans make up a higher percentage of the population in urban areas, such as Detroit (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2008b). This held true in the current sample as well, where 57.5% of the African Americans self-identified their city of residence as Detroit, as compared to only 1.4% of the White respondents. Registered sex offenders tend to cluster in socially disorganized neighborhoods (Mustaine, Tewksbury, & Stengel, 2006) where one is likely to find a higher percentage of minorities and urbanization (Sampson & Groves, 1989). Therefore, the African Americans in this sample may see the additional registries as more of a protective mechanism although future research needs to empirically test this theory. The finding that younger respondents were more likely to support additional registries may be because of the fact that the Michigan sex offender registry is online. Younger people in general tend to use the Internet more often than older adults, and, when online, they are more likely to search for information on government Web sites (Fox, 2004).

Unlike previous research on sexual offenses (Kernsmith et al., 2009), females were not significantly more likely to support additional registries in either the bivariate analysis or the logistic regression. Understandably, those in this study who had been convicted of a crime were significantly less likely to report that there should be additional crime registries. The logistic regression model did provide the ability for better prediction, as the percentage of correctly classified cases improved over an intercept-only regression model.

Fifty-three percent of the current sample supported additional registration requirements for other crimes; yet, from this same sample, 90% of respondents supported registration requirements for those who had sexually abused a child (Kernsmith et al., 2009). This discrepancy in numbers illustrates that sexual abusers are seemingly viewed differently than other types of criminals, which appears to mirror the sentiments expressed by the sex offenders themselves (Tewksbury & Lees, 2007). Sex offenders have historically been handled with policy that is more severe than other crimes (Quinn, Forsyth, & Mullen-Quinn, 2004).

Of those respondents supporting expanded registries, the widest support was expressed for crimes against people, possibly due to a greater level of fear of violent crime. This would be consistent with previous research that illustrated support for sex offender registration is linked to fear of sex offenders (Caputo & Brodsky, 2004; Kernsmith et al., 2009). In addition, the findings are consistent with empirical work illustrating that violent crime is what separates the public's support for punitive versus

nonpunitive consequences for criminals (Cullen, Fisher, & Applegate, 2000). The lowest support was for substance use-related crimes. This was somewhat unexpected as other sources have reported support for more punitive drug legislation (McBride, VanderWaal, & Terry-McElrath, 2003; Meier, 1992).

Limitations

The study is limited in some ways by its methodology. Response rates to telephone surveys have declined substantially since the late 1970s (Curtin, Presser, & Singer, 2005) and therefore, although the response rate of 44% is not ideal, it is fairly typical of phone surveys (McCarty, House, Harman, & Richards, 2006; Mears et al., 2008; O'Toole, Sinclair, & Leder, 2008). It is important to consider that the responses may have been altered by the characteristics of those who chose to participate. In addition, the survey design excludes those who do not have telephones, likely affecting the socioeconomic status of the sample.

Other research has indicated that respondents are more likely to give a socially desirable response when interviewed by telephone rather than when interviewed through a face-to-face survey (de Leeuw, 1992). As this was a telephone survey, it may have biased some of the responses, particularly in relation to support for sex offender registration. It is recommended that this study should be replicated using another data collection modality to further explore the findings or, at a minimum, use a social desirability scale in future surveys to determine if there is a correlation between the social desirability scale and participant responses.

Future Research

Initially, future research should consider other possible factors that would produce a better fitting model that predicts support for additional criminal registries. Possible variables that could affect supporting additional registries are respondents' feelings of safety in their own neighborhood, the crime rate in their community, and their overall perceptions of law enforcement and the criminal justice system.

In addition, given the mild support for expanded registration, possible consequences of being on a registry, and the costs to the government to maintain an up-to-date listing for valid public use, further work is needed to examine policy options for those who live in society after being labeled a criminal. Research has not fully examined the impact of offender registries that currently exist although it has been found that there have been significant unintended consequences because of sex offender registration (Levenson & Cotter, 2005; Levenson, D'Amora et al., 2007; Tewksbury, 2005; Zandbergen & Hart, 2006).

Further research is needed to determine whether the variety of intended and unintended consequences seen with sex offender registration policy is seen with registries targeting other crimes. As sexual offenders elicit higher levels of fear than other criminals, it is possible that the negative consequences experienced by sexual

offenders on the registries and their families will not be the same as those experienced by other registered offenders. It is important, however, to incorporate the understanding of the popularity of the current sex offender registries into the discussion. Recent policy changes, in combination with the public popularity, suggest registries will be around for the foreseeable future. Therefore, upcoming research needs to determine the best practices for public registries, so that the registries can be useful to the public while minimizing the unintended consequences to those who are listed.

Conclusion/Implications

Even in the absence of empirical support for the utility of registries for various types of crimes, policy makers are going forward with this mechanism in the stated interest of public safety. Therefore, it is important to know if policy makers have the support of their constituents, and for about half of the current sample, respondents supported other registries. As Sample and Kadleck (2008) found that policymakers' perceptions of public desire for action influenced their decision to support sex offender registries, determining public support for other types of registries should also influence policy makers. It is hoped that this research will encourage careful analysis and policy planning if jurisdictions choose to incorporate registries for other crimes as a crime prevention method.

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