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**Sex Offender Registration and Notification Policies:  
Summary and Assessment of Research on Claimed  
Impacts to Registered Offenders**

A Report Prepared by the  
Federal Research Division, Library of Congress

October 2020

Researchers: Meaghan Flattery  
Wm. Noël Noël

**72 Years of Research Services to the Federal Government  
1948 – 2020**

## PREFACE

The analysis in this report is based on FRD's assessment of the relevant research published by scholarly journals. Additional sources include a government report, a doctoral dissertation, and a publication by a nongovernmental organization. The literature reviewed for this report is largely focused on criminal justice and law, but also covers sociology and economics.

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Helene Zakia  
Project Manager

Information Cutoff Date for Research: April 2019

## HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

This report evaluates research studying federal, state, and local sex offender registration and notification laws' impacts on convicted sex offenders.\* It provides an analysis of 24 peer-reviewed research studies, a doctoral dissertation, a federal report, and a nongovernmental organization publication. Analysis includes an examination of the methodological rigor of all 27 publications.

A high-level summary of findings is found in Section 1, while Section 2 gives a brief background on federal laws related to sex offenses. Section 3 provides the research and evaluative methodology used in this report. Section 4 summarizes and analyzes publications — discussions are categorized by impact type and scored for objectivity and statistical integrity. Section 5 concludes the report with a recap.

Five appendices appear at the end of this report. The first three appendices give detailed summaries and assessments broken down by publication subject: Section 6 provides these for studies on adult registered sex offenders (RSOs), Section 7 focuses on adult RSOs' families, and Section 8 highlights juvenile RSOs.

The fourth appendix, Section 9, provides a more in-depth look at FRD's approach to evaluating statistical integrity. Internal validity (measured using the Maryland Scientific Scale), construct validity, external validity, and statistical conclusion validity are explained and determined for each assessed study.

Finally, the fifth appendix, Section 10, explores the author and publication relationships of the literature assessed in this report.

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\* The Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act, the current federal law regarding sex offender registration and notification, applies to all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the principal U.S. territories, and federally recognized Indian tribes. Generally, the research in this report addresses registration and notification policies in the 50 states. However, one report, GAO (2013), is based on data collected in the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the territories, and another, Kilmer and Leon (2013), does not provide location information for the study participants.

## EVALUATING PUBLISHED RESEARCH

To assess the body of research on the claimed impacts of registration and notification laws to RSOs, FRD examined studies' methodologies. One question asked is whether researchers employed randomized experimental research methods. Widely recognized by statisticians as the strongest and most reliable ways of establishing valid causal relationships between variables, randomized experiments include an array of research methods. There are four distinct practices, all of which can impact a study's statistical validity:

- Randomly selecting experimental units (e.g., people of different genders, ages, ethnicities, and weights);
- Collecting data from those units on all factors that could affect an outcome (e.g., gender and age);
- Randomly assigning those units to experimental and control groups (e.g., one group receives an experimental headache medication, while the other group receives a placebo); and
- Collecting data on an outcome before and after the experimental treatment is given (e.g., the frequency and severity of headaches before and after receiving the experimental headache medication).

FRD evaluated qualitative and quantitative research on the basis of the above four criteria. While studies at times differed in research technique, they shared a number of important similarities. Studies employed deductive research (i.e., testing theories or ideas with specific observations) and inductive research (i.e., exploring specific observations and subsequently developing hypotheses and theories to explain them). Some studies showcase the hallmarks of both: making observations, inductively creating hypotheses about those observations, using data to test deductions based on those hypotheses, and using the findings to refine or reject those hypotheses.

Other publications are more exploratory in nature, examining the data to find what, if any, connections exist between the variables. However, such research is limited to hypothetical connections between variables and cannot validly establish statistical associations such as causation or correlation.\*

Within the body of literature reviewed for this report, two methodological limitations that appear to affect a study's statistical integrity most frequently were the lack of a control group and

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\* Causation is a type of association where a change in one variable produces a change in another, while correlation is a type of association that measures the strength of the relationship between two variables. Correlations can be positive, meaning that as one variable changes, the other changes in the same direction (i.e., either increase or decrease), or negative, meaning that the variables change in different directions (e.g., as one increases, the other decreases).

overgeneralizations based on small, specific sample sizes. Studies that lack a control group cannot say with any certainty that an observed change is caused by the independent variable (in this case, the impacts of registration experienced by adult and juvenile RSOs) or some other confounding factor.\* Overgeneralizations occur when the results from a single study are applied to other populations — for example, using the experiences of RSOs navigating one state’s residency restriction policies to predict the experiences of RSOs in other states with different laws.

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\* A confounding factor (also referred to as a confounding variable) is something that influences the outcome under study (job, housing, psychological wellness, etc.) and is correlated with the factor of interests (being on the registry and public notification), but is not included in the statistical analysis. This leads to observed correlations between the outcome and the factor of interests that are truly caused by the confounding factors. Not controlling for confounding variables reduces the validity of an experiment.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE.....	i
HOW TO READ THIS REPORT .....	ii
EVALUATING PUBLISHED RESEARCH.....	iii
1. KEY FINDINGS.....	1
2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND.....	4
3. FRD RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....	6
3.1. Literature Selection Process.....	6
3.1.1. Databases Used.....	6
3.1.2. Keywords and Other Search Parameters.....	6
3.2. Literature Selection Criteria .....	6
3.3. Literature Evaluation Methods .....	7
3.3.1. Objectivity Score.....	7
3.3.2. Statistical Integrity Score.....	8
4. LITERATURE SUMMARY .....	9
4.1. Methodological Quality of the Studies .....	10
4.2. Claimed Impacts of SORN Policies on Sex Offender Employment and Finances.....	11
4.3. Claimed Impacts of SORN and Residency Restriction Policies on Sex Offender Housing.....	13
4.4. Sex Offender Perceptions of SORN and Registry Restriction Policy Effects .....	14
4.5. Claimed Impacts of SORN Policies on Physical and Psychological Well-Being.....	15
4.6. Claimed Impacts of SORN and Residency Restriction Policies on Families of Sex Offenders....	16
4.7. Claimed Impacts of SORN Policies on Juvenile Sex Offenders.....	17
5. CONCLUSION .....	20
6. APPENDIX I: Assessment of Studies on Adult Registered Sex Offenders .....	21
6.1. The Experiences of Registered Sex Offenders with Internet Offender Registries in Three States .....	21
6.2. Attitudes about Community Notification.....	22
6.3. Criminal History and Landlord Rental Decisions .....	23
6.4. Understanding Collateral Consequences of Registry Laws .....	24
6.5. Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act .....	25
6.6. A Comparative Longitudinal Analysis of Recidivism Trajectories and Collateral Consequences .....	26
6.7. The Effect of Megan’s Law on Sex Offender Reintegration .....	27
6.8. The Impact of Sex Offender Residence Restrictions .....	29
6.9. Sex Offender Residence Restrictions.....	30
6.10. Where for Art Thou? .....	32
6.11. The Impact of Specialized Sex Offender Legislation on Community Reentry .....	33
6.12. Assessing Informal Social Control against the Highly Stigmatized .....	34

6.13. Residential Location and Mobility of Registered Sex Offenders .....	35
6.14. Post-Release Recidivism and Employment among Different Types of Released Offenders.....	36
6.15. Experiences and Attitudes of Registered Female Sex Offenders.....	37
6.16. Collateral Consequences of Sex Offender Registration .....	37
6.17. Perceptions of Sex Offender Registration .....	38
6.18. Perceptions of Punishment .....	39
6.19. Sex Offender Community Notification.....	40
7. APPENDIX II: Assessment of Studies on Families of Adult Registered Sex Offenders .....	41
7.1. Nobody Worries about Our Children.....	41
7.2. Collateral Damage.....	42
7.3. Stress Experiences of Family Members of Registered Sex Offenders .....	43
8. APPENDIX III: Assessment of Studies on Juvenile Registered Sex Offenders.....	44
8.1. Family Experiences of Young Adult Sex Offender Registration.....	44
8.2. The Relationship between Juvenile Sex Offender Registration and Depression in Adulthood..	44
8.3. Collateral Consequences of Juvenile Sex Offender Registration and Notification.....	45
8.4. Effects of Juvenile Sex Offender Registration on Adolescent Well-Being .....	46
8.5. Raised on the Registry .....	47
9. APPENDIX IV: Analysis of Statistical Integrity .....	49
10. APPENDIX V: Researcher and Publication Details .....	53
11. REFERENCES.....	57
12. SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	59

### TABLE OF TABLES

Table 1. Study Summaries: Claimed Impacts on Employment and Finances .....	12
Table 2. Study Summaries: Claimed Impacts on Housing .....	13
Table 3. Study Summaries: Perceptions of Policy Effects.....	14
Table 4. Study Summaries: Claimed Impacts on Well-Being.....	15
Table 5. Study Summaries: Claimed Impacts on Families.....	16
Table 6. Study Summaries: Claimed Impacts on Juvenile Sex Offenders.....	18
Table 7. Statistical Validity Scores.....	51
Table 8. Researcher Titles, Affiliations, and Studies Authored and Co-Authored .....	53
Table 9. Journal Names and Numbers of Studies Published.....	56



## 1. KEY FINDINGS

### Research Concerns

The overall body of work analyzing impacts of SORN policies on RSOs is indeterminate in its findings, largely because these works suffer from one or more methodological flaws that render their findings unreliable, invalid, or of little to no applicability to individuals not directly included in the research itself. These flaws, which are discussed in detail in Section 4.1, “Methodological Quality of the Studies,” include the following:

- *Misuse of Statistical Methods.* A common problem with studies that employed statistical methods in research on RSOs is the misuse of statistical methods, such as the calculation of the averages of “ordinal variables,” which are variables in which data is classified into ordered or ranked categories (e.g., Agree, Neutral, Disagree). Computing averages for such variables is not a valid statistical practice.
- *Potential for Bias.* A significant amount of the literature relies on survey or interview methodologies in which participants were told that the sex offender registry and its impacts are the subject of the study, which may lead to selection bias or confirmation bias.\*
- *Lack of Comparison Groups.* Many studies examine only RSOs and do not include comparison groups, such as individuals who have or have not been convicted of other types of felonies.† The absence of comparison groups is one of several methodological problems that undermine the internal validity of statistical research.
- *Non-Probability Sampling.* Many studies used non-probability sampling to select the study participants, which negates extending the application of statistical findings to subjects not in the sample (i.e., it undermines the “external validity” of the research).
- **Overall Status of Research:** Publications reviewed for this paper were generally critical of sex offender registration and notification (SORN) policies; however, the body of work as a whole was effectively indeterminate in its findings. No paper provided reliable and valid empirical support for claims that SORN policies have had adverse effects on registered sex offenders (RSOs). While SORN policies may indeed have deleterious effects on RSOs, thus far the research has not provided evidence of an association between SORN policies and studied impacts. It is important to note that the Federal Research Division’s (FRD’s) goal is

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\* According to researchers Sarah W. Craun and David M. Bierie, selection bias comes from “which subjects agree to participate,” while confirmation bias is “a tendency of subjects to overstate what they believe researchers are looking for” (“Are the Collateral Consequences of Being a Registered Sex Offender as Bad as We Think? A Methodological Research Note,” *Federal Probation* 78, no. 1 [2014]: 28, [http://www.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/june2014\\_final\\_proof\\_6\\_11\\_2014.pdf](http://www.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/june2014_final_proof_6_11_2014.pdf)).

† A few studies, however — such as Douglas Evans and Jeremy Porter’s quasi-experimental work on landlord behavior, Wesley Jennings’ team’s general impacts study, and John Nally’s team’s research on ex-offender employment rates in Indiana — do attempt to compare outcomes for sex offenders with those experienced by other types of offenders.

not to impugn either survey research as a whole or the work of the researchers who study this field, but to raise readers' awareness of the limitations of the research and caution against extrapolating conclusions that cannot be supported by the current literature. In many cases, authors have acknowledged the limitations of their work.

- **Claimed Impacts to Sex Offender Employment and Finances:** Studies within this category investigated how registration may impact RSOs' financial lives through loss of jobs or promotions, or denial of bank accounts or loans. They were based largely on self-reported interview and survey data from RSOs, and most studies lacked control groups. Two of the 10 studies analyzed administrative data to compare post-release employment outcomes for sex offenders with other groups of offenders. Overall, due to limitations in methodologies and/or misuse of statistical practices, research addressing this topic failed to provide conclusive evidence linking impacts on employment to registration.
- **Claimed Impacts on Sex Offender Housing:** Researchers investigated whether SORN laws and state or local residency restriction policies have impacted the ability of RSOs to find and maintain housing, the quality of RSO neighborhoods, and rates of RSO homelessness. Methodologies included self-reported survey or interview data, analysis of administrative data, and quasi-experimental methods. Due to flaws in the quality of the research, current literature does not provide enough evidence to conclude that SORN or residency restriction policies lead to housing challenges for RSOs.
- **Sex Offender Perceptions of SORN Policies and Residency Restrictions:** This research, based on self-reported survey and interview research, explored RSOs' opinions of SORN policies and residency restrictions. These studies examine registrants' beliefs about the social value of these policies and whether they are effective in preventing recidivism or aiding RSOs in making positive choices. No conclusions can be drawn from the body of research because of methodological and statistical flaws in the design of these studies.
- **Claimed Impacts to Sex Offender Physical and Psychological Well-Being:** Researchers studying RSOs' physical and psychological well-being examined possible links between registration and experiences such as loss of supportive relationships, social isolation, victimization through harassment and assault, and negative emotions such as embarrassment, fear, hopelessness, and shame. Studies that address this topic are based on self-reported survey and interview data and lack control groups. The research is generally poor quality, with methodological and statistical errors that prevent conclusions from being drawn about the possible links between registration and RSOs' social or emotional well-being or physical safety.
- **Claimed Impacts on Families of Sex Offenders:** Publications in this category examined whether RSOs' family members experience financial strain, harassment, stress, or challenges maintaining affordable housing due to RSO registration requirements or residency restriction policies. Researchers obtained data from surveys administered to and interviews conducted with registrants' family members. However, these individuals were

recruited from advocacy or support organizations; their experiences may not be representative of the wider population of RSO families. Moreover, the research also suffered from other limitations such as the misuse of statistical tests. Rigorous evidence is therefore lacking to support conclusions about possible links between registration and the well-being of the family members of RSOs.

- **Claimed Impacts to Juvenile Sex Offenders:** Publications covering this topic investigated the impacts of registration and notification to juvenile RSOs' education, employment, emotional well-being, families, housing, safety, and social relationships. The studies are based on self-reported survey or interview data obtained from current or former RSOs, their families, and treatment providers who work with juveniles. No conclusions can be derived from these studies due to poor methodological quality. Furthermore, some authors who studied this population openly advocated for changes to current sex offender policies regarding juveniles, making it difficult to gauge the extent of objectivity in the design of their studies.

## 2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

California established the first U.S. sex offender registry in 1947. Over the years, other states followed suit. By 1996, every U.S. state operated a sex offender registry, most of which were only accessible to local law enforcement personnel. No federal laws governing sex offender registries existed until 1994's Wetterling Act (the Jacob Wetterling Crimes Against Children and Sexually Violent Offender Registration Act).<sup>\*</sup> It was the first federal law requiring every state to have a registry, and it standardized the states' registry programs. The Wetterling Act had a minimalistic provision for notification that allowed, but did not mandate, the release of information about RSOs to the public when it was deemed necessary for the public's protection.<sup>1</sup>

Shortly after the passage of the Wetterling Act, Megan's Law was passed in 1996.<sup>†</sup> Megan's Law strengthened notification policies in the Wetterling Act by requiring all states to notify the public about RSOs. Shortly thereafter, states began to create public registry websites.

In 2006, Congress passed the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act (AWA), which included the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act (SORNA). The AWA is similar to the Wetterling Act in that it sets federal minimum standards for jurisdictions' sex offender registries, including creating baseline standards stipulating which offenders must register and how long they must remain on the registry. The requirements of the AWA apply to all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the principal U.S. territories, and federally recognized American Indian tribes. SORNA's goals include providing for registration and notification tools to build public awareness of RSOs in the community; addressing gaps existing due to variations across states' laws, policies, and technology systems; and standardizing notification procedures by requiring states to publish certain information on their public registries and requiring state registries to connect to the Dru Sjodin National Sex Offender Public Website.<sup>2,‡</sup>

SORN laws encompass both federal and state statutes that require states to maintain internal registries of convicted sex offenders for law enforcement and public registry websites with RSO identifying information for the community. SORNA, a federal statute, set minimum standards for SORN policies; however, states and localities may choose to enact additional statutes such as residency restriction laws or proactive notification policies. As long as jurisdictions meet federal SORNA standards and avoid prohibited practices, they do not run afoul of SORNA.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>\*</sup> The act is named for Jacob Wetterling, an 11-year-old boy abducted from his hometown of St. Joseph, Minnesota, in 1989. The case remained a mystery until 2016, when a longtime person of interest finally confessed to his murder.

<sup>†</sup> The law is named for Megan Kanka, a 7-year-old girl from Hamilton Township, New Jersey, who was raped and murdered in 1994 by a neighbor with two previous sexual assault convictions.

<sup>‡</sup> The website is named for Dru Sjodin, a 22-year-old college student from Grand Forks, North Dakota, who was abducted and murdered in 2003 by a sex offender registered in Minnesota. The site is a resource run by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking, and allows the public to search all the states' registries from one location.

This report reviews and assesses 27 studies discussing the impacts of registration and notification laws on RSOs. These studies were published between 2000 and 2018 and reflect circumstances before, during, and after the states' implementation of the 2006 Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act. Included among these 27 reports is research regarding claimed impacts of residency restriction policies — these are state and local policies prohibiting RSOs from living in certain areas, and are not mandated by federal legislation. Twenty-four of the 27 studies were conducted by academics and published in academic journals. The remainder consist of a report by the U.S. Government Accountability Office, a dissertation, and a report published by Human Rights Watch.

This body of literature investigates the potential impacts of registration and notification on registrants' employment and finances, housing, and physical and psychological well-being. The research also explores RSOs' perceptions of the value of registration, as well as the potential impacts to family members and the particular impacts related to juvenile RSOs.

### **3. FRD RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

FRD conducted its analysis for this report by gathering a body of research that addresses potential impacts of SORN policies to RSOs and evaluating the objectivity and methodological quality of that research. The works examined for this report consist of studies published in scholarly journals, a government report, a doctoral dissertation, and a report published by a nongovernmental organization.

#### **3.1. Literature Selection Process**

To identify the existing research on impacts of registration and notification on RSOs, FRD conducted keyword searches in a variety of databases and search engines. An initial query captured 898 articles that appeared relevant to sexual offending. Of those 898 articles, 177 appeared relevant to the impacts of SORN policies experienced by offenders. After a close review of those 177 articles, 150 were removed because they were either not germane to the topic or did not provide original research data on impacts. At the end of this process, 27 articles were determined to be suitable for evaluation in this report.

##### **3.1.1. Databases Used**

FRD conducted its search using the following databases: Academic Search Complete, Google Scholar, Hein Online, the National Criminal Justice Reference Service, ProQuest, and Scopus.

##### **3.1.2. Keywords and Other Search Parameters**

Keyword searches consisted of Boolean search strings that included the use of wild cards and modifiers, such as quotation marks for specific phrases. FRD combined the following terms with "Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act": "sex offender," "registry," "impact," and "collateral consequence."

Depending on the database used, FRD added additional search parameters, including a date range (January 1, 2000 to April 30, 2019), that searches return full-text articles, that results be peer-reviewed or refereed, that publications be available in English, and that studies be conducted within the United States. Subject limitations were also applied to prevent the databases from returning works in non-relevant fields of study.

#### **3.2. Literature Selection Criteria**

As this report focuses on the claimed impacts of registration experienced by adult and juvenile RSOs, articles were discarded for:

- Addressing topics that do not directly relate to possible impacts experienced by RSOs as a result of SORN or residency restriction policies (such as recidivism rates); or
- Providing legal or theoretical arguments, rather than original data, on how sex offenders are impacted by registration.

Studies on the impacts of state and local residency restriction laws were considered in this analysis, particularly as these laws affect the housing options of adult and juvenile RSOs and their families.

### 3.3. Literature Evaluation Methods

After narrowing down the literature selection to a final total of 27 articles, FRD evaluated the objectivity of these studies using a scale developed in-house by researchers. To rank the studies' methodological quality, FRD applied a modified version of the Maryland Scientific Methods Scale (SMS) — a five-point scale initially developed to evaluate criminological research.

#### 3.3.1. Objectivity Score

To rate an article's neutrality regarding federal, state, and local SORN and residency restriction laws, FRD developed an objectivity score with a starting value of five — signifying the highest level of objectivity. Two FRD analysts reviewed each study that met the division's selection criteria and independently assigned it a score. When analysts' scores differed, a consensus-building process was employed to arrive at a unified score for each study. FRD did not disqualify studies for analysis on the basis of the objectivity score. Points were subtracted as follows:

- 0 points were subtracted for each of the following:
  - Having a neutral point of view (e.g., no language either expressly for or against these laws).
  - Having a non-biased funding source (e.g., government grant money).
- 1 point was subtracted for each of the following:
  - Having a critical point of view (e.g., language questioning the laws' purpose or usefulness).
  - Having an unknown funding source (i.e., no information provided in the text).
  - Being built on a pre-determined conclusion (e.g., a study design that appeared to focus on an existing point of view).
- 2 points were subtracted for each of the following:
  - Having a biased point of view (e.g., containing language either expressly for or against these laws).

- Having a biased funding source (e.g., grant money from a nonprofit research organization with a stated policy perspective).

### ***3.3.2. Statistical Integrity Score***

To assess the internal validity of the research studies, FRD used a modified Maryland SMS to evaluate each study's application of research methods. Considerations also were given to each study's construct validity, external validity, and statistical conclusion validity. The studies' methods were rated on a scale of one to five, with higher numbers indicating a use of research methodologies most likely to yield valid findings. More information about these evaluations can be found in Section 9, Appendix IV, "Analysis of Statistical Integrity."



#### 4. LITERATURE SUMMARY

Studies addressing SORN policies' possible impacts to RSOs have generally been conducted by a small number of researchers who often co-author one another's papers and sometimes use one another's survey instruments. For instance, a 2014 study led by Erika Davis Frenzel of the Indiana University of Pennsylvania used a modification of the survey instrument Richard Tewksbury of the University of Louisville developed for his 2005 study.<sup>4</sup> Likewise, Jill Levenson, initially of Lynn University and later of Barry University, co-authored a research study with Yolanda Nicole Brannon of the Florida Institute of Technology in 2007 and another study with Cynthia Calkins Mercado of the City University of New York's John Jay College of Criminal Justice in 2008.<sup>5</sup> Both of these publications used a modified version of the survey instrument Levenson had previously developed for her 2005 research with Leo Cotter of the S.H.A.R.E. (Sexual Health: Awareness\*Rehabilitation\* Education) program in Tampa, Florida.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, Levenson led a 2015 study that was co-authored by Alissa Ackerman of the University of Washington Tacoma, who served as lead author on a 2013 study.<sup>7</sup> This report covers several works by Levenson and Tewksbury, two prolific authors often cited by other researchers in the field. It reviews eight studies authored or co-authored by Levenson, and nine studies authored or co-authored by Tewksbury.\*

Among the professional academic researchers whose works are assessed in this report, the plurality serve on the faculty of their institution's department of criminology or criminal justice studies (16 of 33 professional academics), while others are located in departments of psychology, public policy, sociology, or social work. The majority of these individuals (27 of 33) are professors, assistant professors, or associate professors, while the remainder have job titles such as investigator, research associate, or scientist. In addition to professional academics, six of the lead authors or co-authors were doctoral students at the time the research was published. Four study authors are employed by state government agencies — specifically, the Indiana Department of Correction, the Indiana Sex Offender Monitoring and Management Program, and the New Jersey Department of Corrections. Three authors are affiliated with consulting groups (such as the Public Consulting Group) or nonprofit organizations (such as Human Rights Watch or S.H.A.R.E.). For a full list of each author's professional title and affiliation, see Section 10, Appendix V, "Table 8: Researcher Titles, Affiliations, and Studies Written/Co-Authored."

Because academic researchers often work with their colleagues, it is not surprising that a number of authors featured in this report are clustered at certain universities. For instance, six authors — Cierra Buckman, Geoffrey Kahn, Elizabeth Letourneau, Reshmi Nair, Amanda Ruzicka, and Ryan Shields — were employed at Johns Hopkins University's Bloomberg School of Public Health while

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\* For a full list of the number of studies in this report that each researcher has authored or co-authored, see Section 10, Appendix V, "Table 8: Researcher Titles, Affiliations, and Studies Written/Co-Authored."

they worked together on the study “Effects of Juvenile Sex Offender Registration on Adolescent Well-Being.” Similarly, there are groups of authors clustered (when they wrote these studies) at other universities, including the Florida Institute of Technology, the University of Massachusetts Lowell, and Wayne State University.

#### 4.1. Methodological Quality of the Studies

In their 2014 article examining literature about sex offender registries, Sarah W. Craun and David M. Bierie of the U.S. Marshals Service identified two common limitations: the use of survey and interview methodologies that introduce the potential for bias and the general lack of control groups. They noted that while this research has done an admirable job of identifying the potential disadvantages of the registries, these shortcomings may have served to overstate the harm done to offenders by being on the registry.<sup>8</sup>

As a whole, FRD\* found that methodological problems undermined the validity of conclusions drawn by the publications analyzed.

**Potential for Bias:** A significant number of articles used survey or interview methodologies where participants were told that sex offender registries and their impacts were the subject of the study. As Craun and Bierie pointed out, “such priming can lead to both selection bias (which subjects agree to participate) and a tendency of subjects to overstate what they believe researchers are looking for (confirmation bias).”<sup>9</sup>

**Lack of Comparison Groups:** Many studies examined only RSOs and did not include a comparison group — for example, individuals convicted of another type of felony crime or individuals who have never been convicted of a felony crime. These studies associate RSOs with post-registration outcomes (such as unemployment) without examining whether individuals who are not RSOs have had similar outcomes. In statistical analyses of causal or other relationships between variables, the absence of comparison groups is one of several methodological problems that undermine the internal validity of statistical research.

**Non-Probability Sampling:** Some publications used non-probability sampling to select individuals for inclusion in the sample, which limits the application of statistical findings to only those subjects in the sample. More simply, it undermines the external validity of the research.<sup>10</sup> For example, the authors of several studies contacted RSOs in a particular location and interviewed or surveyed the offenders who made themselves available for interviews. This is a technique called convenience sampling. The findings from research using this and other non-probability sampling

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\* In fall 2018, the SMART Office partnered with the Federal Research Division (FRD) within the Library of Congress for support researching and analyzing the current literature on the claimed impacts of federal, state, and local sex offender registration and notification policies to registered adult and juvenile sex offenders.

methods can only be applied to the research subjects in the sample and, therefore, cannot be extrapolated to other populations.

**Misuse of Statistical Methods:** Another frequent problem encountered within publications was the misuse of statistical methods, compromising the statistical conclusion validity of the research.<sup>11</sup> For example, some studies surveyed RSOs, asking them to respond to questions with a choice of “highly likely,” “somewhat likely,” etc., and assigned a number to those categories for computational purposes (5 for highly likely, 4 for somewhat likely, etc.). Researchers then calculated an average of the numbers assigned to those choices (e.g., 3.8), and compared those averages. However, the calculation of averages with this kind of data is not mathematically sound. These and other types of variables that have ordered categories are called “ordinal” variables. Examples of ordinal variables include social class (lower, middle, upper) or likelihood (highly likely, somewhat likely, etc.). While these categories have some order, they do not have known, fixed differences: no numerical value describes the difference between highly likely and somewhat likely. Thus, the calculation of the averages of categories is not mathematically feasible.

In the pages that follow, FRD analysts review the body of work examining the claimed effects of SORN policies on RSOs and their families. This review will provide summaries of claims made and assessments of the quality of the research underlying those claims. Publications are categorized into six topic areas; some studies appear in multiple categories as they discuss more than one subject. A detailed examination of each study’s claims and methodological quality is located in the appendices.

#### **4.2. Claimed Impacts of SORN Policies on Sex Offender Employment and Finances**

FRD found 10 studies that provide various data points and analyses on the collateral consequences — the “unintended negative experiences and costs” — of federal and state SORN policies as they relate to registrants’ employment and finances (see table 1).<sup>12</sup> These works were published between 2000 and 2014, encompassing the period of time both before and after the 2006 passage of SORNA. Many state laws also changed during this time, occasionally in response to the federal act’s new standards and requirements.

**Table 1. Study Summaries: Claimed Impacts on Employment and Finances**

<b>Section</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Objectivity Score (1–5)</b>	<b>Stat. Integrity Score (1–5)</b>
6.4	Understanding Collateral Consequences of Registry Laws	3	1
6.5	Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act	5	2
6.6	A Comparative Longitudinal Analysis of Recidivism Trajectories and Collateral Consequences	5	1
6.7	The Effect of Megan’s Law on Sex Offender Reintegration	4	1
6.11	The Impact of Specialized Sex Offender Legislation on Community Reentry	2	1
6.12	Assessing Informal Social Control against the Highly Stigmatized	4	1
6.14	Post-Release Recidivism and Employment among Different Types of Released Offenders	4	2
6.15	Experiences and Attitudes of Registered Female Sex Offenders	4	1
6.17	Perceptions of Sex Offender Registration	2	1
6.19	Sex Offender Community Notification	3	1

Note: Both measurements ascend in value, with 5 being the highest score a study can receive in either category.

The research attempted to tie SORN policies to RSOs’ difficulties in finding and maintaining employment and being met with denials of promotions, bank accounts, or loans. Authors at times professed to have mixed views on the different aspects of these policies; however, they generally concluded that SORN restrictions harm RSOs’ employment prospects, even when findings showed that a majority of RSOs sampled did not experience a particular consequence.

The 10 studies in this subject area are generally objective; however, the overall quality of the research is poor. Authors largely used methodologies that compromised or negated studies’ external and internal validity. For example, some researchers failed to use control groups, while others’ statistical analyses did not support their findings. Still others administered surveys where RSOs self-reported their experiences, but the methodologies of these studies did not provide for the verification of self-reported data. Therefore, it is not known if the experiences reported by survey respondents are truly caused by their registration status or by other factors. For instance, a respondent may have lost a job because his employer has a policy prohibiting the employment of felons. The respondent’s status as a felon is not caused by registration; however, his status as a felon and his status as a registrant are connected in such a way that it may be easy to conflate them. Consequently, when a survey question asks if a respondent has lost a job as a result of registration, he may answer the question affirmatively, and thus mistakenly provide a false response. Detailed examinations of the studies listed in Table 1 are included in Section 6, Appendix I, “Assessment of Studies on Adult Registered Sex Offenders.”

### 4.3. Claimed Impacts of SORN and Residency Restriction Policies on Sex Offender Housing

FRD identified nine studies that examine how SORN and residency restriction policies affect RSOs' housing (see table 2). All nine were published by academic researchers between 2005 and 2015. Five were based on self-reported data provided by RSOs in surveys or interviews. Three analyzed data collected by government agencies, and one employed a quasi-experimental audit methodology to examine how landlords respond to potential tenants with a criminal conviction. Some studies presented data on residency restriction policies.

#### Residency Restrictions

While residency restrictions apply to RSOs, they are not established by federal law; rather, such policies are enacted at the state and local level. Specific residency restriction policies may have changed since a study was conducted, and these studies do not necessarily reflect the experiences of RSOs living in a state or locality with different policies than those cited in the research.

**Table 2. Study Summaries: Claimed Impacts on Housing**

Section	Title	Objectivity Score (1–5)	Stat. Integrity Score (1–5)
6.3	Criminal History and Landlord Rental Decisions	5	1
6.6	A Comparative Longitudinal Analysis of Recidivism Trajectories and Collateral Consequences	5	1
6.7	The Effect of Megan's Law on Sex Offender Reintegration	4	1
6.8	The Impact of Sex Offender Residence Restrictions	3	1
6.9	Sex Offender Residence Restrictions	3	1
6.10	Where for Art Thou?	4	1
6.11	The Impact of Specialized Sex Offender Legislation on Community Reentry	2	1
6.12	Assessing Informal Social Control against the Highly Stigmatized	4	1
6.13	Residential Location and Mobility of Registered Sex Offenders	4	1

Note: Both measurements ascend in value, with 5 being the highest score a study can receive in either category.

RSOs face the potential prospect of hostile neighbors and wary landlords if notification policies make their sex offender status known to the community. They may choose to move if they are not welcome in their community; however, moving may be complicated if landlords do not want to rent to an RSO. Additionally, some areas have enacted residency restriction laws at the state or local level, which generally prohibit RSOs from living within a certain distance of schools or other places where children congregate.<sup>13</sup> Residency restrictions limit the areas in which RSOs are

allowed to live, and may potentially curtail the amount of available housing to the point that RSOs may have difficulty finding a home.\*

These nine publications sought to provide data on the degree to which RSOs experience challenges finding and maintaining housing that meets their needs. However, research quality was poor — all of the studies had significant methodological or statistical flaws. Additionally, the analysis failed to account for complexities that may affect sex offenders' housing. For instance, offenders whose victims are their own family members may be prevented from returning to their family home because of restrictions on living with victims or because the family severed ties with the offender. Due to these limitations, this body of literature does not provide conclusive evidence supporting a link between SORN and residency restriction policies and collateral consequences to RSOs in finding or maintaining housing.

#### 4.4. Sex Offender Perceptions of SORN and Registry Restriction Policy Effects

FRD analyzed eight studies providing data on RSOs' opinions of SORN and residency restriction policies (see table 3). These studies were conducted by academic researchers and published between 2000 and 2013. All of the studies are based on self-reported data collected by researchers either in surveys or interviews of RSOs.

**Table 3. Study Summaries: Perceptions of Policy Effects**

Section	Title	Objectivity Score (1–5)	Stat. Integrity Score (1–5)
6.1	The Experiences of Registered Sex Offenders with Internet Offender Registries in Three States	3	1
6.2	Attitudes about Community Notification	4	1
6.7	The Effect of Megan's Law on Sex Offender Reintegration	4	1
6.8	The Impact of Sex Offender Residence Restrictions	3	1
6.9	Sex Offender Residence Restrictions	3	1
6.11	The Impact of Specialized Sex Offender Legislation on Community Reentry	2	1
6.18	Perceptions of Punishment	4	1
6.19	Sex Offender Community Notification	3	1

Note: Both measurements ascend in value, with 5 being the highest score a study can receive in either category.

These eight publications explored how RSOs view the efficacy of sex offender registries. While RSOs may experience financial impacts if they are unable to obtain employment or housing, a less

\* This body of research does not address one of the most direct impacts to housing for some sex offenders and their families: the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD's) regulation prohibiting lifetime registered sex offenders from admission to HUD-subsidized housing ("State Registered Lifetime Sex Offenders in Federally Assisted Housing," Notice PIH 2012-28, June 11, 2012, <https://www.hud.gov/sites/documents/PIH2012-28.PDF>).

conspicuous impact may be SORN policies' effects on RSOs re-integrating into society and avoiding re-offense. The data from these studies attempted to capture RSO beliefs about whether SORN and residency restrictions are effective at preventing recidivism and useful to society in their current form. Based largely on interview data, researchers reported that RSOs hold negative views of residency restrictions and do not think that these policies are effective in preventing sex offenders from re-offending. However, studies of RSOs' attitudes toward SORN policies drew fairly nuanced conclusions, and they often report that RSOs have mixed feelings about these policies. As Richard Tewksbury and Matthew Lees state in their 2007 study, "Almost without exception, RSOs expressed an understanding of why society would want to have a sex offender registry. However, there is also widespread dissatisfaction with having oneself listed."<sup>14</sup>

These studies were generally objective in the way the research was conducted, although one study, "The Impact of Sex Offender Residence Restrictions: 1,000 Feet from Danger or One Step from Absurd?" by Levenson and Cotter (April 2005), was given a dramatic title that may have the effect of priming readers to believe that residency restrictions are "absurd." Moreover, the body of research is generally poor quality, and all of the studies contain multiple methodological or statistical flaws.

#### 4.5. Claimed Impacts of SORN Policies on Physical and Psychological Well-Being

FRD identified nine studies that provide data on the impacts of registration on RSOs' emotional and psychological well-being, safety, and social relationships (see table 4). These studies were conducted by academic researchers and published between 2000 and 2014. All nine studies are based on self-reported data provided by RSOs in surveys or interviews.

**Table 4. Study Summaries: Claimed Impacts on Well-Being**

Section	Title	Objectivity Score (1–5)	Stat. Integrity Score (1–5)
6.1	The Experiences of Registered Sex Offenders with Internet Offender Registries in Three States	3	1
6.2	Attitudes about Community Notification	4	1
6.4	Understanding Collateral Consequences of Registry Laws	3	1
6.7	The Effect of Megan's Law on Sex Offender Reintegration	4	1
6.12	Assessing Informal Social Control against the Highly Stigmatized	4	1
6.15	Experiences and Attitudes of Registered Female Sex Offenders	4	1
6.16	Collateral Consequences of Sex Offender Registration	3	1
6.17	Perceptions of Sex Offender Registration	2	1
6.19	Sex Offender Community Notification	3	1

Note: Both measurements ascend in value, with 5 being the highest score a study can receive in either category.

These studies investigate the possible impacts of registration on RSOs' health and well-being. Potential impacts may be emotional or psychological in nature (e.g., stress, fear, and depression), or are those that result from the actions of family, friends, neighbors, or other members of the community (such as loss of relationships, social isolation, and victimization through harassment or assault).

Similar to the studies in other sections, serious methodological and statistical flaws prevent this selection of publications from supporting any replicable conclusion on the possible links between registration and registrants' physical and psychological health.

Moreover, attributing negative social impacts to the requirement for registration is problematic; it conflates an RSO's presence on a registry with why the RSO must register. In other words, one may argue that the act resulting in a conviction for a sex crime is considered heinous, not because the offender is thereafter required to register. Furthermore, a friend or member of the community could very plausibly find out that the RSO had been convicted of a sex crime through social networks and would not necessarily need to have checked the registry to obtain that information. It is difficult to ascertain the following from these studies:

- Whether the person imposing the social sanction is responding to the fact that the RSO is on the registry or responding to the fact that the RSO committed a sex crime.
- How the person imposing the social sanctions found out about the RSO's status.

#### 4.6. Claimed Impacts of SORN and Residency Restriction Policies on Families of Sex Offenders

FRD identified three studies that provide data on the impact of registration on RSOs' families (see table 5). These studies were conducted by academic researchers and published between 2009 and 2017. The studies are based on self-reported data provided in surveys and interviews of the family members of RSOs.

**Table 5. Study Summaries: Claimed Impacts on Families**

<b>Section</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Objectivity Score (1–5)</b>	<b>Stat. Integrity Score (1–5)</b>
7.1	Nobody Worries about Our Children	1	1
7.2	Collateral Damage	1	1
7.3	Stress Experiences of Family Members of Registered Sex Offenders	2	1

Note: Both measurements ascend in value, with 5 being the highest score a study can receive in either category.



This body of research claims that family members who live with an RSO may experience impacts to the family's finances if the RSO has trouble maintaining employment or impacts to housing if the RSO is subject to residency restrictions or neighborhood discrimination. Family members, including children, may experience stress or other negative emotions because of the RSO's registration status. Because of their relationship with an RSO, social stigmatization could take the form of harassment or even assault.

All three studies investigating SORN and residency restrictions' impact on RSOs' family members recruited the study participants from advocacy and support organizations for RSOs' families. This is problematic as the sample is not necessarily representative of the general population of RSO families — it only represents the experiences of those who choose to join such organizations. It is possible that individuals who join these groups are inclined to do so because they are particularly aggrieved by the impacts they have experienced as the family member of an RSO. Individuals who have experienced fewer impacts may have less cause to partake in advocacy or seek support. Therefore, these studies may fail to capture the full range of circumstances experienced by RSOs' families and likewise fail to address any other viewpoint of the registrants' families. Moreover, the studies lack a control group: There is no comparison to the post-release effects on family members of felons convicted of offenses that do not require registration. Overall, the methodological quality of these studies is poor and no conclusive evidence on the impacts of registration to family members can be drawn. This topic is further discussed in Section 7, Appendix II, "Assessment of Studies on Families of Adult Registered Sex Offenders."

#### **4.7. Claimed Impacts of SORN Policies on Juvenile Sex Offenders**

There is very little research on the specific impacts of registration on juvenile sex offenders.<sup>15</sup> Published studies on juvenile RSOs have largely focused on juvenile recidivism and theoretical arguments on the jurisprudential, psychological, and sociological merits of registering juveniles, rather than examining the claimed impacts of registration on juvenile RSOs. This report surveys three published studies as well as a dissertation ("The Relationship between Juvenile Sex Offender Registration and Depression in Adulthood") and a nonprofit report ("Raised on the Registry"). The published studies were conducted by academics, the dissertation was produced by a doctoral student, and the author of the report is a juvenile justice advocate. All of the research is based on self-reported data obtained through surveys, interviews, or focus groups (see table 6).

**Table 6. Study Summaries: Claimed Impacts on Juvenile Sex Offenders**

<b>Section</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Objectivity Score (1–5)</b>	<b>Stat. Integrity Score (1–5)</b>
8.1	Family Experiences of Young Adult Sex Offender Registration	3	1
8.2	The Relationship between Juvenile Sex Offender Registration and Depression in Adulthood	3	1
8.3	Collateral Consequences of Juvenile Sex Offender Registration and Notification	3	1
8.4	Effects of Juvenile Sex Offender Registration on Adolescent Well-Being	2	1
8.5	Raised on the Registry	1	1

Note: Both measurements ascend in value, with 5 being the highest score a study can get in either category.

SORNA requires that certain juvenile sex offenders who have been adjudicated delinquent for serious sex offenses be placed on the registry. Specifically, registration is required of juveniles “who are at least 14 years old at the time of the offense and who have been adjudicated delinquent for committing (or attempting or conspiring to commit) a sexual act with another by force, by the threat of serious violence, or by rendering unconscious or drugging the victim.”<sup>16</sup> However, SORNA does not require states to post information about juvenile RSOs on their public registry websites. Juvenile registration is controversial and aspects of the law, such as lifetime registration for juveniles, have been challenged in the courts. Currently, despite the federal statute, implementation of the requirement varies across jurisdictions: Some jurisdictions do not register juveniles at all, while others place limitations on the registration; still others go above and beyond the federal requirements for registration.<sup>17</sup>

The literature on juvenile registration is scant and is based on surveys and interviews with the parents of juvenile RSOs, treatment providers who work with juveniles, and juvenile RSOs themselves. These studies generally report that juvenile RSOs experience negative emotional and social impacts, may have unstable housing, and may even be at risk for sexual violence by adults as a result of being on the registry. However, each of these studies has at least one of the following statistical or methodological limitations:

- An extremely small sample,
- A lack of an appropriate control group,
- An absence of “pretesting” and “post-testing” (i.e., not measuring a result of interest before and after the occurrence of a cause of interest [such as not measuring the extent to which RSOs have experienced negative emotional experiences and other difficulties both before and after being registered as a sex offender]),

- Possible systematic differences between those recruited for research and those who were not (for example, some researchers only recruited survey participants from advocacy or support groups; these participants might have different views on registration than non-members of such groups),
- A misuse of statistical methods, or
- Arguments supported by anecdotal evidence.

As a group, these studies contain too many methodological errors to support conclusions about the prevalence of collateral consequences for juvenile registrants. Section 8, Appendix III, "Assessment of Studies on Juvenile Registered Sex Offenders," reviews the studies on this subject.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This report presents a review of the literature on the impacts of SORN policies on adult and juvenile RSOs. While this report mainly focuses on federal and state policies, impacts caused by state and local residency restriction policies are considered where relevant. This report considers the claims of 27 studies, most of which were published in academic journals between 2000 and 2018. In addition to work produced by academics, this report also considers studies produced by the U.S. Government Accountability Office, a dissertation, and a report published by Human Rights Watch. FRD identified these studies through keyword searches in a variety of databases, including Academic Search Complete, Google Scholar, Hein Online, the National Criminal Justice Reference Service, ProQuest, and Scopus. Additional studies were identified by following bibliographical citations in the research and through general internet searches.

This body of research examines the impacts that RSOs claim affect their employment and finances, housing, and physical and psychological well-being, as well as their attitudes regarding the efficacy of registration, impacts experienced by their family members, and the impacts experienced by juvenile RSOs. However, there are several limitations or concerns with the methodologies or quality of the research in all of the studies examined. They are largely based on self-reported data provided by RSOs, their family members, and treatment providers in surveys and interviews with researchers. In many of these studies, the participants were informed that the study was recruiting RSOs or their family members to provide information in their experiences with registration, which may have led to selection bias or confirmation bias in the study.

As a whole, the literature on the impacts of registration for RSOs is indeterminate in its findings. Its limitations are mostly caused by the prevalence of methodological shortcomings in the research that restrict the reliability, validity, or applicability of the findings to only those individuals in the sample. For example, many studies lack a comparison or control group, such as ex-felons convicted of nonsexual offenses, undermining the strength of the claim that a causal relationship exists between registration and the observed impact for RSOs. Furthermore, many studies use non-random sampling techniques, which limit the applicability of the findings to the population sampled. Finally, several studies misused statistical methods and techniques. Future research could address these methodological limitations. This could include studies that use random sampling measures, comparison groups, and proper statistical methods to ensure the validity of the research findings. A robust body of research would be useful to both policymakers and the public to inform considerations of how sex offender legislation impacts the individuals who are registered.

## 6. APPENDIX I: Assessment of Studies on Adult Registered Sex Offenders

### 6.1. The Experiences of Registered Sex Offenders with Internet Offender Registries in Three States

Ackerman, Alissa R., Meghan Sacks, and Lindsay N. Osier. "The Experiences of Registered Sex Offenders with Internet Offender Registries in Three States." *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation* 52, no. 1 (2013): 29–45. doi: 10.1080/10509674.2012.720959.

- **Author Affiliation(s):** Ackerman (University of Washington Tacoma)  
Sacks (Fairleigh Dickinson University)  
Osier (University of Washington Tacoma)
- **Intent:** The authors stated that the study "adds to the body of literature by providing a qualitative assessment of the thoughts and feelings about SORN [sex offender registration and notification] in general, from the perspective of the RSO [registered sex offender]."<sup>18</sup>
- **Methodology:** The data was gathered as part of a larger study on the impacts of SORN policies, in which RSOs in Kansas, Montana, and Nebraska were mailed surveys. Although respondents were not specifically asked to provide additional commentary, 66 of the 246 respondents (27.8 percent) provided narrative responses, which the researchers coded and analyzed for this study.
- **Claimed Impacts:** *Perceptions of SORN*— The study reported that half of the respondents believed that SORN laws have the potential to be effective at promoting community safety — if they are streamlined to target only repeat or high-risk offenders, or if the required registration periods are shortened.
- **Claimed Impacts:** *Physical and Psychological Well-Being* — The study reported that 18.3 percent of the participants (11 RSOs) expressed pessimistic emotions, such as hopelessness, anger, or despair, related to their future prospects or ability to achieve their goals, as a registrant.
- **Objectivity Score: 3** — The Federal Research Division (FRD) could not assess the funding source of the research because it was not disclosed in the article. The article included multiple statements questioning the effectiveness of SORN policies.
- **Statistical Integrity: 1** — This study had several issues with external and internal validity. Because of the low response rate, the study's findings suffered from non-response bias, a common problem with many of the publications examined for this report. In statistical terminology, "unit non-response" refers to individuals approached to participate in a survey but who does not participate in it (when survey respondents do not answer a particular survey question, that is called "item non-response"). Research has repeatedly found that unit non-response — hereafter simply referred to as "non-response" — can affect survey results, either leading to overestimations or underestimations of various statistics, depending on the topic and population of research interest. In other words, non-response biases survey findings. In statistics, samples can be used to make reliable inferences about populations if the sample is representative of the population, and research has found that respondents and non-respondents to surveys frequently differ in ways that limit both their similarities and the applicability of findings (from respondents to the behaviors and attitudes of non-respondents and the population of research interest as a whole). Studies have found respondents and non-respondents differ in age, education, marital status, interest in particular survey topics, etc.

Another problem with the study was that its findings were based on a non-random sample survey; thus, the findings could not be extrapolated beyond the sample (which the authors acknowledged). In statistics, populations are collections of all units of research interest — be those units people, animals, documents, etc. A sample is a subset of a population that is actually observed and analyzed. Statistics uses probability to estimate quantities of a population (totals, averages, etc.) and to quantify the uncertainty of findings based on sample data. Random sampling methods are used to ensure that every unit in a population has an equal, preassigned chance of being selected for inclusion. Random sampling, therefore, is an important tool for reducing various kinds of bias in the selection of population units, such as creating a sample from the most conveniently available research subjects or from research subjects that researchers assume represent some population of interest.

Furthermore, there was possible self-selection bias because of non-probability sampling: The sample consisted of a portion of respondents to the mailed survey, specifically those respondents who provided written comments to questions. Finally, there was no control over variables that could affect the results. The consequences the respondents identified were assumed to be those of SORN requirements, but the authors did not seek information about whether the respondents experienced those problems prior to their required fulfillment of these requirements.

## 6.2. Attitudes about Community Notification

Brannon, Yolanda Nicole, Jill S. Levenson, Timothy Fortney, and Juanita N. Baker. "Attitudes about Community Notification: A Comparison of Sexual Offenders and the Non-Offending Public." *Sex Abuse* 19, no. 4 (2007): 369–79. doi: 10.1177/107906320701900403.

- **Author Affiliation(s):** Brannon (Florida Institute of Technology)  
Levenson (Lynn University)  
Fortney (Florida Institute of Technology)  
Baker (Florida Institute of Technology)
- **Intent:** The research "compared the perceptions of sex offenders to those of the non-offending public regarding the fairness and effectiveness of Megan's Law and the impact of notification on sex offenders."<sup>19</sup>
- **Methodology:** This study used a survey of 125 RSOs in outpatient treatment in Florida and a survey of 193 members of the public at Department of Motor Vehicles locations in Florida. The groups were administered identical surveys, which used a modified version of Levenson and Cotter's 2005 survey instrument (see Section 6.7, "The Effect of Megan's Law on Sex Offender Reintegration").
- **Claimed Impacts:** *Perceptions of SORN* — The study reported that 42 percent of RSOs in the sample believed that SORN policies were ineffective at reducing recidivism.
- **Claimed Impacts:** *Physical and Psychological Well-Being* — The study reported that approximately 13 percent of RSOs surveyed said they had experienced physical harm as a result of SORN policies.
- **Objectivity Score: 4** — FRD could not assess the funding source of the research because it was not disclosed in the article.

- **Statistical Integrity: 1** — The use of a non-random sample limited the findings in this study to the participants. This meant findings could not be generalized to all sex offenders, sex offenders who are registered and who satisfied community notification requirements, sex offenders in Brevard County or elsewhere, nor any permutation or combination of the aforementioned groups.

Moreover, the researchers provided data on gender, race, income, and years of education, having found statistically significant differences between sex offenders and non-sex offenders on these variables. Thus, these two groups were of limited comparability, and factors other than being a sex offender or not could have been associated with differences in the groups' perceptions of Megan's Law and its impact on sex offenders. The researchers' lack of analysis on these variables' influence on perceptions of community notification laws and society raised doubts about the validity of findings that identified SORN policies as the reasons for different perceptions of community notification laws. In statistical terminology, the variables of gender, race, income, and years of education discussed here would be termed "confounding variables."

Finally, the authors used statistical methods and terminology inappropriately, such as having calculated means — i.e., "averages" — of categorical data and having used t-tests to determine if differences in means were statistically significant. Means and t-tests can only be used with numerical data, not categorical data.

### 6.3. Criminal History and Landlord Rental Decisions

Evans, Douglas N., and Jeremy R. Porter. "Criminal History and Landlord Rental Decisions: A New York Quasi-Experimental Study." *Journal of Experimental Criminology* 11, no. 1 (2015): 21–42. doi: 10.1007/s11292-014-9217-4.

- **Author Affiliation(s):** Evans (CUNY John Jay College of Criminal Justice; Mercy College)  
Porter (CUNY Brooklyn College)
- **Intent:** The study's objectives were to "determine the effect of a criminal conviction on landlord decisions to consider prospective tenants and the extent to which landlord responses vary based on [a] prospective tenant's offense type."<sup>20</sup>
- **Methodology:** A quasi-experimental audit methodology, in which pairs of testers posing as potential tenants called landlords in New York State to inquire about advertised apartments. Testers posed as having one of four conviction statuses: non-offenders (who functioned as the control group), offenders convicted of drug trafficking, offenders convicted of child molestation, or offenders convicted of statutory rape.
- **Claimed Impacts:** *Housing* — The results of this quasi-experimental study examined the willingness of landlords to rent to a potential tenant if the tenant disclosed a past criminal conviction. The study compared landlords' responses to researchers posing as tenants who disclosed a drug trafficking conviction, a child molestation conviction, or a statutory rape conviction with "tenants" who did not disclose a criminal conviction. The authors reported that almost all "tenants" (96 percent) without a criminal conviction were granted an apartment showing by the landlord. Among prospective "tenants" who disclosed a prior conviction, "tenants" who disclosed statutory rape and drug trafficking convictions experienced similar interest from landlords: 48 percent of those who disclosed a statutory rape conviction and 47 percent of those who disclosed a drug trafficking conviction received agreement to view the apartment. Landlords were less willing

to rent to individuals who disclosed a child molestation conviction: Only 34 percent received agreement to view the apartment. Landlords in counties with residency restrictions did not have significantly different responses than those in counties without such policies, indicating that local residency restriction laws did not affect landlords' decisions about prospective tenants who disclosed a sex offense.

- **Objectivity Score: 5** — This study received government funding. An analysis of the article determined that the authors did not have a critical or biased point of view, nor had they designed the study to reach a pre-determined conclusion.
- **Statistical Integrity: 1** — This study received a score of 1 on FRD's modified Maryland Scientific Methods Scale (SMS) due to its use of a non-random sample and incorrect use of some statistical methods.

As with many other studies evaluated in this report, Evans and Porter used a non-random sample in their study. More specifically, the authors created a sample of landlords in New York State by examining rental listings on websites — only two of which they specified (Craigslist and Backpage) — and then using their judgment to assess if landlords or brokers wrote the listings. They said, "Listings were avoided if [the] online descriptions of rental properties appeared to be written by a broker."<sup>21</sup> Indeed, the authors acknowledged using a non-random sample, arguing that subjectivity was necessary to determine if rental listings were written by landlords rather than brokers. In statistical terminology, investigators' use of their own judgment to select landlords or other "population units" for inclusion in a sample of that population risks introducing researchers' own opinions of which members of a population should, or should not, be in the sample. In statistical terms, the use of such judgment in sampling is a form of "sampling bias."

The authors' misuse of statistical methods raised some doubts about the correctness of the statistical results stated in the study. For example, the authors collected data on landlords' stated willingness (yes or no) to show an apartment to callers posing as sex offenders and others posing as non-sex offenders, with such data collected for each landlord. In statistical terminology, a variable such as a landlord's stated willingness to show an apartment to a prospective tenant is a dichotomous variable, as the variable can take only two values, such as yes or no (other examples of binary values are heads or tails and success or not success). Moreover, the collection of each landlord's response to a caller posing as an offender and one posing as a non-offender is an example of "matched-pair" data, because a pair of responses (yes or no to an ostensible offender and non-offender) is matched to each test subject (the landlords in this case). The authors subsequently determined if there was a statistically significant difference in the percentage of landlords willing to rent to offenders and non-offenders with a t-test, which was an incorrect use of statistics. T-tests are used to determine if there are statistically significant differences in means, i.e. "averages," not proportions. The correct method of comparing differences in proportions from matched pairs would have been a McNemar's test. This misuse of statistics raised concerns with the study's statistical conclusion validity.

#### 6.4. Understanding Collateral Consequences of Registry Laws

Frenzel, Erika Davis, Kendra N. Bowen, Jason D. Spraitz, James H. Bowers, and Shannon Phaneuf. "Understanding Collateral Consequences of Registry Laws: An Examination of the Perceptions of Sex Offender Registrants." *Justice Policy Journal* 11, no. 2 (2014). [http://www.cjcb.org/uploads/cjcb/documents/frenzel\\_et\\_al\\_collateral\\_consequences\\_final\\_formatted.pdf](http://www.cjcb.org/uploads/cjcb/documents/frenzel_et_al_collateral_consequences_final_formatted.pdf).



- **Author Affiliation(s):** Frenzel (Indiana University of Pennsylvania)  
 Bowen (Texas Christian University)  
 Spraitz (University of Wisconsin Eau Claire)  
 Bowers (Saginaw Valley State University)  
 Phaneuf (Indiana University of Pennsylvania)
- **Intent:** The researchers set out to “examine collateral consequences of the sex offender registration laws in Pennsylvania, Texas, and Wisconsin.”<sup>22</sup>
- **Methodology:** A mail survey of 443 RSOs in Pennsylvania, Texas, and Wisconsin using a modified version of Richard Tewksbury’s 2005 survey instrument.
- **Claimed Impacts: *Employment and Finances*** — The study reported that, due to their registration status, 50 percent of survey participants had lost a job, 25 percent had been denied a promotion, and 6 percent had been denied a bank account or loan.
- **Claimed Impacts: *Physical and Psychological Well-Being*** — The survey reported that 42 percent of respondents said they had been harassed in person and 14 percent had been assaulted or attacked as a result of SORN policies. Additionally, 52 percent of respondents reported having lost a friend due to these policies, while 28 percent said they had lost a spouse or dating partner.
- **Objectivity Score: 3** — The language and framing of the study introduced the possibility of bias into the research. For example, the survey questionnaire was followed by an open-ended question: “Have you experienced additional negative consequences due to being on the [state name] Sex Offender Registry other than the ones listed above? If so, please describe these negative experiences/consequences in the box below.” This wording may have primed the participants to believe that the researchers expected them to have experienced negative consequences, which may have biased their responses. Furthermore, the study used non-objective language, repeatedly referring to the consequences that RSOs “endure,” a word that carries connotations of pain and suffering.
- **Statistical Integrity: 1** — This study had low statistical integrity. Points were deducted because the study had issues with its internal validity, namely, focusing on a non-objective research question: “To examine the collateral consequences of the sex offender registration laws in Pennsylvania, Texas, and Wisconsin.” This question (and the related survey instrument) assumed an associative or causal relationship existed between such laws and certain results. The study also had problems with its external validity, as the data was derived from convenience samples, and was biased due to a high non-response rate and an overrepresentation of respondents in urban areas. For these reasons, the results cannot be extrapolated to the overall population of RSOs.

## 6.5. Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act

U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO). *Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act: Jurisdictions Face Challenges to Implementing the Act, and Stakeholders Report Positive and Negative Effects*, GAO-13-211. Washington, DC: GAO, 2013. <https://www.gao.gov/assets/660/652032.pdf>.

- **Intent:** GAO issued this report in response to a request from the House Judiciary Committee’s Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security to assess two questions: “(1) To what extent has the SMART Office [Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking] determined that jurisdictions have substantially implemented the Sex Offender

Registration and Notification Act, and what challenges, if any, have jurisdictions faced? (2) For jurisdictions that have substantially implemented the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act, what are the reported effects that the act has had on public safety, criminal justice stakeholders, and registered sex offenders?"<sup>23</sup>

- **Methodology:** Interviews with criminal justice officials and a web-based survey of state registry officials.
- **Claimed Impacts: *Employment***— The study reported that one official in a public defender’s office stated that the Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act’s (SORNA’s) requirement to publish addresses of RSOs’ employers had resulted in “several instances” of registrants losing their jobs.<sup>24</sup>
- **Objectivity Score: 5** — This report was produced by a federal government agency. An analysis of the report determined that the authors did not have a critical or biased point of view, nor had they designed the study to reach a pre-determined conclusion.
- **Statistical Integrity: 2** — While the report benefited from a high response rate to its survey, the wording GAO employed in the survey includes non-objective language (e.g., “Section 2: Challenges Regarding SORNA Implementation” rather than “Section 2: Experiences with SORNA Implementation”). The use of non-objective wording in a survey, particularly one that is self-administered, could lead respondents to assume a particular point of view about the topic of analysis (i.e., SORNA) or assume that the survey administrators have a particular point of view about the topic of analysis. Moreover, the survey did not include a comparison or control condition, such as questions concerning states’ experiences with implementing other federal legislation. This lack of a control undermined the study’s internal validity, as it was unclear if there was a valid association between SORNA and states’ experiences with implementing it.

## 6.6. A Comparative Longitudinal Analysis of Recidivism Trajectories and Collateral Consequences

Jennings, Wesley G., Kristen M. Zgoba, and Richard Tewksbury. “A Comparative Longitudinal Analysis of Recidivism Trajectories and Collateral Consequences for Sex and Non-Sex Offenders Released since the Implementation of Sex Offender Registration and Community Notification.” *Journal of Crime and Justice* 35, no. 3 (2012): 356–64. doi: 10.1080/0735648X.2012.662062.

- **Author Affiliation(s):** Jennings (University of South Florida)  
Zgoba (New Jersey Department of Corrections)  
Tewksbury (University of Louisville)
- **Intent:** The purpose of the study was to examine “whether the recidivism trajectories post-prison release for post-SORN sex offenders are similar to or different from the recidivism trajectories post-prison release for post-SORN non-sex offenders who are released from prison via parole.”<sup>25</sup>
- **Methodology:** An analysis of data on a random sample of 247 sex offenders and 250 other felons who were convicted of nonsexual crimes. All offenders had been released from prison in New Jersey.
- **Claimed Impacts: *Employment*** — The study reported that 37 percent of sex offenders were employed post-release, compared to 41 percent of offenders convicted of other felonies.

- **Claimed Impacts: *Housing***— The study found that rates of homelessness or transience are similar for sex offenders (5.5 percent) compared to other felons (5.3 percent).
- **Objectivity Score: 5** — This study received government funding. An analysis of the article determined that the authors did not have a critical or biased point of view, nor had they designed the study to reach a pre-determined conclusion.
- **Statistical Integrity: 1** — This study received a Maryland SMS score of 1 due to several limitations in its methodology. While the authors used random sampling, the sample consisted of individuals who were incarcerated in New Jersey during a five-year period, so the results cannot be extrapolated beyond individuals imprisoned in New Jersey during that same time period. Furthermore, the control and treatment groups had limited comparability due to statistically significant differences in race and in mean age at release. The research had several confounding variables, such as factors that affect employment or housing type (renter- or owner-occupied), and the results simply presented between-group differences in these variables. The authors also commingled findings that are statistically insignificant with those that are statistically significant, but they discussed their findings as if they were all statistically significant. The between-group differences in employment, residence in renter-occupied housing, and living with friends were not statistically significant, while the between-group differences in group facility residence and moving from one residence to another were statistically significant.

Another problem with the study was its misuse of statistical methods. The authors collected data on several post-release consequences to sex offenders and non-sex offenders and made several comparisons. For example, the authors compared employment for sex offenders after release to employment for non-sex offenders after release. Similar comparisons were made for various measures of housing. Making multiple comparisons in this way with the same data is acceptable statistical practice and can yield interesting discoveries when statistically significant results are found. However, if enough comparisons are made, then a significant result may materialize even when no actual difference or similarity exists. This is because the meaning of statistical significance — such as conducting tests to find if results are statistically significant at the 5 percent level — is that if 100 tests are conducted, then, on average, five of those tests indicate statistical significance even if there is no relationship among the things being compared. When researchers are making multiple comparisons on the same data, then adjustments must be made to account for the effect of multiple tests, yet the authors of this study did not do so.

## 6.7. The Effect of Megan’s Law on Sex Offender Reintegration

Levenson, Jill S., and Leo P. Cotter. “The Effect of Megan’s Law on Sex Offender Reintegration.” *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 21, no. 1 (February 2005): 49–66. doi: 10.1177/1043986204271676.

- **Author Affiliation(s):** Levenson (Lynn University)  
Cotter (S.H.A.R.E. [Sexual Health: Awareness\*Rehabilitation\*Education])
- **Intent:** The goal of the study was to “better understand the positive and negative, intended and unintended, consequences of community notification on sex offenders’ rehabilitation and reintegration.”<sup>26</sup>
- **Methodology:** A survey of 183 RSOs recruited from outpatient sex offender counseling centers in Florida. Participants completed the survey during group therapy sessions.

- **Claimed Impacts: *Employment*** — The study found that 27 percent of the people in the sample reported a job loss because their bosses or coworkers discovered their sex offender status.
- **Claimed Impacts: *Housing*** — The study reported that 20 percent of RSOs who rented homes have moved because their landlords found out that they were sex offenders.
- **Claimed Impacts: *Perceptions of SORN*** — The study reported that 71 percent of the RSOs surveyed believed that notification interferes with their recovery by causing more stress in their lives. Thirty-six percent of the sample were more willing to manage the “risk factors” associated with sex offense recidivism because they believe their neighbors were watching, and 66 percent were “motivated to prevent re-offense so that I can prove to others that I am not a bad person.” However, only 22 percent believed that SORN helped to prevent them from reoffending.
- **Claimed Impacts: *Physical and Psychological Well-being*** — The study reported that 67 percent of the people in the sample state that notification policies caused them to feel shame and embarrassment that kept them from participating in activities. Additionally, 64 percent of the sample reported feeling alone and isolated, and 52 percent reported losing a friend or other close relationships due to notification. Thirty-three percent of the respondents in the sample reported being harassed or threatened by neighbors and five percent have been physically assaulted by a person who found out the respondent was a sex offender.
- **Objectivity Score: 4** — FRD could not assess the funding source of the research because it was not disclosed in the article.
- **Statistical Integrity: 1** — This study had a number of issues of concern caused by its statistical methods: It used non-random sampling; suffered from confounding factors and uncontrolled covariates; and used inappropriate statistical tests. More specifically, the use of non-random sampling limited the study’s conclusions to only those individuals who participated in it. With regard to confounding factors, the sample was drawn from RSOs who were in outpatient sex offender counseling, a variable that could have some association with the response variables, which the authors described as experiences and perceptions of the current law at the time — Megan’s Law; effects of notification strategies; and sex offenders’ perceptions of their own recidivism risk. As for uncontrolled covariates, the sample consisted of adult males living in urban areas, but the research did not control for age, gender, residence, or other variables that could have some association with the aforementioned response variables.

The researchers also misused some statistical tests, namely linear regression, Pearson correlation, and t-tests. A Pearson correlation measures the strength of a straight-line or “linear” relationship between two numerical variables, yet the authors used this type of correlation with categorical data, an inappropriate use of the method. Measures of association that could have been used for two categorical variables that each have two values are chi-squared, the contingency coefficient, and phi.

Regression refers to a range of techniques used to test relationships among variables, such as to determine if one of more variables help predict another variable. As with many statistical methods, data characteristics determine the type of regression technique that can be used to analyze the data. In this article, Levenson and Cotter used linear regression with a five-point categorical variable (strongly agree, agree, I don’t know, disagree, strongly disagree) as the response variable, however, a logistic regression technique should have been used for such a variable.

A third statistical test that Levenson and Cotter misused in this article is a t-test, which is used for various tests of means (i.e., averages). However, the authors used a t-test to compare proportions, such as the proportions of sex offenders who claimed subjection to notification requirements and those who did not had significant differences in job loss, property damage, and other experiences as a consequence of them being on a sex offender registry. The variables in question had binary outcomes (subject to notification requirements or not, loss of job or not, etc.), the same group of individuals was being asked these questions, and the researchers were comparing pairs of those outcomes to individual respondents. Thus, this was a matched-pairs research design with binary outcomes, and the correct test for such would not have been a t-test but a McNemar's test.

Moreover, in this study, RSOs' stated experiences with stress, isolation, relationship loss, and other problems were attributed to Megan's Law's community notification requirements. However, the lack of a comparison group — such as individuals who were not sex offenders but were otherwise comparable in terms of age, gender, residence, etc. — did not enable the study to examine if individuals not required to meet community notification requirements have also experienced the same problems but for different reasons. Consequently, the study's findings may not have accurately reflected what its underlying research was designed to examine, which was the influence of individuals' meeting community notification requirements on their subsequent rehabilitation and community re-integration.

## 6.8. The Impact of Sex Offender Residence Restrictions

Levenson, Jill S., and Leo P. Cotter. "The Impact of Sex Offender Residence Restrictions: 1,000 Feet from Danger or One Step from Absurd?" *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology* 49, no. 2 (April 2005): 168–78. doi: 10.1177/0306624X04271304.

- **Author Affiliation(s):** Levenson (Lynn University)  
Cotter (S.H.A.R.E.)
- **Intent:** The intent of the study was "to describe the impact of residence restrictions on sex offender reintegration and to better understand sex offenders' perceptions of these laws."<sup>27</sup>
- **Methodology:** A survey of 135 RSOs in outpatient counseling centers in Florida who are subject to residency restrictions. Participants completed the survey during group therapy sessions.
- **Claimed Impacts: Housing** — The study found that 22 percent of respondents had moved out of a home they owned and 28 percent had moved out of rental housing because of residency restrictions.
- **Claimed Impacts: Perceptions of SORN** — In characterizing the narrative comments that some respondents provided in addition to their survey responses, the study stated that most RSOs believed that residency restriction policies were generally not beneficial, although some believed that the policies could have been improved through a more individualized application.
- **Objectivity Score: 3** — FRD could not assess the funding source of the research because it was not disclosed in the article. The article also employed language that indicated a bias against residency restriction policies. For instance, the title, "The Impact of Sex Offender Residence Restrictions: 1,000 Feet from Danger or One Step from Absurd?," used emotional trigger language that appeared to be intended to prime the reader to question the value of residency restriction policies.

- **Statistical Integrity: 1** — This study has a Maryland SMS score of 1. As with many other studies examined here, its external validity was compromised by the use of a non-random sample. In addition, its statistical conclusion validity was compromised by a confounding variable (all individuals in the sample were in outpatient counseling for sex offenders); a lack of variation in the covariates (all individuals in the sample were sex offenders and all were in outpatient counseling); and the questionable use of statistical tests. For example, the authors appeared to use Pearson correlation with variables that were dichotomous (such as being unable to live with family and difficulty finding affordable housing). As a result, these correlations were invalid and no valid conclusions could be made about them.

## 6.9. Sex Offender Residence Restrictions

Levenson, Jill S., and Andrea L. Hern. "Sex Offender Residence Restrictions: Unintended Consequences and Community Reentry." *Justice Research and Policy* 9, no. 1 (2007): 59–73. doi: 10.3818/JRP.9.1.2007.59.

- **Author Affiliation(s):** Levenson (Lynn University)  
Hern (Indiana Sex Offender Monitoring and Management Program)
- **Intent:** The authors stated that their purpose was to "investigate the positive and negative, intended and unintended consequences of residence restrictions on sex offenders."<sup>28</sup>
- **Methodology:** A survey of 148 sex offenders in Indiana attending sex offender counseling centers. Respondents completed the survey during a group therapy session.
- **Claimed Impacts: Housing** — The study reported that 7 percent of the sample had moved out of homes they owned and 11 percent had moved out of homes they rented because of residency restrictions. Twenty-two percent had encountered a landlord who refused to rent the property because the applicant was an RSO. Eight percent had a landlord who refused to renew a lease because of residency restrictions. And 38 percent reported that they had difficulty finding affordable housing because of residency restrictions.
- **Claimed Impacts: Perceptions of Residency Restrictions** — The study reported that 26 percent of RSOs believed that residency restrictions successfully limited their access to children and the same percentage (26) believed they were more able to manage their "risk factors" because of residency restrictions. However, most respondents did not believe that residency restrictions prevent recidivism: Only 19 percent said the policies helped prevent them from reoffending, while 74 percent believed that if they wanted to reoffend, residency restrictions would not stop them.
- **Objectivity Score: 3** — FRD could not assess the funding source of the research because it was not disclosed in the article. Language in the article also criticized the purpose of residency restrictions, suggesting that these policies may "create more problems than they solve" because they could potentially increase recidivism by increasing the amount of stress experienced offenders. However, the authors were unable to support this theory with their data because their study did not actually attempt to measure recidivism. Additionally, the authors made blanket statements — such as, "Housing restrictions appear to disrupt the stability of sex offenders by forcing them to relocate, sometimes multiple times, creating transience, financial hardship, and emotional volatility"<sup>29</sup> —

which appeared rather hyperbolic given only 18 percent of the sample moved due to residency restrictions.

- **Statistical Integrity: 1** — This study scored low on the Maryland SMS with a score of 1. The use of a non-random sample meant that these results could not be extrapolated to individuals not in the sample, be they sex offenders or the general population.

Another problem with the study was that the researchers did not address a confounding variable," which is a variable that researchers do not examine and that could affect the research results. The study sought to examine how sex offenders' residency restrictions affected their community reintegration, as measured by difficulties securing affordable housing, being unable to reside with family members, and other housing-related outcomes. Based on responses to their survey of offenders, the authors attributed all of the housing outcomes the offenders cited to the residency restrictions to which the offenders were subject. However, all individuals in the study sample were in outpatient counseling for sex offenders, a variable that could have influenced the results, such as reducing the likelihood of offenders experiencing various housing difficulties. Instead of surveying sex offenders in outpatient counseling and those not in such counseling and then comparing their housing outcomes, the researchers omitted outpatient counseling as a variable under consideration and attributed housing outcomes to residency restrictions.

A similar problem was that the authors tested whether offender age, income, and other variables were associated with housing consequences, but they did so by testing whether each of these variables individually had an association with housing consequences. Among their findings were that offender age was negatively correlated with reported difficulty finding an affordable place to live. The acquisition of affordable housing, and many other results, could be the consequence of a combination of things. Examining the relationship of only one variable with a result — such as age and difficulty finding affordable housing — risked not ruling out the influence of other factors on the result, such as the association of income and years of education on obtaining affordable housing. Statistically, there are techniques that can be used to test if, among a set of variables, one or more has a significant association with a result. For example, logistic regression can be used to determine if offender age, years of education, income, subjection to residency requirements, attending outpatient counseling, and/or other variables affect individuals' likelihood of finding affordable housing. The results would indicate what, if any, variables were associated with the result, and the relative strength of those variables' association with the result. However, the authors only tested relationships between one variable and another, and thus they could not assess the influence of other variables on those relationships.

It is interesting to note that the article emphasized the influence of residency restrictions on housing outcomes despite finding that offender age was also associated with some measures of housing outcomes.

Finally, the authors misused the Pearson correlation coefficient, which is a statistical method for estimating the correlation between two numerical variables. However, Levenson and Hern used this technique to measure the correlation of numerical variables with a dichotomous variable, which is a variable that takes two values (e.g., yes or no, true or false). For example, the authors used a Pearson correlation coefficient to test the correlation between offender age (a numerical variable) and "had to move out of a rental" (a dichotomous variable). It should be noted that this latter variable is, in statistical terminology, an "artificial" dichotomous variable, as it is a conceptual dichotomy rather than a naturally occurring one, such as a coin toss (heads or tails). A statistic that

can be used to estimate the correlation between a numerical and a dichotomous variable is a biserial correlation.

### 6.10. Where for Art Thou?

Levenson, Jill S., Alissa R. Ackerman, Kelly M. Socia, and Andrew J. Harris. "Where for Art Thou? Transient Sex Offenders and Residence Restrictions." *Criminal Justice Policy Review* 26, no. 4 (2015): 319–44. doi: 10.1177/0887403413512326.

- **Author Affiliation(s):** Levenson (Lynn University)  
Ackerman (University of Washington Tacoma)  
Socia (University of Massachusetts Lowell)  
Harris (University of Massachusetts Lowell)
- **Intent:** The goal of the research was to "better understand transient (homeless) sex offenders in the context of residence restriction laws."<sup>30</sup>
- **Methodology:** An analysis of data collected by the state of Florida on 23,523 RSOs living in the state. The researchers obtained data files from two publicly available sources: the Florida Department of Law Enforcement and the Florida sex offender registry website.
- **Claimed Impacts: Housing** — The study reported that 3 percent of RSOs in Florida were homeless and registered as transient. This transience rate, while small, was larger than the rate of homelessness in the general population of Florida (which was less than 1 percent of the state's population). Additionally, the team reported that it is rare for any RSO to abscond from registration.
- **Objectivity Score: 4** — The article contained statements criticizing registries.
- **Statistical Integrity: 1** — This study received a Maryland SMS score of 1. One problem with the study was that the authors did not test for the association between several variables that could be associated with homelessness or transience, including a sex offenders' educational attainment and employment status. Variables that can affect a result (in this case, homelessness and transience) but which are not examined are called confounding variables. It should be noted that the authors themselves acknowledged the lack of examination of such variables as a limitation of their study.

An additional limitation of the study was that its results could not be extrapolated to populations other than RSOs living in Florida, as the study was limited in its external validity. In statistics, the generalizability of findings from a sample to the population from which that sample is drawn or to other populations rests on empirical support for comparability of the sample to those populations. Places can vary in one or myriad ways, and the state of Florida may differ from other states in terms of policing, laws, and other factors that limit the comparability of RSOs and their experiences in Florida to RSOs and their experiences in other states. Other factors that can limit the generalizability of findings from a sample to a population are time period characteristics, sample characteristics, and low survey response rates.



## 6.11. The Impact of Specialized Sex Offender Legislation on Community Reentry

Mercado, Cynthia Calkins, Shea Alvarez, and Jill S. Levenson. "The Impact of Specialized Sex Offender Legislation on Community Reentry." *Sexual Abuse* 20, no. 2 (2008): 188–205. doi: 10.1177/1079063208317540.

- **Author Affiliation(s):** Mercado (CUNY John Jay College of Criminal Justice)  
Alvarez (CUNY John Jay College of Criminal Justice)  
Levenson (Lynn University)
- **Intent:** The goal of the study was to "examine the perceived impact of community notification and residency restriction statutes among a sample of higher risk ... sex offenders in New Jersey."<sup>31</sup>
- **Methodology:** A mail survey conducted with 138 RSOs in New Jersey using a modified version of a survey instrument that Levenson had developed and used in her 2005 and 2007 studies (see Sections 6.7, 6.8, and 6.9 for details).
- **Claimed Impacts: Employment**— The study found that 52 percent of the sample have experienced a job loss due to notification policies.
- **Claimed Impacts: Housing** — The study reported that 4 percent of homeowners in the sample have moved out of a home because of SORN policies, 20 percent of renters have moved out of a home because of pressure from neighbors, and 24 percent of renters have moved because landlords found out they were registered. The study found that 12 percent of survey participants have moved out of a house they owned and 24 percent have moved out of a rented home because of residency restrictions. Thirty-four percent have attempted to rent from a landlord who would not rent to them because of residency restrictions.
- **Claimed Impacts: Perceptions of Residency Restrictions**— Only 10 percent of the sample believed that residency restriction policies helped prevent them from reoffending, while 62 percent believed that if they wanted to reoffend, they would not be stopped by residency restrictions.
- **Objectivity Score: 2** — FRD could not assess the funding source of the research because it was not disclosed in the article. The article contains language that is critical of SORN laws and expressly opposed to SORNA.
- **Statistical Integrity: 1** — The statistical methodology used by these researchers to reach their conclusions was problematic and this article ranked low on the Maryland SMS. As with other reports, the results of this study could not be extrapolated to the RSO population in general because the authors did not use random sampling and because the survey upon which the study was based had a low response rate (9.5 percent) and did not incorporate methods to address that. In addition, the research had issues with statistical conclusion validity because there was no variation in the predictor variables — notification and residency restrictions — and all survey responses were attributed as associated with those variables. The researchers also incorrectly used some statistical methods, such as providing means and standard deviations of ordinal data, using t-tests on ordinal data, and using ANOVA on ordinal data. Consequently, correct conclusions could not be made about the association between, on one hand, sex offender notification and residency restrictions and, on the other hand, the consequences of notification and residency restrictions reported in the study.

## 6.12. Assessing Informal Social Control against the Highly Stigmatized

Mustaine, Elizabeth Ehrhardt, and Richard Tewksbury. "Assessing Informal Social Control against the Highly Stigmatized." *Deviant Behavior* 32 (2011): 944–60. doi:10.1080/01639625.2010.538361.

- **Author Affiliation(s):** Mustaine (University of Central Florida)  
Tewksbury (University of Louisville)
- **Intent:** The researchers "investigate[d] the traditional view of informal social control (as types of collateral consequences experienced by deviants) and propose[d] that against particularly well-known and stigmatized individuals, these efforts may be more proactive."<sup>32</sup>
- **Methodology:** A survey of 231 RSOs in Kansas and Oklahoma.
- **Claimed Impacts: Employment**— Thirty-six percent of survey respondents reported a job loss due to SORN policies, and 19 percent reported that they had been denied a promotion because of their presence on a registry.
- **Claimed Impacts: Housing** — The study reported that 20 percent of respondents said that they have moved to a new home because of community pressure and 20 percent had moved because of financial concerns.
- **Claimed Impacts: Perceptions of SORN**— The study reported that 48 percent of the sample had lost a friend who found out that the individual was on the registry, 26 percent had been harassed in person, and 11 percent had been assaulted or attacked.
- **Objectivity Score: 4** — FRD could not assess the funding source of the research because it was not disclosed in the article.
- **Statistical Integrity: 1** — The study received a Maryland SMS score of 1 because of several methodological problems. For one, it used random sampling to create a sample of RSOs for the study, however the response rate was low (12.1 percent), which introduced the possibility of non-response bias into the sample and limited the generalizability of the study's findings to RSOs not in the study sample. The generalizability of the study's findings to RSOs in states other than Kansas and Oklahoma was also limited because the study lacked analysis to show how similar the RSOs participating in the study were to RSOs in other states.

In addition, the survey relied on self-reported information, which raised doubts about the accuracy of the findings. More specifically, the authors' survey asked RSOs to report their feelings about being recognized in public as a sex offender and the consequences they believe they have experienced due to registering as a sex offender. However, research has found that survey respondents often deliberately misreport information about themselves, their actions, and their experiences in order to present themselves as conforming to social norms of desirable behavior and for other reasons. Given the sensitive nature of sex offenses, it is likely that many sex offenders will deliberately misreport information about themselves.

Another problem with the study was that it lacked a comparison or control group. All of the individuals in the sample are RSOs and the authors attributed all problems the individuals claim to have experienced to be consequences of registration as a sex offender. Indeed, many of the events the RSOs in the study stated they had experienced are experiences shared by individuals who are

not RSOs, such as receiving rude treatment in public, losing a job, and losing a friend. If the authors had designed a random sample to include RSOs and non-RSOs and inquired about certain experiences (e.g., rude treatment in public and job loss), then the authors could have estimated if sex offender registration has a significant association with those experiences, independent of other characteristics, such as age, gender, and race.

Finally, the study examined daily stress levels but did not include many confounding variables that could have some bearing on these levels, such as job pressures, medical expenses, or the death of a family member.

### 6.13. Residential Location and Mobility of Registered Sex Offenders

Mustaine, Elizabeth Ehrhardt, Richard Tewksbury, and Kenneth M. Stengel. "Residential Location and Mobility of Registered Sex Offenders." *American Journal of Criminal Justice* 30, no. 2 (2006): 177–92. <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007/BF02885890.pdf>.

- **Author Affiliation(s):** Mustaine (University of Central Florida)  
Tewksbury (University of Louisville)  
Stengel (University of Louisville)
- **Intent:** The researchers stated that the study "builds on the literature regarding where registered sex offenders reside to assess the characteristics of present location with the location occupied at the time of arrest."<sup>33</sup>
- **Methodology:** An analysis of census tract data on 271 RSOs in Kentucky.
- **Claimed Impacts: Housing**— The study investigated whether RSOs had moved to neighborhoods that were more "socially disorganized" (i.e., economically depressed and having less stability and social capital) after registration, compared to their pre-arrest residence. The research found a roughly even split, with 31 percent of sex offenders having moved to more disorganized neighborhoods, 33 percent having moved to less disorganized neighborhoods, and 36 percent remaining in the same neighborhoods. Therefore, the authors stated that there did "not appear to be a strong downward spiral or any negative collateral consequences associated with their new places of residence."<sup>34</sup>
- **Objectivity Score: 4** — FRD could not assess the funding source of the research because it was not disclosed in the article.
- **Statistical Integrity: 1** — One problem the study had was that its findings could not be generalized beyond the individuals included in the study (i.e., it had no external validity). The authors created the study's sample from a list of 709 RSOs in a single county (Jefferson County, Kentucky), examining data for the 271 RSOs who were not incarcerated, not residing in a halfway house, and who had both a known address at the time of arrest for a sex offense and a known address at the time the researchers collected such data. Because there was missing data on a substantial proportion of the total population of interest (RSOs in Jefferson County) and because the authors did not use random sampling, the study's findings could not be extrapolated to individuals not in the study sample, including the other 438 RSOs in Jefferson County or RSOs living elsewhere.

There was no control group as the sample consisted entirely of RSOs. Consequently, the study's conclusions about the reasons for RSOs' residential changes may not have reflected the actual reasons for those changes in residence (stated differently, the study has limited internal validity).

Finally, the researchers did not use statistical tests to estimate the similarities or differences in the characteristics of respondents' residential locations before and after registration, nor whether the respondents relocated to a neighborhood with more or less social disorganization. Rather, the authors made non-statistical comparisons of residential locations — such as the percentages of individuals aged 19 and below in previous and current census tracts of residence — and assumed those comparisons were sufficient for subsequent statistical analyses of residential changes.

#### 6.14. Post-Release Recidivism and Employment among Different Types of Released Offenders

Nally, John M., Susan Lockwood, Taiping Ho, and Katie Knutson. "Post-Release Recidivism and Employment among Different Types of Released Offenders: A 5-Year Follow-Up Study in the United States." *International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences* 9, no. 1 (2014): 16–24. ProQuest (1557153003).

- **Author Affiliation(s):** Nally (Indiana Department of Correction)  
Lockwood (Indiana Department of Correction)  
Ho (Ball State University)  
Knutson (Public Consulting Group)
- **Intent:** The study's goal was to "explore the post-release employment and recidivism among different types of released offenders before, during, and after the economic recession of 2008."<sup>35</sup>
- **Methodology:** An analysis of data collected on a cohort of 6,561 ex-offenders who were released from the Indiana Department of Correction in 2005. The ex-offenders were classified into four groups: violent offenders, non-violent offenders, sex offenders, and drug offenders. Using data from the Indiana Departments of Corrections and Workforce Development, the researchers tracked post-release employment and recidivism from 2005 to 2009. While the researchers were not specifically examining the impacts of SORN or residency restriction policies, they offer data on how sex offender employment rates compare to the employment rates of other types of offenders.
- **Claimed Impacts: Employment** — The study found that sex offenders shared similar unemployment rates with other types of offenders. Thirty-six percent of sex offenders had never been employed since their release from prison, compared to 37 percent of drug offenders, 38 percent of non-violent offenders, and 37 percent of violent offenders.
- **Objectivity Score: 4** — FRD could not assess the funding source of the research because it was not disclosed in the article.
- **Statistical Integrity: 2** — This study ranked a little higher than others (with a Maryland SMS score of 2) and was noteworthy for its large sample size, appropriate statistical methods, and examination of sex offenders compared to multiple comparison groups, including drug offenders and non-violent offenders.

While the research was methodologically better than most other research examined for this report, it was still problematic in terms of its external validity. The results cannot be extrapolated beyond Indiana or the time under study. Moreover, despite the use of a very large sample (6,561 offenders),

the authors did not state if their sample was a random sample or how they selected the population. Thus, it seems likely that the results cannot be generalized beyond the subjects in the sample to other offenders in Indiana during the time of the study.

### 6.15. Experiences and Attitudes of Registered Female Sex Offenders

Tewksbury, Richard. "Experiences and Attitudes of Registered Female Sex Offenders." *Federal Probation* 68, no. 3 (2004): 30–33. [https://www.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/fed\\_probation\\_dec\\_2004.pdf](https://www.uscourts.gov/sites/default/files/fed_probation_dec_2004.pdf).

- **Author Affiliation(s):** Tewksbury (University of Louisville)
- **Intent:** The study examined how SORN policies "have created unintended and potentially serious collateral consequences for convicted sex offenders, with a special focus on female sex offenders."<sup>36</sup>
- **Methodology:** A mail survey of 40 female RSOs in Indiana and Kentucky.
- **Claimed Impacts: Employment** — The study reported that 42 percent of the study participants have lost a job because of their registration status.
- **Claimed Impacts: Physical and Psychological Well-Being** — The survey reported that 40 percent of sample participants said that they have lost a friendship when the friend found out the respondent was on the registry. Thirty-four percent of the sample have been harassed in person and 11 percent had been assaulted because of their registration status.
- **Objectivity Score: 4** — FRD could not assess the funding source of the research because it was not disclosed in the article.
- **Statistical Integrity: 1** — There were concerns with the study's external validity because of the use of non-random sampling and non-response bias caused by a low response rate to the survey. With regard to non-random sampling, the author mailed survey questionnaires to all 227 females on sex offender registries in Indiana and Kentucky as of May 2004, rather than using a random sampling method to select a sample of those 227 persons to contact. The author received completed, useable surveys from 40 of the 227 individuals contacted, yielding a response rate of 20.5 percent and introducing non-response bias into the statistics based on the sample. In addition, the article mentions no use of statistical methods to address the low response rate, such as the use of a stratified random sample and post-survey weighting.

Moreover, there are concerns with the study's statistical conclusion validity because of a misuse of statistical methods, specifically, the calculation of means for ordinal variables. Statistical conclusion validity is also compromised by the absence of variation in the independent variable — sex offense registration — and by uncontrolled covariates.

### 6.16. Collateral Consequences of Sex Offender Registration

Tewksbury, Richard. "Collateral Consequences of Sex Offender Registration." *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 21, no. 1 (2005): 67–81. doi: 10.1177/1043986204271704.

- **Author Affiliation(s):** Tewksbury (University of Louisville)
- **Intent:** The author states that his research is "one of the first examinations of the collateral consequences of sex offender registration from the perspective of the offender."<sup>37</sup>

- **Methodology:** A mail survey of 121 RSOs in Kentucky.
- **Claimed Impacts:** *Physical and Psychological Well-Being* — The study reports that 55 percent of the sample have lost a friend who found out that the respondent is on the registry, 47 percent have been harassed in person, and 16 percent have been assaulted because they are registered.
- **Objectivity Score: 3** — The research was funded in part by the Foundation for the Scientific Study of Sexuality, a nonprofit professional membership organization.
- **Statistical Integrity: 1** — In this article, there was a high non-response rate with no measures taken to address it (such as post-survey weighting), resulting in non-response bias. In addition, there was selection bias in the survey sample because the research participants are all registered sex offenders who, therefore, may be more likely to perceive sex offender registration as a major reason for adverse life experiences (e.g., job loss, rude treatment in public) than individuals who are not RSOs. The researcher also calculated means of ordinal data, which was a misuse of statistical methods. Finally, the researcher used random sampling but only sampled RSOs, effectively sampling on the study's response variable, problems experienced as a consequence of sex offender registration. All individuals in the sample were RSOs and they attributed their problematic, but common, life experiences to their sex offender registration.

### 6.17. Perceptions of Sex Offender Registration

Tewksbury, Richard, and Matthew Lees. "Perceptions of Sex Offender Registration: Collateral Consequences and Community Experiences." *Sociological Spectrum* 26, no. 3 (2006): 309–34. doi: 10.1080/02732170500524246.

- **Author Affiliation(s):** Tewksbury (University of Louisville)  
Lees (University of Louisville)
- **Intent:** The authors stated that their study "[sought] to provide insights and details about the experiences [of a] registered sex offender as they live in the community and manage their identities as not only convicted felons, but as publicly proclaimed sexual offenders."<sup>38</sup>
- **Methodology:** Qualitative interviews with 22 RSOs in Kentucky.
- **Claimed Impacts:** *Employment*— Some of the RSOs in the sample acknowledged that employers would not hire them simply because they have been convicted of a felony. Others stated that employers attach a greater degree of stigma to sex offenders than other offenders or perceive hiring them to be risky, particularly in outward-facing positions involving interactions with customers or the public.
- **Claimed Impacts:** *Physical and Psychological Well-Being* — Although the study did not provide quantitative data on harassment, the researchers addressed the topic, stating, "The fears of harassment [were] common among RSOs; however, almost without exception the fears and apprehensions of RSOs were unfounded, at least in the degree to which they anticipated harassment."<sup>39</sup>
- **Objectivity Score: 2** — FRD could not assess the funding source of the research because it was not disclosed in the article. The article contained multiple instances of expressly anti-SORN language.

- **Statistical Integrity: 1** — As in Tewksbury’s earlier studies, this study had a high non-response rate with no corresponding measures to compensate for it and a selection bias in the sample. Other issues with statistical conclusion validity included no control of covariates, such as including the demographic data collected for the study. In addition, there was no variation in the independent variable (sex offense registration). Because all subjects in the sample were RSOs, the problems the survey participants described (employment difficulties, relationship difficulties, etc.) were all attributed to sex offense registration. The study’s lack of a control group, such as individuals who are not RSOs, obviates valid conclusions about the association of sex offense registration and subsequent problems that individuals may experience. In addition, the authors stated that interview responses were coded, but they do not provide a measure of inter-rater reliability nor state if such a measure was calculated. A consequence of the lack of such a measure was that the coder’s (or coders’) interpretation(s) of survey responses may be neither objective nor valid.

### 6.18. Perceptions of Punishment

Tewksbury, Richard, and Matthew Lees. “Perceptions of Punishment: How Registered Sex Offenders View Registries.” *Crime & Delinquency* 53, no. 3 (2007): 380–407. doi: 10.1177/0011128706286915.

- **Author Affiliation(s):** Tewksbury (University of Louisville)  
Lees (University of Louisville)
- **Intent:** The goal of the study was to “identify perceptions RSOs have about the sex offender registry as a tool for public safety.”<sup>40</sup>
- **Methodology:** Qualitative interviews with 22 RSOs in Kentucky.
- **Claimed Impacts:** *Perceptions of SORN* — The study reported that the RSOs in the sample have a “generally positive” opinion of the existence of registries. However, most RSOs in the study believed that the registry was not effective at deterring re-offense. The study did not include quantitative data on these viewpoints.
- **Objectivity Score: 4** — FRD could not assess the funding source of the research because it was not disclosed in the article.
- **Statistical Integrity: 1** — This study received a score of 1 on FRD’s modified Maryland SMS because of several methodological problems. The results only applied to study participants, and not to other members of the population, because of the high non-response rate (with no corresponding measures to compensate for it), and there was selection bias in the sample. Additionally, there were statistical issues with the study: The authors did not control for covariates (including the demographic data collected for the study), there was no variation in the independent variable (sex offense registration), and the interview responses were coded but they did not provide a measure of inter-rater reliability.

## 6.19. Sex Offender Community Notification

Zevitz, Richard G., and Mary Ann Farkas. "Sex Offender Community Notification: Managing High Risk Criminals or Extracting Further Vengeance?" *Behavioral Sciences & the Law* 18, no. 2–3 (2000): 375–91. doi: 10.1002/1099-0798(200003/06)18:2/3<375::AID-BSL380>3.0.CO;2-N.

- **Author Affiliation(s):** Zevitz (Marquette University)  
Farkas (Marquette University)
- **Intent:** The research focused on "the social and psychological effects of community notification on sex offender reintegration within those communities where notification has occurred."<sup>41</sup>
- **Methodology:** Face-to-face interviews with 30 RSOs in Wisconsin whose experiences were solicited through open-ended questions.
- **Claimed Impacts: Employment** — The study reported that 57 percent of the people in the sample have lost a job because of registration and notification policies. This was a higher percentage than other studies found; however, this data was based on a small sample.
- **Claimed Impacts: Perceptions of SORN** — The study reported that RSOs in counseling generally did not think that SORN policies were "antitherapeutic," and some believed that SORN had helped them to take responsibility or to be more honest.<sup>42</sup> However, the study did not include quantitative data on these viewpoints.
- **Claimed Impacts: Physical and Psychological Well-Being** — The study reported that 77 percent of the people in the sample had been ostracized by neighbors or acquaintances, and the same number (77 percent) had experienced threats or harassment. However, only 3 percent of the sample had experienced a vigilante attack. Still, this data was based on a small sample of 30 individuals.
- **Objectivity Score: 3** — The article contained expressly anti-SORN language, and it framed registration and notification as "humiliating" and "disturbing."<sup>43</sup>
- **Statistical Integrity: 1** — This study had external validity issues in that non-random sampling was used to select interview participants. The 30 individuals interviewed for the study were 30 of 44 who consented to be interviewed and the authors did not provide evidence of how representative these individuals were of the population of individuals who have met community notification requirements. More significantly, when evaluating the relevance and importance of this research, it implied or stated that offenders' experiences with problems concerning employment, housing, and other matters were solely attributable to community notification requirements. However, the researchers did not perform a before-and-after comparison of the problems the interviewed sex offenders reportedly experienced (i.e., employment status or earnings before sex offense conviction and after satisfying community notification requirements), and they provided no case-control comparison of sex offenders to non-sex offenders (i.e., intergroup comparison of employment status, earnings). This research did not conclusively establish any relationship between SORN policies and employment or finance issues.



## 7. APPENDIX II: Assessment of Studies on Families of Adult Registered Sex Offenders

### 7.1. Nobody Worries about Our Children

Kilmer, Ashley, and Chrysanthi S. Leon. "‘Nobody Worries about Our Children’: Unseen Impacts of Sex Offender Registration on Families with School-Age Children and Implications for Desistance." *Criminal Justice Studies* 30, no. 2 (2017): 181–201. doi: 10.1080/1478601X.2017.1299852.

- **Author Affiliation(s):** Kilmer (Bridgewater State University)  
Leon (University of Delaware)
- **Intent:** The research “examined the way registrant family members made sense of current sex offender policies and laws (such as residency restrictions, registration requirements, and community notification) and the impact of such policies on family members in the areas of social/family relationships, employment, housing, and community involvement.”<sup>44</sup>
- **Methodology:** The study was based on interviews with 19 family members of registered sex offenders (RSOs) and written narrative data from 58 family members.
- **Claimed Impacts:** The study found that 73 percent of participating family members reported that sex offender registration and notification (SORN) requirements had impacted the employment of someone in their family, and 83 percent reported that SORN policies had impacted the housing of someone in their family. The authors noted that “these struggles were sometimes described as a result of post-conviction laws that restrict where registrants can live, but often because of the ‘extra-legal’ decisions made by landlords and employers, above and beyond what the law may require.”<sup>45</sup>
- **Objectivity Score: 1** — FRD could not assess the funding source of the research because it was not disclosed in the article. The study recruited participants through advocacy or support groups for families of RSOs. Individuals who chose to join these groups may not be representative of the general population of RSO families. For instance, they may have sought support or engaged in advocacy because they have had particularly negative experiences. The study may have been less likely to capture the experiences of families who had not experienced negative impacts because those individuals would have less motivation to join such groups. Therefore, the study only reflected the experiences of a particularly engaged and motivated subgroup of RSO families. Furthermore, the article used language that was highly critical of SORN policies. For instance, the title, “‘Nobody Worries about Our Children’: Unseen Impacts of Sex Offender Registration on Families with School-Age Children and Implications for Desistance,” is sensationalist and seems intended to persuade the reader that SORN policies are bad.
- **Statistical Integrity: 1** — The study suffered from a common error among many studies cited in this report: The analysis drew from a non-random sample, and it contained a sample bias because 41 of the 77 subjects in the sample were involved in advocacy work for sex offenders. In qualitative terms, the research did not use the comparative method to compare across cases or within cases, and it lacked variation in the independent and dependent variables. In quantitative terms, the research did not control for covariates and lacks variation in the predictor and response variables. There were also problems with an inappropriate use of statistical methods because the authors provided no measure of inter-coder reliability for their qualitative coding.

## 7.2. Collateral Damage

Levenson, Jill S., and Richard Tewksbury. "Collateral Damage: Family Members of Registered Sex Offenders." *American Journal of Criminal Justice* 34, no. 1–2 (2009): 54–68. doi: 10.1007/s12103-008-9055-x.

- **Author Affiliation(s):** Levenson (Lynn University)  
Tewksbury (University of Louisville)
- **Intent:** The authors stated that the purpose of their research was to "better understand the impact of sex offender registration and notification laws on the family members of registered sex offenders."<sup>46</sup>
- **Methodology:** An online survey of 584 family members of RSOs recruited from all 50 states.
- **Claimed Impacts:** The study found that 53 percent of adult family members reported that the family had experienced financial hardship because the RSO had lost a job, and 82 percent reported that the family had experienced financial hardship because the RSO had a hard time finding a job. Seven percent of family members reported experiencing assault or injury as a result of their relationship with an RSO, 27 percent had experienced malicious property damage, and 44 percent had experienced harassment or threats. More than half of the respondents perceived that the children of RSOs were treated differently by their peers at school (58 percent) or by adults, such as neighbors and teachers (63 percent). Respondents believed that the parents of these children's friends may restrict their children from playing with an RSO's child at their own house (56 percent) or at the house of an RSO's child (70 percent). Family members reported that the children of RSOs showed psychosocial effects, such as anger (80 percent), depression (77 percent), anxiety (73 percent), and feeling left out (65 percent).
- **Objectivity Score: 1** — FRD could not assess the funding source of the research because it was not disclosed in the article. Study participants were recruited from advocacy and support groups for the families of RSOs. The members of these groups do not necessarily have the same experiences or opinions as family members who do not feel motivated to seek out activism or support groups, and therefore the results did not necessarily portray the full range of experiences that family members may have. Furthermore, the article employed sensationalist and unobjective language in the title of their study, "Collateral Damage: Family Members of Registered Sex Offenders," and they appeared to be biased against the Adam Walsh Act, having referred to it as "well-intentioned but misguided."<sup>47</sup>
- **Statistical Integrity: 1** — The authors of this study used non-random sampling, estimated the survey response rate, and made no efforts to compensate for the low response rate. Moreover, the predictor variables did not vary, as all of the sample participants were family members of RSOs, and other covariates were not tested. In addition, there was no variation in the independent variable (sex offender registration) nor any control group, such as family members of individuals who were not RSOs. Consequently, there are some doubts about being a family member of an RSO as a sole or major cause of the consequences attributed to being a family member of an RSO. The authors also incorrectly performed variable selection for regression. Thus, it is unclear if the selected variables under- or over-fit the data and have higher variance than other variable subsets.

### 7.3. Stress Experiences of Family Members of Registered Sex Offenders

Tewksbury, Richard, and Jill S. Levenson. "Stress Experiences of Family Members of Registered Sex Offenders." *Behavioral Sciences & the Law* 27, no. 4 (2009): 611–26. doi: 10.1002/bsl.878.

- **Author Affiliation(s):** Tewksbury (University of Louisville)  
Levenson (Lynn University)
- **Intent:** The authors stated that their goal was "to assess the ways in which SORN impact[ed] family members of RSOs psychologically, socially, and practically, with a focus on their perceived levels of stress."<sup>48</sup>
- **Methodology:** An online survey of 584 family members of RSOs. The study examined the impacts of both SORN policies and residency restrictions on RSO family members.
- **Claimed Impacts:** The study reported that 68 percent of family members agreed with the statement that SORN caused stress in their lives "very often," and 33 percent of family members reported that they "very often" feel afraid for their safety because of SORN requirements. Thirty-one percent of family members have moved because of residency restrictions or pressure from the community.
- **Objectivity Score: 2** — FRD could not assess the funding source of the research because it was not disclosed in the article. Moreover, the study recruited participants from advocacy and support groups for sex offenders' families. The individuals who chose to join these groups do not necessarily have the same characteristics as the general population of sex offenders' families. Furthermore, the article adopted a critical tone toward SORN policies.
- **Statistical Integrity: 1** — The study used non-random sampling. The authors estimated the survey response rate and did not take efforts to compensate for the low response rate, resulting in non-response bias. Additionally, there were several concerns with the study's use of statistical methods, including uncontrolled covariates (the predictor variables did not vary, as all of the participants in the sample were family members of RSOs, and other covariates were not tested) and no variation in the independent variable (sex offender registration).

## 8. APPENDIX III: Assessment of Studies on Juvenile Registered Sex Offenders

### 8.1. Family Experiences of Young Adult Sex Offender Registration

Comartin, Erin B., Poco D. Kernsmith, and Bart W. Miles. "Family Experiences of Young Adult Sex Offender Registration." *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse* 19, no. 2 (2010): 204–25. doi: 10.1080/10538711003627207.

- **Author Affiliation(s):** Comartin (Wayne State University)  
Kernsmith (Wayne State University)  
Miles (Wayne State University)
- **Intent:** The purpose of the study was to "examine the impacts on families of having a child placed on the sex offender registry."<sup>49</sup>
- **Methodology:** A focus group, consisting of four women whose sons were juvenile sex offenders in Michigan, gathered qualitative data on the economic, physical, psychological, and social impacts of registration on the family.
- **Claimed Impacts:** The study reported that the parents of juvenile registered sex offenders (RSOs) described challenges their sons have finding employment and housing, and the resulting financial instability they experienced. The parents described emotional impacts for themselves, the juvenile sex offender, or other members of the family. The emotional impacts to the offender included low self-esteem due to a lack of opportunities, stigmatization, and shame from being labeled as a sex offender.
- **Objectivity Score: 3** — FRD could not assess the funding source of the research because it was not disclosed in the article. The study recruited participants from advocacy and support groups for sex offenders or their families. The individuals who joined these groups may not have been representative of the general population of juvenile sex offenders' families, and they may have had disproportionately negative experiences with sex offender registration. The article did not provide a balanced assessment of sex offender registration and notification (SORN) policies: It discussed the possible negative consequences of SORN laws without mentioning possible positive impacts.
- **Statistical Integrity: 1** — The study had issues with internal and external validity as well as statistical conclusion validity. Its conclusions were limited by the use of non-random sampling, selection bias in sampling, and an extremely small sample (this study was based on information from interviews of four families). For these reasons, these study participants could be compared to other populations.

### 8.2. The Relationship between Juvenile Sex Offender Registration and Depression in Adulthood

Denniston, Sharon E. "The Relationship between Juvenile Sex Offender Registration and Depression in Adulthood." PhD diss., Walden University, 2016. <https://scholarworks.waldenu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2986&context=dissertations>.

- **Author Affiliation(s):** Denniston (Wayne State University)

- **Intent:** The aim of the research was to “gain a more comprehensive understanding of the effects of sex offender registration policy by exploring, using quantitative comparative analysis methods, whether a relationship exists between juvenile sex offender registration and latent depression in current and former registrants who have matured into adulthood, and whether there is a persistent effect to this relationship.”<sup>50</sup>
- **Methodology:** A survey of 165 adults between the ages of 21 and 39, including 36 participants currently registered for a juvenile offense, 23 formerly registered for a juvenile offense, and 106 who never had to register. The study did not state whether the 106 participants in the control group had a history of criminal convictions or problematic sexual behavior, traits shared by all the participants in the other two study groups.
- **Claimed Impacts:** The study reported that current registration for an offense committed as a juvenile was a predictor of increased severity of depression compared to previous registration status or individuals who never had to register. Additionally, the study reported that suicidal ideation was common in offenders who were currently registered. Interestingly, those who were on a nonpublic registry had a higher incidence of depression than those who were on a public registry. The study found that increased dependence on another person for housing predicts increased depression. However, other factors, such as age of registration, number of years registered, adjudication in the adult or juvenile justice system, felony or misdemeanor conviction, Tier III registration status (which requires registration for at least 25 years with quarterly verification of registration information), or the presence of a subsequent registerable offense did not lead to increased depression.
- **Objectivity Score: 3** — The study recruited participants from advocacy and support groups, and these individuals’ experiences may not have been representative of experiences in the broader population of juvenile sex offenders. Furthermore, there was a lack of objective language throughout the article regarding juvenile SORN policies. For instance, these policies were referred to as “increasingly harsh and adult-like.”<sup>51</sup>
- **Statistical Integrity: 1** — As with nearly all studies examined for this report, the researcher used non-random sampling. In addition, the author’s discussion of her regression analysis suggested misunderstandings of the method. When discussing sampling, the author states that her thesis uses a non-probability sample and does not represent the sampling population.

### 8.3. Collateral Consequences of Juvenile Sex Offender Registration and Notification

Harris, Andrew J., Scott M. Walfield, Ryan T. Shields, and Elizabeth J. Letourneau. “Collateral Consequences of Juvenile Sex Offender Registration and Notification: Results from a Survey of Treatment Providers.” *Sexual Abuse* 28, no. 8 (2016): 770–90. doi: 10.1177/1079063215574004.

- **Author Affiliation(s):** Harris (University of Massachusetts Lowell)  
Walfield (East Carolina University)  
Shields (JHU Bloomberg School of Public Health)  
Letourneau (JHU Bloomberg School of Public Health)
- **Intent:** The study “examined the collateral impacts of JSO [juvenile sex offender] registration and notification by eliciting the insights and perspectives of treatment providers who work with juveniles with problem sexual behavior.”<sup>52</sup>

- **Methodology:** A national survey of 265 treatment providers who supplied services to youth with problematic sexual behavior, including youth who have sexually offended. In this study, respondents were prompted to agree, neither agree nor disagree, or disagree with a series of survey items to “indicate the extent to which you believe that requiring youth to [register with law enforcement/disclose their sex offender status] might have the noted effect in comparison with youth not required to register.”<sup>53</sup> The use of the words “believe” and “might” in the survey prompt indicated that study participants were being asked to use their professional experience to speculate on the likelihood of hypothetical SORN impacts, rather than report effects they have actually observed in their clients. However, the study did not make this distinction clear in its discussion of the findings.
- **Claimed Impacts:** The study reported that 54 percent of the treatment providers surveyed believed that juveniles subject to notification might be less likely to be in school, and that most treatment providers felt that juveniles subject to notification might be more likely to have changed caregivers (66 percent) or move (61 percent) than other juveniles. The study reported that 85 percent of treatment providers believed that juveniles subject to notification might be afraid for their own safety.
- **Objectivity Score: 3** — Funding for this project was partially provided through a grant from Open Society Foundations, a philanthropic organization with a policy perspective.
- **Statistical Integrity: 1** — The authors discussed their efforts to increase the sample size of surveyed sex offender treatment providers through the use of “snowball sampling,” a non-random sampling technique in which researchers asked interviewees or survey respondents to suggest additional individuals for inclusion in the research. While this technique is frequently used when interviewing hard-to-locate individuals (e.g., drug users and undocumented migrants), it introduced potential bias into the research as subjects may refer researchers to other subjects whom they believe share their views on the research topic. Moreover, it was a non-random sampling method, thus the survey’s results could not be extrapolated to subjects outside the sample. Also, the survey’s response rate was not stated, introducing the possibility of non-response bias. Moreover, the authors did not control covariates or otherwise attempt to rule out alternative explanations for the problems that juvenile RSOs experience. The authors discussed the use of linear regression, a statistical technique frequently used to assess associations between variables. However, the paper contained no results from this effort, only stating that the results were statistically insignificant.

#### 8.4. Effects of Juvenile Sex Offender Registration on Adolescent Well-Being

Letourneau, Elizabeth J., Andrew J. Harris, Ryan T. Shields, Scott M. Walfield, Amanda E. Ruzicka, Cierra Buckman, Geoffrey D. Kahn, and Reshmi Nair. “Effects of Juvenile Sex Offender Registration on Adolescent Well-Being: An Empirical Examination.” *Psychology, Public Policy, and Law* 24, no. 1 (2018): 105–17. doi: 10.1037/law0000155.

- **Author Affiliation(s):** Letourneau (JHU Bloomberg School of Public Health)  
Harris (University of Massachusetts Lowell)  
Shields (University of Massachusetts Lowell)  
Walfield (East Carolina University)  
Ruzicka (JHU Bloomberg School of Public Health)  
Buckman (JHU Bloomberg School of Public Health)

Kahn (JHU Bloomberg School of Public Health)  
Nair (JHU Bloomberg School of Public Health)

- **Intent:** The authors stated that the study was “the first to compare registered and nonregistered children on several key domains in an effort to evaluate the unintended consequences of juvenile registration and notification.”<sup>54</sup>
- **Methodology:** A survey of 251 boys who were receiving treatment services for inappropriate or harmful sexual behavior, and who were recruited through treatment providers. The study participants ranged in age from 12 to 17, and 29 percent of them were currently at the time, or had been formerly, registered.
- **Claimed Impacts:** The study reported that registered juveniles perceived themselves to be less safe than non-registered juveniles, and they had more peer-relationship problems and more experiences with relational violence. The study found that registered juveniles were almost twice as likely as non-registered juveniles to have experienced sexual assault in the past year and five times as likely to have been approached for sex by an adult in the last year. Registered juveniles were four times as likely as non-registered juveniles to have attempted suicide in the past 30 days. However, registered juveniles perceived themselves to have significantly higher levels of social support than non-registered juveniles.
- **Objectivity Score: 2** — The study received funding from the Annie E. Casey Foundation and Open Society Foundations Criminal Justice Fund. It used language that indicated a bias against current sex offender policy, such as referring to juvenile SORN policies as “failed” and “flawed.”<sup>55</sup>
- **Statistical Integrity: 1** — The research was based on a non-random sample and contains sample bias, because the sample included only juveniles in therapy. Although the authors acknowledged the limitation, anyone referencing this study should be aware that the research did not control for many covariates, thus association (including causation) between sex offense registration and other outcomes could not be reliably estimated.

## 8.5. Raised on the Registry

Pittman, Nicole. *Raised on the Registry: The Irreparable Harm of Placing Children on Sex Offender Registries in the U.S.* New York: Human Rights Watch, 2013. [https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/us0513\\_ForUpload\\_1.pdf](https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/us0513_ForUpload_1.pdf).

- **Intent:** The study aimed “to better understand what it means to be a youth offender raised on the registry.”<sup>56</sup>
- **Methodology:** An investigation of 517 cases of juvenile sex offenders in 20 states. The study was based on semi-structured interviews with 281 RSOs who were juveniles at the time of their offenses (subjects ranged in age from 14 to 48 at the time of the interview). Additional interviews were conducted with academic experts, RSOs’ family members, defense attorneys, judges, juvenile justice advocates, mental health professionals, prosecutors, and victims of juvenile sex offenders.
- **Claimed Impacts:** Of 296 cases of RSOs who had registered because of an offense committed as a juvenile, more than 44 percent state that they had “at least one period of homelessness” as a result of state or local residency restrictions, and that 52 percent of RSOs reported that they or their family members had experienced violence or the threat of violence because of their registration status.

Seventy-seven percent of RSOs in the sample claimed that registration had impacted their family in various ways, including effects on their family's finances, housing, or relationships with one another.

- **Objectivity Score: 1** — The study was funded by Human Rights Watch, an organization that advocates against the registration of juvenile sex offenders.<sup>57</sup> It used language that was biased against current sex offender policy and made clear statements advocating for policy change. In part, the advocacy for changes to SORN policy was made clear by the title of the report, "Raised on the Registry: The Irreparable Harm of Placing Children on Sex Offender Registries in the U.S." Subheadings within the report include "A Policy Based on a Misconception," "Onerous Restrictions," "Faulty Assumptions about Youth Sex Offenders," and "An Overbroad Policy of Questionable Effectiveness," all of which underlined an opposition to current juvenile SORN policies.
- **Statistical Integrity: 1** — The use of chain-referral sampling resulted in selection bias in the sample, which the author acknowledged. The findings were largely based on self-reported data of interviewees' experiences and their attribution of those experiences to their registration status; the analysis did not extend to alternative explanations. In addition, the analysis did not include a control group; the sample only included offenders who had been subject to registration requirements and excluded offenders who had not been subject to those requirements. The report used anecdotal evidence to support arguments, and it frequently comingled interview findings that were related to sex offender registries with findings that were unrelated or were questionably related, such as vigilante and extrajudicial measures undertaken by citizens, companies, or the police. Moreover, the findings applied only to the individuals in the sample and could not be reliably extrapolated to individuals outside of the sample because the sample was not selected at random. In addition, the publication did not provide the form or questions the researcher used in the semi-structured interviews, making it difficult to assess the results. The report did state that all documents it cited are either publicly available or on file with Human Rights Watch.



## 9. APPENDIX IV: Analysis of Statistical Integrity

As noted in Section 3, “FRD Research Methodology,” the Federal Research Division’s analysis included a statistical component to evaluate each of the 27 research studies referenced in this report. This evaluation used the five-point Maryland Scientific Methods Scale (SMS) to assess the **internal validity** of the reported research methods.<sup>58</sup> In statistical and other research, internal validity describes the truth or falsity of any causal relationships cited by the researchers.<sup>59</sup> To have a study that is internally valid, the research must, at a minimum, include the following:

- An experimental condition to estimate what happens to research subjects when a treatment is applied to them, such as sex offense registration;
- A control condition to estimate what happens to research subjects when the treatment is not applied to them, such as not being registered as a sex offender; and
- Measurements of the hypothesized outcomes in both groups before and after the treatment is applied, such as measures of employment before and after individuals in the experimental group register as sex offenders.

In line with the Maryland SMS, FRD rated the publications’ statistical methods on a scale of 1 to 5, with higher numbers indicating the use of research methods more likely to yield internally valid findings. The Maryland SMS levels and criteria are as follows:

- Level 1: The research design states that one variable is associated with another at a point in time, but does not specify which variable precedes the other (e.g., “Individuals who are registered sex offenders [RSOs] are less likely to have full-time employment than those who are not RSOs”).
- Level 2: The research design measures an outcome before and after a treatment, but does not include a control condition (e.g., “After registration, sex offenders were likely to lose full-time employment”).
- Level 3: The research design measures an outcome before and after the treatment in experiment and control groups (e.g., “After registration, sex offenders were more likely to lose full-time employment than individuals who were not RSOs”). Oft-cited literature on research design describes Level 3 as the minimum for drawing valid conclusions about associations between variables.
- Level 4: The research design measures an outcome before and after the treatment in multiple experiment and control groups, controlling for other variables that influence the outcome (e.g., “After registration, sex offenders were more likely to lose full-time employment than individuals who were not RSOs, controlling for age, educational attainment, and race”).

- Level 5: The research design includes randomized experiment and control groups with reports of pre-existing characteristics for both (e.g., "Individuals who were sex offenders were randomly selected to register as such (experiment group) or not (control group); the design also included randomly selected individuals who were convicted of another felony and those who had never been convicted of a felony. All possible covariates were controlled, including age, educational attainment, gender, geographic region, industry of employment, and race"). A Level 5 research design is regarded as the veritable gold standard to produce valid cause-and-effect findings. However, it is relatively uncommon in many research fields, due in no small part to the legal and ethical considerations that exclude the use of humans in many social science experiments.

In addition to internal validity, FRD rated all of the research studies on construct validity, external validity, and statistical conclusion validity.

**Construct validity** refers to a research design's inclusion of reliable and valid measures of the variables. For example, unemployment is a variable and the unemployment rate repeatedly measures it, making the rate a reliable and valid measure. As with the Maryland SMS, FRD deducted a single point for studies if they did not include such measures in their research designs.

**External validity** is the extent to which the research findings can be applied to other people, places, times, and outcomes. For example, the results from a study of juvenile drug use in Manhattan during the 1980s may depend greatly on a combination of factors not frequently found outside that time and place. Similarly, findings from research based on non-random samples of people may reflect some particular trait of those individuals. (Note: This is one measure FRD evaluated that the Maryland SMS does not.)

A single point was deducted from a study for each of the following criteria it did not satisfy:

- Having sample, setting, and temporal characteristics that are neither unique nor so specific that they are not generalizable to other peoples, places, and times;
- Having a response rate that would not bias the sample (using 80 percent as a rule of thumb) or for having differential attrition in comparison groups; and
- Using a random sampling method to select research subjects if the study included a survey.

**Statistical conclusion validity** is the measure of whether one variable and another are related and how strong that relationship is. If, for example, a study of 20 athletes' change in running speed after using a high-intensity interval training method finds no significant increase in speed, the reason may be that the study's use of a small sample limited its capacity to detect significant changes (in statistical jargon, the study would have "low statistical power"). Other factors that can affect statistical conclusion validity are low response rates (in the case of surveys) and the misuse of statistical techniques.

A single point was deducted from a study for each of the following criteria it did not satisfy:

- Using appropriate statistical analyses, and
- Using a sufficiently large sample to support those analyses.

Table 7 highlights the internal validity (IV), construct validity (CV), external validity (EV), and statistical conclusion validity (SCV) for each of the research studies referenced in this report. It also includes the final score for each study. Like the Maryland SMS, if a study loses points based on these measures, the lowest score it can receive is a 1.

**Table 7. Statistical Validity Scores**

<b>Author (Pub. Date)</b>	<b>Article Title</b>	<b>IV</b>	<b>CV</b>	<b>EV</b>	<b>SCV</b>	<b>Final Score</b>
Ackerman, Sacks, and Osier (2013)	The Experiences of Registered Sex Offenders with Internet Offender Registries in Three States	2	0	-2	-1	1
Brannon et al. (2007)	Attitudes about Community Notification: A Comparison of Sexual Offenders and the Non-Offending Public	2	0	-1	-1	1
Comartin, Kernsmith, and Miles (2010)	Family Experiences of Young Adult Sex Offender Registration	2	0	-2	-1	1
Denniston (2016)	The Relationship between Juvenile Sex Offender Registration and Depression in Adulthood	2	0	-1	-2	1
Evans and Porter (2015)	Criminal History and Landlord Rental Decisions: A New York Quasi-Experimental Study	2	0	-1	-3	1
Frenzel et al. (2014)	Understanding Collateral Consequences of Registry Laws: An Examination of the Perceptions of Sex Offender Registrants	2	0	-2	0	1
GAO (2013)	Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act: Jurisdictions Face Challenges to Implementing the Act, and Stakeholders Report Positive and Negative Effects	2	0	0	0	2
Harris et al. (2016)	Collateral Consequences of Juvenile Sex Offender Registration and Notification: Results from a Survey of Treatment Providers	2	0	-2	-1	1
Jennings, Zgoba, and Tewksbury (2012)	A Comparative Longitudinal Analysis of Recidivism Trajectories and Collateral Consequences for Sex and Non-Sex Offenders Released Since the Implementation of Sex Offender Registration and Community Notification	3	0	-1	-1	1
Kilmer and Leon (2017)	'Nobody Worries about Our Children': Unseen Impacts of Sex Offender Registration on Families with School-Age Children and Implications for Desistance	2	0	-2	-1	1

<b>Author (Pub. Date)</b>	<b>Article Title</b>	<b>IV</b>	<b>CV</b>	<b>EV</b>	<b>SCV</b>	<b>Final Score</b>
Letourneau et al. (2018)	Effects of Juvenile Sex Offender Registration on Adolescent Well-Being: An Empirical Examination	2	0	-2	--2	1
Levenson and Cotter (Feb. 2005)	The Effect of Megan's Law on Sex Offender Reintegration	2	0	-1	-3	1
Levenson and Cotter (Apr. 2005)	The Impact of Sex Offender Residence Restrictions: 1,000 Feet from Danger or One Step from Absurd?	2	0	-1	-3	1
Levenson and Hern (2007)	Sex Offender Residence Restrictions: Unintended Consequences and Community Reentry	2	0	-1	-3	1
Levenson and Tewksbury (2009)	Collateral Damage: Family Members of Registered Sex Offenders	2	0	-2	-1	1
Levenson et al. (2015)	Where for Art Thou?: Transient Sex Offenders and Residence Restrictions	2	0	-1	-1	1
Mercado, Alvarez, and Levenson (2008)	The Impact of Specialized Sex Offender Legislation on Community Reentry	2	0	-2	-3	1
Mustaine and Tewksbury (2011)	Assessing Informal Social Control against the Highly Stigmatized	2	0	-1	-1	1
Mustaine, Tewksbury, and Stengel (2006)	Residential Location and Mobility of Registered Sex Offenders	2	0	-1	-1	1
Nally et al. (2014)	Post-Release Recidivism and Employment among Different Types of Released Offenders: A 5-Year Follow-Up Study in the United States	3	0	-1	-0	2
Pittman (2013)	Raised on the Registry: The Irreparable Harm of Placing Children on Sex Offender Registries in the U.S.	2	0	-1	-1	1
Tewksbury (2004)	Experiences and Attitudes of Registered Female Sex Offenders	2	0	-2	-2	1
Tewksbury (2005)	Collateral Consequences of Sex Offender Registration	2	0	-1	-1	1
Tewksbury and Lees (2006)	Perceptions of Sex Offender Registration: Collateral Consequences and Community Experiences	2	0	-2	-3	1
Tewksbury and Lees (2007)	Perceptions of Punishment: How Registered Sex Offenders View Registries	2	0	-2	-3	1
Tewksbury and Levenson (2009)	Stress Experiences of Family Members of Registered Sex Offenders	2	0	-2	-3	1
Zevitz and Farkas (2000)	Sex Offender Community Notification: Managing High Risk Criminals or Extracting Further Vengeance?	2	0	-2	-1	1

## 10. APPENDIX V: Researcher and Publication Details

Table 8 lists the titles, affiliations, and numbers of studies authored or co-authored in relation to the researchers of the 27 studies evaluated in this report. The position or title of the researchers listed and the university or other organization is correct, as far as the Federal Research Division (FRD) could ascertain, at the time when the works reviewed in this report were published.

**Table 8. Researcher Titles, Affiliations, and Studies Authored and Co-Authored**

Name	Position/Title	Affiliation	# of Studies, Lead Author	# of Studies, Co-Authored
Alissa R. Ackerman	Assistant professor of social work	U. of Washington Tacoma	1	1
Shea Alvarez	Doctoral student	City U. of New York (CUNY) John Jay College of Criminal Justice	—	1
Juanita N. Baker	Professor of psychology	Florida Institute of Technology	—	1
Kendra N. Bowen	Associate professor of criminal justice	Texas Christian U.	—	1
James H. Bowers	Associate professor of criminal justice	Saginaw Valley State U.	—	1
Yolanda Nicole Brannon	Doctoral student	Florida Institute of Technology	1	—
Cierra Buckman	Senior research coordinator, Moore Centre for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse	Johns Hopkins U. (JHU) Bloomberg School of Public Health	—	1
Erin B. Comartin	Doctoral student	Wayne State U.	1	—
Leo P. Cotter	Director	S.H.A.R.E. (Sexual Health: Awareness* Rehabilitation*Education)	—	2
Sharon E. Denniston	Doctoral student	Wayne State U.	1	—
Douglas N. Evans	Adjunct assistant professor and senior investigator of sociology	CUNY John Jay College of Criminal Justice; Mercy College	1	—
Mary Ann Farkas	Professor of social & cultural sciences	Marquette U.	—	1
Timothy Fortney	School of Psychology	Florida Institute of Technology	—	1

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position/Title</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b># of Studies, Lead Author</b>	<b># of Studies, Co-Authored</b>
Erika Davis Frenzel	Professor of criminology and criminal justice	Indiana U. of Pennsylvania	1	—
Andrew J. Harris	Professor of criminology and criminal justice	U. of Massachusetts Lowell	1	2
Andrea L. Hern	Director	Indiana Sex Offender Monitoring and Management Program	—	1
Taiping Ho	Professor of criminal justice and criminology	Ball State U.	—	1
Wesley G. Jennings	Associate professor of criminology	U. of South Florida	1	—
Geoffrey D. Kahn	Professor of bioethics and public policy	JHU Bloomberg School of Public Health	—	1
Poco D. Kernsmith	Professor of social work	Wayne State U.	—	1
Ashley Kilmer	Assistant professor of criminal justice	Bridgewater State U.	1	—
Katie Knutson	Senior consultant	Public Consulting Group	—	1
Matthew Lees	Graduate student	U. of Louisville	—	2
Chrysanthi S. Leon	Associate professor of sociology	U. of Delaware	—	1
Elizabeth J. Letourneau	Director, Moore Center for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse	JHU Bloomberg School of Public Health	1	1
Jill S. Levenson	Assistant professor and human services department chair; Associate professor of psychology and social sciences; Professor of social work	Lynn U.; Barry U.	5	3
Susan Lockwood	Director of juvenile education	Division of Youth Services, Indiana Dept. of Correction	—	1
Cynthia Calkins Mercado	Associate professor of psychology	CUNY John Jay College of Criminal Justice	1	—
Bart W. Miles	Assistant professor of social work	Wayne State U.	—	1
Elizabeth Ehrhardt Mustaine	Professor of sociology	U. of Central Florida	2	—

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position/Title</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b># of Studies, Lead Author</b>	<b># of Studies, Co-Author</b>
Reshmi Nair	Assistant scientist	JHU Bloomberg School of Public Health	—	1
John M. Nally	Director, Department of Education	Indiana Dept. of Correction	1	—
Lindsay N. Osier	Department of Criminal Justice	U. of Washington Tacoma	—	1
Shannon Phaneuf	Professor of criminology and criminal justice	Indiana U. of Pennsylvania	—	1
Nicole Pittman	Soros Senior Justice Advocacy Fellow	Human Rights Watch	1	—
Jeremy R. Porter	Professor of sociology	CUNY Brooklyn College	—	1
Amanda E. Ruzicka	Research associate	JHU Bloomberg School of Public Health	—	1
Meghan Sacks	Associate professor of criminology	Fairleigh Dickinson U.	—	1
Ryan T. Shields	Assistant scientist; assistant professor of criminology and justice studies	JHU Bloomberg School of Public Health; U. of Massachusetts Lowell	—	2
Kelly M. Socia	Associate professor of criminology and justice studies	U. of Massachusetts Lowell	—	1
Jason D. Spraitz	Associate professor of criminal justice	U. of Washington Eau Claire	—	1
Kenneth M. Stengel	Graduate student	U. of Louisville	—	1
Richard Tewksbury	Professor of justice administration	U. of Louisville	5	4
Scott M. Walfield	Assistant professor of criminal justice	East Carolina U.	—	2
Richard G. Zevitz	Professor of criminal justice	Marquette U.	1	—
Kristen M. Zgoba	Supervisor, Research and Evaluation Unit	New Jersey Dept. of Corrections	—	1

It might have been expected that articles on a specialized topic, such as the impacts of sex offender registration and notification policies on registered sex offenders, would be found concentrated in a small number of journals. As table 9 shows, however, that is not the case with the studies FRD reviewed for this report: the 27 articles critiqued are published by 20 different journals.

**Table 9. Journal Names and Numbers of Studies Published**

<b>Journal Name</b>	<b># of Studies Published</b>
American Journal of Criminal Justice	2
Behavioral Sciences & the Law	2
Crime & Delinquency	1
Criminal Justice Policy Review	1
Criminal Justice Studies	1
Deviant Behavior	1
Federal Probation	1
International Journal of Criminal Justice Sciences	1
International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology	1
Journal of Child Sexual Abuse	1
Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice	2
Journal of Crime and Justice	1
Journal of Experimental Criminology	1
Journal of Offender Rehabilitation	1
Justice Policy Journal	1
Justice Research and Policy	1
Psychology, Public Policy, and Law	1
Sex Abuse	1
Sexual Abuse	2
Sociological Spectrum	1



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