Sex Offender Registration Notification (SORN)

Summaries of Research

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General Information


Sought to determine what content is available on sex offender registries has changed over the past eight years since Tewksbury and Higgins (2005) research. An examination of 51 U.S. state and District of Columbia sex offender registries were conducted and supplemented by the National Institute of Corrections/Washing College of Law, Fifty State Survey of Sex Offender Registration Requirements and determined that a significant amount of changes have occurred in the amount of information offered for each offender and methods to search for an offender. The most common types of information found on sex offender registries included photograph (100%), home address (98%), age/DOB (98%), race (98%), conviction offense (98%), whereas the least common information were offense description (2%), length of sentence (14%), employer (18%), and date of release from confinement (29%). Every registry maintained at least one search method with nearly all state registries able to search by the registrant’s name (98%), city (92%), and zip code (88%). Notably, the largest change in information from Tewksbury and Higgins (2005) research was map of the registrant’s residence which increased from 10% to 57%.

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Sought to determine what content is available on sex offender registries. An examination of 40 U.S. state sex offender registries were conducted where it was uncovered that each state registry greatly differed in amount of information offered, in which some registries maintained two types of information up to 18. The most common types of information found on sex offender registries included conviction offense (97.4%), photograph (89.7%), home address (84.6%), race (84.6%), and age/DOB (82.1%), whereas the least common information were vehicle description or license no. (7.7%), employer (10.3%), and school attended, if a student (10.3%). When broken down into regions (Northeast, Midwest, South, and West) and assessed for the greatest amount of information, Northeastern states offered the greatest amount of information, followed by Southern states, then Midwestern states, and Western states. Midwestern states offered the greatest number of methods to search for registered sex offenders followed by Southern states, Northeastern states, and Western states.

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Examined the accuracy and completeness of the information of Kentucky’s sex offender online registry. A total of 537 registered sex offenders from 14 of the 120 U.S. counties within Kentucky was collected on July 4th, 2001 along with the offender’s gender, race, county of residence, registration year, length of required registration (life or 10 years), photograph, and the individual’s address, as well as address, which was either confirmed on the Jefferson County Property Valuation Administrator and/or through physical inspection. In regards of listed addresses, less than three-quarters (73.7%) of urban RSOs listed a true address in the registry, though RSOs without a listed address were typically less serious offenders with 10-year registration periods, but lifetime registrants (65%) were less likely to report a real address than 10-year registrants (71%), urban RSOs without a listed address were less likely to have a photograph (51.3%) compared to rural RSOs (60%), white RSOs (85.6%) are more likely to report an address than non-White RSOs (81.5%), In regards of photographs, more than one-half (57%) maintained a photograph where urban residents (63.8) were more likely to have a photograph than rural residents (41.5%), White RSOs (52.9%) were less likely to have a photograph compared to non-Whites (69.3%), and the variables of the year of first registration, length of registration, and rural/urban county of residence predicted the likelihood of a photograph on the sex offender registry. Overall, the inaccuracies and incompleteness of the information on the sex offender registry may be an indication that all varieties of RSOs are attempting to overcome the registry system.


Semi-structured interviews were conducted toward 24 male sex offenders who were within three years of being released from a medium security prison about their institution’s sex offender treatment program. Both positive and negative perceptions were expressed by the sex offenders in regards to their sex offender treatment program. Those who held positive perceptions of their program stated they benefitted from the assistance and guidance, learned about themselves which included developing coping strategies to avoid relapse/risky situations and understanding of the motivations behind their sexual act, wished for personal change, and the participation in the program promoted early release. Sex offenders with negative perceptions of their treatment program believed it was unwarranted to disclose their sex offenses, they had to repeat treatment once released which was viewed as a waste of time and compromised the legitimacy of such programs, punishment was experienced due to no or poor participation (which is based on subjective beliefs by the counselor) and can result in increased prison time as they did not complete the treatment program.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted toward 24 male sex offenders who were within three years of being released from a medium security prison about their opinions of their family before and after their status as a sex offender. Prior to offense, the sample of sex offenders expressed positive family relationships that consisted of support, encouragement, and intimacy, whereas those with negative family relationships reported traumatic events, such as separation, violence, and sexual abuse. In regards of future family expectations, most expressed positive expectations from members in terms of understanding, acceptance, and opportunities for employment and housing. Those who expressed negative expectations were in the forms of rejection, doubt, and ambivalence of acceptance. Notably, many of these incarcerated sex offenders never received family visits, and if visited by family members they tended to be limited.

**Recidivism**


Recidivism rates were examined of 247 male sex offenders before (1990-1994) and 248 male sex offenders after SORN (1996-2000) released from a New Jersey prison with an eight year follow-up in order to determine if there are differences in their recidivism rates and demographics. Risk was identified by frequency of re-arrest within eight years post-release, in which 203 pre-SORN and 197 post-SORN were identified as low-risk while 44 pre-SORN and 51 post-SORN were identified as high-risk, in which high-risk sex offenders were more likely to recidivate earlier and commit future criminal offenses, specifically sexual offenses, as well as post-SORN produced greater arrests than pre-SORN. Sex offenders in the high-risk category were more likely to be non-Whites, non-married sex offenders, had drug problems, younger, rapists, had female and stranger victims, previous non-sex offense, used a weapon, had a prior criminal history, sex offense post-release, and re-arrest frequency, whereas those in two-parent households, had employment prior to incarceration, and child molesters were in the low-risk category. Sex recidivism was predicted by age and prior sex offense and general recidivism was predicted by age, employment prior to offense, drug problems, and prior non-sex offense. In general, SORN produced minimal benefits to sex and general recidivism as it could not predict which sex offenders would recidivate sexually.

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Examined sexual recidivism rates of 759 sex offenders released within five years prior to the implementation of SORN and 823 sex offenders within five years after SORN from the Iowa Department of Corrections. Recidivism rates of those released after the implementation of SORN (15.8%) were nearly identical to those released after SORN (16.5%). Pre- and post-SORN groups also maintained a near identical match in the rate of sexual recidivism after their release from prison when separated by conviction rate (none, low, and high). SORN did not play an influence on the decrease of sexual recidivism rates of sex offenders. Jurisdictions should consider the social and financial repercussions of SORN.

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Examined whether differences in recidivism rates and collateral consequences experiences between post-prison releases for post-SORN sex offender’s and post-prison release for post-SORN non-sex offenders released from prison via parole. Recidivism rates were collected from 247 male sex offenders and 250 non-sex offenders after SORN released from a New Jersey prison via parole between 1995 and 1999, as well as variables of collateral consequences that included: post-release employment/homelessness/housing, living arrangements, and residential relocations. A larger portion of sex offenders (94.7%) were identified as low risk compared to their non-sex offender counterparts (72.8%), in other words, non-sex offenders exhibited a higher rate of recidivism, in which recidivism rates peaked for year seven for sex offenders and year four for non-sex offenders. A smaller percentage of post-SORN sex offenders compared to post-SORN non-sex offenders were employed, lived in renter-occupied housing, and lived with family and friends post-release compared to post-SORN non-sex offenders, whereas a larger percentage of post-SORN sex offenders lived in owner-occupied housing, were homeless/transient, lived alone, lived in a group facility or other type of housing, had moved post-release compared to post-SORN non-sex offenders. Generally speaking, non-sex offenders and sex offenders shared experiences of collateral consequences, though not living with friends, living in group facilities, and residential relocation impacted sex offender’s post-prison release differently.

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Determined whether or not SORN changed a sex offender’s specialization/versatility by examining 84 male sex offenders released from a New Jersey prison before (1990-1994) and 54 male sex offenders released after SORN (1996-2000) that committed two or more offenses (violent, property, drug, or sex offense) eight years post-release. The eight year follow-up uncovered sex offenders were diverse/versatile instead of specialized with their crimes. A pattern of specialization occurred when married and a prior property offense while alcohol problems, rapist status, prior violent offense, and recidivism rate predicted greater versatility. Post-SORN sex offenders were more specialized/less diverse than pre-SORN, but for drug offenses not sex offenses, which were the least recidivated offense compared to violent, property, and drug offenses for both pre- and post-SORN sex offender groups. This study suggested SORN produced unintended consequences of promoting specialization and reducing versatility of sex offenders, particularly in drug offenses and had no effect on sex recidivism.

**Residency Restrictions**


Four of six U.S. counties (Greenville, Spartanburg, Richland, and Charleston) were spatially examined to determine the potential effects of two statewide residency restriction laws of 1,000 and 5,280 feet onto registered sex offenders (RSOs) in available housing and treatment center options. Sex offender data was pulled August 31st, 2007 that resulted in a total of 246 RSOs, in which a buffer zone of 1,000 feet and 5,280 feet surrounded the residence of each RSO. Of the 1,000 foot proposed residency restriction, almost one-fifth (19.5%) of the current residences of RSOs would be in violation with almost half (45.4%) of the residential housing restricted to RSOs, but there is no increased distance to treatment centers. The 5,280 foot residency restriction produced greater repercussions for RSOs, where over four-fifths (80.5%) residences of RSOs were afflicted, over four-fifths (81.3%) residential housing was restricted to RSOs, and there was a significant increase in distance to treatment centers.

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Examined the potential effects of residency restrictions laws in Minnesota that spanned from 1,000 to 2,500 foot buffer zones through an analysis of spatial patterns of offenses committed of 224 male RSOs released from Minnesota correctional institutions between 1990 and 2002 who were reincarcerated before January 1st, 2006 for a new sex offense. Most offenses occurred in or near the offender’s residence and as the distance increased between the offender’s residence and location of the offense the number of offense’s also decreased. A larger portion of the offenders sexually victimized a victim they knew (79%) compared to a stranger (21%). Access to their victim was typically gained through some form of an acquaintance (51%) or being biologically related (14%), whereas those who made direct contact via street, bar, or victim’s home were more likely to reoffend against an adult rather than a juvenile, which also occurred more than a mile from the offender’s residence and not near an area congregated by children. Not one of the 224 sex offenses would have likely prevented by residency restrictions, thus residency restrictions are likely to be ineffective to reduce sexual recidivism.


Examined whether sex offender residency restrictions influenced sex crime arrests rates in New York U.S. counties, specifically of registered sex offenders (RSOs) and non-RSOs who offended children and adults. Between January 1998 and December 2009, 8,928 cases of sex crimes were collected across 62 U.S. counties in New York. Residency restrictions was not associated with the rate of sex crime arrests by child RSOs/non-RSOs and RSOs who offended adults. These restrictions may deter some non-RSOs from sexually victimizing adults, which is an indication there is a general deterrent effect from residency restrictions toward potential sex offenders. The results suggested that residency restrictions are ineffective in the protection of children from RSOs as it was meant to be intended, but it is effective in the protection from potential sex offenders who may victimize adults.

Explored the factors that have encouraged New York U.S. counties that implemented residence restriction policies over a five year period. Focused on the residential and political atmosphere of 62 U.S. New York counties between November 2005 and December 2009 and examined factors that influenced residency restrictions by utilizing legislative files, 2000 U.S. Census Bureau variables, U.S. Census (2010) Population Estimates Program, New York State Board of Elections, and the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services Computerized Criminal History Database. U.S. counties that implemented residence restrictions portrayed little influence on the encouragement for nearby U.S. counties to implement these policies, in other words there is no “domino effect”. Political competition was heavily influential in the implementation of a county residency restriction, that is to say U.S. counties where the majority party had a lower proportion of registered voters were more likely to have implemented a residence restriction. Rate of sex crimes in a U.S. county does not influence the likelihood of a residence restriction.

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Explored the potential impact of a 1,000 foot and 2,500 foot residency restrictions from schools, day care centers, churches, and parks on the housing availability for registered sex offenders (RSOs). Types of data collected included 211 RSOs that have placed their residence in Camden County, New Jersey as of March 2007, the locations of private and public schools, day care centers, parks, and churches, and 2000 U.S. Census block data of population, which were inputted into ArcGIS where a 1,000 and 2,500 foot residency restriction were placed around the residence of RSOs. Under the 1,000 foot residency restriction, 58% of RSOs resided near schools, day care centers, parks, and churches with a majority of the residences of RSOs near day care centers (37%) followed by schools (26%) while under the 2,500 foot residency restriction, 88% of RSOs resided near schools, day care centers, parks, and churches with a majority of the residences of RSOs near day care centers (80%) followed by schools (71%), thus a majority of the RSOs would be unable to reside in their current dwelling if such residency restrictions were in place. When divided into type of victim the RSO offended, sex offenders who victimized adults lived closer to school than child registered sex offenders. Notably, RSOs were no more likely to reside near schools compared to the general population.

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Explored the impact of residency restrictions on sex offender reintegration and sex offenders’ perceptions of these restrictions. A survey was conducted on 135 sex offenders in Florida from two outpatient sex offender counseling centers who were subjected to residency restrictions. Half (50%) of the sex offenders reported that they were forced to move of their residence as a result of residency restrictions with a quarter (25%) who when released from prison due to sex conviction were unable to return to their previous residence. As a result of the residency restriction, about half (48%) reported to have suffered financially and an even greater portion of sex offenders suffered emotionally (60%). This particular sample reported residence restrictions were not helpful in risk management and may actually increase their risk of re-offense, as well as many sex offenders believed that if other sex offenders are not committed to treatment and recovery, residency restrictions would have no effect on the potential to reoffend.

**Housing/Residential Locations**


Examined whether registered sex offenders (RSOs) resided in areas that have greater levels of social disorganization and disadvantaged communities and increased opportunities of potential future victims. A list of 519 RSOs was obtained in July 2005 from one urban U.S. County, Jefferson County, Kentucky, in which their listed addresses was matched to their respective census tract that contained 11 2000 U.S. Census neighborhood and resident characteristics. RSOs were more likely to reside in socially disorganized and disadvantaged communities. As the rate of RSOs decreased per census tract the rate of children nine years old and younger increased, in other words, RSOs did not reside nearby these types of victims. Notably, as the rate of RSOs increased per census tract so did the number of women aged 16-64 with a disability, but it was reasoned this may be related to economic reasons.

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Examined how home sale prices of sold homes between December 2012 to 2013 were affected by the concentration and distance of registered sex offenders (RSOs) and sexual predators of an Illinois county, McLean County. After controlling for housing characteristics (age and building square feet) and social factors (female-headed households, children under the age of 19, vacant homes, and renter occupied homes) concentrations of RSOs within 0.2 of a mile affected 553 home sale transactions and produced a predicted financial loss of $6,586 compared to the 376 home sale transactions that were affected by concentrations of sexual predators which produced a greater predicted $9,098 financial loss. In regards to distance, for each additional foot between the sold home and the nearest RSO a $18.92 predicted gain in selling price was experienced, whereas the nearest sexual predator produced a lower gain of $18.53.

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Examined whether the characteristics of a neighborhood a registered sex offender placed residence was influenced by their race. A total of 2,290 registered sex offenders (RSOs) that resided in five urban U.S. counties (Florida, Kentucky, and Illinois) were matched to their respective census tracts, which contained 2000 U.S. Census variables of resident and housing information. RSOs generally resided in areas that displayed high levels of social disorganization compared to surrounding communities and the nation with Black RSOs residing in more socially disorganized neighborhoods than White RSOs. White RSOs were more likely to reside in census tracts with high concentrations of RSOs than Black RSOs, which high concentrations were defined as ten or more RSOs in a census tract. Variables that predicted the presence of heavy concentrations of RSOs were population of White RSOs, if the victim of the RSO was a minor, and median housing value, whereas percentage of Whites, percentage of a four-year degree, and percentage of families below poverty produced a lesser likelihood to reside near these concentrations.

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Examined proximity to areas children congregate and residential characteristics of registered sex offenders (RSOs) dwellings in order to determine if RSOs are relegated into disadvantaged, disorganized communities. Observational data was conducted of 96 RSOs residences that resided in an urban U.S. county in Florida, Seminole County. A moderate portion of the sample of RSOs resided at least near one child congregation area (31.3%), followed by two (14.6%) then three (3.1%), specifically, less than one-fourth (21.9%) lived near a park/playground with 14.6% that resided near an elementary school and day care center within 1,000 feet. Further, one-half (50%) of the sample subjected to residency restrictions that barred their nearby residence of child congregation areas were in violation. RSOs’ dwellings were placed in neighborhoods typically with vacant lots (32.3%), litter in public (22.9%), non-lawn items on the law (19/8%), abandoned/boarded up buildings (15.3%), and abandoned cars (11.5%), additionally, they lived near churches (36.5%), convenience store/gas station (31.3%).and in a neighborhood with a neighborhood watch sign (28.1%), in other words, RSOs residences are only fairly disorganized, a bit decrepit but not excessively

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Examined the community characteristics of registered sex offenders in rural communities and whether social disorganization factors were present and if there were differences between areas with high and low concentrations of RSOs. A total of 728 non-incarcerated RSOs that resided in 41 rural U.S. countries in the Appalachia region of Eastern Kentucky on July 1st, 2005 were matched with their appropriate census tract data that included resident and housing characteristics from the 2000 U.S. Census, which were selected as they are relevant social disorganization variables. Few social disorganization factors were present in rural areas where RSOs have resided as RSOs placed residence in areas with similar types of socially disorganized characteristics as the average person in rural eastern Kentucky, thus they are not relegated into rural areas rather they live amongst the general population. Census tracts with high concentrations of RSOs (identified as census tracts with five or more RSOs) were not that dissimilar compared to census tracts with low concentrations of RSOs with the only differences being that highly concentrated census tracts maintained lesser percentages of Whites, lesser percentages of home ownership, and lesser percentages of owner occupied households. Interestingly, RSOs resided in areas with more residential stability and homeownership rates compared to national rates.

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Sought to determine the characteristics of the areas registered sex offenders (RSOs) resided in Orlando, Florida. Four data sources (Florida Department of Law Enforcement Sexual Offender and Predator Registry, Orlando Police Department, Orange County Sheriff’s Office, and the U.S. Census American FactFinder Community Survey 2007) were utilized that identified the addresses of RSOs that were matched with their census tract which contained its respective characteristics, as well as assisted in the creation of measures of violent crime (homicides, robberies and child sexual assaults per census tract) and social disorganization concepts of concentrated disadvantage, immigrant concentration, residential instability. Higher concentrations of RSOs are predicted to be located in census tracts with higher levels of concentrated (economic) disadvantage, residential instability, and higher rates of robbery and child sexual abuse and lower levels of immigrant populations and murders. Generally speaking, RSOs are located in undesirable neighborhoods.


A total of 1,504 registered sex offenders (RSOs) in four urban U.S. counties (Florida and Kentucky) were obtained in April 2005, in which their census tract information was compared to county-wide and national values, in addition to assessed whether census tracts that contained high concentrations of RSOs were more socially disorganized. Resident and housing characteristics were collected for each census tract from the 2000 U.S. Census. Compared to the county and national census tract information, RSOs resided in areas with greater levels of social disorganization, specifically, greater percentages of population 19 years of age or lower, unemployment, families below the poverty line, percentages of non-Whites, and lower levels of educational attainment. Notably, census tracts resided by RSOs produced lower percentages of female-headed households and higher percentages of residential stability, which is not in accordance to the social disorganization theory and was reasoned to be related to economics. Census tracts with high RSOs concentration (ten or more RSOs) had the most social disorganization compared to lower concentrations of RSOs, which ascertained that RSOs are relegated to such areas.
Collateral Consequences


Examined collateral consequences of sex offender registration from the perspective of registered sex offenders (RSOs). A total of 121 RSOs in Kentucky in 2004 were surveyed about their attitudes concerning the sex offender registry and registration experience, specifically negative consequences. Between metropolitan and nonmetropolitan county RSOs, nonmetropolitan were more likely to report greater rates of negative experiences, and between child RSOs and adult RSOs, adult RSOs were more likely to report greater rates of negative consequences. Due to their presence on the registry, RSOs reported high levels of shame, unfair punishment and understanding why the general public wants their placement on the registry. Notably, a majority of RSOs reported that most individuals were aware of their offenses, though RSOs that victimized children reported a lesser amount of people were aware of their offense and registration compared to those that did not offend children, which is an indication perhaps child RSOs are better at hiding their offense compared to other RSOs.

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Explored the collateral consequences, be it positive and negative, intended and unintended of community notification on sex offenders’ rehabilitation and reintegration, as well as their perceptions of Megan’s Law and of their own risk. Surveyed 183 convicted male sex offenders from Florida that participated in an outpatient treatment program. A majority of the respondents experienced threats or harassment (33%), job (27%) or home loss (20%), and property damage (21%), whereas few reported physical assault (5%). Those identified as negative effects included hopelessness (72%), stress (71%), shame/embarrassment (67%), alone/isolation (64%), and loss of relationships (52%) while those there were positive included motivation to prevent re-offense to prove they are not a bad person (66%), people who are aware of their sex offender status are mostly supportive (52%); interestingly, many sex offenders did not believe that registration and notification prevented reoffending (22%). Additionally, few sex offenders believed that communities are safer because of Megan’s Law (19%) and many believed it was not fair for their information to be publicly accessible, and of those who viewed their listing on the sex offender registry less than half (46%) reported that the information posted about them in the registry was incorrect.

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Discussed the impact of residential restriction mandates on registered sex offenders (RSOs) and communities. An understanding was provided of the unintended repercussions that residency restrictions may produce unfavorable issues upon public safety as well as successful re-entry and reintegration of RSOs into communities. Several unintended collateral consequences have been reported of sex offender registration with a special focus to the issue of housing difficulties faced by RSOs, in which legislation relegated RSOs into disorganized and economically disadvantaged communities, forced them to move, and barred RSOs from many areas. With that said, residency restrictions have been how to negatively impacted RSOs and communities, further, it is unlikely to prevent sexual offending. Combined with the current research of residency restrictions, a short discussion of Georgia is introduced as the U.S. state proposed a statute that may enforce a residency restriction for RSOs.

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Examined the perceptions of female RSOs and their consequences as a result of being listed in the sex offender registry. Questionnaires were sent to female RSOs listed in the Kentucky Sex Offender Registry, in which 40 female RSOs responded and represented the study’s sample. Of the sample of female RSOs, around one-third reported to lost a job (42.1%), lost a friend who found out about registration (39.5%), harassed in person (34.2), loss/denial of a place to live (31.6%), or been treated rudely in a public place (31.6%) were some of the several collateral consequences of their registration; additionally those who reported a lengthier period for registration also reported to have experienced a negative result from registration. In general, female RSOs experienced high levels of shame and felt as if the registry was a form of unfair punishment. Notably, female RSOs who have spent more time on the registry reported higher levels of shame and avoidance from people though they understood that the registry is a good thing.

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Examined the social, economic, and structural characteristics of child registered sex offenders (RSOs) and compared these characteristics to non-child RSOs, as well as compared differences between no/low and high concentrations (5 or more) of child RSOs. A look at five urban counties (Florida, Kentucky, and Illinois) gathered a total of 2,586 RSOs and various census tract information of resident and neighborhood housing characteristics from the 2000 U.S. Census Bureau, and then identified census tracts with high concentrations of child RSOs. Child RSOs resided in more socially disorganized areas via neighborhood characteristics than RSOs that victimized adults, except for percentages of families below the poverty line and owner occupied homes, but did not experience greater residential disadvantage than their adult-targeting counterparts. With that said, neighborhood disadvantages were generally equal between child RSOs and RSOs that offended against adults, and was reasoned as child RSOs offended non-strangers where adult RSOs offended strangers. Again, RSOs reside in the same characteristics of neighborhoods compared to those with heavy concentrations of child RSOs with similar levels of social disorganization and difficulty to find housing.


Examined the experiences of RSOs as a member of society and how their status afflicted their livelihood. Interviewed 22 RSOs from Jefferson County, Kentucky between February and March 2005 who predominantly reported employment and relationship difficulties, harassment, and stigmatization. Many lost employment opportunities and relationships with family members, anticipated verbal and physical harassment that was experienced at a minimal level amongst this sample, and maintained a strong sense of stigmatization.

Differences of collateral consequences experienced were assessed, in terms of different stressors, U.S. states that maintain different residency restrictions, and rural/urban settings amongst 209 registered sex offenders (RSOs) in Oklahoma (n = 125) and Kansas (n = 84) via survey in April 2007. RSOs experienced a moderate amount of collateral consequences due to their RSO status with the most common being housing, employment, and social stigmatization issues. The sample of RSOs reported moderate-to-extreme levels of stress with three variables that were predicted to be associated with stress levels where recognition in public and harassment increased stress levels and treatment participation/completion reduced stress levels. Over four-fifths (80%) reported using some form of coping strategies for their stress with the most common being recreation (18%) though none of the coping strategies used by this sample of RSOs had a significant impact on the reduction of their stress levels. Few differences existed between RSOs that resided in different U.S. states with different residential restrictions mandates and urban/rural environments experienced different types of experiences and difficulties, though Oklahoma RSOs saw housing issues as a bigger consequence from their status than those that resided in Kansas and believed they are more easily recognizable in public.


Explored the impact of Megan’s Law on the lives of registered sex offenders (RSOs) that resided in Indiana and Connecticut. Surveyed 239 RSOs that attended outpatient sex offender counseling centers in Connecticut (n = 148) and Indiana (n = 91) in December 2005. Few RSOs were unaware of the community notification strategies that took place in their jurisdiction. Minimal negative consequences were experienced amongst the total sample included job loss (21%), threats and harassment (21%), property damage (18%), and suffering of household members (16%). Majority experienced psychosocial distress due to community notification, such as stress (62%), shame (58%), and hopelessness (55%), yet most believed (74%) community notification motivated them not to reoffend.
Collateral Consequences - Family Members’ Experiences


Explored the experiences of intra-familial child sex abuse cases by examining the outcomes of child protective services, identifying non-offending parents or caretakers (NOPCs) feelings about the abuse, and identifying the forms of interventions NOPCs participated and their beliefs about those interventions. A total of 31 non-offending parents or caretakers of a sexually abused child by a family member/registered sex offender were surveyed online about the impact of sex offender registration and notification mandates on their livelihood. Almost one-third (31%) reported that child protective services was not involved. NOPCs reported mixed feelings that included that family and friends don’t seem to understand intra-familial sexual abuse, sadness, embarrassment, hurt, loneliness, shame, loss of control in my life, and guilt. A majority of offenders, victims, and the NOPCs received counseling and believed counseling was beneficial for the offender, in addition to most NOPCs participated in family reunification or visitation.


Examined how the effects sex offender registration and community notification (SORN) and residency restrictions policies impacted family members. An online survey was completed from 584 family members from all 50 U.S. states in July 2008 that visited advocacy/support websites for family members of registered sex offenders (RSOs) in which a majority were females (80%) and related by being a spouse (42%), parent/stepparent (33%), or sibling (24%) of the registered sex offender (RSO). Many family members reported very frequent feelings of stress and direct loss, specifically over two-thirds (68.2%) reported being stressed very often by SORN policies, over half felt isolated very often because of SORN (55.3%), under half (48.8%) avoided social activities very often due to shame/embarrassment because of SORN. Stress levels were predicted to be influenced by those from lower income backgrounds, feelings of isolation, fear for one’s safety, shame/embarrassment, and having to move. Notably, almost two-thirds (62%) resided in the same location with the RSO, in which those family members experienced greater levels of isolation due to their residential status.

Examined how the effects sex offender registration and community notification and residency restrictions impacted family members, particularly children. An online survey was completed from 584 family members from all 50 U.S. states in July 2008 that visited advocacy/support websites for family members of RSOs, in which a majority were females (80%) and related by being a spouse (42%), parent/stepparent (33%), or sibling (24%) of the registered sex offender (RSO). Employment issues were commonly reported by family members as a majority (82%) reported difficulty in RSOs obtaining employment and resulted in financial hardships for their family followed by a loss of employment by the family member/RSO (53%) as a result of the RSO status discovery by their employer/co-workers. Nearly one-third (29%) of the surveyed family members were a parent or caretaker of a child and reported over half (58%) of the children experienced different treatment from child and other adults (63%), as well as stigmatization (71%), as well as children of RSOs reported feelings of anger (80%), depression (77%), anxiety (73%), left out by peers (65%), and fear (63%). Overall, the impact felt by family members affected their ability support RSOs, specifically to suppress their recidivism rates and promote reintegration efforts.

**Collateral Consequences – Schools/Students**


Examined the collateral consequences of university sex offender registries (SORs) upon registered sex offenders (RSOs) who attended a four-year public institution. Questionnaires were mailed to RSOs who attended a public, four-year college or university in the U.S., in which a total of 26 were completed. All were aware they were listed in the state-wide SOR, but only a third (38.5%) were familiar with being listed on their university SOR. Between RSOs who were students and employees, students are more likely to report to have experienced a collateral consequences due to their registration, specifically not hired for, or fired from a job, denied a promotion at work, lost/denied place to live, treated rudely in public, lost a friend, and received harassing mail/notes/flyers. RSOs reported that the state-wide SOR (73%) was more influential on their lives compared to the university’s registry (7.8%).

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Examined a Kentucky state law (KRS 17.545.2) that required a registered sex offender (RSO) to obtain written consent to enter school grounds, specifically a RSO parent. A survey assessed 83 public school principals in Kentucky that represented elementary schools (59%), middle schools (19.3%), and high schools (21.7%) and the likelihood to allow RSOs who are parents on school grounds based on 10 different scenarios. On familiarity of KRS 17.545.2, high school principals (82.4%) reported greatest awareness of the law, followed by elementary school principals (69.6%), and middle school principals (66.7%). Based on the ten scenarios, principals were more likely to allow a RSO parent to attend a parent-teacher conference and attend a graduation/year-end ceremony; on the other hand, principals were least likely to grant permission for a RSO parent to volunteer in a classroom and chaperone a school event or field trip. Further, few differences existed between type of principal with exception to high school principals were more likely to grant permission for a RSO parent to attend their child’s graduation/year-end ceremony and sports event/ceremony.

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Examined registered sex offenders (RSOs) social, emotional, and interpersonal experiences of their registration to the state-wide sex offender registry and a university based sex offender registry. Telephone interviews were conducted on nine male RSOs between summer and fall of 2011. The male RSOs reported feelings of social isolation and intense feelings of vulnerability. The classroom was utilized as an environment to focus their attention and energy toward due to the external issues being mitigated, though there was a concern of vulnerability if they were recognized for their status. Being involved in school was seen as a positive aspect of a RSOs livelihood, in which they benefited from the removal of the negative experiences typically reported by RSOs, but it may produce a perpetual cycle that is caused by limiting the risk of being found out and maintaining the classroom experience.
**Stresses of Registration**


Surveyed 107 registered sex offenders (RSOs) from New Jersey about their coping strategies, stress levels, and the effect of Internet access restrictions. In general, a majority of RSOs reported moderate levels of stress and utilized multiple forms of coping strategies, where most coped via active coping, acceptance, self-distraction, and planning, while humor, substance use, denial, and behavioral disengagement were the lowest reported forms of coping. Interestingly, being forced to move was reported as a low stress item. In regards to Internet usage, although there is a state statute that prohibits the use of computers amongst RSOs, nearly half (44.3%) reported a computer with Internet availability, which were typically used for reading the news or e-mailing friends and family. RSOs reported that a lack of Internet created difficulties in seeking out employment (42%), inability to communicate with friends and family (28%), loss of recreational activity (18%), and inability to bank online (10%).

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Semi-structured interviews were administered toward 24 male sex offenders who were within three years of being released from a medium security prison about their social stigmatization. Sex offenders recognized their stigma, although dissimilar to the stigmas society has maintained of them. Such stigma was prevalent within prison institutions, in which inmates expressed strong negative views and harassed sex offenders, in addition to being restricted from programs in the prison institution. Sex offenders internally expressed their emotion by shame, hopelessness/depression, and fear while external feelings were expressed through questioning their label, unfairness, and resentment, which as a whole affected their self-esteem.

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Examined how the effects sex offender registration and community notification (SORN) and residency restrictions policies impacted family members. An online survey was completed from 584 family members from all 50 U.S. states in July 2008 that visited advocacy/support websites for family members of registered sex offenders (RSOs) in which a majority were females (80%) and related by being a spouse (42%), parent/stepparent (33%), or sibling (24%) of the registered sex offender (RSO). Many family members reported very frequent feelings of stress and direct loss, specifically over two-thirds (68.2%) reported being stressed very often by SORN policies, over half felt isolated very often because of SORN (55.3%), under half (48.8%) avoided social activities very often due to shame/embarrassment because of SORN. Stress levels were predicted to be influenced by those from lower income backgrounds, feelings of isolation, fear for one’s safety, shame/embarrassment, and having to move. Notably, almost two-thirds (62%) resided in the same location with the RSO, in which those family members experienced greater levels of isolation due to their residential status.

**Perceptions – Public**


Examined public perceptions of sex offenders and the effectiveness of community protection policies and the policies themselves. A total of 193 residents responded to questionnaires from Melbourne, Florida in August 2005 based on their familiarity of community notification strategies, types of information to be publicly released, beliefs about sex offenders and sex crimes, opinions of community notification techniques, and opinions of sex offender treatment. Many participants reported community notification strategies never took in their communities, yet many would support (73%) community notification strategies even if there was a lack of empirical evidence that it would achieve its goals, and believed all sex offenders should be subjected to community notification (76.3%). Community members also believed they should have access to an abundance of information about sex offenders, yet valued the privacy of sex offenders as they believed some of the information should not be viewable amongst the general population. Community notification strategies were viewed by residents as effective in the reduction of sexual abuse (83%), and believed sex offenders have high recidivism rates (74%), sex offenders sexually assault strangers, sex offenders were equal in risk level, and were skeptical about the benefits of sex offender treatment.
Investigated what factors contributed to perceptions of electronic monitoring via global positioning satellite (GPS) for sex offenders. A sample of 746 residents’ perceptions were surveyed from Norfolk and Virginia Beach that was originally obtained in spring 2007. The following variables were included: demographic information was comprised of gender, educational attainment, race, income; experimental variables consisted of violence experienced as a child and whether the resident was a victim of a property or violent offense; characteristics of neighborhoods were collected from the 2007 U.S. Census Bureau and formed two constructs, social capital and vulnerable populations, also included in neighborhood characteristics were perceived incivilities of resident’s neighborhood in various forms of social disorder (litter, vandalism, houses with burglar bars, unsupervised youth, and public drinking) and collective efficacy, which was measured by the resident’s perception of the likelihood their neighbor would intervene to prevent deviant behavior, and rate of RSOs in each resident’s ZIP code. Those who favored global positioning satellite monitoring for RSOs chiefly derived from individuals’ demographic characteristics, whereas experimental and neighborhood factors provided some influence over individuals’ views of electronic monitoring policies for sex offenders. Notably, those most at risk of victimization via proximity to sex offenders viewed electronic monitoring unfavorably, as well as more support of GPS were from communities of higher incivilities and lesser support in communities with higher social capital.


Examined whether parents with children were more supportive of residency restrictions compared to non-parents. In spring 2006, a telephone survey was conducted on 1,308 residents in Florida which collected various opinions of criminal justice related topics, in which the present study was focused on the opinions held by parents with children of sex offender legislation that enforced residency restrictions on registered sex offenders. Overall, many respondents (82%) supported residency restrictions, specifically parents were 58% more likely to support such laws compared to non-parents. Further, a positive relationship was exhibited between number of children and support for residency restrictions, in other words, as the number of children parents have the greater the support for such restrictions, especially those with three or more children. Support for residency restrictions is consistent across moms, dads, of various races, ethnicities, and ages.
Perceptions – Criminal Justice System Officials


Determined whether or not Community Attitudes Toward Sex Offenders scale (CATSO) is applicable in gauging criminal justice officials opinions of sex offenders and the policies set upon them, in which the survey along with the 18-item CATSO found moderate supportive for the sex offender strategies and held minimal stereotypes about sex offenders. Thus, CATSO was deemed unfit to be used as a measurement to obtain the attitudes of sex offenders and policies held by criminal justice professionals. It was suggested that elements of CATSO are applicable to obtain the perspectives of sex offenders and the policies of criminal justice professionals though to a smaller scale.


Examined community correction professionals’ attitudes about sex offender registration and community notification (SORN) policies and sex offenders. An online survey was issued to 716 community corrections professionals that represented 45 states and the District of Columbia. Community correction professionals were somewhat supportive about effectiveness of community notification, to elaborate, more than one-half (56%) believed community notification prevented sexual offenses, though did not find many forms of notification useful with exception to registration lists held by law enforcement agencies (72%) and online registration lists (84%). With that said, most believed the registry did not act as a deterrent to sex offenders and community members. In regards to residency restriction, a majority believed sex offenders should be prohibited from schools (78%) and daycares (70.7%) with minimal support for restrictions of fast food restaurants (5.8%) and public rest rooms (16.4%).
A survey assessed the opinions of 209 law enforcement agency supervisors/managers from various departments across the nation of SORN, which contained the Community Attitudes Toward Sex Offenders (CATSO). A majority of law enforcement believed SORN policies were not effective in reducing sex offenses (62.1%) compared to over a third (37.9%) who believed they were effective, but opined that all sex offenders should still be subjected to these policies (63.1%). Even if research proves residency restrictions are not effective, most believed housing restriction laws are effective in the prevention of sexual victimization (81.5%), specifically around schools (94.7%). In regards to community notification, a total of 90.3% supported internet registries, which they believed should include a name (96.6%), photograph (94.2%), and home address (86.9%). CATSO results revealed law enforcement held negative views of sex offenders. There was a direct relationship between an officer’s experience and the belief community notification was effective, which was reasoned to be related to promotions, thus decreased their contact with sex offenders.

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To determine whether or not Community Attitudes Toward Sex Offenders scale (CATSO) is applicable in gauging state parole board members opinions of sex offenders and the policies set upon them. A total of 80 parole board members from 30 state parole boards completed an online survey that contained the CATSO scale, in which uncovered that parole board members held moderate views of sex offender registration and community notification (SORN) and seldom held extreme opinions. There was minimal support for residential restrictions, but in terms of community notification a stronger support was exhibited with a majority that supported lists for law enforcement (71.3%) and believed a name (87.5%), photograph (80%), and home address (66.3%) should be included in registries. Further, a majority supported SORN policies, but were split in their opinions whether SORN policies were effective in the reduction of sex offenses; for instance, parole board members that attained higher levels of education were less likely to believed community notification reduced sex offenses, but those with a greater number of children believed sex offenses would decrease due to community notification. Overall, CATSO was not an appropriate instrument to ascertain the views of parole board members.
Perceptions – Registered Sex Offenders


Sought to uncover whether female sex offenders maintained the same expectations for reentry compared to their male counterparts. Semi-structured interviews were administered to 41 incarcerated female sex offenders from one southern state who were either on the registry or soon to be listed. Female sex offenders were aware of the registry, community notification, and residency restriction procedures, but knew very little how these policies would affect their personal lives. They acknowledged difficulties in obtaining housing and employment and the stigma attached to their offense and were concerned about their relationship with their children, but were optimistic about family and social relationships. Reentry plans were suggested as both female and male sex offenders were very comparable in their expectations of reentry, specifically their lack of knowledge of the legal obligations placed upon them.

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Semi-structured interviews were administered toward 24 male sex offenders who were within three years of being released from a medium security prison about their expectations for reentry. Sex offenders were generally unaware of the legal requirements set upon them when released except for registration and their conditional release. Sex offenders held positive expectations for their reentry into society, but anticipated difficulty with obtaining housing and employment, establishing and maintaining personal relationships, living with the stigma of being a dangerous registered sex offender, and being rejected by society. Sex offenders will seek out personal, family, and social resources to avoid stigma for their sexual crime. It was reasoned that the optimistic view of reentry was based on the lack of knowledge of the legal constraints of their sexual crime; and programs should be designed in order to inform sex offenders of what they should expect upon reentry.

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Examined the perceptions held by registered sex offenders (RSOs) about the sex offender registry. A total of 121 RSOs listed in the Kentucky Sex Offender Registry completed a questionnaire in 2004. In regards of monitoring, over one-third (35%) reported to have never been contacted by the police with over a one-fifth (26.7%) who have only been contacted once by law enforcement while one-third (31.9%) of RSOs believed they would never be recognized in public. RSOs who are lifetime registrants compared to those with 10-year registration lengths are more likely to notify a change in residence while RSOs who have been on the registry for five years or less compared to those listed for more than five years are more likely to correct a wrong address and offense listing. Generally speaking, RSOs are likely to correct/update information on their registry listing with only a small minority of RSOs may not be willing to comply with registration requirements nor voluntarily update their registry information.

Examined the perceptions of 10 sex offender registries (SORs) held by registered sex offenders (RSOs). Interviews were conducted between February and March 2005 with 22 RSOs who have been on the Kentucky SOR for a period of six months or more with a listed residential address. RSOs acknowledged that SORs are a viable tool that can make positive contributions to society, but questioned the legitimacy of SORs, such as the effectiveness of enhancing community awareness, public safety, the influence on recidivism as most believed that the registry is not a deterrent, and fairness of being listed. RSOs also discussed issues with the structural format of SORs. Three common suggestions were made by RSOs to improve SORs that included: distinctions of the types of sex offenders and degrees of dangerousness; registration lengths should be based on objective, clinical assessments in order to be listed in the SOR, and restrictions placed on who can access the registry strictly so they are viewable to law enforcement and other officials and not the general public.