



Studies in the News

California Research Bureau, California State Library

March 29, 2017

Contents this week:

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

Birthrate among women over 30 at highest rate since 1964

ECONOMY

Economic mobility rate is lower for younger baby boomers

EDUCATION

School choice—federal and state policy overview

EMPLOYMENT

Unconscious bias may contribute to gender pay gap in management

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

Some of CA's oil emits greenhouse gases

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Promoting equity through social policies

HEALTH

Increasing importance of parks, recreation programs on health

HUMAN SERVICES

TANF payments, benefits have lost value due to shifting priorities

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Bots run approx. 48 million Twitter accounts, tweet political messages

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

“Births: Final Data for 2015.” By Joyce A. Martin, et al. *National Vital Statistics Reports*, vol. 66, no. 1 (Jan. 5, 2017) 70 p.

https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr66/nvsr66_01.pdf

“For women in their early 30s, the birthrate in 2015 was the highest it’s been since 1964, according to a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report this year. And the rate for women age 35 to 39 was the highest since 1962, when families were larger and births hit near all-time highs in the baby-boom years.... Although hardly a baby boomlet, the higher birthrates among older women help offset a decline in births among younger women age 15 to 24. And they suggest that younger women who are putting off

parenthood now may embrace it as they get older, finish their education, establish careers, and become more financially secure.” ([Stateline](#), March 20, 2017).

ECONOMY

***The Decline in Intergenerational Mobility After 1980.* By Jonathan Davis, et al. Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago. Mar. 2017. 41 p.**

<https://www.chicagofed.org/publications/working-papers/2017/wp2017-05>

Rates of intergenerational income mobility in the U.S. are relatively low compared to other advanced economies. But has that always been the case? This study examines income mobility over time among baby boomers. “We demonstrate that intergenerational mobility declined sharply for cohorts born between 1942 and 1953 compared to those born between 1957 and 1964. The former entered the labor market prior to the large rise in inequality that occurred around 1980 while the latter cohorts entered the labor market largely afterwards.... The share of children whose income exceeds that of their parents fell by about 3 percentage points. These findings suggest that relative mobility fell by substantially more than absolute mobility.”

EDUCATION

***A New Era of School Choice.* By Josh Cunningham. National Conference of State Legislatures. Mar. 2017. 2 p.**

http://www.ncsl.org/documents/legisbriefs/2017/lb_2510.pdf

This brief provides background on federal and state action for three forms of school choice now available within many states: charter schools, magnet schools and voucher programs. It discusses arguments in favor and in opposition to these types of programs, and highlights some issues that have been brought up at the federal level—particularly “portability,” or the directing of federal money to “wherever qualifying students enroll in school, including private schools,” and not via the traditional channels of the public school district.

EMPLOYMENT

***Gender Equity Insights 2017: Inside Australia’s Gender Pay Gap.* Workplace Gender Equality Agency. Mar. 2017. 72 p.**

<http://www.smh.com.au/business/workplace-relations/concentration-of-women-managers-results-in-higher-pay-for-men-20170228-gunl43.html>

“A 10% or more increase in the proportion of female senior executives can narrow the gender pay gap. But if women make up more than 80% of managers, the gap widens again.... ‘It seems that where the men are few, they are more highly valued. It is often thought that men are put on a pedestal in environments where they are outnumbered by women.’ The report speculated an explanation for this was likely to be driven by unconscious bias and stereotypical views of men as figures of authority.” This report can inform wider policy discussions underway in the United States regarding gender pay equity.

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

Need to Know: The Case for Oil Transparency in California. By Deborah Gordon, et al. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Mar. 2017. 10 p.

<http://carnegieendowment.org/2017/03/15/need-to-know-case-for-oil-transparency-in-california-pub-68166>

“California is home to some of the world’s dirtiest oil.... [This] report looked at the entire life cycle of oil, from production to end use, and found some oils emit as much or more greenhouse gases as Canada’s oil tar sands.... The study also found California has some of the cleanest oils ... because an oil’s chemical composition can vary.... The report says that the state should track an oil’s chemical makeup to help better manage greenhouse gas emissions.” (*Capital Public Radio*, Mar. 15, 2017).

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Centering the Margins: A Framework for Equitable and Inclusive Social Policy. By Rachel Black, et al. New America. Jan. 26, 2017. 28 p.

<https://www.newamerica.org/family-centered-social-policy/policy-papers/centering-margins/#>

“Social policy is the expression of our government’s commitment to upholding the promise of equality of opportunity to every member of our society. The key test of the integrity of this commitment is the freedom of individuals who are subject to legacies of exclusion and oppression to be full participants in our society and economy.” This study explores the “troubling evidence that our social policies are failing” leading to the “unsettling conclusion: Social policy does not disrupt patterns of economic and social division; instead it replicates them. We have a separate and unequal set of social policies that exacerbate inequality instead of providing a countervailing force against the factors that cause it.” The authors describe a new model intended to redirect policymaking to better serve those who have been marginalized in the past.

HEALTH

“The Relationship between Self-Rated Health and Use of Parks and Participation in Recreation Programs, United States, 1991 and 2015.” By Nicholas A.D. Pitas, et al. *Preventing Chronic Disease*, vol. 13 (Jan. 2017) 5 p.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5217766/pdf/PCD-14-E02.pdf>

“This study supports the importance of locally offered recreation facilities and programs to contribute to residents’ health and provides evidence to support adequate funding for both quality recreation facilities and programming as part of the public health infrastructure.... Study results suggest that the effect of park use and participation in recreational programs on health has strengthened in the United States during the last two decades. Whereas these two variables were not significantly related to self-rated health in 1991, by 2015 their importance had increased significantly. Considering this trend, adequate investment in parks and programs is increasingly important to combat nationwide health concerns.”

HUMAN SERVICES

Lessons from TANF: Block-Granting a Safety-Net Program Has Significantly Reduced Its Effectiveness. By Liz Schott. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Feb. 22, 2017. 7 p.

<http://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/2-22-17tanf.pdf>

“As with most other block grants, TANF [Temporary Assistance for Needy Families] funding has lost much of its value over time, with its funding falling by more than a third since it was created, after adjusting for

inflation. Many states have used their flexibility over TANF funds to ease state budget shortfalls and fund other priorities of state politicians, shifting funds away from helping poor families meet basic needs or prepare for work. Only half of TANF funding now goes for TANF's basic purposes of cash assistance for poor families, work or employment preparation programs, or child care assistance so parents can work."

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Online Human-Bot Interactions: Detection, Estimation, and Characterization. By Onur Varol, et al. *arXiv.org*. Mar. 9, 2017. 11 p.
<https://arxiv.org/pdf/1703.03107.pdf>

Social Bots Distort the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election Online Discussion. By Alessandro Bessi, et al. *First Monday*. Nov. 7, 2016. 18 p.
<http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/7090/5653>

"[R]oughly nine to 15% of Twitter accounts ... are so-called bots controlled by software instead of humans. Twitter boasts 319 [million] monthly active users meaning that this recent revelation equates to nearly 48 million bot accounts.... [M]any 'social bots perform useful functions, such as dissemination of news and publications.'" However, there are also malicious uses of social bot networks, such as creating fake grassroots political support and terrorist propaganda and recruitment. An earlier study reported that "bot accounts produced 3.8 million tweets, or 19 percent of all election tweets for the study's period between Sept. 16 and Oct. 21, 2016." ([CBS News](#), Mar. 10, 2017).

About the California Research Bureau

The California Research Bureau at the California State Library develops independent, nonpartisan research and analysis for the executive and legislative branches. We provide policy research, 50-state reviews, academic and media summaries, data analysis and much more. To learn more about us or to make a request, or to subscribe to *Studies in the News*, contact crb@library.ca.gov or call (916) 319-2691.

Studies in the News archived issues and RSS feed are available at <http://www.library.ca.gov/sitn/crb/>.