



## Studies in the News

California Research Bureau, California State Library

September 6, 2017

### In Memoriam of John Jewell

This issue is dedicated to John Jewell, who was called “The Father of SIN” for his development of Studies in the News when he was an assistant director here at the California Research Bureau. The first issues of Studies in the News in 1992 were distributed weekly to legislators and staffs on the early version of the Legislative Information System. John died on Aug. 10.

<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/sacbee/obituary.aspx?n=john-h-jewell&pid=186557620>

Featured study:

#### **ECONOMY**

3 studies show values that drive support for economic redistribution

Contents this week:

#### **CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT**

Study finds donated military gear can have a positive effect on law enforcement

#### **CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY**

More Americans see racism as a societal problem

#### **EDUCATION**

Who is teaching in America? National survey on teacher characteristics

#### **EMPLOYMENT**

Minimum wage negatively impacts some low-skilled workers

#### **GENERAL GOVERNMENT**

Audit reveals IRS does not protect taxpayers' financial data

#### **HEALTH**

Evidence suggests interventions could delay or prevent a third of dementia cases

#### **HUMAN SERVICES**

Potential impact of federal spending cuts on public services

### **ECONOMY**

While a desire to reverse trends of growing income inequality is shared by Americans across ideologies, a deeper understanding of the values that drive the economic operationalization of those desires helps explain the remaining disconnect. Three studies, highlighted below, describe the widespread interest in preserving the basic social hierarchy; addressing inequality when it is required through compassion, envy

or self-interest but not to achieve fairness; and, counterintuitively for some, may lead to decreased interest in government intervention.

**“Rank Reversal Aversion Inhibits Redistribution Across Societies.”** By Wenwen Xie, et al. *Nature Human Behavior*, vol. 1 no. 0142 (July 10, 2017). 5 p.

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41562-017-0142>

“If we hate economic inequality so much, why do humans keep supporting institutions that concentrate wealth in a tiny percentage of the population? A new cross-cultural study led by economists working in China suggests one possible reason: people are not willing to redistribute wealth if they think it will upset the social hierarchy .... They found that responses were surprisingly uniform: 76.87% of people were willing to redistribute money if the rich person remained slightly wealthier than the poor person, thus keeping ‘social ranking’ intact. But only 44.8% of people were willing to redistribute the money if it meant reversing the fortunes of the ‘rich’ and ‘poor’ people .... Our equality condition shows that people would accept the elimination of hierarchies,” write Zhou and his colleagues. “It is only when winners become losers and losers become winners that people object.” (*ARS Technica*, Jul. 13, 2017).

**“The Political Implications of American Concerns About Economic Inequality.”** By Graham Wright. *Political Behavior*. Mar. 10, 2017. 23 p.

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11109-017-9399-3> (Available from the California Research Bureau)

“The results of the dyad-ratios algorithm confirm that, as McCall (2013) argues, concerns about unequal outcomes and unequal opportunities are intertwined in American public opinion .... The results of the models of concern and mood, however, imply that an increase in national concern for inequality will not, on its own, lead to a subsequent increase in desire for government intervention .... Moreover, these results also raise the possibility that, at least under certain circumstances, increased concern for inequality might actually lead to a more conservative political environment in America, at least with respect to government intervention in the economy.”

**“Support for redistribution is shaped by compassion, envy, and self-interest, but not a taste for fairness.”** By Daniel Sznycer, et al. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, vol. 144 no. 3 (Aug. 1, 2017). 6 p.

<http://www.pnas.org/content/114/31/8420.abstract> (Available from the California Research Bureau)

“The authors found stronger support for redistribution in people who spontaneously feel more compassion toward individuals in need. Self-interest also played a role: support for redistribution was higher in people who thought that they or their family would benefit from it personally. The more surprising findings involved envy ... directed toward those better off than you, predicted support for redistribution. ‘When a rival outperforms you in some activity, your relative standing decreases,’ said Sznycer. ‘People sometimes act to chip away at their rivals’ advantages, even when that also harms third parties or even sometimes themselves.’” (*Reason*, Aug. 1, 2017).

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

**“Police Officer on the Frontline or a Soldier? The Effect of Police Militarization on Crime.”** By Vincenzo Bove, et al. *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, vol. 9 no. 3 (Aug. 2017) 19 p.

<http://pubs.aeaweb.org/doi/pdfplus/10.1257/pol.20150478>

“We investigate whether surplus military-grade equipment acquired by local police departments from the Pentagon has an effect on crime rates. We use temporal variations in US military expenditure and between-counties variation in the odds of receiving a positive amount of military aid to identify the causal effect of militarized policing on crime. We find that (i) military aid reduces street-level crime; (ii) the program is cost-effective; and (iii) there is evidence in favor of a deterrence mechanism.” Results

observed by the researchers include a fall in crime, mostly in robberies, assaults, burglaries and car thefts. Nonlethal equipment transfers, including office supplies and IT hardware, have the largest effect on all types of crime. The report cautions that the social cost is a point that the analysis cannot duly capture.

## CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

***Views of racism as a major problem increase sharply, especially among Democrats.*** By Samantha Neal. Pew Research Center. Aug. 29, 2017.

<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2017/08/29/views-of-racism-as-a-major-problem-increase-sharply-especially-among-democrats/>

“[M]ore Americans consider racism a ‘big problem’ than they have at any other point in the last two decades, while the share of those who consider it a ‘small’ or non-existent problem continues to shrink. Fifty-eight percent of Americans believe racism is a pervasive issue, an increase of eight percentage points since 2015, and more than double the 26 percent reported in 2009.... Pew’s study suggests this change was spurred at least in part by the activism of Black Lives Matter.” (*Pacific Standard*, Aug. 29, 2017).

## EDUCATION

***Characteristics of Public Elementary and Secondary School Teachers in the United States: Results from the 2015-2016 National Teacher Principal Survey: First Look.*** By Soheyla Taie, et al. National Center for Education Statistics. Aug. 2017. 50 p.

<https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2017/2017072.pdf>

This report is a summary of the American public elementary and secondary school teacher population—for the academic year 2015-2016. Some highlights of the findings are: 1) white, female teachers predominate staffing (77% female vs. 23% male; 80% white, 9% Hispanic, 7% Black and 2% Asian) 2) average annual base pay for full-time, regular teachers was \$55,100, and 3) public school teachers had about 14 years of experience, on average.

## EMPLOYMENT

***People Versus Machines: The Impacts of Minimum Wage on Automatable Jobs.*** By Grace Lorden, et al. National Bureau of Economic Research Working Papers. Aug. 2017. 39 p.

<http://www.nber.org/papers/w23667> (Available to .gov accounts or from the California Research Bureau)

This working paper “suggests that sharp minimum wage increases in the United States in coming years will shape the types of jobs held by low-skilled workers, and create employment challenges for some of them. Our findings identify some workers on whom the more general minimum wage literature is silent, but who are vulnerable to substitution of machines for people.... [W]e find that increasing the minimum wage decreases significantly the share of automatable employment held by low-skilled workers, and increases the likelihood that low-skilled workers in automatable jobs become unemployed. The average effects mask significant heterogeneity by industry and demographic group, including substantive adverse effects for older, low-skilled workers in manufacturing.”

## GENERAL GOVERNMENT

***Control Deficiencies Continue to Limit IRS's Effectiveness in Protecting Sensitive Financial and Taxpayer Data.*** Government Accountability Office. GAO-17-395. July 2017. 42 p.

<https://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-17-395>

"The IRS is still failing to adequately protect U.S. taxpayers' personal information and sensitive financial data.... The July report tallies 166 outstanding recommendations related to information security best practices and ensuring that taxpayer and financial information can't be accessed by people who don't need to access it. GAO faulted the tax agency for not monitoring its systems to ensure employees are complying with security policies, not ensuring software is updated to protect against digital vulnerabilities or is even still serviced by the vendor, and not updating security plans as the agency's operating environment changes." ([Nextgov](#), Aug. 14, 2017).

## HEALTH

***Dementia Prevention, Intervention, and Care.*** By Gill Livingston, et al. *The Lancet*. July 19, 2017. 62 p.

<http://www.thelancet.com/commissions/dementia2017> (Available from the California Research Bureau)

"Globally, about 47 million people were living with dementia in 2015, and this number is projected to triple by 2050.... The 2015 global cost of dementia was estimated to be US\$818 billion, and this figure will continue to increase as the number of people with dementia rises.... This Lancet Commission on Dementia Prevention, Intervention, and Care met to consolidate emerging knowledge about what can work and what individuals should do to prevent and manage dementia, particularly with the health systems in high-income countries. Many of dementia's manifestations are now known to be manageable, and while the underlying illness is not curable, the course might be modifiable with good dementia care.... Additionally, there is evidence that an important fraction of dementia is preventable."

## HUMAN SERVICES

***What's at Stake in Current Federal Budget Proposals: Fact Sheets by Congressional District.*** California Budget & Policy Center. Aug. 2017.

<http://calbudgetcenter.org/resources/fact-sheets-federal-impact/>

"A number of current proposals at the federal level, put forth by the Trump Administration and congressional leaders, call for deep spending cuts to many important public services and systems that improve the lives of individuals and families across California.... Although federal spending deliberations occur far from California, their outcomes have deep potential impacts right here at home, in every part of our state.... [These House district fact sheets] provide district-by-district figures on public services and supports across four areas—food and shelter, health care, income support, and education—along with local information on social and economic conditions."

### ***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](mailto: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/>.