



Studies in the News

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Contents this week:

CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

Strategies may have eroded trust between police and communities

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

Income gap explanations of unintended child bearing

EDUCATION

Computer science studies and high school graduation

EMPLOYMENT

A look at employed families on government subsidies

Who are California's low-wage workers?

ENERGY

Short-term peak pricing can habituate users to save electricity

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Parcel taxes as a revenue source for CA local governments

HEALTH

CA still faces high levels of diabetes, liver disease

HUMAN SERVICES

A look at the incarceration of poor people

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

Growth of digital technologies requires infrastructure investment

CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

Nicholas Turner's Testimony to President's Task Force on 21st Century Policing. Vera Institute of Justice. Jan. 22, 2015. 6 p.

<http://www.vera.org/pubs/nicholas-turner-testimony-presidents-task-force-21st-century-policing>

This paper consists of "[w]ritten testimony of Nicholas Turner, president and director of the Vera Institute of Justice, on the topic of building trust and legitimacy between law enforcement agencies and communities they serve.... Turner discusses how trust between police and communities has been damaged by the ascendancy of policing strategies organized around arresting large numbers of people for low-level crimes and the wide-scale use of punitive interventions—such as stop, question, and frisk—and encourages police leadership to experiment with a philosophy of fewer arrests, summonses, and intrusions in the name of crime prevention."

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY

Sex, Contraception, or Abortion? Explaining Class Gaps in Unintended Childbearing. By Richard V. Reeves, et al. Brookings Institution. Feb. 2015. 14 p.

http://www.brookings.edu/~media/research/files/papers/2015/02/26-class-gaps-unintended-pregnancy/26_class_gaps_unintended_pregnancy.pdf

“Control of fertility varies widely between income groups. Most unmarried women are sexually active, regardless of income. But women with higher incomes are much more successful at ensuring that sex does not lead to an accidental baby.... [T]hey have more to lose from an unintended birth. Improving the economic and educational prospects of poorer women is therefore an important part of any strategy to reduce unintended birth rates. But there are more immediate solutions, too. Affluent women use contraception more frequently and more effectively, and there is a clear case for policies to help close this income gap, including increasing access to long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARCs). But access to affordable abortion also matters, and this is currently limited for many low-income women.”

EDUCATION

Computer Science in High School Graduation Requirements. By Jennifer Dounay Zinth. Education Commission of the States. Apr. 2015. 4 p.

<http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/01/18/29/11829.pdf>

Only 14 states require that students be allowed to apply computer science courses towards high school graduation requirements in math, science or foreign language. In four states, students can use computer science credits to earn a special diploma or endorsement to the standard high school diploma. California and Arizona give local school district boards the authority to award math or science credit for computer science classes. The research suggests that allowing computer science credits to fulfill high school graduation requirements could encourage more students to take these courses and continue this study in college.

EMPLOYMENT

The High Public Cost of Low Wages: By Ken Jacobs, et al. UC Berkeley Labor Center. Apr. 2015. 11 p.

<http://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/pdf/2015/the-high-public-cost-of-low-wages.pdf>

“Reliance on public assistance can be found among workers in a diverse range of occupations. Three of the occupations with particularly high levels of public assistance program utilization that have been recently analyzed are front-line fast food workers, child care providers, and home care workers.... [In addition] [f]ully one-quarter of part-time college faculty and their families are enrolled in at least one of the public assistance programs analyzed in this report.” From 2009-11, the annual state cost for California working families for Medicaid/CHIP and TANF was 50% (approximately \$3.7m.) of the total state cost of the programs (approximately \$7.3m.).

Low-wage California: 2014 Chartbook. UC Berkeley Labor Center. Apr. 2015. 43 p.

<http://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/pdf/2014/chartbook.pdf>

California’s low-wage workers are those 18-64 year olds who earned less than \$13.63 per hour working for someone else (not self-employed) during 2014. These 4.7 million Californians are often less educated, but 10% of low-wage workers have bachelor’s degrees. Nearly 30% are represented in the retail and food industries. Whites and Latino/as comprise equal proportions of California workers, but the latter comprise over half of those working for a low wage. Across race/ethnic categories women are roughly half of those earning lower wages. Union membership and employer-sponsored health insurance and pension plans

are less frequently offered to low-wage workers than they are for California workers overall. Job quality is also lower, and they experience wage theft, lack of paid sick days, and on-call scheduling.

ENERGY

The Persistence of Moral Suasion and Economic Incentives: Field Experimental Evidence from Energy Demand. By Koichiro Ito, et al. E2e Working Paper 017. Feb. 2015. 44 p.
<http://e2e.haas.berkeley.edu/pdf/workingpapers/WP017.pdf>

“Firms and governments often use moral suasion and economic incentives to influence intrinsic and extrinsic motivations for various economic activities.” This study experimentally assigned participating households to either “moral suasion” treatments, dynamic pricing for electricity use during peak hours, or a control group. “Using household-level consumption data for 30-minute intervals, we find significant short-run effects of moral suasion, but the effects diminished quickly after repeated interventions. Economic incentives produced larger and persistent effects, which induced habit formation after the final interventions.”

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

Parcel Taxes as a Local Revenue Source. By Jon Sonstelie. Public Policy Institute of California. Apr. 2015. 24 p.
http://www.ppic.org/content/pubs/report/R_415JSR.pdf

Local governments in the state are assuming greater control for corrections and school funding. “However, a stronger local public sector requires ... adequate revenue, a concern since the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978. That initiative limited property tax increases and replaced locally determined rates with a statewide rate, thereby constraining local government finances. In many cases, local governments have responded by turning to another source of revenue - the parcel tax. The parcel tax is a tax on parcels of real property collected as part of a property tax bill. Unlike the property tax, the parcel tax cannot be based on property value.... This report evaluates the parcel tax based on standard principles of taxation.... It finds that a well-designed parcel tax can be a worthwhile fiscal institution for California.”

HEALTH

County Health Status Profiles 2015. California Department of Public Health, et al. Mar. 2015. 102 p.
<http://www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/ohir/Documents/OHIRProfiles2015.pdf>

“The County Health Status Profiles 2015, released as part of national Public Health Week (April 6-12, 2015), provides statewide and county-level data to help guide the course of health promotion and preventive services. For many of the diseases and conditions, California achieved goals established in the Healthy People 2020 national objectives, which serve as a guide to improve the health of people across the nation.... While the report highlights progress that’s been made, there are some chronic conditions that have failed to show an improvement. Those include age-adjusted death rates for diabetes, Alzheimer’s disease and chronic liver disease.” (*Press release*, Apr. 6, 2015).

HUMAN SERVICES

***The Poor Get Prison: The Alarming Spread of the Criminalization of Poverty.* By Karen Dolan, et al. Institute for Policy Studies. Mar. 2015. 35 p.**

<http://www.ips-dc.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/IPS-The-Poor-Get-Prison-Final.pdf>

“Poor people, especially people of color, face a far greater risk of being fined, arrested, and even incarcerated for minor offenses than other Americans.... [The forms of criminalizing poverty are] the targeting of poor people with fines and fees for misdemeanors and the resurgence of debtors’ prisons.... mass incarceration of poor ethnic minorities for non-violent offenses and the barriers to employment and re-entry into society once they have served their sentences; excessive punishment of poor children that creates a ‘school-to-prison pipeline’; increase in arrests of homeless people and people feeding the homeless.... and confiscating what little resources and property poor people might have through ‘civil asset forfeiture.’”

TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

***21st Century Infrastructure: Keeping California Connected, Powered, and Competitive.* By Sean Randolph, et al. Bay Area Council Economic Institute. Apr. 2015. 48 p.**

<http://documents.bayareacouncil.org/21cii.pdf>

This report “finds that California needs new approaches to managing the exploding growth of digital technologies consumers and businesses are demanding and the rapid changes in how the state produces, stores and delivers energy to its 37 million residents...[and] offers a series of recommendations for enabling California to keep pace with the rapid onslaught of new technologies that will require moving, storing and processing massive amounts of data, connecting people with each other through mobile networks and connecting a new generation of digital products and services that communicate with each other and everything else (the Internet of Things).” (*Press release*, Apr. 13, 2015).

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