



## Studies in the News

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

*Digital Evidence and the U.S. Criminal Justice System.* By Sean E. Goodison, et al. RAND. 2015.

32 p.

[http://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR890.html](http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR890.html)

“This report describes the results of a National Institute of Justice (NIJ)-sponsored research effort to identify and prioritize criminal justice needs related to digital evidence collection, management, analysis, and use.... Several top-tier needs emerged from the analysis, including education of prosecutors and judges regarding digital evidence opportunities and challenges; training for patrol officers and investigators to promote better collection and preservation of digital evidence; tools for detectives to triage analysis of digital evidence in the field; development of regional models to make digital evidence analysis capability available to small departments; and training to address concerns about maintaining the currency of training and technology available to digital forensic examiners.”

## ECONOMY

***The Equality of Opportunity Project.* By Raj Chetty, et al. Harvard University, NBER. May 2015.**

<http://www.equality-of-opportunity.org/>

**Report. 145 p.:** [http://www.equality-of-opportunity.org/images/nbhds\\_paper.pdf](http://www.equality-of-opportunity.org/images/nbhds_paper.pdf)

“How can we improve economic opportunities for low-income children? The Equality of Opportunity Project uses ‘big data’ to develop new answers to this question. The previous phase of the project presented statistics on how upward mobility varies across areas of the U.S. and over time. In the current phase, we focus on families who moved across areas to study how neighborhoods affect upward mobility. We find that every year of exposure to a better environment improves a child’s chances of success, both in a national quasi-experimental study of five million families and in a re-analysis of the Moving to Opportunity Experiment. We use the new methodology and data to present estimates of the causal effect of each county in America on upward mobility.”

## EDUCATION

***Finishing Last: Girls of Color and School Sports Opportunities.* By Fatima Goss Graves, et al. National Women’s Law Center. 2015. 24 p.**

[http://www.nwlc.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/final\\_nwlc\\_girlsfinishinglast\\_report.pdf](http://www.nwlc.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/final_nwlc_girlsfinishinglast_report.pdf)

“While heavily minority schools typically have fewer resources and provide fewer spots on teams compared to heavily white schools, they also allocate those fewer spots unequally such that girls of color get less than their fair share. So even though girls overall still receive fewer opportunities to play sports than boys, girls in heavily minority schools are especially shortchanged. In fact, nationwide, 40% of heavily minority schools have large ‘female opportunity gaps,’ compared to only 16% of heavily white schools.” This gap deprives these girls of potentially beneficial health, academic and employment outcomes. Researchers offer recommendations to state, local and federal policymakers on addressing the problem of sports inequality among girls of color.

***A Better Start: Why Classroom Diversity Matters in Early Education.* By Jeanne L. Reid, et al. National Center for Children and Families. Apr. 2015. 34 p.**

[http://tcf.org/assets/downloads/A\\_Better\\_Start.pdf](http://tcf.org/assets/downloads/A_Better_Start.pdf)

“This report presents the results of a review and analysis of demographic data, current research, and position statements of national early childhood organizations, emphasizing the following findings. The demographic data reveal troubling racial/ethnic and economic disparities in preschool enrollment and in the quality of preschool that children experience, which beckon policy changes to provide all families with access to affordable, high-quality preschool options. Among families who do enroll, most children attend classrooms that are homogenous in family income, and often in race/ethnicity as well.” The researchers recommend that policymakers create an equity component to high-quality preschool, strengthen professional development for teachers working in diverse classrooms, and encourage an increase in preschool enrollment among ethnically/racially diverse families.

## EMPLOYMENT

***California Employment Report: March 2015.* California Center for Jobs and the Economy. Apr. 24, 2015. 8 p.**

<http://centerforjobs.org/job-reports/march-2015/>

“For both California and the U.S., improvement in the unemployment rate has come primarily as the unemployed have shifted to employed status or left the workforce. There has been little change in the overall labor force ... and the labor force participation rate has again declined. While significantly

improved over prior years, the current job creation rate has yet to be strong enough—except for some centers such as the Bay Area—to put upward pressure on wages and draw persons back into the workforce.”

***Increasing Education: What it Will and Will Not Do for Earnings and Earnings Inequality.***  
By Brad Herschbein, et al. Brookings Institution. Mar. 31, 2015. 11 p.

<http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/up-front/posts/2015/03/31-what-increasing-education-will-and-wont-do-for-earnings-inequality-hershbein-kearney-summers>

“In recent decades, the earnings of those with a college degree or more have risen steadily, while the wages of those with lower levels of education have stagnated or fallen.... We have empirically simulated what would happen to the distribution of earnings if one out of every ten men aged 25–64 who did not have a bachelor’s degree were to instantly obtain one.... Our empirical simulation supports the following general observations: 1. Increasing the educational attainment of men without a college degree will increase their average earnings and their likelihood of being employed. 2. Increasing educational attainment will not significantly change overall earnings inequality. 3. Increasing educational attainment will, however, reduce inequality in the bottom half of the earnings distribution, largely by pulling up the earnings of those near the 25th percentile.”

## GENERAL GOVERNMENT

***Legislating Evidence-Based Policymaking: A Look at State Laws that Support Data-Driven Decision-Making.*** The Pew Charitable Trusts, et al. Mar. 2015. 8 p.

<http://www.pewtrusts.org/~media/Assets/2015/03/LegislationResultsFirstBriefMarch2015.pdf?la=en>

“Under increasing pressure to demonstrate effectiveness and do more with less, many governments are expanding their use of evidence-based programs—those shown in rigorous evaluations to be effective. Committing to such proven programs can help governments strengthen efficiency and accountability and achieve better outcomes for residents.” This brief examines that trend by reviewing state statutes passed between 2004 and 2014, identifying five strategies, and looking at how state governments have used them to increase evidence-based policymaking.

## HEALTH

***Stigma, Discrimination, and Well-Being Among California Adults Experiencing Mental Health Challenges.*** By Eunice C. Wong, et al. RAND. Apr. 23, 2015. 14 p.

[http://www.rand.org/pubs/research\\_reports/RR1074.html](http://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1074.html)

“[N]early 9 in 10 Californians who reported having a mental health problem in the past 12 months said they had experienced discrimination because of it. Most often, respondents reported discrimination in intimate social relationships. But more than 40% also reported ‘high levels of discrimination at school, in the workplace, and from health care providers and law enforcement officials,’ the study said.... RAND completed the study as part of an evaluation of the California Mental Health Services Authority’s prevention and early intervention programs, designed to improve mental health outcomes.” (*KQED blog*, Apr. 23, 2015).

## HUMAN SERVICES

***No Mystery Why SNAP Enrollment Remains High: It's Still the Economy.*** By Chad Stone, et al. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. Updated Mar. 18, 2015. 12 p.

<http://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/7-29-13fa.pdf>

“[A] critical reason SNAP [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program] enrollment and costs are still high is because the job market has continued to exhibit scars from the Great Recession that the unemployment rate does not fully reflect.... [T]here is still considerable ‘slack’ in the labor market (people not working who want to be, or people who want to be working more hours than they are).... The historical record shows that declines in poverty and SNAP enrollment typically lag behind improvements in the unemployment rate following recessions. As the job market improves and fewer families thus need food assistance, SNAP enrollment and costs should come down.”

## TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE

***Improving Freight System Performance in Metropolitan Areas: A Planning Guide.***

By José Holguín-Veras, et al. National Cooperative Freight Research Program. Apr. 23, 2015. 214 p.

[http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/ncfrp/ncfrp\\_rpt\\_033.pdf](http://onlinepubs.trb.org/onlinepubs/ncfrp/ncfrp_rpt_033.pdf)

“Many of the challenges affecting the freight system, from congestion to land use conflicts to community acceptance, arise in metropolitan areas.... The lack of knowledge and experience with freight in metropolitan planning agencies has often precluded an effective response to the challenges.... [This report] provides a regional public planning guide that identifies potential strategies and practical solutions for public and private stakeholders to improve freight movement system performance in diverse metropolitan areas. The Guide is intended to serve as a comprehensive reference for all portions of a metropolitan area, from the urban core to more suburban and exurban areas (urban fringe).”

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