CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT
How ‘crime blindness’ affects witness testimony

CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY
Algorithms as discriminatory as humans in setting higher mortgage rates for blacks, Latinos

ECONOMY
New research challenges Piketty’s World Inequality Report

EDUCATION
Audit: Poorer, smaller schools tend to offer less college prep

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Study shows relationship between higher minimum wage, lower recidivism rate

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Ocean warming trend appears to be accelerating

GENERAL GOVERNMENT
CA ranked as most equitable tax system in U.S.
FPPC map shows 2018 violations, fines, settlements by CA county

HEALTH
U.S. suicide rates vary widely across occupational groups

HUMAN SERVICES
2018 point-in-time estimate of homelessness

CRIMINAL JUSTICE & LAW ENFORCEMENT

https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2372732218786749

“People often experience crime blindness—the failure to see an accident or crime that occurs directly in front of them—if they are focused on some other activity. With attention focused on something elsewhere, potential witnesses will experience both awareness and memory problems…. Interviewers and jurors may be surprised that witnesses could fail to notice an accident or crime that occurs directly in front of them.
Education concerning attention failures and crime blindness may be important [and] new standards should be developed to assess the attention focus and reliability of eyewitnesses.”

**CULTURE & DEMOGRAPHY**

http://faculty.haas.berkeley.edu/morse/research/papers/discrim.pdf

“[A]lgorithmic credit scoring using big data is no better than humans at evening the playing field when it comes to determining home mortgage interest rates. Both online and human lenders earn 11 to 17% higher profits off minority borrowers by charging African Americans and Latinos steeper rates…. Black and Latino consumers pay 5.6 to 8.6 basis points higher interest on home purchase loans than their white or Asian counterparts with similar credit profiles—no matter whether they obtained their loans through a face-to-face process or online…. The disparity results in African Americans and Latinos, together, paying up to a half a billion dollars more in mortgage interest each year, the study found…. The findings are significant as more consumers shop for mortgages online.” *(Washington Post*, Nov. 14, 2018).

**ECONOMY**


“The ground-breaking, systematic and transparent methodology on which the WIR [World Inequality Report] rests is largely the use of tax records…. These Piketty and his colleagues argue are more complete, comprehensive, and comparable across countries and through time than the generally-used alternative,… The WIR authors write disparagingly of the ‘Gini index’—the inequality measure most prevalent in such surveys…. The review shows that by comparison with payroll and survey data, available records from tax files are relatively sparse, and biased toward wealthier countries and those that were once British colonies, which imposed income tax. It shows that tax data are far less consistent with survey and payroll records than are the latter two with each other … while a misunderstanding of the nature of low-income tax filers in the US leads to a dramatic but nonsensical claim that the earnings of the bottom 50% of Americans have ‘collapsed’ in recent decades.” *(INET*, Jan. 2, 2019).

https://wir2018.wid.world/

“The World Inequality Report 2018 relies on a cutting-edge methodology to measure income and wealth inequality in a systematic and transparent manner. … Income inequality varies greatly across world regions. It is lowest in Europe and highest in the Middle East…. In recent decades, income inequality has increased in nearly all countries, but at different speeds, suggesting that institutions and policies matter in shaping inequality…. We document a dramatic collapse of the bottom 50% income share in the United States since 1980 but not in other advanced economies.”
EDUCATION


“Students in relatively poor and small schools had less access to high school courses that help prepare them for college…. While most public high schools, regardless of poverty level, offered courses like algebra and biology, disparities in access were associated with school poverty level for more advanced courses like calculus, physics, and those that may allow students to earn college credit, like Advanced Placement (AP) courses…. GAO’s regression analysis also showed that smaller schools and certain types of schools, like charter schools, are less likely to offer the college preparatory math or science courses that many colleges look for during the admissions process.”

EMPLOYMENT

https://voxeu.org/article/minimum-wage-income-tax-credits-and-criminal-recidivism

“Individuals with a criminal record face difficulties in the labour market that can compel them to reoffend. This column reveals how increases in the minimum wage in the US reduce the likelihood of recently released felons being reincarcerated, while an income-related tax subsidy has a similar effect for women, but not men. The results suggest significant welfare benefits from policies that help raise wages above the potential income from criminal activity.”

ENERGY & ENVIRONMENT

http://science.sciencemag.org/content/363/6423/128/tab-pdf

“[This report] found that the warming of the oceans was accelerating and was matching the predictions of climate change models, which have shown global temperature rises are likely to lead to extreme weather across the world…. Separate recently published research extrapolated temperature estimates for the oceans for the past 150 years, and found substantial warming. Published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences … research found the total heat taken up by the oceans in the last century and a half was about 1,000 times the annual energy use of the world’s population.” (The Guardian, Jan. 10, 2019).

GENERAL GOVERNMENT

https://itep.org/whopays/
Tax inequality map: https://itep.org/whopays-map/

This report ranks California as the most equitable tax system in the United States. “States and localities are filling their coffers by disproportionately burdening lower-income residents, who are taxed at a higher effective rate than top earners…. The 50-state analysis by the nonpartisan Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy found that the lower one’s income, the higher the effective overall state and local tax rate. The study includes sales taxes, excise taxes, user fees and income taxes. In fact, states which boast low income taxes are often the most likely to have systems that end up shifting the fiscal burden to
lower-income residents…. Further, people who choose to live in states with little or no income tax might find they end up paying more than if they lived in a state with higher income taxes.” (U.S. News & World Report, Oct. 17, 2018).

http://www.fppc.ca.gov/transparency/heat-map.html

This “heat map” by the Fair Political Practices Commission shows the number of cases and violations by county in the past year. The top five counties that generated FPPC prosecutions were: Los Angeles (51); Sacramento (18); Santa Clara (15); San Bernardino (12); and San Diego and Fresno counties (both 11). According to the 2018 annual report, the FPPC successfully resolved 1,243 cases, which included 235 settlements totaling over $499,000 in fines.

HEALTH

https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/wr/mm6745a1.htm

“To better understand suicide among different occupational groups and inform suicide prevention efforts, CDC analyzed suicide deaths by Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) major groups for decedents aged 16–64 years from the 17 states participating in both the 2012 and 2015 National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS).” The report found that suicide rates varied widely across occupational groups. “Among males, the largest suicide rate increase from 2012 to 2015 (47%) occurred in the Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media group (from 26.9 to 39.7), and among females (54%) in the Food Preparation and Serving Related group (from 6.1 to 9.4).”

HUMAN SERVICES


“The Annual Homeless Assessment Report to Congress (AHAR) Part 1 provides Point-in-Time (PIT) estimates, offering a snapshot of homelessness—both sheltered and unsheltered—on a single night…. In 2018, roughly 553,000 people were experiencing homelessness in the United States…. Homelessness increased (though modestly) for the second year in a row…. African Americans are considerably overrepresented among the homeless population compared to the overall U.S. population.” California had the largest numbers of people experiencing homelessness (24% or 129,972 people). This number decreased by 1.2% (1,560 fewer people) between 2017 and 2018.

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