COVID-19 AND THE CRISIS: VULNERABILITIES IN LOS ANGELES

MANUEL PASTOR

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THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Population</th>
<th>% Cases</th>
<th>% Deaths</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>31.2%</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AAPI</td>
<td>43.5%</td>
<td>61.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed/Other</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

COVID-19 Cases and Deaths by Race for Californians Aged 18-49, May 13, 2020
THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS

Even before pattern began to be clear, community partners (particularly from South LA) asked USC’s Program for Environmental & Regional Equity (PERE) to look at certain vulnerable populations in Los Angeles: the elderly, the undocumented, renters, and children on the other side of the digital divide.
To do this and more for this project, we analyzed six data sets:

- the 2014-2018 American Community Survey (ACS) micro-data (so that we could devise customized disaggregations),
- the 2014-2018 ACS summary files which are best for mapping and other sorts of geographic analysis,
- a special version of the 2013-2017 ACS in which we previously estimated legal status,
- a customized self-pooled version of the 2016, 2017, 2018 ACS micro data to better estimate digital divide,
- 2017 ESRI Business Analyst data, &
- the 2014-2018 California Health Interview Survey.

So here’s (part of!) what we found:
Because Los Angeles is a high-cost area, economists tend to look at those living below 150% of the poverty level. The share of seniors living below that is much higher in South LA than in the City or the County.

Note: Data reflect a 2014 through 2018 average.
The share of seniors living below 150% of the poverty level in the County varies dramatically by race & nativity.

Source: USC Program for Environmental and Regional Equity analysis of the 2018 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA. Note: Data reflect a 2014 through 2018 average.

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The share of seniors living without family members (not in assisted living) is higher for African Americans and whites, lower for Latinos and Asians.

Note: Data reflect a 2014 through 2018 average.
But the **poverty rates** for all seniors of color living alone is much higher than for whites.

Note: Data reflect a 2014 through 2018 average.
More generally, there are significant racial disparities in terms of not just health insurance but access to care.

Does not have a usual source of care (when sick or need health advice),
Los Angeles County, 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>API</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed-Race/Other</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Undocumented workers are a significant share of employed workers, especially in the City and South LA. They are often in industries that will be hard-hit & lack access to needed support.

Percent of Employed Workers (Age 25-64) Who Lack Legal Status, L.A. County, 2017

- L.A. County: 12%
- L.A. City: 16%
- South L.A.: 27%

Note: Data reflect a 2013 through 2017 average.
While undocumented workers are 12 percent of overall employment up to one-third of those in occupations that are hard-hit by the COVID-19 crisis, such as janitorial and food services. They also are a large share of workers in occupations that are essential for all of us to keep going, such as farming, production and transportation.

Percent of Employed Workers (Age 25-64) Who Lack Legal Status, Selected Occupations in L.A. County, 2017

- All occupations: 12%
- Janitorial services: 33%
- Food services: 28%
- Farming, fishing & forestry: 33%
- Production: 29%
- Transportation: 20%

Note: Data reflect a 2013 through 2017 average.
Among food service occupations in the County, there are about 67,000 cooks and nearly 27,000 of them are undocumented. Among janitorial service occupations, there are over 18,000 undocumented janitors and 27,000 undocumented housekeepers.

Workers (Age 25-64) by Immigration Status, Selected Food and Janitorial Services Occupations in L.A. County, 2017

- Immigrant, undocumented
- Immigrant, documented
- U.S. born

Note: Data reflect a 2013 through 2017 average. Figures are rounded to the nearest 100,
Nearly 19 percent of L.A. County residents are either undocumented or living with a family member who is undocumented. This is partly because of the long-settled nature of the population: 69% of undocumented Angelenos have been in the U.S. for a decade or longer.

![Immigration Status and Family Ripple Effects, Los Angeles County, 2017](image)

Note: Data reflect a 2013 through 2017 average. Figures are rounded to the nearest 100.
L.A. County has a large share of the state’s undocumented Californians and children of undocumented, many of whom will not be eligible for federal relief programs as they are currently designed; local and state programs will be key.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual, Household, and Family Statistics for California, Los Angeles County, &amp; Los Angeles City, 2017</th>
<th>Numbers by Geography</th>
<th>Share in Geography</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>California</td>
<td>LA County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Residents</td>
<td>39,368,000</td>
<td>10,233,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Undocumented Californians</td>
<td>2,504,000</td>
<td>835,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of which, Number of DACA Recipients</td>
<td>200,000</td>
<td>66,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Households</td>
<td>12,888,000</td>
<td>3,295,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Households with at least one undocumented adult</td>
<td>1,234,000</td>
<td>412,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Families</td>
<td>14,777,000</td>
<td>3,798,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families with at least one undocumented adult</td>
<td>1,488,000</td>
<td>498,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many minor children by geography?</td>
<td>9,139,000</td>
<td>2,280,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many minor children with at least one parent who is undocumented?</td>
<td>1,649,000</td>
<td>506,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many married adult couples?</td>
<td>6,956,000</td>
<td>1,650,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many married adult couples are mixed status, where one spouse is undocumented and the other spouse is a LPR or US citizen?</td>
<td>470,000</td>
<td>137,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How many children in mixed status families (one parent undocumented, the other not)?</td>
<td>712,000</td>
<td>200,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: USC CSII analysis of 2017 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA. Data represent a 2013 through 2017 average. Overall population numbers may be slightly higher than in usually reported statistics because of adjusted weights used to account for undercount of undocumented Californians.
Children are heading to home-based instruction, but the digital divide by race persists.

Percent of Children (Age 18 or Under) Who Attend K-12 And Lack a Computer & High-Speed Internet at Home by Race, L.A. County, 2018

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Percent Lack of Computer &amp; High-Speed Internet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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Source: USC Program for Environmental and Regional Equity analysis of pooled 2016-2018 1-year American Community Survey microdata files from IPUMS USA. Note: Data reflect a 2016 through 2018 average.
And high housing costs means finding enough space in the house for learning is more challenging for some than others.

Percent of Children (<= 18 years) Who Attend K-12 Living in Overcrowded Households by Race, L.A. County, 2018

Note: Overcrowded households are defined as having more than 1.5 persons per room.
Many of L.A. County’s residents work in **small business** establishments.

![Chart showing share of employees by establishment size by industry in Los Angeles County, 2017.](chart)

Source: USC PERE analysis of 2017 ESRI Business Analyst Data. Note: Universe includes businesses with one or more employees. Employee data reported by establishment location. Individual businesses may have multiple establishments.
There is significant racial segregation of the elderly in Los Angeles County.

Population age 65 or older, by census tract
(1 dot = 50 people)

- Black
- Latino
- Asian or Pacific Islander
- Native American
- White

Source: USC Program for Environmental and Regional Equity analysis of the 2018 5-year American Community Survey summary file. Note: Data reflect a 2014 through 2018 average. All groups except white may include people of Hispanic or Latino origin who identify racially as indicated by the legend.
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Population age 65 or older, by census tract
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There are significant disparities in where the elderly poor live in Los Angeles County.
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This map shows the pattern when we adjust up the poverty line to 150% of the poverty level, more appropriate for L.A. County.

Population age 65 or older below 150% poverty level, by census tract

1 dot = 25 people

Source: USC Program for Environmental and Regional Equity analysis of the 2018 5-year American Community Survey summary file. Note: Data reflect a 2014 through 2018 average. 150 percent of the federal poverty level for a family of four is about $38,500 annually.
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Rent-burdened households are households paying more than 30 percent of their income on rent. That’s a large number of renters in high-cost Los Angeles County.

Rent burdened households, by census tract
1 dot = 50 households

Source: USC Program for Environmental and Regional Equity analysis of the 2018 5-year American Community Survey summary file. Note: Data reflect a 2014 through 2018 average. Rent burdened households are defined as those that spend at least 30 percent of income on rent and utilities.
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Severely rent-burdened households are paying more than 50 percent of their income on rental housing. That is an especially acute problem in mid-city, South LA, part of Northeast LA, and Long Beach.

Severely rent burdened households, by census tract
- 1 dot = 50 households

Source: USC Program for Environmental and Regional Equity analysis of the 2018 5-year American Community Survey summary file. Note: Data reflect a 2014 through 2018 average. Severely rent burdened households are defined as those that spend at least 50 percent of income on rent and utilities.
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All this is occurring against a backdrop of elevated health risk due to air pollution (with data here from our Environmental Justice Screening Method).
And the pattern is even more striking when we consider **cumulative impacts** in which we take into account **health risk, hazard proximity, and social vulnerability** (from our Environmental Justice Screening Method).
The share of Angelenos who are undocumented varies across the county, with high concentration in the Southeast cities, mid-City, and in the eastern San Fernando Valley.

For details on estimates of the undocumented population visit: https://dornsife.usc.edu/assets/sites/731/docs/Methodology_Final_updated_ETN_2017.pdf
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The share of Angeleno children who have at least one undocumented parent follows a generally similar pattern, but with a specific concentration in Historic South Central.

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Children with at least one undocumented parent, by PUMA

- Lower than 8.4%
- 8.5% - 17.1%
- 17.2% - 25.2%
- Higher than 36.7%
- L.A. City

Source: USC Program for Environmental and Regional Equity analysis of 2017 5-year American Community Survey microdata from IPUMS USA and the 2008 Survey of Income and Program Participation. Note: Universe includes children with at least one immigrant parent whose parents live in the same household. Data represent a 2013 through 2017 average.
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A key public health principle – evident in this crisis – is to protect ourselves, **we must protect everyone.** For too long, in L.A. and the U.S., we have instead left the most vulnerable behind.

This is a time to make sure that our short-run measures to address the COVID-19 crisis take into account the situations of all Angelenos and set the long-term platform for a more inclusive and sustainable economy and society.
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