

NEW PERSPECTIVES

U.S. COMMISSION ON CIVIL RIGHTS SUMMER 1988



Blacks on TV: Adjusting the Image
by Martha Bayles

Affirmative Action Programs That Work
by Carl Hoffmann

Two Views on Federally Subsidized Housing
by Craig Flournoy and Irving Welfeld

Women's Studies, Ersatz Scholarship
by Michael Levin

Editorial

Segregated Housing: The Reasons Why

Residential segregation by race may be the area of American life left most untouched by the landmark civil rights legislation of the 1960s. Despite the passage of the Fair Housing Act of 1968, American blacks—of all social classes—live, by and large, with other blacks. The persistence of these patterns profoundly influences society's ability to achieve meaningful and lasting integration, not only in housing but in all our institutions, from public schools to places of employment.

Though many means of preserving and maintaining integrated neighborhoods have been tried, most have failed to overcome the problem of resegregation. The causes of racial isolation are, of course, complex—certainly race prejudice continues to impede our efforts; but it is difficult to determine the extent to which specific illegal actions (as opposed to, say, income differences or personal choice) perpetuate segregatory housing patterns.

In this issue, *New Perspectives* takes up one aspect of the question of racially segregated housing: the financing of public or private housing by the federal government. After investigating federally assisted housing across the country, Craig Flournoy of the *Dallas Morning News* asserts that discrimination accounts in large part for the contrast between the shabby, dangerous federally assisted housing provided to American black families and the well-equipped, well-maintained facilities that house America's (predominantly white) elderly. Irving Welfeld, on the other hand, takes a look at the history of publicly subsidized housing and argues that other factors, probably of greater significance than discrimination, have made the development of racially integrated housing difficult.

Over the next few years the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights will examine in depth the extent of discrimination in housing. Beginning in 1986, the Commission will sponsor hearings concerned with many aspects of the housing situation. The following year it will begin work on a major study on changing racial patterns in housing to assess the various factors that encourage or discourage the integration of America's neighborhoods. ▣

M.G.

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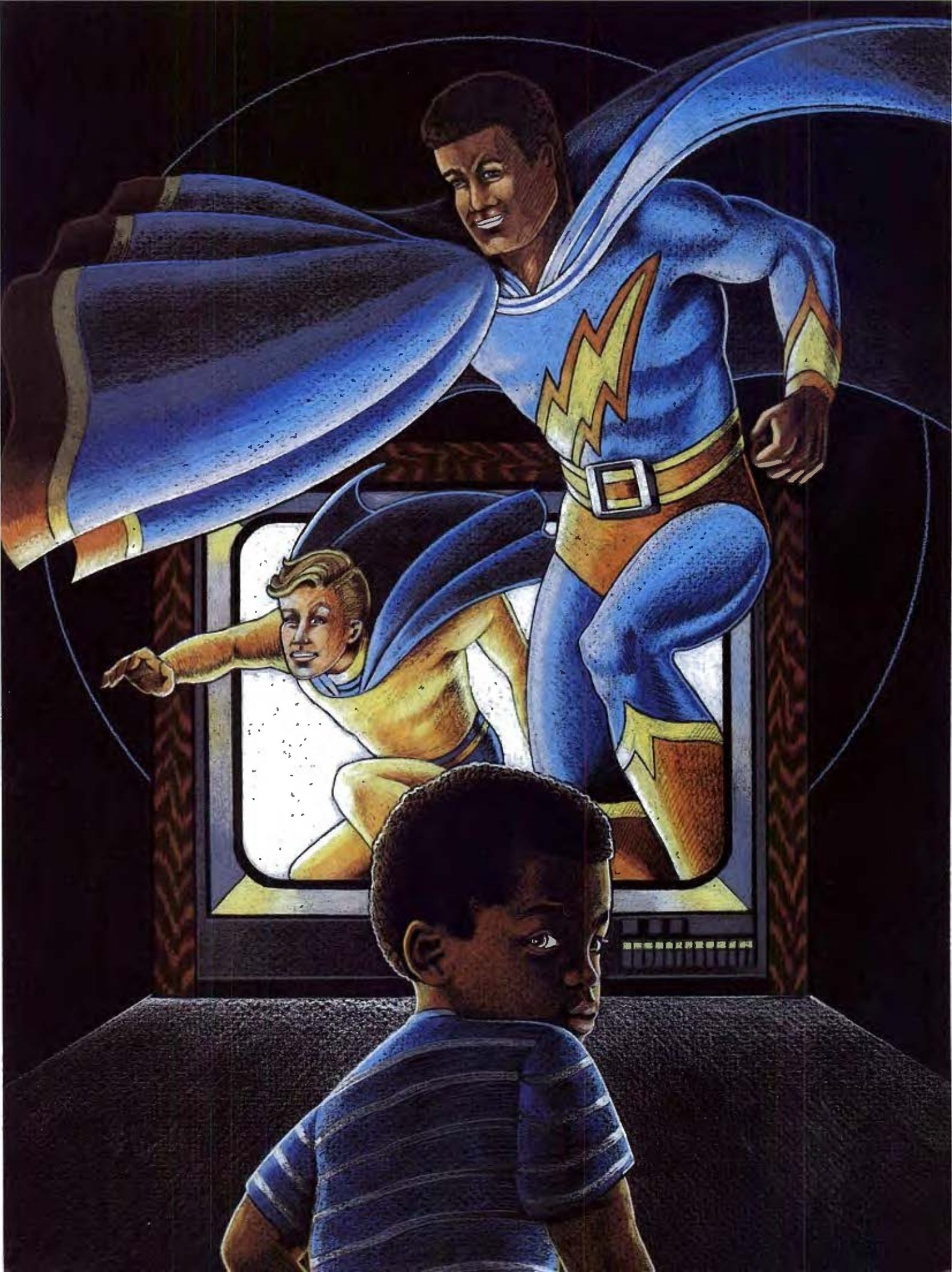
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Blacks On TV: **ADJUSTING** *the Image*

by Martha Bayles

I met a Martian the other day, who made the most extraordinary observation about American race relations—a subject which intrigues him, coming as he does from a planet where everybody is the same shade of green. His last visit to Earth was in the 1850s, and although he is impressed with our technological advancements, such as television, he stated unequivocally that our social arrangements had not changed. White Americans, he declared after watching a couple of TV shows, still consider it their duty to provide physical and emotional support to the black race, whom they regard as childlike and mentally inferior.

When asked how he reached this remarkable conclusion, my green friend simply waved his antennae at the nearest VCR and on came an episode of “Webster,” followed by “Diff’rent Strokes.” As I viewed these current sitcoms, in which blacks live as adopted children in affluent white families who love them for being so cute and so incapable of growing up, I began to see that the Martian perspective made sense. Stripped of their liberal pretensions, these programs present a paternalistic fantasy of black-white relations which would not be out of place in the antebellum South.

Out of sympathy for Gary Coleman and Emmanuel Lewis, the young stars of these shows (who are both in real life considerably older than their size suggests), I hastened to observe that both play bright, precocious characters with better sense than the whites—and that the same is true of Nell Carter, who plays a housekeeper on “Gimme A Break,” and Robert Guillaume of “Benson.”

But perhaps because Martians are only three feet tall them-

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How have such racial atavisms come to dominate the 1980s airwaves?

selves and have excellent memories, my friend was not impressed by the difference between such compliments and those lavished on capable slaves by affectionate masters back in the 19th century. The household in question is still white; and although the blacks may say clever or wise things and wield some authority, they are not the real bosses. With the exception of Benson, whose role has been upgraded from butler to lieutenant governor, they seem perfectly content—even grateful—to belong to white people instead of to their own. In other words, they are “happy darkies.”

I assured this extraterrestrial pundit that a great deal had happened in the last 130 years that was not reflected in these few TV images, and he said he would take my word for it. But as he flew off in his interplanetary flivver, I was left with the perplexing question which his mistaken perception had raised: How have such racial atavisms come to dominate the 1980s airwaves?

First we must define the image of the childlike, contented “darky” not as a reality, but as a stereotype—a comforting myth embraced by slave owners who might otherwise have feared the rebelliousness, violence, and sensuality of their human chattel. Unlike the negative stereotype of the “bad nigger,” which was derived from these frightening traits, the “darky” myth was concocted from lovable traits such as warmth, humor, simplicity, and spontaneity. It insulted blacks not because it focused on the bad, but because in its fearful haste to deny what was threatening, it focused on a ridiculously selective notion of the good.

Today the dynamic is more complicated. White fear and prejudice are not the only reasons why blacks on TV have been reduced to “happy darky” status. There were, after all, several all-black sitcoms during the 1970s that were popular with whites as well as with blacks. Not only did these shows enjoy high ratings at the time, but many of them are still thriving in syndicated reruns in heavily black markets such as Washington, D.C.

Yet in spite of their popularity, these sitcoms did not find favor with minority critics and organizations. According to a 1977 report of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, the dramatic series “Shaft” was attacked for whitewashing the “funky” black image of the movie; sitcoms such as “The Jeffersons” and “Sanford and Son” were considered insulting to blacks’ intelligence; and Florida on “Good Times” was called unrealistic because she stayed home while her husband supported the family.¹

The Commission report, entitled *Window Dressing on the Set: Women and Minorities in Television*, does not originate these criticisms. But it does quote them approvingly, and in its

conclusion lumps them all together as if their diverse claims could be easily reconciled. The report, for example, lists a number of minority and feminist organizations, which have prepared “checklists or guidelines to aid writers, production companies, and the networks to achieve more positive, more diverse, and more realistic portrayals of the people [these organizations] represent.”²

The trouble is, these claims are contradictory. What is “realistic” may not always be “positive;” what is “positive” may not be “diverse;” and in turn, what is “diverse” may not be “realistic.” In the process of trying to satisfy every demand, it is not surprising that TV has come up with strange amalgams like “Webster” and “Diff’rent Strokes.” The blacks come from relatively humble backgrounds (“realistic”) but live wonderful middle-class lives (“positive”) while retaining a wisdom which is distinctively different from that of whites (“diverse”).

What is “realistic” may not always be “positive;” what is “positive” may not be “diverse;” and in turn, what is “diverse” may not be “realistic.” In the process of trying to satisfy every demand, it is not surprising that TV has come up with strange amalgams like “Webster” and “Diff’rent Strokes.”

Of course, one could say the opposite: that these “happy darky” sitcoms are artificial, derogatory, and hopelessly homogenized, which is exactly what a lot of observers, black and white, are currently saying. The debate goes around in circles, partly because many blacks involved don’t really want a blend of the realistic, the positive, and the diverse. Rather, they want what every politicized group wants when it gets around to dictating its own image: the heroic. All the talk since the 1960s about role models and about reassessing black history comes from a deep and understandable desire to see heroic figures who not only overcome adversity but teach others how to do the same.

Since the television industry does try to accommodate the conflicting claims of minority organizations, it has made many efforts to portray black heroism. But because its audience has always been overwhelmingly white, these efforts have never set black heroes against the adversity of white racism without the mitigating presence of sympathetic, and equally heroic, whites. A totally black hero, a Stagolee who single-handedly whups the bigots, has never appeared. Even “Roots,” the top-rated miniseries of all time, which presented the heroic saga of a black family from slavery to the present, was studded with positive white characters. And more recently, the short-lived ABC series about an Air Force family in the 1960s, “Call to Glory,” drama-

tized a local civil rights conflict as occurring chiefly between two white families, one liberal and one segregationist. Obviously white liberals played a significant role in the real civil rights movement. But this program goes overboard, portraying the black family involved as merely standing on the sidelines while the white characters thrash the matter out.

Today the grimmest adversity—and one which TV almost totally evades—lies within the black community itself.

In this way, TV has consistently failed to satisfy the black craving for heroes who accomplish great things on their own. It is a failure which also explains why blacks seem unimpressed with TV's many salt-and-pepper law enforcement teams, starting with "I Spy" in 1965 and continuing through "Magnum, P.I.," "Hill Street Blues," and "Miami Vice" today. In these programs, black heroism is played to the hilt, only never in a racially charged context. No matter how realistic the black cops are, the programs are not, because they sidestep their most racially charged subject: crime.

As media scholars Robert and Linda Lichter have pointed out, television not only ignores the fact that those arrested for serious crime are disproportionately young, black, and poor; it bends over backwards to depict criminals as middle-aged, white, and well-to-do. The Lichters feel that there isn't "anything necessarily invidious about this fact. It was partly criticism from the black community, after all, that led to the disappearance of 'Stepin Fetchit' characters in popular entertainment and made possible a series like 'Roots.'"³

In other words, here is a case where the lobbying of black media organizations has led not to realism, but to its opposite. Don't think, however, that critics are satisfied with seeing blacks as victims. The compilers of *Window Dressing* were equally dismayed by the high "victimization ratio" of non-white, particularly female characters, declaring that such a pattern reinforces the stereotyping of female and minority "weakness" and "vulnerability."⁴

So there we have the argument. Although it is realistic to depict blacks as the victims of crime, it is not diverse. Unless the perpetrator is also black, in which case it is not positive. See how confusing it can get? The upshot, since 1977, has been the kind of police show ("Barney Miller," "Hill Street Blues") which is set in the inner city, but deals largely with white-on-white crime—that is, when it isn't covering up its black-and-white numbers game with an influx of other ethnic groups, chiefly Latinos.

Iwish I could say of minority censorship that it was capable of re-thinking its decisions when times and circumstances change. But to judge from one of the best-known cases in

the business, the "racist" label, once applied, is mighty hard to peel off. Take the case of the TV series "Amos 'n' Andy" produced by CBS between 1951 and 1953 and highly successful in reruns until 1966, when the network took it off the air permanently due to intense pressure from the NAACP. In a documentary that has been airing on independent stations since 1983, observers as diverse as Marla Gibbs (Florence in "The Jeffersons"), Redd Foxx, and Jesse Jackson take issue with the NAACP party line that the show was nothing but a compendium of offensive racial stereotypes.⁵

Mr. Jackson in particular recalls enjoying the show as a child, and says, quite perceptively, that "black people had enough sense to appreciate that they were making fun of people playing roles. Their roles were so limited, we laughed at them, and their roles." Not a bad description of any comic character, from Tartuffe to Archie Bunker (who, by the way, patterns his wonderful malapropisms after those of the irrepressible Kingfish: "Hmmm, that's bubblin' at about a hundred degrees centipede").

According to the documentary's executive producer, Michael Avery, officials of the NAACP roared with laughter at a private screening of old "Amos 'n' Andy" episodes but refused to be interviewed on the subject, "for fear of appearing to reverse their condemnation of the program in the 60's."⁶ From this we can deduce one striking fact: that unlike today's sitcoms, which by some stretch of cultural illogic are not considered offensive, "Amos 'n' Andy" was—and still is—funny. By contrast, it's hard to imagine people 30 years from now roaring with laughter at this week's episode of "Gimme A Break."

I fully understand how, in the mid-1960s, at the emotional peak of the civil rights movement, black leaders might have been galled to see the only black faces on TV belonging to a con man, a dupe, a hen-pecked husband, and a mother-in-law to end all mothers-in-law. If ever there were a time to knock off the yuks and get on with the heroics, the mid-1960s was it. But now, two decades later, it is disturbing to see a group of leaders so stalled in the past that they dare not admit that "Amos 'n' Andy" was not racist so much as simply comic, with comedy's tendency to take a dim view of human nature, regardless of color.

Perhaps if TV had been able, over the past 20 years, to depict black heroism overcoming the adversity of white prejudice without white guidance, then both the black critics of TV and those who try to accommodate them would have been able to update their definitions of heroism—and of adversity. White prejudice hasn't disappeared, but protesting is no longer the lonely, hazardous act of courage it was back in the early 1960s. Today the grimmest adversity—and one which TV almost totally evades—lies within the black community itself.

TV prides itself on the "sensitive issues" it treats: incest, drunken driving, Alzheimer's disease. But when it comes to the most sensitive social issue of our time, the fact that millions of

young blacks are succumbing to crime, drugs, and teenage pregnancy, the all-seeing, big-hearted, public-spirited networks remain silent. Black America has a lot on its mind right now: shame, pride, and value conflicts crying out to be dramatized. Yet the only black figure on TV who comes within a country mile of these concerns is the star of a sitcom: Bill Cosby.

To blacks of all classes, the Cosby Show says, "Hold on. We can make it if we just go on teaching our kids the difference between right and wrong."

After suggesting that heroism is incompatible with comedy, it may seem inconsistent of me to say that "The Cosby Show" is heroic. But it is, if only for showing the world that the happy-darkey-in-a-white-setting formula is not necessary for prime time success. Instead of placing one black child in an affluent white setting, Mr. Cosby places *five* black children in an affluent *black* setting. When the show premiered last Fall, Mr. Cosby took a lot of flack for creating an "unrealistic" portrayal of black life.⁷ When the program became a rising tide lifting all of NBC's boats, however, such criticism gave way to praise like that of the *Washington Post's* William Raspberry, who wrote: "You don't have to be poverty-stricken or bitter or smart-ass to be authentic. . . . There is value in letting white America understand that blackness isn't necessarily a pathological condition."⁸

To this I would add that there is value in letting *black* America understand the same thing. "The Cosby Show" focuses on a question crucial to black viewers: How shall we raise our children? Unlike most sitcoms, where the precocious children lecture the un-hip adults, "The Cosby Show" reinforces the authority of parents. The Huxtable family may be upper middle class, but like most families in America, their offspring are exposed to a certain amount of pressure to lie, steal, take drugs, sleep around, abuse their elders, and settle for second best or empty token achievement. In its mild way, this vastly popular TV program says to middle-class whites that their values are OK after all—and that, contrary to the usual message delivered by the popular media, blacks do not want to undermine those values. To blacks of all classes, the show says, "Hold on. We can make it if we just go on teaching our kids the difference between right and wrong."

Heroism of a sort; but I wonder, where is the adversity? How would the Huxtables, who live in a downtown New York brownstone, manage if they lived a hundred blocks north, in an environment where the destructive pressures on their children would be a hundred times greater? Like any successful TV program, "The Cosby Show" gives the illusion of being freer than it is, as evidenced by the one truly dreadful episode of the first season, which guest-starred Tony

Orlando and was set in a Manhattan "community center."

Working as volunteers in the center, the Huxtables encounter a Latino boy who refuses to speak. Mr. Orlando, who plays the center's director, attempts to befriend the boy, but his shyness and remoteness persist. Finally the Huxtables knock off work and go for a picnic in a nearby park, only to encounter the mother of the boy, who explains that her husband was a policeman recently killed in the line of duty. Since then, she explains, her son has had trouble trusting strangers.

Getting a sinking feeling? Good—that means you've been following the discussion. "The Cosby Show" deals with an important reality, that of well-to-do blacks who are succeeding and helping their children succeed. But as evidenced by the episode in the community center, it is no more capable than any other TV show of confronting the other reality, that of poor blacks who are lost in a labyrinth of false and destructive values.

To put it bluntly, which is more artificial: a four-foot tall black teenager snapping out witticisms at the expense of his white parent; or an inner-city community center where everyone is sober, you can picnic in the park without getting mugged, and the biggest problem is a little boy with a loving mother and a heroic father? In a widely quoted interview last Fall, Mr. Cosby said he was "tired of shows that consist of a car crash, a gunman, and a hooker talking to a black pimp. It was cheaper to do a series than to throw out my family's six TV sets."

A clever remark, but also quite revealing of Mr. Cosby's limitations. He may have restored dignity to the sitcom, but he is not about to confront the true nature of the adversity found in city parks and next door to struggling community centers. I would love to see a dramatic series about a black family trying to survive in a hostile world of black gunmen, hookers, pimps, and pushers. Yet because such a series would require week after week of black villains as well as heroes, neither Cosby nor anyone else in TV would touch it with a ten-foot microphone boom. Unless, of course, it could be sold into syndication on Mars. ☐

End Notes

1. U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *Window Dressing on the Set: Women and Minorities in Television* (Washington, D.C., 1977), pp. 19 and 21.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
3. Robert and Linda Lichter, *Prime Time Crime: Criminals and Law Enforcers in TV Entertainment* (Washington, D.C.: The Media Institute, 1983), pp. 23–24.
4. *Window Dressing*, pp. 37–40.
5. "Amos 'n' Andy: Anatomy of a Controversy," a film produced by Michael Avery, San Diego, aired March 1984 and thereafter.
6. Quoted in the *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*, March 29, 1984.
7. These negative criticisms from *The Village Voice* and *Newsweek* are quoted in William Raspberry, "Cosby Show: Black or White," *The Washington Post*, November 5, 1984.
8. *Ibid.*

Women's Studies, Ersatz Scholarship

by Michael Levin

The essentially ideological content of Women's Studies courses, which sets them apart from the rest of university curricula, was implicit in their creation during the 1960s and early 1970s. At a time when black militants were developing "Black Studies," it was possible for other groups to demand a "study" of their own on grounds of equity. Those declaring themselves representatives of women were thus able to claim a "study," as well as interdisciplinary courses like "Philosophy of Women" and "Women's History." Judith Walzer writes in retrospect of the "unusual genesis" of Women's Studies, "the spark of anger that charged the early projects in Women's Studies."¹

The Women's Studies courses introduced during the 1960s and 1970s did not originate in significant discoveries as did courses in molecular biology or the "higher criticism" of biblical texts. To be sure, academic feminists have subsequently announced significant discoveries such as the impossibility of objective science under patriarchy, but this putative body of knowledge was not the primary factor spurring the proliferation of Women's Studies courses and enrollments.

Nor did Women's Studies undergo the scrutiny that normally attends even the most modest academic innovation. The very speed with which these courses proliferated suggests that they were perceived as entitled, by historical and political necessity, to a place in academe. Indeed, in the rhetoric of the time, to oppose Women's Studies was to be "anti-woman," a stance few academics would adopt. At Brown University, there was an unusual case of resistance to a Women's Studies course on "Biology of Women," which the instructor, Anne Fausto-Sterling, an avowed radical, described as less concerned with scientific research on gender than with the "political motives behind" this research.²

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Nonetheless, the course was approved.

The denial of sex differences, one of the original tenets of feminist theory, propels feminists to demand both "equal opportunity" and special compensation for female weaknesses. This desire to win the game while playing by special rules is evident in the content of Women's Studies courses. Feminists contend that they have been barred from the rigorous, prestigious disciplines by overt and covert pressures, yet, given a free hand, they have done little more than restate the doctrines of feminism itself in the classroom, which is transformed into a forum for consciousness-raising and advocacy of a policy agenda.

A characteristic selection of Women's Studies texts that appear repeatedly in syllabi includes: the manual *Our Bodies, Ourselves*, published by the Boston Women's Health Collective (which may strike some as overly concerned with lesbianism, masturbation, venereal disease, and rape); novels such as Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing* (about the author's dissatisfaction with male love-making), Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* (an older novel on a similar theme), and Alix Kate Shulman's *Memoirs of an Ex-Prom Queen*. The latter concerns a girl seduced by her philosophy professor; in one Women's Studies class I attended, this apparent *roman à clef* provided the occasion for an exhortation by the instructor that women are entitled to be as promiscuous as men. Other books that recur are Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* and Sulamith Firestone's *The Dialectic of Sex*. The latter is often defended as an example of "one phase" of feminist thinking, as if that would justify serious discussion of a book that advocates incest and refers to childbirth as "sh---ing a pumpkin" ("So you can have a baby of your very own to f---k up"). However, it is these ideas themselves, and not the social significance of their advocacy, that are the topics of study.

Some books observe the forms of academic respectability. Sheila Ruth's anthology *Issues in Feminism: A First Course in Women's Studies* includes numerous charts and graphs to docu-

ment the disadvantaged position of women. The readings, however, emphasize Engels, Betty Friedan, and advocacy literature for the Equal Rights Amendment—material that would normally be regarded as insufficiently rigorous for a college classroom. Ruth herself depicts Women's Studies classes with presumably unintended harshness:

[Teachers] come frequently from counterculture organizations, from consciousness-raising groups and feminist organizations, from political parties and equal rights agencies. . . . One is apt to find group projects, credit for social change activities or for life experiences, contracts or self-grading, diaries and journals, even meditation and ritual.³

This impression is reinforced by the National Advisory Council on Women's Educational Programs report entitled *Seven Years Later: Women's Studies Programs in 1976*, which describes the Women's Studies classroom as "a place in which anyone may say anything, however private or political . . . both of intellect and feeling, qualitatively different from most college classrooms . . . mainly because of the reliance on an unique combination of scholarship and the experience of classroom participants." Menstruation, machismo, and rape are mentioned as typical examples of the "unusual subject matter treated."⁴ As advocates of Women's Studies have no reason to misrepresent it in such unflattering terms, we may assume these descriptions are accurate.

Women's Studies books ignore an otherwise standard feature of academic texts, the presentation of both sides of disputed issues. Those who do aspire to fairness, like Jane English in *Philosophy and Sex*, balance many feminist selections with one or two by critics. The rest, and they are the vast majority, are avowedly doctrinaire. Barbara Sinclair Deckard announces on the first page of *The Women's Movement*, "Chapter 1 documents prevalent sexual stereotypes and explains how they function as ideology. It is the explanation of the political functions of this ideology that sets the analytical framework for the book."⁵ I emphasize that the Deckard and Ruth books have not been selected to put academic feminism in a poor light; academic feminists have cited them as the best available.

The most salient feature of Women's Studies courses is their omission of the study of women *per se*. Williams College's "Foundations of Feminism," cross-listed in both the Women's Studies and philosophy departments, deals with such topics as pornography and whether feminism is compatible with such "personal adornment" as lipstick. There is no indication of concern with such matters as hormones, menarche, childbearing,

or female longevity. The "major project" for a passing grade in "Women in Contemporary American Society," the basic Women's Studies course at the University of Indiana, is "a critical and analytical essay on the subject 'Myself as a Woman' or 'Myself as a Man.'" Students aiming for an "A" can write a short paper on "How do you feel about the way you were told and how would you tell your daughter about menstruation?" or "Compare and contrast early lesbian literature with recently written literature by reading Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* and then Brown's *Rubyfruit Jungle*." One may also "critique Firestone on racism." If the academic forms of comparing, contrasting, and critiquing prove burdensome, the student may "keep a journal for two weeks wherein you record your daily experiences as a woman or as a man." Those tempted to treat this as something other than a serious intellectual challenge are admonished: "A journal is not a place to jot down almost randomly but it is a place to think seriously on paper."

The Women's Studies final at one New York university consisted of the question, "What do you think of Women's Liberation?"

Women's Studies courses are decidedly easier than standard college courses on Shakespeare or chemistry. Male students I have asked say they take them as an easy "A". Indeed, it would seem difficult not to earn a high grade when the main requirement is a diary or a report on what one has learned about oneself, and in which sincerity counts as much as mastery of the material. The Women's Studies final at one New York university consisted of the question, "What do you think of Women's Liberation?"

If Women's Studies discuss what women have done in a field or the female experience and outlook, one might expect a comparable development of men's studies. Feminists are aware of this challenge, and generally reply that most of the current college curriculum already *is* men's studies. Virtually every subject, they continue, has been developed and, indeed, distorted by men. Elizabeth Minnich writes, "If our notion of history leaves out well over half the human race, it is not human history, and we need to get busy figuring out what we need to do and know to create a human history—for the first time in human history."⁶

Such contentions are frequently voiced, and must be answered. The college curriculum cannot be reconstructed on the basis of sexual equity, because it is already sex-neutral. Material is taught when competent scholars judge it to be interesting and significant. There are calculus courses because calculus is important, not because its inventor was male. The Treaty of Versailles

is studied not because men negotiated it but because it affected a great many people, male and female. Even if there were no women at Appomattox, solely because of sexism, Appomattox is a fact of history to be taught as faithfully as events in the times of Joan of Arc, Elizabeth I, and Catherine II of Russia are to be taught. Conversely, if women had written *Hamlet*, the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and *Das Capital*, there would be just as many graduate seminars devoted to them. There is certainly no evidence that the works of figures like Margaret Mead, Anna Freud, or Hannah Arendt suffered neglect when those works were deemed important.

The claim that the curriculum has the current form *because* it is the work of men implies that the academics who helped to form it over several centuries were consciously or unconsciously responding to the sex of the intellectuals, scientists, and scholars in various disciplines. Unless convincing evidence for this claim can be produced, it makes little sense to seek what the Wheaton College catalog terms a "gender-balanced perspective to the traditional liberal arts."⁷ To assume that a discipline is intellectually imbalanced or distorted because women are "underrepresented" among its founders is to sacrifice every canon of intellectual value and pertinence to that of sex as if the work of intellectuals represented products of their sex, like hens' eggs, and not their minds or humanity. It is not surprising that Elizabeth Minnich, who makes that assumption, would have members of the teaching profession ignore the works of Pythagoras, Aristotle, Augustine, Aquinas, Spinoza, Kant, Rousseau, Shakespeare, Tolstoy, and Freud because they were not feminists.

In defense of Women's Studies, it is said that all instruction is "political" or ideological. As one participant in a workshop on "Integrating the Study of Women into the Liberal Arts," put it, "ideology does play a role in any teaching program . . . one's politics are apparent in both the choice of topic and its treatment."⁸ This is simply wrong (or else farming, bricklaying, and sunbathing are also political acts). There is nothing overtly or covertly political or ideological about teaching, unless those words are used so broadly that all meaningful distinctions are obscured. The college curriculum typically expands when a new branch of knowledge sprouts and flourishes; an old branch may dry up and drop off from lack of nourishment. The decision to communicate new or drop old knowledge is a judgment of value, to be sure, but of *epistemic*, not political or moral value. Science faculties that offer computer science clearly think recursion theory is worth knowing and no doubt communicate their enthusiasm for the subject in the classroom. This is hardly "politics," which means the allocation of resources and power.

Women and feminism can, of course, be the subject of respectable course work, but such work is best undertaken in traditional departments.

Treating all values as ideological, the argument about "politics" confuses what may be *inferred* about a person's values with explicit advocacy and action. Clearly, a teacher lecturing animatingly about Picasso finds modern art fascinating, but he is not explicitly demanding that his students become artists or art historians or subsidize Picasso exhibits. If he exhorted all his students to do such things, he would be violating professional ethics. The explicit advocacy of values in a Women's Studies class cannot therefore be justified by observing that *all* instructors have made "value choices." (In fact, conscientious teachers will try as far as possible to subdue their preferences. A conscientious teacher of American history should leave his students in doubt as to whether he thinks Franklin Roosevelt an angel or a devil.)

A quite different justification of Women's Studies is that it is therapeutic. "Male students must know the injustice done women" and the emotional repression resulting from "the American emphasis on a certain masculine ideal." Women's Studies courses can help "a freshman desperate for acceptance . . . admit his discomfort," John Schilb declares.⁹ In practice, this leads to academic encounter groups, role playing, grievance committees, and other forms of self-dramatization. One university course asks the co-ed to pretend she is the wife of a plantation owner who has sired ten mulatto children, or to pretend "You are a middle-class woman talking to a working woman, and both of you are unhappy with the status of women." Women's Studies, in short, will help young women grow as persons. No doubt, personal growth is desirable, but this argument compromises the claim of Women's Studies to cognitive value.

Women and feminism can, of course, be the subject of respectable course work, but such work is best undertaken in traditional departments. The nature and ramifications of gender differences are empirical questions of biology, psychology, anthropology, sociology, political science, history, and literature. Their serious, dispassionate study will differ greatly from the premeditated feminist doctrines expounded in Women's Studies courses. If there is such a thing as "women's writing," it should be taught in the English department. Feminists themselves offer an interesting subject for a sociology or psychology department. Who are they? What is

their typical income, religion, age, marital status, sexual orientation, number of children, education, health, and political outlook? Objective analysis of feminism, such as Claire Fulewider's *Feminism in American Politics: A Study of Ideological Influence*, should be encouraged.¹⁰

Feminists themselves offer an interesting subject for a sociology or psychology department. Who are they? What is their typical income, religion, age, marital status, sexual orientation, number of children, education, health, and political outlook?

With the possible exception of psychology, no discipline provokes feminist hostility as much as history. What historians study is amorphous, but closely mirrors what a culture deems important. Because historians usually chronicle war, revolution, statesmanship, technology, and exploration—predominantly male activities—feminists see conventional historiography as biased. Books about, say, “inventions that changed the world,” or “decisive battles of history” are largely about men. Even social history is likely to be heavily slanted toward the activities of men. Feminists have argued that it is time to study what women have done. Thus, Rose Coser is currently working on a book, *The World of Our Mothers*, dealing with the experience that her good friend Irving Howe neglected in his best-selling *The World of Our Fathers*.

An equal-time doctrine is a useless principle for assessing historical significance; some periods, nations, and individuals have exercised a disproportionate influence over the rest of mankind. The myths, art, and language that the women of any culture share, they also share with the men of that culture. What is more, to speak of a group's history implies that it has the marks of group identity that women lack: physical concentration, cultural distinctiveness, common language, myths, and art. Marriage and the family mean that what happens to women happens to men and vice versa. The events that have most affected women are precisely those which have most affected humanity as a whole—war, disease, famine, exploration, trade, inventions, and manufacture. All that a modern American woman shares with the wife of a fifth century Chinese peasant, but with no American man, are those biologically-based traits and experiences that feminists minimize or deny.

Within each culture, a sorority of mothers transmits a special

lore to its daughters, just as fathers transmit a lore to their sons. Feminists emphasize this sort of universal sisterhood and it is intriguing to study how women have lived in different epochs, and their effect upon their culture and nation. But feminist historians who trace these strands of tradition and influence have created no new subject. Such work has been done by many social historians and economists without ideological preconceptions. Barbara Tuchman's discussions of the effects of medieval child rearing practices on the medieval personality is one example.¹¹ There might be some point to designating this study “a new kind of history” if it produced evidence or theories at variance with ordinary facts or ideas of history, or anthropology, or psychology. So far, it has not.

It is not possible in a short essay to describe the sort of advanced research that is done in Women's Studies departments, or the star-chamber atmosphere created by feminist boycotts of textbooks and blacklisting of instructors. Suffice it to say that feminism has contributed to the “decline of standards” which is now so fashionable to deplore. ☒

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Teenage Pregnancy: The **DIMENSIONS** of the Problem

by Kristin A. Moore

In 1970, 30 percent of the children born to American teenagers were born outside of marriage. By 1982, this proportion had increased to 51.5 percent, and among black females alone it reached nearly 90 percent. At the present time, one-half of all first births to blacks, and one-fourth of first births to whites, are to teenagers.

In an earlier era, childbearing during the teenage years was a common and acceptable part of life. However, in a modern industrial society such as the U.S., teenage parents and their families experience significant economic and social disadvantages.

Because they are at a particularly high risk of dropping out of school, teenage parents are unlikely to achieve the education and vocational skills required for many of today's jobs. There have been some increases in school completion rates among adolescent mothers in recent years, but the significance of this improvement is attenuated by the fact that women who were not teenage mothers have also increased their levels of attainment. For example, among women aged 20 to 24 in 1980, those less than 18 years old when their first child was born completed an average of 10.6 years of school, compared to 11.5 years among those who were 18 or 19 when their first child was born, and 13.2 among those who had not had a birth. Consequently, although their absolute level of education has improved, their disadvantage relative to other women has not changed.¹

While in earlier eras the problem of early pregnancy was often "resolved" by marriage, the proportion of premaritally pregnant women who marry before the baby is born has fallen over the last two decades. Those who do marry are economically better off (initially, at least) but also face a high risk of marital dissolution and are more likely than their unmarried counterparts to drop out of school.

Teenage mothers also tend to have more unplanned births, larger families, and more difficulty working outside the home than women who delay childbearing. Their families are thus more likely to require welfare assistance. Studies conducted in the seventies consistently indicated that approximately half of the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) budget was

expended on families in which the mother was a teenager when she bore her first child.² Given the increase in out-of-wedlock childbearing among teens over the past decade, it seems unlikely that this welfare percentage has declined.

The children of teenage parents clearly face more difficulties in growing up than children born to women in their twenties and thirties. Fourteen percent of the babies born to adolescents under age 15 are of low birth weight compared to fewer than six percent of the babies born to mothers aged 25 to 29, a liability that increases the risk of numerous health problems, including anemia and toxemia. The offspring of adolescent parents also tend to score lower on cognitive tests and to perform less well in school. For example, 30 percent of the children in the National Survey of Children whose mothers were less than 17 were behind the modal grade for a child of their age, compared to about one in ten of the children whose mothers were 25 or older. In addition, several studies have found that the children of teenage parents are more likely to become adolescent parents themselves.

The prevalence of adolescent childbearing results from various social and demographic processes. The number of teens in the population, the proportion of those teens who are married, the incidence of sexual activity among the unmarried, the consistency of contraceptive use, and the effectiveness of the methods used are among the factors that affect the probability of pregnancy. Among those who become pregnant, a number of resolutions are possible, including pregnancy loss, marriage, adoption, and out-of-wedlock motherhood.

These behaviors have been changing at different rates, and some of the changes are moving in different directions. Moreover, it is possible for some of the changes to offset others or for one change to affect the size of the population at risk for another behavior. Consequently, it is necessary to explore an entire range of behavioral factors in order to understand teenage childbearing.

Since the U.S. baby boom extended through the 1950s and peaked in 1957, the number of teenagers in the United States increased throughout the 1970s. Increased numbers plus a trend toward later marriage resulted in a considerably larger popula-

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tion of unmarried teenagers. At the same time, premarital sexual activity among teenagers became considerably more common. In 1971, 28 percent of females aged 15 to 19 had had sexual intercourse. By 1982, 30 percent of females aged 15 to 17 had done so.

The proportion of sexually experienced adolescents increases rapidly during the teen years, as data from the National Survey of Family Growth show. Among whites in 1982, the proportion ever having had intercourse rose from 18 percent at age 15, to 29 percent at age 16, 40 percent at 17, 55 percent at 18, and 69 percent at age 19. Among blacks, the proportions are higher—28, 42, 55, 77, and 82 percent respectively.

Black teenagers are particularly likely to be at risk of premarital pregnancy. Among 18 to 19 years olds, 97 percent of black females as compared to 83 percent of white females are unmarried. Moreover, at age 19, 81 percent of never married black females have had premarital intercourse, compared to 64 percent of never married white females.³

It should be noted that most teenagers do not have intercourse frequently. Data for 1979 indicate that four in ten of those who had ever had sex did not have intercourse during the previous month; only one in five had sex on six or more occasions. Clearly if frequency approached that of married couples, pregnancy risk would be even higher.

Among white females aged 15 to 19 in 1982, 37 percent of all births occurred outside of marriage, up from 18 percent in 1970. This increase almost pales in comparison to the proportion—87 percent—found in 1982 among black females the same age.

The increased number of pregnancies to teenagers during the 1970s has not translated into an increase in the number of births to teenagers. In fact, the number of births to teens aged 15 to 19 fell from roughly 644,700 in 1970 to 527,400 in 1981, and again in 1982 to 513,800. The degree of decline has been slightly greater among older teens, however. Among the oldest teens, aged 18 to 19, births have declined by 21 percent (from 421,118 in 1970 to 352,596 in 1982), compared to a 16 percent decline among teens 15 to 17 (from 223,590 to 187,397), and a 17 percent decline among teens under age 15 (from 11,752 to 9,773).

Although the total number of births to teens has fallen, there have been important changes in the marital status distribution of

those births. As noted, in 1970, 30 percent of the births to females under age 20 occurred outside of marriage. By 1981, the proportion had risen to 51 percent. Between 1970 and 1981, the absolute number of marital births to teens fell by approximately 200,000 while the number of non-marital births rose by 70,000.

Some of the most striking race differences are in the proportion of births that occur outside of marriage. Among white females aged 15 to 19 in 1982, 37 percent of all births occurred outside of marriage, up from 18 percent in 1970. This increase almost pales in comparison to the proportion—87 percent—found in 1982 among black females the same age.⁴

Not only has the incidence of out-of-wedlock childbearing risen substantially during recent years, but the proportion of unmarried teens who give their babies up for adoption seems to have fallen, in part due to a greater acceptance of out-of-wedlock motherhood. No reliable national data on adoption are available to document this assertion and thus the magnitude of the change cannot be quantified. However, the direction of the change seems certain judging from the unanimity of the anecdotal evidence and the difficulty that couples currently have in locating an adoptable child.

The end result of having more teenagers, fewer married teenagers, and a higher proportion experiencing intercourse, even infrequently, has been a substantial increase in the number of youth at risk for experiencing a premarital pregnancy during their teen years. What factors predict which teens will initiate sex?

Generally, the closer a source of influence is to the adolescent's life, the greater the influence to be expected. Thus it is not surprising that studies of the effect of societal variables such as welfare policy have shown little impact on teens' sexual behavior. The level of welfare benefits, for example, appears neither to encourage nor discourage early sexual activity. (In fact, national survey data indicate that fewer than one in five adolescent pregnancies are intended for any reason.) Similarly, there is as yet no evidence that the availability of family planning services encourages the early initiation of sex. In addition, studies of sex education have found that while students typically gain in knowledge and become more tolerant of others as a result of sex education, enrollment has little impact on their own sexual behavior.

Family characteristics seem to be more important than external influences affecting teenagers. Researchers have repeatedly shown that adolescents from relatively affluent families, and from intact families, are less likely to place themselves at risk of an early pregnancy. Related research currently focuses on the importance of parent/child communication, parental modeling and supervision, provision of rewards and punishments for

behavior that is approved or disapproved, and a family value system that opposes early sexual activity or parenthood.

Of course, the stronger the external pressures, the stronger family influences need to be to counteract such pressure. In certain communities, the influence of the peer culture in the neighborhood simply overwhelms some families. In this regard, black teens exhibit a disproportionately high incidence of early sexual activity in part because of their disproportionate representation in families of low socioeconomic status, in single parent families, and in impoverished neighborhoods.

Of those teens having sexual intercourse, perhaps one in ten has sexual intercourse only once and then stops for many years. For the majority who have sex more or less regularly, the probability of pregnancy rests on their fecundity and their use of contraception. Although sub-fecundity, perhaps due to venereal disease, does seem to be on the rise,⁵ most American teenagers seem to be fully fecund by their fifteenth year. Very young teens who rely on their infertility to keep them from becoming preg-

nant sometimes end up getting caught when full fecundity arrives. Most premarital teenage pregnancies occur, however, within six months of first intercourse (according to research by Laurie Zabin, John Kantner, and Melvin Zelnik).⁶

Only a minority of teens seem actively to desire pregnancy. What appears to be missing for many is sufficient motivation to avoid it.

The number of pregnancies need not inevitably rise as a result of more frequent premarital intercourse, but avoiding such an increase requires an offsetting improvement in the frequency and effectiveness of contraceptive use. A large percentage of sexually active teens delay the initiation of contraceptive use, rely on ineffective methods, or employ their methods incorrectly or

TABLE 1
Number of Total Births and Out-of-Wedlock Births, Percent of Teen Births Out-of-Wedlock, and Percent of all Births to Teens By Race.

	Total Number of Births to Females Under Age 20	Out-of-Wedlock Births to Females Under Age 20	Percent of Births to Females Under 20 Out-of-Wedlock	Percent of all First Births Born to Females Under Age 20
1982				
All Races	523,531	269,346	51%	26%
White	362,101	133,902	37%	23%
Black	145,929	127,468	87%	45%
1970				
All Races	656,460	199,900	30%	36%
White	467,928	81,900	18%	32%
Black	179,100	114,700	64%	59%

TABLE 2
Teenage Birth Rate and Out-of-Wedlock Birth Rate, by Race

Birth Rate
(Births Per 1,000 Females Aged 15 to 19)

Race	1982	1970
All Races	53	68
White	45	57
Black	97	148

Out-of-Wedlock Birth Rate
(Births per 1,000 Unmarried Females Aged 15 to 19)

Race	1982	1970
All Races	29	22
White	18	11
Black	87	97

inconsistently. While some increase in the use of contraception did occur during the 1970s, the improvement did not compensate for the increased size of the population at risk. Consequently, the number of pregnancies among females aged 15 to 19 rose from an estimated 840,000 in 1970 to 1,120,000 in 1981.⁷ However, considering only sexually active teenage females, the rate of pregnancy seems to have remained fairly stable during the 1970s and perhaps even to have fallen.

The primary reason for the high incidence of pregnancy among sexually active American teenagers is their late, inconsistent, and incorrect use of contraceptives. Very few teens fail to practice contraception because they are unaware that such a thing exists. Johns Hopkins professors John Kantner and Melvin Zelnik found that nearly all of the females interviewed in a 1971 national survey had heard of birth control pills. However, misinformation about other forms of contraceptives is widespread. Many teens have inordinate fears of contraceptive side effects, lack awareness of how and where to obtain a method, underesti-

mate the effectiveness of current methods, and/or fear that their parents will be told if they visit a family planning clinic or doctor.⁸

Contraceptive use is relatively low among both white and black teens, but constitutes a particular problem among black youth. In part this is due to the fact that black adolescents are younger when they begin having sex, and younger teens are generally less likely to use birth control. However, at any given age, blacks are somewhat less likely to use contraceptives. For example, among females 15 to 19 in 1979, 24 percent of white females reported never practicing contraception, compared to 36 percent of black females. Because black teens are more likely to be sexually active and because they are less likely to employ contraceptives, they are considerably more likely to become pregnant. Thus one in four black 17-year-olds have been pregnant, compared to one in ten whites the same age.

Only a minority of teens seem actively to desire pregnancy. What appears to be missing for many is sufficient motivation to avoid it. While education about how pregnancy occurs and can be prevented is crucial to implement prevention, as are family services, it has become clear that motivation is needed as well. If the motivation to avoid parenthood is not present, programs and services will be ignored. Thus an effective prevention program would have to address the need for information, services, and motivation.

In-depth interviews with teenagers conducted by Hannah Meara indicate that those teens who have managed consistently to practice contraception are those who pursue personal goals with considerable determination. Those who never consistently or properly used a method or who experienced a pregnancy before using contraceptives tended to have disorganized and in some cases "nightmarish" lives. A number of researchers have found that the young women most likely to become pregnant are those who lack high educational aspirations.

There are many complex reasons that might explain the failure of teenagers to use contraceptives. The difficulty of simultaneously managing the initiation of a sexual relationship and negotiating the rules of birth control use seems to overtax the capacity of many younger adolescents. Many teens, wishing to maintain at least the facade of spontaneity, may fear that any act of preparation would brand them as having planned to have sex.

Many studies have documented the importance of the male in encouraging premarital sex regardless of contraceptive use. Unfortunately, little is known about what motivates—or fails to motivate—the young male, primarily because researchers have tended to focus on females but in part because high school-age males have been found to be uninterested and hard-to-study respondents. Because the occurrence of an untimely birth is more likely to interfere with a young woman's educational or

occupational plans, one would anticipate such aspirations to be a stronger influence on young females.

The heterogeneity of American culture with all its racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic subgroups has made it difficult to develop an integrated approach to reducing teenage pregnancy.

Teenagers who do give birth more often intended to become pregnant, are apt to feel a religious or moral obligation to carry their pregnancy to term, or already have marriage plans. They are less likely to have higher educational aspirations. Whether a pregnancy can be resolved in marriage is affected, of course, by the availability of the father for marriage. Given high unemployment among young men in general and among minority youth in particular, this form of resolution may not be feasible for many young women.

The heterogeneity of American culture with all its racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic subgroups has made it difficult to develop an integrated approach to reducing teenage pregnancy. Many approaches are possible. Sweden has achieved pregnancy rates far below the U.S. in a liberal social climate⁹ while Japan has maintained low rates in a very traditional setting that discourages premarital intercourse. But both these countries have very homogeneous populations. The U.S., by contrast, needs to develop multiple strategies tied to the cultural mores of individual subgroups.

Although teens often describe becoming an adolescent parent as if it were a one-step process ("I couldn't say no!"), there are in fact a number of decision points that are traversed along the way—points broadly demarcated by sexual activity, pregnancy, and pregnancy resolution—as described above. Moreover, the influences that affect the behavior of teens differ at different decision points. Consequently, the process framework that has organized this discussion can also be used to explore the potential of varied policy approaches.

It seems clear that intervention is easier and less costly when it occurs earlier in the decision-making process and closer to the individuals involved—that is, before pregnancy and within the family or local community, rather than after pregnancy or at the national level.¹⁰ Programs that encourage teens to make conscious and rational decisions about becoming sexually involved and that strive to develop a sense of individual responsibility are

to be encouraged; however it seems unlikely that any federal effort is going to have an impact comparable to that initiated by parents, churches, local schools, or community self-help groups.

Concerning pregnancy prevention, it seems clear that access to family planning services does reduce the incidence of unwanted pregnancy among adolescents. Low-cost, accessible, and private services need to be maintained. However, mere provision of services will only reduce the barriers so that the moderately motivated will seek services along with the highly motivated. Those with low motivation need to find some reason that makes preventing pregnancy worth the effort. This motivation might come, for males, from the fear of making child support payments for 18 years. Alternatively, it could arise from a realization that early parenthood poses true social and economic costs for the individual teen. For the latter perspective to work, it needs to be in some sense true; adolescents who believe that early parenthood represents no cost to them in terms of getting an education or a decent job lack the reason to postpone parenthood that most middle-class teens have. Thus, perhaps surprisingly, part of the answer to reducing the incidence of teenage parenthood may lie in improving schools and job opportunities. □

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Affirmative Action PROGRAMS That Work

by Carl Hoffmann

There are two fundamentally different methods of rectifying pay differences and occupational segregation for minorities and women. One is to impose centralized control over affirmative action programs by instituting quotas. The other has been to make employment decisions which are consistent with sound business principles but which also seek to counteract prejudice, expand employment opportunities for underrepresented groups, and recognize structural distortions in the labor market that have a disparate impact not justified by business necessity.

These philosophies generally do not co-exist within a company. Companies that wish to maintain control over the *results* of their employment processes employ the former philosophy. They center their enforcement activities on the achievement of numerical results and often ignore the actual impediments to minority and female progress in the workforce. This is the “body count” approach to affirmative action, and for corporations that choose it, the effectiveness of an affirmative action program (AAP) is appraised according to the year end bottom line; a manager’s performance criteria, to the extent that they are influenced by affirmative action, can be met by achieving numbers, without regard to the cost to the employees or to the company.

Those companies that have adopted the other basic method of affirmative action are more interested in monitoring the employment *process*. These businesses must accept a great deal of uncertainty since it is more difficult for them to measure the effectiveness of their program. Results are judged effective to the extent to which managers are able to run efficient personnel operations that fully develop human resources and hire and promote the most qualified people to fill positions. The focus is on the *corporate* bottom line and on achieving it through a social contract which will develop, utilize, and reward workers fully.

The “social contract” style of management trusts that if managers operate fairly, minorities and women will progress at

rates equal to their numbers. Companies that take this approach are more likely to fire a manager for a prejudicial act than are those companies which measure affirmative action by numerical quotas. This is true because adherence to numbers as a measure of success seems to alleviate the moral responsibility of the manager. Managers who operate under strict quotas are viewed as fulfilling their obligations not by interacting with people or by recruiting and developing talent, or by rewarding loyalty to the company, but rather by merely achieving numbers which look good at the corporate headquarters. Such achievement—or lack of achievement—of employee composition is not given moral weight since it is, in effect, little more than an accounting procedure.

The argument that follows contrasts the two aforementioned views of affirmative action as well as the management styles which correspond to the views. Although the goals and quota approach is strongly supported by many advocates of racial equality, I will argue that it is the social contract view which is the far more egalitarian of the two. In seeking to provide equal opportunity to all employees to fulfill their maximum potential, the “social contract” assumes that all employees are worth developing. Advancement opportunities to the highest level of the organization are to be open to all individuals, regardless of the initial placement of the employee and regardless of age, race, or sex. Advancement and reward apply only to performance.

If the goal of affirmative action is numbers, it can be easily satisfied in the short term by just hiring bodies. But what happens to those employees after they are hired? If the goal is to get female operatives in an area of a factory where there haven’t been females before, that can be done by active salesmanship of that job to women. Yet the primary result of such efforts may simply be a high turnover rate for women in that position as a result of rotating shifts, overtime demands which conflict with family responsibility, requirements for physical exertion (upper body strength), or insensitive—even bigoted—behavior by co-workers and supervisors.

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A personnel manager can continue to meet a quota just by hiring more women to replace the ones that leave, but if there is never an evaluation of ways to improve the structure of the job or improve training for the job to increase the supply of labor and perhaps make the job more efficient, then the company is apt to incur tremendous social and financial costs as a result of the turnover.

The following example will illustrate the costs of hiring for quotas. In the early 1970s, a construction company realized that it had very few blacks in craft positions. This company, which in almost all respects had good relations with its employees, chose an affirmative action plan that relied solely on numbers. From a population that was estimated to have a black availability for the craft position of 4.55 percent, the company hired 19.3 percent blacks for a two-year period from 1973 to 1974 and 11.7 percent from 1973 to 1977. The overall black population, including both sexes and all ages and occupations in the area, was 5.4 percent.

In an attempt to meet its numerical goals, the company ignored the failure rate of blacks on selection tests which was three times higher than that of whites. Of the 96 blacks hired into the company, only 57 were subsequently promoted into the skilled craft training programs. (This contrasts sharply with the promotion rate for whites, according to which 81 blacks should have been promoted.) Once in training programs, more blacks than whites successfully finished, but the company was still sued by many of those blacks who failed to qualify for training.

The actual cause of the low promotion rate for blacks was a high black termination rate which was itself the result of job abandonment and absenteeism. These two characteristics correlated closely with the poverty and education levels of neighborhoods from which these people came. Job abandonment and absenteeism by whites was also related to poverty and education levels, but because the company engaged in compensatory black hiring, a disproportionately large number of blacks came from these backgrounds. The company did not hire whites with similarly deprived backgrounds, not because they were unavailable, but because there was no pressure to hire them.

Ultimately, the cost to the company in down time, in disciplinary management problems, and in legal actions by people whose expectations had been raised but who had been given little actual support in the difficult adjustment to the discipline of the work added up to several hundred thousand dollars. All of this cost could be traced back to: (a) setting the quota; and (b) hiring minorities above their rate of availability. The company has now begun hiring blacks at their level of availability through color-blind standards and has had little disruption.

Perhaps one of the most seductive aspects of hiring for quotas is the guarantee that if you hire a specific number of people you will be immune from prosecution and, in a more positive way, achieve your affirmative action goals. But does the company in fact need to hire on the basis of yearly quotas in order to gain more minority and female representa-

tion? And if the company does employ quotas, will they guarantee increased black representation? The case represented in Table 1 shows that many of the current assumptions about quotas are not very accurate.

Nine cities in which a company referred to as "XYZ" operates are listed in Table 1. For each city, Table 1 lists the minority utilization figures for 1975 and 1984, the average hiring and the yearly range for ten years, minority availability, size of organization, and total number hired during the ten year period for an entry level position for which the job description and pay are the same in all locations. Availability estimates take into consideration local, state, and national occupations from which people are drawn and the comparative advantages of this job over others in the local labor market. What we find is very interesting. For instance, in Atlanta minority utilization has increased from 28 percent to 31 percent from 1975 to 1984, yet the hiring average was one percent below the 28 percent starting figure. So representation of minorities in XYZ increased overall even though the proportion of minorities being hired was less than the proportion of minorities already in the company. Hiring was two percent above the availability figure (27 percent versus 25 percent) but deviated greatly on either side of that figure during the ten years, in one year as low as 12 percent and in another year as high as 41 percent.

In XYZ's Boston location, minority representation stayed flat for the period at eight percent, despite the fact that hiring is at a 12 percent figure and three percent above availability. The company was thus hiring at levels above availability but getting no greater proportion of minorities in the company. In Detroit, minority representation dropped from 20 percent to 18 percent, despite the fact that minority hiring was at 29 percent for the period, or ten percent above the availability figure. In Houston, minority representation dropped from 31 percent to 29 percent, a small drop considering minority hiring was 15 percent for the period, or ten percent below availability.

These figures suggest that internal representation of minorities in a company is strongly affected by factors other than just hiring figures or quotas. Such factors include terminations, transfers, and promotions, which are in turn affected by the opportunities available inside and outside the company for white and minority workers who are or could be employees in the XYZ company.

It is important to note that XYZ is not a company which focuses on quotas and goals. By concentrating its affirmative action efforts on employment processes, the company was able to achieve overall representation equal to or above availability figures. Those availability estimates, which are used by most companies as the basis for quotas, were used by XYZ for monitoring the success of their affirmative action process.

Often companies which stress quotas hire people who are qualified to do one specific job. This is essentially a caste approach to the labor market since it does not consider the whole question of employee development. The emphasis on numbers

also acts as an incentive to lower hiring standards to fit only the immediate needs of the job. People are then viewed as filling slots. This is a particularly attractive hiring method from a lazy management perspective because an individual is viewed as a known quantity hired to do one job and one job only. That employee is not likely, therefore, to complicate a supervisor's job by moving around within the company and therefore demanding guidance, training, and encouragement.

Quota-oriented affirmative action plans are appealing to some companies for still another reason. The federal government has given explicit backing to this approach through the Uniform Employee Selection Guidelines, issued by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) in 1978. The Guidelines say, for instance, that a company can evaluate the qualifications of applicants only for the job they are applying for and not for subsequent promotions. The Guidelines go on to say that the qualifications for a job are set by the least qualified incumbent for that job. These statements reinforce the view held by many companies that secretaries are secretaries, janitors are janitors, and management trainees come from Harvard Business School.

These two provisions in the Uniform Employee Selection Guidelines support the notion that minorities and women are unable to compete for all positions within a corporation equally. Hiring applicants qualified for long term development in the company has in the past been used as a pretext for not hiring minorities and women into jobs which they could perform. These provisions arise from the view that long term *employment*—not development, but employment of any kind—is better than the cycle of transient labor or no labor force participation among disproportionate numbers of minorities and women. The Guidelines' perspective is shared by many companies and by prominent advocates for minority and female employment. But in the long run, this method of affirmative action is wrong not only because it presupposes a low assessment of minority and female potential and not only because it reinforces a caste system where security is prized over mobility, but because it asks a company to adjust for some employees the rewards system which applies to all employees. This narrow view of an entire race or sex and of employer obligations is, as we shall see, a costly one.

Although it is difficult to quantify all the costs associated with a limited view of individual potential, they are apt to include the sacrifice of a cohesive and fully productive workforce that has

TABLE 1

Location	Utilization		% Minority Hiring 75-84	Hiring Ranges		Minority Availability	Size	Hiring 75-84
	84	75		Low	High			
Atlanta	31%	28%	27%	12%	41%	25%	2787	2936
Boston	8%	8%	12%	2%	34%	9%	486	544
Detroit	18%	20%	29%	10%	41%	19%	206	314
Houston	29%	31%	15%	7%	28%	25%	177	371
Los Angeles	47%	37%	39%	18%	61%	32%	227	389
Memphis	28%	24%	32%	18%	40%	27%	235	190
Miami	30%	25%	20%	13%	24%	27%	666	1146
San Francisco	38%	37%	22%	8%	31%	21%	129	201
Tampa	23%	24%	19%	6%	24%	10%	211	239

some sense of membership and allegiance. There are, to be sure, profitable companies that do not take the long term view on their hiring practices and hire only to fill a limited position, but these companies may be less profitable than they could otherwise be if they utilized a different AAP.

In addition to the pressures on business to conform to the Guidelines, as discussed above, other forces contribute to the decision of many companies to opt for the short term "body count" approach to affirmative action. One is unionization, with its penchant for detailed job descriptions and elaborate seniority systems which tend to narrow the worker's view of his function and prospects. There is a certain belligerence connected with unionization that divides the world into two strata: management and labor. This division is reinforced by management schools which have a parochial view of the abilities of people who did not attend business school. These factors tend to make dealings between management and labor rigid, procedural, and mechanical as elaborate rules are established to define their adversarial relationship.

Stratification also comes from a failure of our secondary education system to recognize the importance of providing a

basic liberal arts education to people who are starting out their careers in operative or craft positions. If they are prepared by their education for limited roles, such individuals will not perceive themselves as having the ability to progress, nor will they have the broader problem-solving capabilities which will allow them to do so.

In general, stratification of the workforce demands less energy from management than an approach which seeks to increase mobility. The "social contract" manager must have a much broader set of skills than managers who merely see people as filling slots in the daily operation of the company. This was a lesson learned by a company that is successful because it purchases small northern unionized companies and moves their manufacturing facilities to the South. The firm obtained a 50 percent increase in productivity largely by the willingness of the employees to work and by absence of labor strife which meant that fewer management personnel and management hours were required to handle work stoppage, grievances, and narrowly defined jobs.

The supervisors who moved from the North to the South, however, had to be completely retrained. Employees were demanding that their supervisors deal with employees' personal

TABLE 2
SEX REPRESENTATION IN OCCUPATION GROUPS
1975 and 1984
XYZ CORPORATION

	1975		1984		% Growth
	Females	%	Females	%	
Administrative Supervisor	69	19%	103	36%	+89%
Computer Clerical	76	25%	100	43%	+72%
Entry Level Operations	7732	8%	9894	12%	+50%
Exec Management	71	0%	112	3%	—
Manager	718	3%	836	10%	+233%
Office Clerk	716	97%	992	95%	-2%
Operative	480	16%	488	19%	+19%
Production Control	312	11%	309	22%	+100%
Professional	3657	2%	5181	8%	+400%
Sales Man	160	13%	301	44%	+238%
Supply Clerk	484	4%	462	5%	+1150%
1st Level Supervisor	256	46%	452	64%	+39%
2nd Level Supervisor	37	11%	75	47%	+327%

problems, with work counseling, and with training for job advancement. Employees asked for participation in management decisions and wanted flexibility in company rules to take into account the employees' human needs. None of these functions were part of management's role in the North. In the North, these tasks were handled through personnel representatives, shop stewards, grievance procedures, or perhaps not at all. Essentially, the exchange was increased productivity for a more intense and broader range of managerial responsibility and a less rigid application of rules. The exchange also required training, promotion, transfers, and rewards beyond pay.

This attention to employees and their development breaks occupational segregation and is, in general, the most successful form of affirmative action. It has the best record because it provides employees, especially non-traditional employees such as blacks and women, with the ongoing social support required for them to become successful workers in occupations where they had not entered in great numbers. The "social contract" management style can also be applied to employees who have been mechanically supervised under unionization agreements and poor management.

The philosophy of the social contract emphasizes individual development consistent with the goals of the organization and places heavy emphasis on the dynamic processes of employment. It is difficult to distinguish between management style and an affirmative action program, because a good management program is the most effective AAP.

The "social contract" approach starts with an understanding of all the jobs within the corporation and of the tasks performed within each job. These tasks are then related to the skills required to perform the job. There should also be a clear view of how jobs are functionally interrelated both with respect to production and hierarchy. This interrelationship will clearly define lines of advancement and appropriate on-the-job training programs to prepare workers for promotions. This kind of analysis will provide broadly inclusive job descriptions not just of the primary tasks associated with a specific job but also of the tasks and functions of all possible jobs which the employee would be asked to learn in order to advance. This flexibility in job descriptions benefits both the company and the employee.

Once the jobs are described, the next step is to identify the personnel characteristics needed to perform the progression of jobs in a corporation. An evaluation can then be made as to what entry level skills are needed to allow employees the prospect of advancing within the corporation. Management can determine which skills an employee must have upon hiring and if they can be easily acquired by a broad range of the population. This analysis, including job descriptions, job requirements, organizational structure, and company philosophy should be available to applicants and employees.

As an encouragement to advancement, all jobs should be posted for internal bidding purposes. Further, all impediments to movement among these positions should be removed, specifically including those that require seniority for bidding or those

that have qualifications that are not clearly required for business necessity. The goal of these policies is to provide the largest supply of labor for every job that opens up within the corporation. Lines of communication, authority, and information flow should be designed to encourage and reward people for performing their jobs well and for commitment to the corporation.

In this type of system, managers are of crucial importance because they perform a large number of functions which operate only in a vague and diffuse way in their corporations. The manager supervises the work, and makes certain work is done in an orderly fashion; in other words, he supervises the attendance and productivity of labor. But in addition to these traditional tasks, the manager is also the chief trainer, the chief employment representative, and the chief EEO person. The manager must therefore be available to his employees for career counseling and personal counseling, for mediating disputes, enforcing company policies, educating individuals as to why those policies exist, and facilitating the flow of information up as well as down.

Managers and especially the first line supervisors are the enforcers of the social contract between employers and employees. This interaction enables the supervisor to learn about each employee's special skills, abilities, and job aspirations. As the supervisor is the primary agent for promotion and personnel development, this knowledge should help the supervisor make appropriate promotion, transfer, training, and compensation recommendations, if not directly, then by performance evaluation.

Supervisory positions ought to be rotated often, exposing large numbers of workers to different management styles and the supervisors to a broad range of worker skills and concerns. An added benefit and a support for affirmative action is that if more than one supervisor evaluates a group of employees, the company has a cross check on the evaluations of women and minorities. The evaluation of any supervisor with a particular prejudice toward race or sex will therefore stand out more clearly.

Once jobs are defined, policies interrelated, and managers in place, management needs to recruit people capable of filling the entry level positions. The first step in recruitment is to examine the characteristics of people who hold or have held the position and evaluate their success in the job. Though an important background factor in job success is occupational experience, it is surprising how broadly adaptable people are. What may seem like a specialized, sophisticated job can often be successfully filled by individuals whose backgrounds might seem unrelated to that particular position.

Take for instance the recruitment policies of a wholesale food company. A study of the company's sales force found that half of sales jobs were filled from internal promotions by people who had no prior sales experience but who had gained knowledge of the products and customers by performing many of the lower level jobs within the facility. The other half of the jobs were filled by people who were hired from outside the company, and of these, only half had any prior sales experience. This occurred despite the fact that the company advertised a policy of prefer-

ring people with prior sales experience. Moreover, an analysis of job performance found that success in the job was negatively associated with prior sales experience. By opening recruitment campaigns to applicants with a broad range of prior occupational experiences, companies can increase the availability of women and minorities for the position and thus fulfill the purpose of affirmative action without having to rely upon policies of reverse discrimination.

By opening recruitment campaigns to applicants with a broad range of occupational experiences, companies can increase the availability of women and minorities for the position.

Geography, migration patterns, and local labor market conditions can influence minority and female availability and are all factors which need to be integrated into a well-constructed recruitment policy. Depending upon the job offered, each location to which the company draws applicants will have a different number of women or minorities available for the job. For instance, an entry level airlines job in Houston may have as many as 50 percent of its openings filled by people coming from outside the city. That figure may be only 25 percent for the Chicago operation and a mere ten percent in Los Angeles.

Local labor market factors will also affect internal transfer to these positions. Consequently, each location in which a company operates will have its own unique mix of local, national, and internal labor markets as well as its own occupational mix of people from which the company can successfully recruit. These city by city variations will greatly affect minority and female availability and need to be considered for planning purposes.

A company with a successful affirmative action program will take these geographic differences into account, but the company should also consider factors other than those measured directly by the Census. If the company is looking for employees with a business administration background, it might center recruitment efforts in North Carolina, where 25 percent of all business administration graduates from four year colleges are black—a representation higher than blacks in the general population, but not at all reflected in census occupation data. If the company is hiring aircraft mechanics, it might recruit from the Navy or Air Force, where black representation is 16 percent to 25 percent of the mechanics as compared to the less than five percent of licensed aircraft mechanics in the general population who are black. But the company should also be aware of why minorities do not always translate their backgrounds into occupations. Discrimination is certainly one factor; another more mundane reason may be that companies simply haven't worked hard enough to publicize all of the available opportunities for employment.

Adopting an affirmative action program that 1) stresses the ability to advance and to do a broader range of activities than those for which the employee is initially hired and 2) incorporates an active transfer and promotion policy of the company's internal labor force will achieve the goal of moving these employees into higher level positions and break down the sex or race segregation which comes in part from the often limited expectations that women and minorities may have when they are hired. For instance, it is often a woman's stereotyped view of her own abilities which limits her choice of initial job. Hiring individuals capable of more than their immediate job and doing so in the context of an open transfer and promotion policy will reduce the potential constricting of initial job choices.

A company should seek to solicit applications from many more people than there are openings. To illustrate how to decide the number of applications to review for each opening, suppose that a company wishes to hire the top ten percent of people qualified to perform the job. The company also wants to be 95 percent certain that the 100 people hired will be in the top ten percent of qualified applicants. According to the rules of statistical sampling, the number of applications which ought to be reviewed to ensure these goals is 1,161.

But let's also consider the following assumption: that this pool of people who can perform the job is 12 percent minority and so a company would like to ensure the *possibility* that 12 of the 100 people hired will be black and also be in the top ten percent of the population. For simplicity's sake, we will assume that the abilities of minorities and whites are equivalent. In a color-blind selection process, in order to ensure the *possibility* that 12 of 100 hired will be minority and also in the top ten percent with the whites hired, the company would have to review 1,668 applications. This is because the targeted group of people is quite rare, not due to their abilities but because 12 percent of ten percent is 1.2 percent of the overall number of applicants. Therefore, many more applications need to be reviewed in order to ensure that a company finds the 12 best applicants. This rate of review translates to about 16 to 17 applications per opening.

The good personnel practices described above require a good deal of study and research. The resulting data should be used not just to establish or define the employee development system, but also to monitor it. For affirmative action purposes, managers ought to be provided with the following information: 1) the geographic areas from which entry level positions are drawn; 2) the occupations for which people are hired; 3) the occupations from which people transfer internally; 4) data on how these first three factors vary from year to year depending on the demand for people to fill positions and the conditions of the external labor market; and 5) data on the proportion of minorities and women who can be expected to fill particular openings. This last piece of information will act as a yardstick against which managers can measure their performance to determine if they have been influenced—however subtly—by

racial prejudice. In other words, these figures should not be used as a quota or goal but as a check against which the managers can evaluate their overall record as equal opportunity employers. If a manager knows the occupational pools, the quality of labor hired, and the geographic areas from which these people are drawn, he or she can estimate the proportion of minorities and women which should have been hired over the long term.

There can be a large yearly random variation around these figures depending upon the supply of applicants and the particular demands of the manager. But there must be some standard of evaluation which ought to occur in the same context from which one can evaluate the success of the manager's hiring, promotion, termination, and overall staffing procedures.

The "social contract" is, in short, a color-blind employment policy unencumbered by artificial impediments to personal advancement and development. The end result of such a system is affirmative action in the truest and most effective sense.

In addition, results of testing procedures, bidding and posting systems, disciplinary procedures, and enforcement of absenteeism policies ought to be monitored in a similar fashion to see if they are being enforced on a color-blind basis. People who wish to avoid quotas and goals should remember that being color-blind does not mean that they should not look for the possibility of discrimination.

This article has attempted to present the case for a policy of promotion from within where all individuals start from specific sets of entry level positions and move up the ladder according to their performance and leadership abilities. Opponents of this approach argue that today's sophisticated world of business demands specialists with the sort of training that requires large investments, and that these "specialists" would not stand for the pay or working conditions of an entry level position. Companies that promote from within, it is argued, cut themselves off from vast pools of talent developed in other companies or professional schools. Some analysts also contend that there are very few people willing to start at entry level positions who have the ability to go to higher levels within the corporation.

To respond to those critics, it is useful to point to companies like Delta Air Lines where all promotions come from entry level positions. It is true that there are few people who can go from entry level to the very top positions, but there are few top positions and usually many thousands of employees. Moreover, although the methods of analyzing problems have become more

complicated, the fundamental problems of business—making a profit and running an effective organization—have remained remarkably unchanged. Fortunately, there are a surprising number of people who have the understanding and discipline effectively to address these problems, and there are many professionally trained individuals who are willing to work at entry level positions.

The "social contract" system is a very competitive one, based on hard and high ideals. Many companies have the notion—reinforced by the Uniform Employee Selection Guidelines—that in a highly competitive system, blacks and women do not do well because they are not as well educated, do not have the requisite credentials, and are not traditionally trained to compete on that level. There is also an underlying assumption in the Guidelines that if these groups are forced into a highly competitive and meritocratic system, they will not just fail to be promoted but fall out of the system because of the pressure. It is precisely to avoid such an exigency, however, that companies with successful "social contract" programs of affirmative action provide a "floor" of support, encouragement, and training to their carefully selected employees, so that they not only stay in the system but advance very well within it. This type of floor is structurally more sound than one based on standards and reward systems which are differentially applied. Table 2 presents the evaluation of an AAP based on attention to the employment process rather than to quotas and goals. The figures show that women have made great strides in the company over the last ten years. By following a "social contract" oriented AAP which sought to maximize genuine equality the company achieved far more impressive results than if it had hired women on the basis of a "body count" approach with its much touted emphasis on equality of results.

Obviously, the success of an open internal labor market depends in part upon an initial selection of individuals who are capable of a broad range of skills and who are also risk takers. It also requires that a company provide some reinforcement and security to this risk taking activity.

What we have just described is a rigorous selection process which enables companies to hire those persons who have the flexibility and ability to be promoted to a variety of different jobs and who can adapt to or fit in with the organizational structure and philosophy of the company. This process demands a strong sense of obligation or social contract between employees and employer. The employee is obligated to work hard for the corporation but is also able to develop the skills necessary for advancement and to take advantage of opportunities offered. The company makes a fair evaluation of each employee based on effort, devotion to the goals of the corporation, and the value of his or her skills.

The social contract is, in short, a color-blind employment policy with a close to perfect internal labor market, unencumbered by artificial impediments to personal advancement and development. The end result of such a system is affirmative action in the truest and most effective sense. ☐

Still Separate and Unequal

by Craig Flournoy

Editor's Note: After a lawsuit led to mandatory integration in a small East Texas town's public housing in December 1983, The Dallas Morning News began investigating federally assisted housing. The 14-month inquiry eventually covered 47 cities and towns from the Northeast to the West Coast. It included interviews with hundreds of tenants, owners, and managers of subsidized developments, current and former local and federal officials, and private housing experts. Additionally, thousands of documents were obtained through the federal Freedom of Information Act.

In February, 1985 The News published an eight part series by reporters Craig Flournoy and George Rodrigue. The series has prompted investigations by the House Subcommittee on Housing and Community Development and the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. The following article summarizing the series is adapted from a speech delivered by Mr. Flournoy at the Third Annual Oregon Fair Housing Conference on June 21, 1985 in Portland.

Willie Lewis and Blanche Rosenberg both live in federally assisted housing in Los Angeles. The eligibility and rental guidelines governing both are basically the same. Mr. Lewis, age 56, and Mrs. Rosenberg, age 85, also have the same landlord, the Housing Authority of the City of Los Angeles.

Mrs. Rosenberg, who is white, says she is more than satisfied with Las Palmas Gardens, the elderly-only development in West Los Angeles where she has lived since it opened in 1979. She and the other elderly residents—nearly all of whom are white—say maintenance is excellent. And the residents say they seldom

worry about street crime at the complex because of the protection provided by guards, computerized emergency systems, and enclosed parking lots with electronically activated gates.

"I love it here," says Mrs. Rosenberg, a native of New York. "If anything breaks they fix it immediately. And I feel very secure here."

Mr. Lewis and his wife Birdell, who are black, say they feel like prisoners in Nickerson Gardens, a sprawling public housing project in the Watts area of Los Angeles. Mr. Lewis and his wife say they often are afraid to go outside because of the gangs and the drug-related violence. Security for the Lewises and for the other 1,000 black families and elderly persons in Nickerson Gardens often depends on a 12-foot-high, grease-coated fence that encircles much of the project.

"You know why they put that fence up?" says Mr. Lewis, gesturing toward the black wrought-iron fence with long spikes that point inward toward the project. "They think we're animals, so they're fencing us in."

The disparity between Las Palmas Gardens and Nickerson Gardens is not unique. The two are part of a national system of 60,000 federally subsidized rental developments that *The Dallas Morning News* found to be largely separate and unequal.

Separate means that most of the nearly ten million residents of federally assisted housing lived in racially segregated apartment complexes in 1984. Numerous federal lawsuits and studies by the government and the private sector have documented pervasive racial segregation in public and private housing.

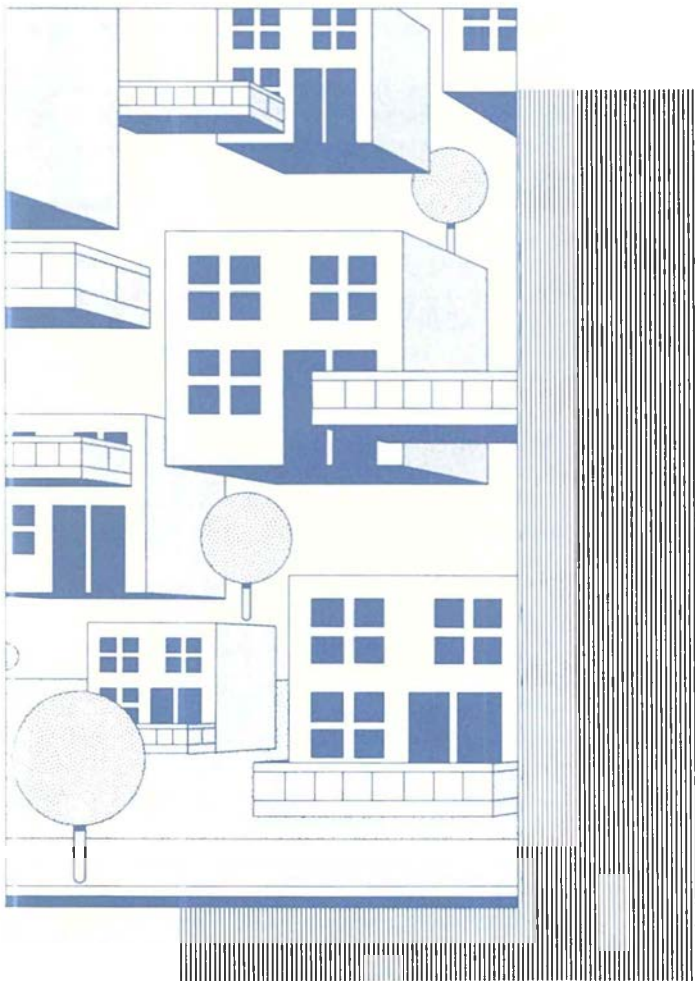
Unequal means that virtually every predominantly white-occupied development was significantly superior in condition, location, services, and amenities when compared to projects that house mainly blacks and Hispanics. At least that's what my partner George Rodrigue and I found in visits to 47 cities and

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Craig Flournoy is an investigative reporter with The Dallas Morning News.

The Limits of Good Intentions

by Irving Welfeld



The solution to the problem of racially segregated public housing has eluded every administration since the public housing program's inception a half century ago. The persistence of separate and inferior accommodations for many black public housing residents continues to perplex policymakers and to generate debate both inside and out of government circles. Recently, for example, a book length investigative series in the *Dallas Morning News* concluded that black families typically occupy old public housing projects on the wrong side of town in marked contrast to the amenity-filled units in good locations which are apt to be filled by elderly whites.

There is, of course, much truth in this depiction of racial separation and inequity. There is less truth, however, in the newspaper's contention that de facto segregation in public housing is primarily a function of official attitudes which, if they are not racist outright, are broadly apathetic towards integrationist objectives. The evidence suggests that the failure to achieve racially integrated public housing has occurred *despite* more than two decades of serious effort on behalf of that goal by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and its affiliate entities. Thus, while it must be recognized that racism is bound to have played a role within a bureaucratic structure which includes more than 3,000 local housing authorities, it is no less important to understand some of the other complex factors that have obstructed meaningful progress towards integrated public housing.

During its first quarter of a century, public housing, like most institutions, largely reflected community norms: segregation in

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Irving Welfeld is a senior analyst with the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The views expressed in this article are solely those of the author.

Still Separate and Unequal

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towns across the nation.

In fact, we did not find a single locality in which federal rent subsidy housing was fully integrated nor one where services and amenities were equal for whites and minority tenants living in separate projects.

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is responsible for funding and overseeing more than 90 percent of the nation's federally subsidized rental housing. Many current and former top officials with HUD agreed with our "separate and unequal" findings. HUD General Counsel John Knapp, the agency's chief legal officer, said in response to our central finding: "I don't doubt that there is a good bit of that."

Our inquiry found that hundreds of suburban communities—from Birmingham, Michigan and DuPage County, Illinois to Fulton County, Georgia—have refused to accept subsidized housing for families, housing for which minorities have the greatest demand. This refusal has played a pivotal role in perpetuating the overwhelmingly white makeup of these communities while leaving millions of minorities locked in inner-city ghettos.

There were almost 3.7 million households in 1984 whose rent was subsidized by the federal government. We found that almost nine of every ten of these apartments were provided in the last two decades, after Congress approved the landmark Civil Rights Act of 1964 that included the Title VI provision prohibiting racial discrimination in all federally funded programs. However, we found that HUD often has ignored the illegal operation of federally assisted developments by many local housing authorities and private developers. Except in isolated instances that have had little national impact, five presidential administrations have steadfastly refused to invoke the strongest penalties and most effective tools provided under federal fair housing laws.

Our 14-month investigation revealed a "new segregation" in the current system of almost 3.7 million federal rent subsidy apartments.

Laurence D. Pearl, a top official in the HUD office responsible for enforcing anti-discrimination laws in federally subsidized housing, said simply that "perhaps we've accepted too little." Mr. Pearl, director of program compliance in HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, also said that racial segregation in the country's 11,500 public housing projects is "definitely a nationwide problem." And Mr. Pearl said solving the problem "rivals in magnitude what I think went on with [desegregation of] the [nation's] schools."

The racial segregation and unequal conditions that pervade

federally subsidized rental housing have more than legal implications. Gary Orfield, a University of Chicago housing expert and a HUD consultant, said racially segregated housing "cuts off access to jobs. It cuts off access to education. It leads to disinvestment as the ghettos and barrios expand. It leads to eventual definition of most cities in racial terms and to their inability to finance basic services as poverty grows with the ghettoization cycle. It can devastate entire cities."

Racial segregation in federally assisted rental housing is not a new development. Since the inception of such housing in 1933, housing authorities from Dallas to Detroit intentionally separated tenants into white projects and black projects with federal consent. By 1964, the government had helped fund the construction of about 540,000 public housing apartments. Families lived in almost three of every four of these modest apartments in separate, but often roughly equal, projects.

Our 14-month investigation revealed a "new segregation" in the current system of almost 3.7 million federal rent subsidy apartments. The new segregation differs from the old in two key ways. First, the whites who benefit the most now are the elderly rather than families. Second, today's system of federally subsidized rental housing is significantly more unequal in the housing and services provided to whites and minorities than in previous decades. The pattern in most cities and towns is a throwback to the days of the antebellum South: the deteriorating, barely habitable housing goes to the blacks; the newer, well-maintained and sometimes lavish housing goes to the whites.

More than 1.5 million blacks live in public housing projects that house both families and elderly persons. Many live in older urban areas in projects vacated by whites in the 1950s and 1960s as surrounding inner-city neighborhoods became increasingly occupied by minorities. Others live in decaying high-rises originally intended to house urban renewal refugees.

The names of many of these older, minority-occupied public housing projects have become synonymous with the worst in slum housing: Chicago's Cabrini-Green, where more than 3,500 black families live in high-rise buildings and row houses often controlled by street gangs; Kansas City's Wayne Miner Court, a half-vacant, virtually all-black complex of high-rises and low-rises so deteriorated that local officials want to demolish it; and, in Dallas, the overwhelmingly minority-occupied West Dallas projects, where more than a third of the almost 3,400 units are vacant and boarded up because of years of official neglect.

"It becomes a serious danger when public housing becomes totally black," said William Wynn, deputy assistant secretary in HUD's Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity. "At the ones that I have seen that became totally black, there is a

disparity of services. It becomes an area where there are not too many supportive services. It also becomes an area where crime seems to run rampant. And it also becomes an area where the laws of the [housing] authority are not readily enforced.”

The “winners” in today’s new segregation have been elderly whites. Based on both eligibility and need, they won a disproportionate share of the almost 3.3 million federal rent subsidy apartments provided during the last 20 years. HUD figures show that the white elderly did particularly well in the competition for the most costly of these apartments—the more than 2.2 million units in which the federal government helped finance construction costs and agreed to subsidize rents. An examination of who lived in these 2.2 million apartments in 1984 shows:

- The elderly lived in more than 1.1 million or 50 percent of these apartments. This is twice the level of their eligibility. Elderly households accounted for less than 23 percent of the nation’s renters eligible for the vast majority of federal rent subsidy housing in 1981, the most recent year for which HUD has information.

- Whites lived in 75 percent of the almost 1.5 million newly built apartments for which racial data is available. White households comprised 64 percent of the nation’s renters eligible for subsidized housing in 1981.

- In the Section 8 New Construction program, which produced more newly built apartments during the past decade than any other rent subsidy program, elderly whites did exceedingly well. In 1984, there were 583,000 Section 8 New Construction units, most of them in privately-owned developments; elderly whites occupied 63 percent of these apartments. Yet HUD’s most recent data show that elderly white households accounted for 17 percent of the country’s renters eligible for subsidized housing.¹

Many local housing authorities have also stopped or severely curtailed the construction of family projects during the last 20 years. Despite waiting lists dominated by families, many cities and towns have concentrated on building government-subsidized apartments for the elderly, often under the public housing program, sometimes under new programs such as Section 8, and sometimes under special local programs. This trend is typified by the Seattle Housing Authority, the largest landlord in the Pacific Northwest.

Since 1967, the Seattle Housing Authority has built 36 developments restricted to elderly and handicapped tenants. Whites occupy almost nine of every ten of the nearly 3,300 apartments in these complexes, most of them in white neighborhoods in the northern part of the city. Meanwhile, from 1942 to 1984, the housing authority built fewer than 600 family apartments, or fewer than 15 per year. Blacks and other minorities occupy about

70 percent of these apartments.

However, the housing authority’s waiting list reveals that families have the greatest demand for housing. Families make up almost two-thirds of the more than 2,200 applicants on the public housing waiting list. And the number of families applying for apartments in Seattle’s Section 8 Existing program is so large that no applications have been taken since May of 1982.

Meanwhile, Housing Management Director Ron Oldham said Seattle has been so successful in its efforts to serve the elderly that “there is an excess supply of one-bedroom units both in public housing and in Section 8 [Existing].”

What explains the dramatic shift in federal rent subsidy housing over the last two decades toward construction of elderly-only developments? The programs providing the vast majority of apartments, such as public housing and Section 8, have the same basic eligibility requirements and rent guidelines. We found, however, that HUD offered developers a financial incentive to build or rehabilitate elderly-only Section 8 developments. HUD regulations, issued during the Ford administration, allow the private owners of newly constructed and renovated Section 8 elderly-only developments to charge five percent higher rents than the agency allows for Section 8 family projects. The Carter administration refused to eliminate the regulations in 1979 despite findings by the U.S. General Accounting Office that the practice “acts as a penalty for developers contemplating family projects.”²

Despite waiting lists dominated by families, many cities and towns have concentrated on building government-subsidized apartments for the elderly.

The News found that an equally dramatic shift toward elderly-only projects also occurred in the public housing program although HUD offers no financial incentive to local housing authorities to build elderly-only developments. Federal figures show that in 1984 the elderly lived in more than half of occupied public housing apartments built since 1964. By comparison, the elderly occupied about one-quarter of all public housing units in 1964. HUD’s latest racial occupancy figures show that whites lived in almost two of every three public housing apartments occupied by the elderly.

Robert Weaver, appointed by President Johnson in 1966 as HUD’s first secretary, said the primary reason for the shift is racial. Many communities made a conscious decision to build public housing for the elderly rather than for families, Mr. Weaver said, because they knew from waiting lists that “the

demand among families for public housing was much greater among blacks than among whites. This is tied, of course, to the whole question of schools, [and] it's tied to the whole question of amenities."

Tenants often put the current situation in eloquent perspective. Georgia Hysaw, a 54-year-old native of Bakersfield, California who has lived for 28 years in an overwhelmingly black-occupied public housing project there, described the situation this way: "We are still segregated and unequal, and it certainly isn't by choice."

In our visits to 47 cities across the country, we found that many elderly-only projects are equipped with sophisticated emergency and security systems, central air conditioning and heating, community centers, and laundry facilities. Through a combination of public and private resources, these developments routinely provide their mostly white tenants with free shuttle bus service for shopping, meals for one dollar, in-house medical care, and arts and crafts facilities staffed by instructors.

In Rhode Island, the Providence Housing Authority so neglected the Roger Williams Housing Project—once the well-maintained home of more than 700 white families—that today it is a rat-infested slum housing just 40 families, all but three of them black.

At the Kinder Park Apartments in suburban Philadelphia, an elderly resident can walk from building to building through enclosed, air-conditioned walkways protected by a computerized security system to reach a circular sunroom with sky light and fountain.

At the Crown Tower high-rise in Omaha, Nebraska, an elderly tenant can play a piano inside the first floor community center, shoot a game of pool inside the billiards room, or take ceramics classes from an instructor.

The Rosa Parks Senior Apartments in San Francisco once were rat-infested firetraps that mainly housed minority families. Renovated at a cost of ten million dollars, the building today provides its elderly residents with social workers for counseling and a hot tub for relaxation.

The 150 million dollar Angelus Plaza complex in Los Angeles is the nation's largest federally subsidized rental development for the elderly. Security measures are as elaborate as the land-

scaping. They include 24-hour protection by guards, closed circuit cameras, and a multi-story parking garage. Each apartment includes wall-to-wall carpeting, central air conditioning, and a balcony. Each apartment is also linked to a sophisticated computerized emergency system that allows each tenant to alert the building manager, who receives a printout with the tenant's apartment number, physician, and medical history.

But it is the social services and recreational activities that, according to tenant Joe Rybacki, make his apartment at Angelus Plaza "just like heaven." These services are showcased in the terraced, six-story Agape Social Services and Activities Center. There, Angelus Plaza tenants are provided with meals costing as little as one dollar, an 11,000-volume library, a ceramics studio with two kilns, and a medical clinic staffed by two physicians. Tenants also can get free psychological counseling, free legal assistance, interest-free loans, and vans to take them shopping.

Conditions are far different at most family public housing projects, which are heavily occupied by black and Hispanic families and elderly persons. In our visits to 47 cities, we found few amenities and even fewer social services.

In Rhode Island, the Providence Housing Authority so neglected the Roger Williams housing project—once the well-maintained home of more than 700 white families—that today it is a rat-infested slum housing just 40 families, all but three of them black.

In Kansas, the Topeka Housing Authority provides each of its three predominantly white-occupied high-rises for the elderly with a community center and tornado shelter. Only one of the three predominantly minority-occupied family projects has a tornado shelter. Topeka's three family projects had recreation centers but lost them when the Topeka City Commission voted to stop funding the facilities. Tenant Imogene Burns recalled, "We practically got down on our knees and begged [the commissioners] to let us keep the center, but they didn't pay any attention to us."

In California, the Kern County Housing Authority shut down the only community center it provided to the 230 households living in the Oro Vista and Adelante Vista projects in Bakersfield, both of which are 90 percent black. The housing authority spent almost 600,000 dollars to install central air conditioning and heating, new carpets, and a new fire alarm system in Plaza Towers, a 14-year-old elderly-only development that is 90 percent white. The housing authority has never replaced the air coolers at the 43-year-old Adelante Vista family project or at the 31-year-old Oro Vista family project.

When asked about this, Paul Castro, the deputy director of the Kern County Housing Authority, said, "As hot as it is in Kern County, a good cooler is absolutely necessary. Some [black family project] tenants just have to buy their own."

In Oklahoma, the Lawton Housing Authority recently spent 1.4 million dollars to install central air conditioning and heating and to construct a maintenance building at the 11-story Benjamin O. Davis high-rise for the elderly. The complex, which is equipped with a nurse call button in each apartment, laundry facilities, arts and crafts room, community center and sprinkler system, is 96 percent white. Elderly minorities are harder to attract, according to Lawton Housing Authority Director Retta Seabolt, because they "just prefer to be out where they can touch the ground."

At the Lawton View family project, blacks live in 130 of the 135 apartments. Lawton View has none of the comforts and conveniences of the high-rise. Annie Anderson, the manager of the family apartments, said that "a lot of tenants [in Lawton View] call in with legitimate complaints. It should be equal."

A series of congressional acts, HUD regulations, and U.S. Supreme Court decisions spanning two decades have banned racial segregation and other forms of discrimination in housing.

After passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, HUD issued regulations prohibiting any action that would "subject a person to segregation or separate treatment in any matter relating to his receipt of housing." In 1968, Congress approved Title VIII, better known as the Fair Housing Act, which prohibited racial discrimination in the bulk of the nation's public and private housing. The lawmakers also directed all executive agencies, HUD in particular, to act "affirmatively" to remedy the effects of past racial segregation and discrimination in housing.

However, except in isolated cases, the administrations of Presidents Johnson, Nixon, Ford, Carter, and Reagan have failed to enforce Title VI and Title VIII aggressively. Top HUD officials from the Johnson administration to the Reagan administration have approved funding for the construction of subsidized projects knowing that tenants would be racially segregated.

Mr. Weaver, the first secretary of HUD, acknowledged that he and other HUD officials knew that some cities and local housing authorities would segregate tenants by race. Mr. Weaver said he tolerated the illegal segregation because he did not want to arouse further opposition to the 1968 Fair Housing Act. Mr. Weaver said that since then "the reason that the 1968 Act wasn't enforced to the degree that it could be enforced was because there wasn't the will to enforce it."

HUD's failure aggressively to enforce fair housing laws under five presidential administrations, Mr. Weaver said, is "purely a case of the federal government not carrying out its responsibilities."

Congress has provided HUD with powerful penalties to ensure that city officials, local housing authorities, and private

developers comply with fair housing laws.

The 1964 Civil Rights Act authorizes HUD to cut off federal assistance to an agency or individual who engages in racial discrimination. Under the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, HUD can suspend, reduce, or stop the flow of Community Development Block Grant funds to a city that violates fair housing laws or does not act "in a manner to affirmatively further fair housing." And HUD is empowered to refer violations of fair housing laws and of the 1974 Act to the Justice Department for prosecution.

With few exceptions, the eight HUD secretaries during the past 19 years have not invoked the laws' strongest measures. For example:

- No HUD Secretary has ever used the authority provided under Title VI to cut off federal funds to a local housing authority, private developer, or landlord who operated a federal rent subsidy development. HUD Secretaries have threatened to cut off funds in 11 instances, but never followed through. Yet an internal 1981 HUD report concluded that "public housing remains racially segregated . . . in violation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968."

Top HUD officials from the Johnson administration to the Reagan administration have approved funding for the construction of subsidized projects knowing that tenants would be racially segregated.

- HUD officials in the last 10 years have never asked the U.S. Department of Justice to sue a locality for violating the Housing and Community Development Act, despite what the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights has said are HUD's own "well-documented findings of discrimination."⁴

- Top HUD officials seldom have revoked Community Development funds from communities despite widespread evidence that many either were violating fair housing laws or failing to make a good faith effort to provide low-income housing, one of the Act's primary goals.

- HUD continues to rely on an 18-year-old plan for selecting and assigning tenants in public housing, despite findings by the Justice Department as early as 1970 that "most public hous-



ing . . . [projects] were segregated and the tenant selection and assignment policy [of HUD] could be a contributing factor.”¹⁵

The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights may have best summed up the situation when, in 1979, it completed its most comprehensive examination of fair housing enforcement. “For more than a decade,” the Commission said, “the Departments of Housing and Urban Development and Justice . . . have largely failed in their responsibilities to prevent and eliminate discrimination and segregation in housing.”¹⁶

During the course of our project, we interviewed one HUD Secretary from each of the last five presidential administrations. Some, like Carla Hills, who served as HUD Secretary under President Ford, said the administration strongly supported her enforcement efforts and that they resulted in a sharp reduction in

racial segregation and discrimination in housing.

Others, such as Mr. Weaver and the late Patricia Roberts Harris, who served as head of HUD during the first two years of the Carter administration, said no administration has effectively enforced fair housing laws. Mrs. Harris said fair housing enforcement “wasn’t a high priority. I must say I consider that one of the areas where we left much to be desired.”

Samuel R. Pierce Jr., the current head of HUD, said racial discrimination in federally subsidized housing is inseparable from one of the nation’s fundamental problems: racial prejudice. “My God, it’s a bad country we live in, prejudice-wise,” said Secretary Pierce. “It’s terrible here, that’s what it is.”

Secretary Pierce also said that as much as government may try to enforce the nation’s fair housing laws, that “in the last analysis it will be [up to] the people” to end discrimination in public and private housing.

However, Antonio Monroig, Pierce’s assistant secretary in charge of HUD’s Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, said that vigorous enforcement by the government would change discriminatory behavior. He cites the deep-seated changes in the Jim Crow South sparked by the Supreme Court’s 1954 ruling that racially segregated public schools were unconstitutional. “We pursued it [enforcement of civil rights laws] down South, where they had separate bathrooms, they had separate seating in the moviehouses, everywhere,” said Mr. Monroig.

“But it [the *Brown* decision] was a law; [other] laws were passed. They were enforced, and it has changed. And I don’t think that anyone in the South at this point thinks that blacks should be up on the second floor or at a different water fountain. The only thing is that with housing, it [enforcing anti-discrimination laws] is a little more difficult,” Mr. Monroig said. “It will take time.” ❧

End Notes

1. Occupancy data provided by several HUD studies. Eligibility data derived from HUD’s Division of Housing and Demographic Analysis, “Trends in Subsidized Housing, 1974–1981,” Washington, D.C., March 1984, pp. 26–27, 44–45.
2. U.S. Comptroller General, “Evaluation of Alternatives for Financing Low and Moderate Income Rental Housing,” Washington, D.C., September 30, 1980, p. 62.
3. Robert H. Covell, Office of HUD Program Compliance, “A Management Control Assessment of the HUD Tenant Selection and Assignment Policy,” Washington, D.C., December 14, 1981, p. 12.
4. U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, *The Federal Fair Housing Enforcement Effort* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1979), p. 55.
5. As quoted in Covell, *op. cit.*, p. 7.
6. U. S. Commission on Civil Rights, *op. cit.*, p. 231.

The Limits of Good Intentions

Continued from p. 25

the South, and pockets of integration in the North. Although the program provided comparable accommodations for blacks and whites, it also seemed to reinforce segregationist housing patterns. As an article examining the impact of the New Deal on blacks in Cleveland concluded:

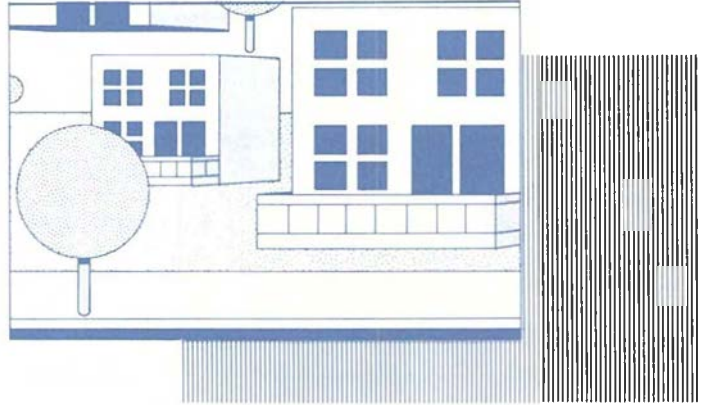
On the one hand, the housing projects provided many Negroes with inexpensive and well-maintained living accommodations and the public work programs furnished jobs for a large number of Negroes who would otherwise have been unemployed. On the other hand, the housing projects encouraged residential segregation . . . and played a crucial role in spreading slum conditions to new areas of the city, while public work programs appear to have depressed the Negro job structure to lower levels by employing Negroes in occupational categories below those which had been open to them in the private sector of the economy.¹

From the late 1930s through the 1940s, the public housing program was run at a fairly low cost and, for the most part, prospered. The program's main problem was that the incomes of too many families exceeded the income limit set for continued occupancy. Critics charged that the program was operating too much like an ordinary real estate operation.

To address the complaints of those who felt that public housing was interfering unduly with private enterprise and that it was not reaching the really underprivileged, Congress responded with the Housing Act of 1949. The Act changed the rules of the game by targeting public housing to the very poor by lowering income limits, barring discrimination against welfare recipients, and giving priority to families displaced by urban renewal and highway construction.

The Housing Act did not, however, change the rules with regard to racial discrimination. An amendment was introduced by Senator John Bricker which would have mandated that public housing be operated on a non-discriminatory basis, but Bricker's purpose was not to rectify racial injustice but rather to split the northern and southern supporters of the housing bill and defeat both that particular measure and the cause of public housing. The Bricker amendment posed the dilemma of civil rights versus civil reform.² In the end, supporters of public housing from all regions stood together on the side of civil reform and defeated the amendment. To the amendment's supporters in the black community (i.e., the NAACP), Senator Glen Taylor was blunt:

I have been approached by Negroes who said, "We would rather go down fighting here and now and not have any housing, than to compromise in this fashion." However . . . I believe those Negroes who spoke to me have houses, probably



adequate houses, to live in. . . . We cannot be too self-righteous and be ready to let other people go without housing in order that we may stand by our principles.³

Another factor which early on dimmed the prospects for integration in public housing was the adoption of a mechanism called "minimum ratio," according to which tenant rents were tied to a percentage of income rather than to the quality of the unit. In the early fifties, the minimum ratio was set at 20 percent of tenant income; this rate was both too high and too low. For the new class of public housing tenants, many of whom were in the lowest income group, 20 percent of their income could not cover even operating costs. The same 20 percent proved too high for the newly prosperous older tenants who could not understand why their rents should increase while their buildings and neighborhoods deteriorated. For these upwardly mobile families, a disproportionately large number of whom were white, the minimum ratio acted like a vacuum cleaner to suck them out of public housing. This process was further accelerated by these families' need for more space than public housing apartments could offer and by the availability of cheap private alternatives.

By the mid-fifties, public housing authorities (PHAs) were petitioning the federal government to drop the requirement of a minimum ratio. Their wish was finally granted in 1959, but by then it was too late to forestall the flight of higher income (predominantly white) families from public housing. Indeed, PHAs had very little to offer their higher income tenants. To families who had been paying steadily increasing rents and receiving steadily decreasing value, PHAs could neither offer rent reductions—this would have threatened the projects with financial insolvency—nor could they offer newer housing. The influx of minorities and the very poor into public housing had begun to generate successful organizing efforts by many neighborhoods to block the construction of new

public housing projects which had come to be seen as unwelcome intruders.⁴

Commenting on this hostility toward public housing, the National Commission on Urban Problems headed by Senator Paul Douglas found that white racism *per se* was too simplistic an explanation:

A substantial part of the opposition to public housing is economic. It is based on the fear that if lower income folk, especially lower income Negroes, come into the neighborhood, crime rates go up and a slatternly pattern of house care develops, which, among other factors, tends to lower the price of real estate and endanger painfully acquired savings. . . . The objectors, whether vocal or silent, are not bad men or women and should not be treated as such. They are, instead, very human. They worry about their savings, their homes, their neighborhoods, and their children, and are often disturbed to find old, subconscious, and hidden prejudices coming to the surface.⁵

As a result of growing community opposition to new family projects, PHAs began to focus their efforts on a new strategy: building for the elderly. Although it originated as a program for families, public housing underwent a major transformation in 1956 when the definition of "family" was amended to include a single person over the age of 62. Armed with a new definition and a little extra subsidy money, PHAs suddenly saw site problems disappear. Moreover, the elderly segment of the public housing program became popular for some very good reasons that had nothing to do with race. As Abner Silverman put it in a paper chapter entitled "Everybody Loves Mòmma":

The elderly don't make waves. They don't have children to over-use project facilities. They generally get along with their neighbors, irrespective of religion, social status or color. They try to take care of their dwellings. They live by middle-class standards.⁶

In 1952 there were no units specially designed for the elderly, but by 1970 more than 138,000 had become available. Although among the older population, a black household is twice as likely to be poor as a white household, there are 3.5 poor elderly white households for every poor black household. This explains why in public housing the ratio of white elderly to black elderly has been three whites for every two blacks. By the standard of 85 percent of one race considered as "all," 41 percent of the elderly projects are all white, 18 percent are all black, and 38 percent are mixed with the remainder all Hispanic or all Asian. Thus public housing, which had threatened to become a program mostly for

minorities, now had a major segment with substantial integration. As noted by the Douglas Commission, ". . . it would seem as the fires of life subside, they do not feel as much race antagonism Mixed projects for the aged, for example, are well accepted in Atlanta [which] while a progressive city, is still geographically in the Deep South."⁷

But while this strategy of building for the elderly resulted in many successful projects from the point of view of integration, it also resulted in overwhelming financial failure, since operating costs for these buildings ran far in excess of tenant rents. By the end of the 1960s, with the outflow of higher income families into private housing and the financially untenable condition of the elderly projects, some of the major PHAs were close to bankruptcy.

At the same time, a rise in rent and a decline in maintenance of low income housing led to growing dissatisfaction that contributed to the urban riots of the 1960s.

The passage of the landmark civil rights legislation of the 1960s brought a new attitude. HUD was not going to stand by—it was going to do something about segregated housing. Activism and good intentions did not produce a solution.

Often the availability of sites seemed to pose a conflict between meeting the needs of minorities for decent housing and the imperatives of integrating publicly subsidized housing.

If the white tenant was not going to come to the inner-city black project (between 1960 and 1973, 3,000 family public housing units were built by the Chicago Housing Authority and exactly one was inhabited by a white family), HUD would attempt to move the subsidized projects out of the ghetto. New site selection standards were finally adopted in 1972, but the new standards had barely any impact on their intended goal: the development of racially and economically integrated privately developed subsidized housing. Unlike their public counterparts, private housing projects did not require such affirming actions by the locality as the creation of a local housing authority and the execution of a cooperation agreement. Private developers were free to roam the four corners of the metropolis.

The development of new site selection standards owed much to the decision in *Shannon v. HUD* (1970) in which the Supreme Court held that HUD "must utilize some institutionalized method whereby, in considering site selection . . . it has before it the

relevant racial and socioeconomic information necessary for compliance with its duties under the 1964 and 1968 Civil Rights Acts.⁸ HUD would be required to justify the selection of sites that might add to racial concentration. The new standards meant that sites must be selected so as to promote greater choice of housing opportunities and to avoid undue concentration of assisted persons in areas containing a high proportion of low income persons.

Each site had to be examined from various perspectives. Could the site be developed? Would it, for example, meet local land use requirements and have the cooperation of local officials for such discretionary items as the extension of sewage and the interpretation of zoning, subdivision, and building requirements? Would HUD approve the site? Would HUD's decision be litigated and what would the courts decide? The public housing developer, in short, had to run an obstacle course strewn with political, administrative, and legal pitfalls.

Often the availability of sites seemed to pose a conflict between the opportunity to meet the needs of minorities for decent housing and the imperatives of integrating publicly subsidized housing. The courts generally came down on the side of the latter and thus, even if a community were unanimous in its support for the inclusion of subsidized housing, if the effect of such housing would be to increase or just maintain the racial concentration, it was deemed impermissible.⁹

If housing could not be built in areas of minority concentration, the choices left for the developer were racially mixed areas or areas in which there were no minorities.

The pressure to produce more housing units and the limited availability of sites led to a predisposition by HUD to approve project sites even when the inclusion of a new lower income project would lead to severe racial imbalance, middle-class disinvestment, and irreversible neighborhood decline. After all, communities already on a downward trend were far less likely than more stable neighborhoods to mount an effective campaign against the construction of new lower income public housing.

Yet in approving site selection in heavily minority areas where new housing would be welcomed, HUD was likely to find its decisions overturned in court for its failure to promote *integrated* housing.¹⁰ Conversely, project sites on which the courts were apt to look favorably for purposes of integration were in those economically and racially stable areas where developers would once again find their plans thwarted, but this time through costly litigation and other obstructionist maneuvering by community groups opposed to all subsidized housing—private or public—as a threat to traditional values. Moreover if a developer selects a site in an outlying area where neighbors are not close enough to object, he may be informed by the courts or other interested parties that the site is unacceptable due to its social

and physical isolation. A resident fellow of the Harvard-MIT Joint Center cited as an example of “desolate sites cut off from the rest of the city” a location on Boston harbor with plenty of light, good air, and water on three sides. That site has since become a choice location for which developers are willing to pay large sums.

Should the developer find a site in a non-minority area, it will certainly pass muster by HUD and, if challenged by neighbors, will most likely survive a court battle. But such victories by developers often turn out to be Pyrrhic ones. The direct cost of litigation plus time factors which may include the holding cost of land and the indirect costs of rising interest and construction rates may turn a feasible project into a lost cause. (One public housing site in Philadelphia actually stayed in litigation for over 20 years.)

It should not come as a surprise that private developers took the same route as public housing authorities. Of the 563,000 units built pursuant to the Section 8 housing program, 65 percent have been built for the elderly.

Over the last two decades, HUD has also implemented tenant selection and assignment procedures specifically designed to advance racial and economic integration throughout all segments of the public housing program. De facto segregationist patterns, however, have remained largely unaffected by such efforts or by other attempts to strengthen federal enforcement of equal opportunity laws including ongoing actions against recalcitrant local housing authorities. Furthermore, even if the assistant secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity were actually able to staff every PHA in the country with personnel free of all racial prejudice and committed to the best practices of enlightened management, the impact on desegregating public housing would hardly be noticeable.

We have already noted that the issue of site selection has involved an apparent incompatibility between the courts' desire to prohibit development of any site which was not likely to result in integrated housing projects and the critical need of minority families for more decent housing. Similarly, with regard to tenant selection, efforts to fill vacancies on the basis of what will best enhance integration are bound to conflict with some fundamental principles of sound financial management. The interplay of these two sets of standards for tenant selection—the one based on economic imperatives and the other on integrationist objectives—was described in a report by the General Accounting Office (GAO) entitled *Stronger Federal Enforcement Needed to Uphold Fair Housing Laws*.

The present HUD tenant selection and assignments policy for public housing was adopted in 1967 and has as its stated goal implementation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and

administration in such a manner as to assure efficiency and economy in the program. The Handbook implementing this policy has adopted a first-come, first-served approach. The applicant at the top of the waiting list is offered an apartment in the project with the largest number of vacancies. Applicants refusing three offers without good cause must be placed at the bottom of the waiting list.

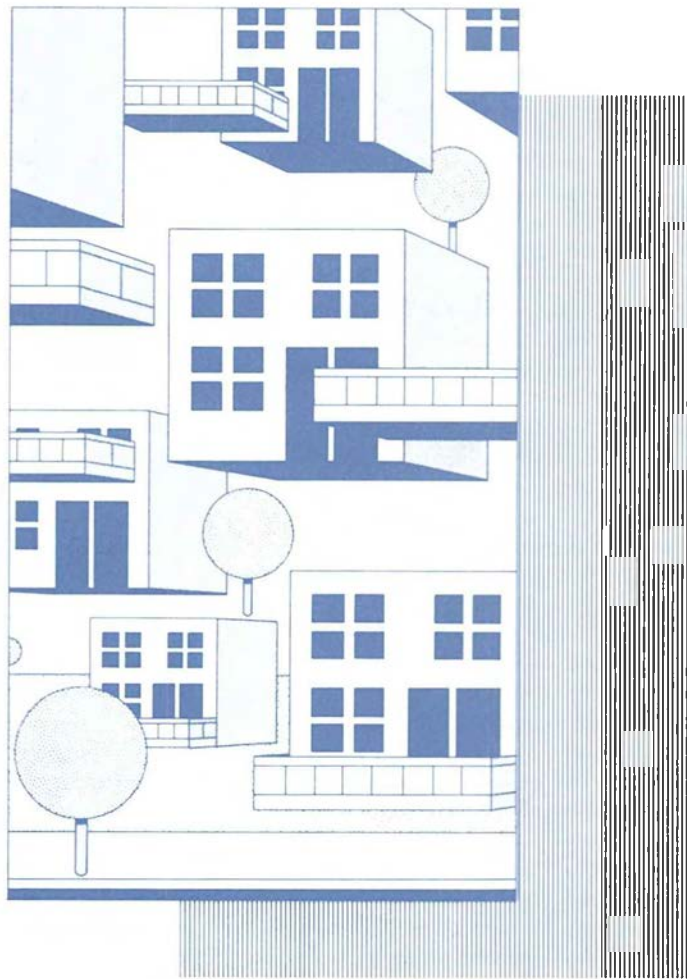
This policy has had little effect on the racial segregation of public housing. One reason is that it runs contrary to the desire of Congress and the Executive Branch as expressed in the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 which instructed HUD to establish standards for operating financially sound public housing projects. Those standards included requirements that authorities select families with a broad range of incomes:

Three of the housing authorities reviewed were giving preference to families able to pay higher rents; as a result, low-income families were systematically not being offered housing or were being offered only the less desirable units. A large percentage of applicants at these three authorities were nonwhites. One authority, for example, selected tenants from applicants who could pay monthly rents of \$50 or more. We sampled 77 files . . . and found that 58 were nonwhites and 19 were white. Of these, 55 nonwhites and 15 whites could not pay \$50 or more. The supervisor for tenant selection told us that persons unable to pay the average rent were offered only the less desirable units.¹¹

Ironically, the GAO has also reported on the failure of the attempt to get a cross-section of income. A report entitled *Serving a Broader Economic Range of Families in Public Housing Could Reduce Operating Subsidies* concluded, "No simple solution exists to motivate housing agencies to house a broader range of low-income families instead of the poorest households. Housing poor families in preference to very poor involves hard choices. Formidable problems of a moral and administrative nature exist."¹²

What the public housing program subsidy structure is missing is the key mechanism for choice in our society, namely, a pricing system. Public housing is a system in which the cost of the product and the quality of the service are totally divorced from the price to the consumer. As a result of legislative fiat, 30 percent is the right rent-to-income ratio for all tenants.

The following example will illustrate the highly complex problem of tenant selection. A 4,000 dollar and a 12,000 dollar household arrive at the doorstep of a public housing project. The authority has two vacancies. The first is its very best unit. It is brand new and located in a pleasant tree-lined middle-class



neighborhood. The cost of the unit (debt service and operating costs) is 500 dollars per month. The second vacancy is the very worst unit. It is close to half a century old, in shabby condition, and located in an area where even dope pushers fear to tread. The cost of the unit is 175 dollars per month. The very worst unit, in a project with more than its fair share of very poor blacks, is offered to the 12,000 dollar family. The PHA will ask the family to pay 30 percent of its income—300 dollars a month. Is there any likelihood that the family will choose the unit? If the PHA wants to snare this tenant, it will have to offer more attractive bait—the 500 dollar vacant unit for 300 dollars. The 4,000 dollar family is then offered the 175 dollar vacant unit for 30 percent of its income—125 dollars a month. It is an offer the family cannot refuse if it wishes to keep a roof over its head.

A method that has been considered for increasing choice is a

one stop, area-wide information and counseling center that would contain listings for subsidized private as well as public housing. Under such a system, the tenant would have a much better idea of his or her housing options. The only catch is its potential impact on public housing. The nature of the subsidy system under which both private and public housing operate would turn this into a foolish enterprise. Since the price the tenant pays is completely divorced from the quality and the market price of the unit, such a policy would result in an emptying out of all the older public housing projects leaving the housing authorities in an even more woeful financial condition than they are in at present. The only residents who would remain in public housing would be those in the newer units. It may be noted that a number of PHAs are beginning to experience substantial vacancies in units formerly occupied by the elderly. A large number of elderly have always been occupants of the pre-1949 projects (which contained many small units since the construction cost limits before 1949 were not based on the number of rooms). Many of these elderly are moving to newly constructed privately subsidized apartments without any increase in rent.

Public housing in the United States has been given a near impossible mission. It is asked to integrate people not merely of different races, but of widely varying socioeconomic backgrounds. Each of these tasks alone is difficult. Put together, they make for a quixotic exercise. Moreover, integration is itself no miracle cure for societal ills. As Thomas Pettigrew, the prominent social scientist and leader in the struggle for school and housing integration, has written:

Many well-meaning Americans have expressed the opinion that if only blacks and whites could experience more contact with each other, the nation's racial difficulties would solve themselves. Unfortunately, the case is not so simple. . . . More racial contact can lead either to greater prejudice and rejection or to greater respect and acceptance, depending on the situation in which it occurs. . . . Prejudice is lessened when the two groups 1) possess equal status, 2) seek common goals, 3) are cooperatively dependent on each other, and 4) interact with the positive support of authorities, laws, or custom.¹³

As we have seen, public housing has been plagued from its earliest days by race-centered problems which are not themselves simply the products of racism. The program has often had to choose between segregated housing and no housing. It has to build elderly housing because of the unavailability of sites for family housing. It has to choose between the poor and the very poor. It has to operate in a subsidy environment in which the

granting of choice to its tenants jeopardizes its financial solvency. It is saddled with the task of producing developments that are racially, socially, and economically mixed, when any one of these tasks requires great skill and good fortune. With hindsight it is easy to criticize some of the choices. With foresight it is difficult to say what is to be done given the present legal framework of public housing. ▣

End Notes

1. Christopher Wye, "The New Deal and the Negro Community: Towards a Broader Conceptualization," *Journal of American History*, Vol. 59, (1972), pp. 621, 622.

2. For a more detailed history of the amendment, see Irving Welfeld, "The Courts and Desegregated Housing: The Meaning (If Any) of the Gautreaux Case," *The Public Interest*, Vol. 45, Fall 1976, pp. 123-135.

3. *Congressional Record*, Vol. 95, p. 4857.

4. The depths of the aversion to projects is illustrated in the following account of an encounter between a buyer interested in a long term real estate investment and a seller:

When we mentioned that perhaps there were similar cemeteries that we should look into, the Parklawn man looked horrified. "Well, you wouldn't want to go to National Memorial Park," he said, "because that's too far away. And as for Fort Lincoln, well, it is tragic what has happened there. The neighborhood has deteriorated so badly. And now they are building a low-cost housing project just over the fence. They will never be able to keep them out, even with a high wall. I am so sick about it, I'm thinking of pulling my first wife out of there and transferring her to Parklawn." Sanning, "Death Styles," *Washingtonian* (August 1973), pp. 54-95.

5. National Commission on Urban Problems, *Building the American City, A Report to the Congress and to the President of the United States*, Washington, D.C., 1968, p. 130.

6. Abner Silverman, *User Needs and Social Services*, paper submitted to the House Committee on Banking and Currency, 92nd Congress, 1st Session, June 1971, p. 598.

7. National Commission on Urban Problems, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

8. *Shannon v. HUD*, 436 F.2d 809 (C.A., 1970).

9. *Marin City Council v. Marin County Development Agency*, 416 F. Supp. 707 (1976).

10. *King v. Harris*, 464 F. Supp. 827 (1979).

11. General Accounting Office, *Stronger Federal Enforcement Needed to Uphold Fair Housing Laws*, February 2, 1978.

12. General Accounting Office, *Serving a Broader Economic Range of Families in Public Housing Could Reduce Operating Subsidies*, November 1979.

13. Thomas F. Pettigrew, "Attitudes on Race and Housing: A Social-Psychological View," in Hawley and Rock, eds., *Segregation in Residential Areas* (Washington, D.C.: National Academy of Sciences, 1973), pp. 59-60.

EDUCATION

By Decree

by Elizabeth A. Marek

With Judge Arthur Garrity's announcement that he is determined to end his involvement in Boston school desegregation this summer, a drama of innumerable acts appears to be drawing to a close. For over a decade now, we have watched the judge as he first tried to end the overtly segregatory aspects of a school system, and then began to run the system himself—with disastrous results. We listened as he first declared his primary concern to be the racial balancing of black and white school children, and then watched him produce a school system far more racially imbalanced than it was when he began. And finally, we watched him create a school system so burdensome to all that, in 1982, a coalition of black parents presented to him a freedom-of-choice plan that would have delighted desegregation's most diehard opponents in 1974, the year the judge took control of the system.

Throughout the 11 years of Judge Garrity's intervention, whites and middle-class blacks deserted Boston's public schools in droves. While the city's population declined by nine percent, total school enrollment fell by nearly 43 percent. Whites still account for 70 percent of the city's population, but white children comprise only 26 percent of the school population, down from roughly 60 percent in 1974. At the same time, while the absolute number of black students has dropped from nearly 32,000 to 27,400, an overall reduction in enrollment meant that the percentage black has increased from 34 to 48. Concurrently, other nonwhite enrollment, primarily of Hispanics, has nearly doubled, from 8,000, or six percent, in 1974 to 15,000, or 24 percent, at the end of last year.

Yet even these disheartening statistics fail to capture the magnitude of the problem, for when one excludes the majority-white enclaves within the system—two of the schools requiring entrance exams, the schools of East Boston, and most of the kindergartens, all exempt from the busing order—the remainder of the system is roughly 80 percent black and other minority, and 20 percent poor white. And while experts disagree about how much of the white decline is directly attributable to

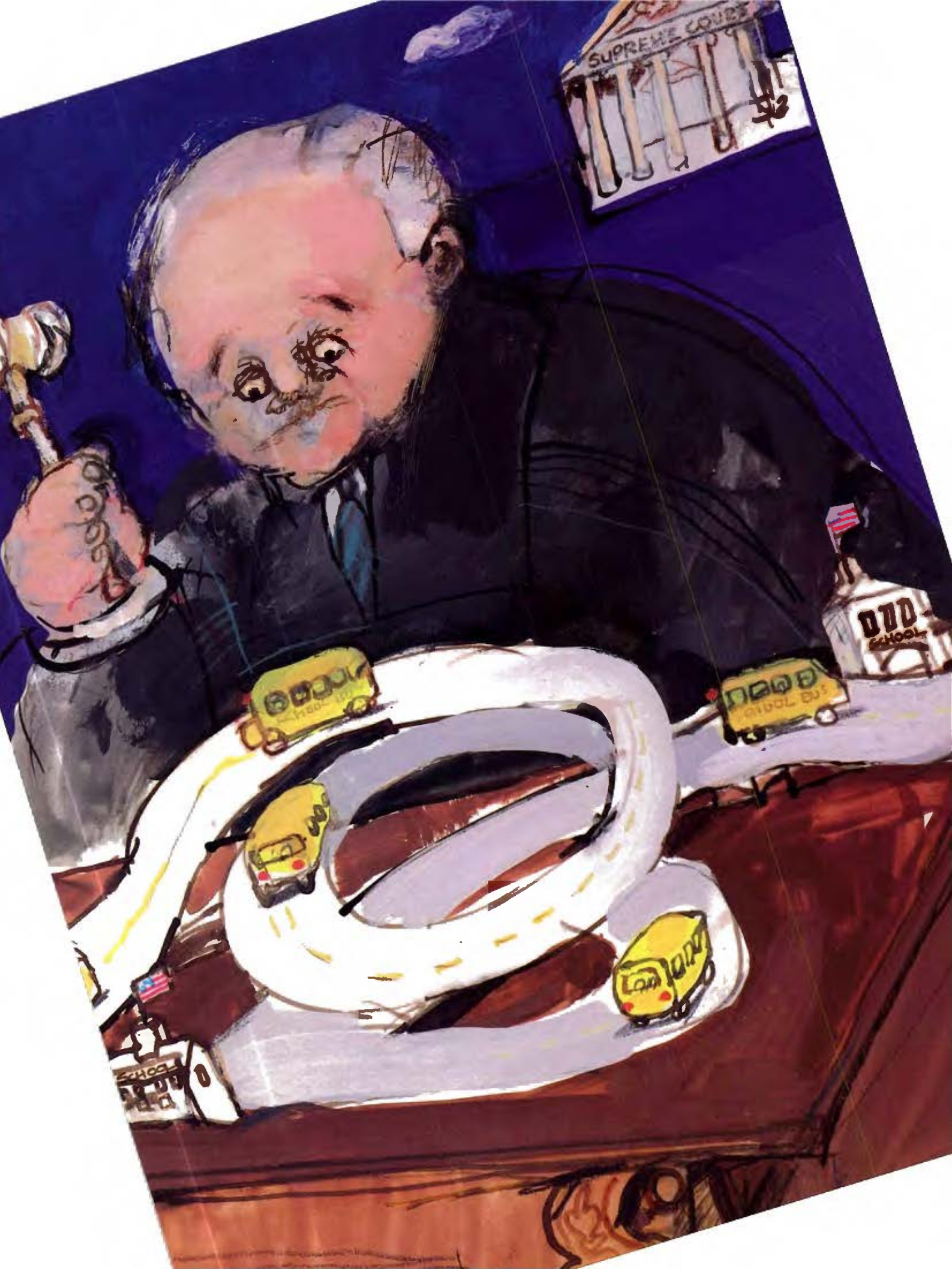
desegregation-related white flight—estimates range from 25 to 50 percent—it is significant that close to 50 percent of the city's white school age children now attend non-public schools, in which whites comprise roughly 85 percent of the student body.

Whatever its cause, the changing racial composition of the school system increasingly means that busing is becoming a dead issue, and racial balancing a mathematical impossibility. Under the current desegregation order, black children are being bused miles from their homes to schools which are already predominantly black. Of the 62 elementary schools in the city, 44 are out of precise compliance with the judge's order.

Of even greater concern is what the children find at the end of the bus ride. There is no way to measure desegregation's effect on the overall quality of education: The school system of Boston was winning no prizes for excellence in 1974, and test scores for both blacks and whites rose considerably during the decade of desegregation, but they remain well below the national median. For example, in 1975—both the first year of full desegregation and the first year test scores were recorded by race—the median score for black sixth graders was 20, while for white sixth graders it was 46. By 1984, median sixth grade scores had risen to 44 and 62, respectively. Similarly, in the 11th grade, median scores for blacks rose from 20 to 30, and for whites, from 54 to 72. Yet nationwide scores rose substantially more during this decade, with the result that of Boston's 17 high schools, 13 remain below the national median in math and 14 are below the median in reading. In 1984, the entire school system (not including the predominantly white "exam" schools) produced only six National Merit semi-finalists—the same number as in 1974. So disturbing is the situation that even Jonathan Kozol, fierce critic of the 1974 school system and staunch supporter of busing, now wonders whether the desegregation order wasn't a "Pyrrhic victory" after all, and characterizes the system as one in which "poor whites, poor blacks and poor Hispanics now become illiterate together."

While desegregation's impact on the overall quality of education is thus unclear, one thing busing clearly did *not* do was integrate the school system. As a result of the massive white flight, blacks and whites still have as little in-school contact as

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they did before busing began. In 1973 the "contact rate" between blacks and whites—defined as the percentage white in the average black child's school—was roughly 21 percent. In 1975, the first year of the mandatory busing, the contact rate peaked at 37.8 percent, but by the end of the 1983–84 school year it had receded to a mere 22 percent. In this most crucial respect, the experiment in Boston must be seen as a failure.

And the costs have been enormous. While it is almost impossible to assign a dollar value to the desegregation effort, we do know that per pupil expenditure has more than doubled—from 1,687 dollars in the 1973–74 school year to 3,965 dollars last year. By 1979, the National Center for Educational Statistics rated Boston's school system as the second most expensive in the nation. And although this increase also reflected inflation, various non-controversial demographic trends, and greater spending on school renovations and improvements, there is no doubt that desegregation-related white flight played a major part in increasing per pupil costs as the number of students fell precipitously and teacher layoffs and school closings lagged behind. Even on a day to day operating level, the politics of desegregation in Boston often ran contrary to sound economic policy. In awarding contracts for school buses or for the construction of new schools, for example, the Boston School Committee sometimes delayed implementation of court orders for so long that there was no longer time for normal bidding procedures, and the most expensive contractors were used.

In a sense, however, the "intangible" costs of the desegregation struggle are actually easier to define. Judge Garrity's order—along with the Boston School Committee's determined efforts to obstruct it—caused massive chaos throughout the school system. The first few years of implementation brought teacher strikes, student "sick-outs," and so many changes in pupil and teacher assignments that all sense of continuity and loyalty was obliterated.

Worse, the conflict over desegregation ignited racial tensions. While busing is a policy tool about which reasonable people can reasonably disagree, in Boston the situation became unreasonable very quickly. News reports during the first year of implementation gave nightly accounts of the day's racial skirmishes and brought pictures of angry white faces hurling epithets, and often stones and bottles as well, at busloads of black children.

As news spread about the worst of this violence—the in-school stabbing of a white boy by a black gang, the attack by a white mob on a black reporter outside South Boston High School, the stabbing of a black civic leader with an American flag in downtown Boston—the city became a symbol of all that was abhorrent in American society. Desegregation in Boston escalated racial hostility to such an extent that long after the media attention had died away, long after the bus routes were straightened out and the mobs dispersed, the bitterness and resentment lingered. Indeed, as late as 1982, there were still frequent racial skirmishes at South Boston and other schools.

Far from achieving its goal of "improved interracial understanding," desegregation instead polarized the city so deeply that even today, 11 years later, black cab drivers routinely refuse to drive passengers into South Boston, and whites view Roxbury and other predominantly black areas as openly hostile territory.

It is somewhat encouraging to note that in-school racial

violence has dropped substantially from its 1975 peak. In South Boston High School, for example, the number of suspensions decreased from a high of nearly 1,700 in 1975 (out of a student population of only 500!) to a mere 150 in 1985. Furthermore, according to Principal Jerome Winegar, most of the violence is no longer racially motivated.

We now hear that at long last the Boston School Committee, the judge, the plaintiffs, and the defendants all profess a commitment to "desegregated education." But what does desegregated education mean in a school system that is nearly four-fifths nonwhite? Why was desegregation in Boston such a self-defeating exercise? Perhaps most importantly, what can be done now to cut the losses and improve educational quality for all?

Most critics of the Boston school desegregation drama place the blame upon desegregation's director, Federal Judge Arthur G. Garrity. It was the "Garrity Plan" that they believe led to white flight, drove the middle classes to desert the system, and escalated racial tension. Even those who acknowledge that problems existed prior to 1974 contend that these were well on the way to being fixed. If the schools are segregated, it was argued, then let the judge find that they are. Let him rule the segregation unconstitutional. But the role of a judge is to do just that: judge. When he steps onto the stage and tries to direct the action, disaster is the inevitable result. While there may be some truth to this argument, Boston's ordeal is far more complex than can be understood by pinning the blame on any one individual.

Boston's desegregation problems developed as they did in part because, unlike many northern cities, the evidence of purposeful segregatory intent on the part of Boston school authorities was clear and abundant. In 1972, the racial composition of the school system as a whole was roughly 61 percent white, 32 percent black, and seven percent other minority. Yet of the city's 18 high schools, eight were more than 85 percent white, with five schools having less than ten percent minority enrollment. Of the remaining ten schools, two were less than two percent white, and another four ranged from 52 to 75 percent black. Similar patterns were repeated at the junior high and elementary level as well.

Of course, such ratios could simply be, as they were in so many northern cities, the result of residential choice, economics, and demography. In Boston, however, Judge Garrity found that the facts argued against such an analysis. First, the district boundaries regulating pupil assignment to elementary and middle schools were drawn separately from natural neighborhood boundaries, and resulted "in nearly the maximum possible racial isolation." Furthermore, schools were often located near edges of irregularly shaped districts, so that some students were forced to attend relatively distant schools when there was another just a few blocks from their home. Third, demographic patterns were not relevant to racial imbalance at the high school level, since attendance was based not on districts but on city-wide "feeder patterns," with a cluster of junior high and middle schools automatically sending their graduates directly to a larger, centralized high school. Under the "feeder pattern" which existed in 1972, the grade structures of the schools were such that most of the predominantly white lower schools fed into the same eight high schools, while the predominantly minority lower schools

fed into others. Finally, Garrity cited school site selection, use of mobile "annex" units, school closings, and the permissibility of minority-to-majority transfers as additional evidence of de jure segregation.

In laying down remedial guidelines, Garrity's initial opinion charged the school board with an "affirmative obligation" to end the gross racial imbalance in the school system. While he shied away from mandating racial quotas, he did note that "a remedial plan . . . is to be judged by its effectiveness" (and its effectiveness, in turn, was to be judged by the number of black children in predominantly white schools and vice versa), and that "a preference not to bus, or for neighborhood schools . . . can be validly maintained only if it will not interfere with the defendant's constitutional duty to desegregate."

What most critics fail to recognize is that Judge Garrity did not originate policy but in fact conscientiously adhered to an inflexible desegregation script written by a unanimous Supreme Court.

While in retrospect it seems clear that no busing plan could have been instituted without difficulty, the Garrity plan—with its emphasis on busing the poorest of the poor and the most insular of the ethnics into each other's turf—was guaranteed to fan the flames. What most critics fail to recognize, however, is that Judge Garrity did not originate policy but in fact conscientiously adhered to an inflexible desegregation script written by a unanimous Supreme Court between 1968 and 1973. The script, unfortunately, left no room to accommodate Boston's unique social and historical background of insular ethnic neighborhoods and inter-ethnic suspicion.

In 1968, as economic theorists championed their ability to "fine tune" the economy and social theorists grew confident of their ability to eradicate many social ills, the Supreme Court, caught up in the mood of the times, shifted the focus of desegregation litigation from constitutionality to practicality, from rights to numbers. In *Green v. New Kent County*, New Kent County's freedom-of-choice desegregation plan was struck down not because such a plan was intrinsically unconstitutional, but because in New Kent County the plan did not work. Under the *Green* standard, the "abolition of segregation and its effects" was held to be a "constitutionally required end," and the means to that end—the local desegregation plan—was to be judged by its results. "If the means prove effective," wrote the Court, "it is acceptable, but if it fails to undo segregation, other means must be used to achieve this end."

Three years later, the Supreme Court specifically sanctioned "administratively awkward, inconvenient and even bizarre" remedies, as long as they "promised realistically to work and work now," and made it quite clear that the yardstick used to measure success would be numerical ratios. Finally, in *Keyes v. Denver*, decided only one year before the Boston case, the Court instructed lower court judges that, even in the North, the invidious use by the school board of "various techniques such as the

manipulation of student attendance zones, school site selection and a neighborhood school policy" placed upon the school board the "affirmative duty to desegregate the system 'root and branch.'"

In retrospect, it is easy to argue that Judge Garrity should have first tried other more limited approaches to desegregation—redrawing district lines to end gerrymandering, changing the segregatory feeder patterns, standardizing grade divisions, equalizing spending, using magnet schools, or any number of alternatives—rather than massive busing, which instead of balancing the racial scales, eventually tipped them further in the wrong direction.

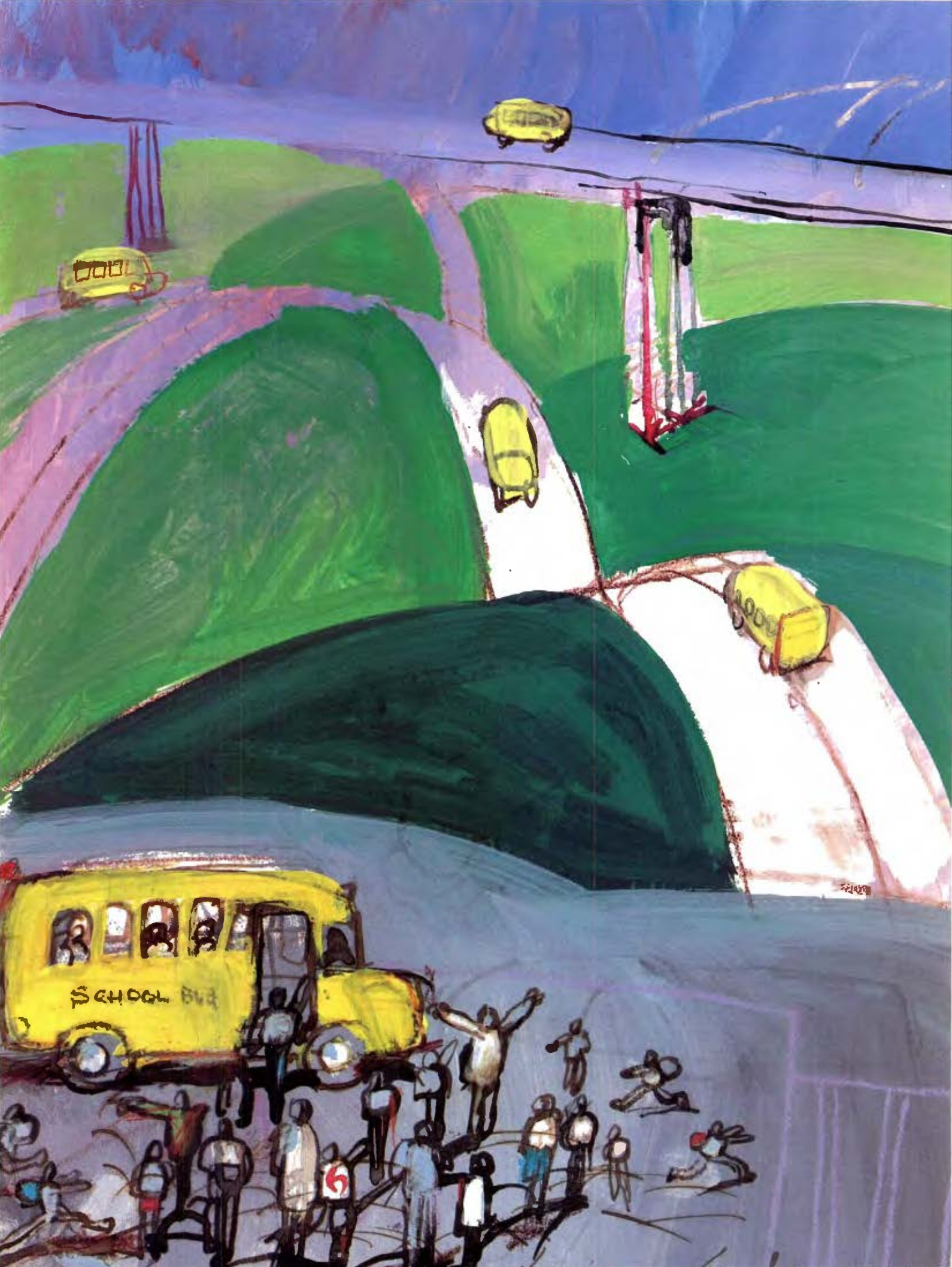
Had he used these more limited tactics, however, Garrity almost certainly would have been reversed on appeal by the plaintiffs. At least that is what happened to other judges who tried a limited approach in Wilmington, Delaware, San Francisco, California, and other cities. The "infamous" Garrity decision—handed down only after repeated attempts to force the Boston School Committee to design their own plan had failed—was thus *not* an isolated example of judicial tyranny, not one judge's hubris. It flowed directly and inexorably from the larger body of Supreme Court law.

The Supreme Court's script did play reasonably well in some areas. After initial unrest, tension, and considerable white flight, the school districts of Little Rock, Arkansas, Charlotte, North Carolina, Wilmington, Delaware, and a few other areas have become more integrated and the resources have been spread more equally among pupils of all races. Yet because it left no room for the judges to take local political and social constraints into account, in Boston it was to become a prescription for disaster.

This is not to say that busing is always going to be a disaster. Where it has not worked is in larger urban areas, especially in the North. There, white flight has uniformly made busing a self-defeating exercise. Indeed, research on desegregation-related white flight shows that Boston, which experienced a white loss of 16.2 percent in the implementation year and an 18.7 percent decline in the following year (versus the predicted five to seven percent loss which would have occurred in the absence of desegregation), is typical of big-city outcomes. In Detroit, where a 9.2 percent drop in white enrollment had been predicted, the actual decline under the court-ordered busing plan was 21.7 percent. Similarly, a predicted 6.8 percent decline in Dayton, Ohio, nearly tripled to 17.5 percent in the first year of court-ordered busing, and an expected five percent decline in San Francisco mushroomed into a 15.6 percent drop under mandatory desegregation.

Voluntary and partial plans, especially those requiring only the one-way busing of black children to predominantly white schools, have produced somewhat less flight. In Milwaukee, for example, a largely voluntary plan increased white loss from an expected 5.7 percent to 10.8 percent, and a partial plan in Indianapolis increased white loss by only a few percentage points, from an expected 6.3 percent to an actual 9.8 percent in the implementation year.

Despite these statistics, many social scientists and educational planners behave like riders on dying horses and vent their frustration with the slowed pace of desegregation by redoubling



SCHOOL BUS

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their blows. In one recent example, sociologist Jennifer Hochschild argued that the white flight problem can be solved only by bringing the (predominantly white) suburbs into the process. Others have suggested springing desegregation on unwitting communities, thereby reducing the "lag time" in which resistance movements are supposed to gather force.

Disregarding the insidiously anti-democratic nature of such suggestions, the fact remains that they simply will not work. No amount of prodding will bring the horse back to life. Hochschild ignores the fact that many parents, black and white, "escape" to the suburbs precisely to ensure a quality education for their children. It is folly to suppose that affluent suburbanites will acquiesce in the busing of their children back to the inner city rather than secure a private or parochial alternative. As for the "attack without warning" approach—Boston itself is a prime example of the need for adequate planning time to minimize chaos and ease implementation.

It is folly to suppose that affluent suburbanites will acquiesce in the busing of their children back to the inner city rather than secure a private or parochial alternative.

Of course, racist attitudes should not be allowed to dictate policy. But recent events have shown that racism is no longer at the bottom of the resistance to desegregation. Indeed, an opinion poll in Boston conducted in January 1985, shows that a majority of public school parents with children at the elementary level would willingly send their children to a non-neighborhood school, provided that the distant school offered certain education-related advantages—e.g. magnet programs, special language curricula, or smaller class sizes—not available at the neighborhood school.

Integrated education is an important and desirable goal for all the reasons that its proponents cite: ending racial isolation, offering poor children a way out of the ghetto, and promoting interracial understanding. But we must ask: What price are we willing to pay? Events in Boston exemplify the need for a rewrite of the desegregation script. It must be made sufficiently flexible to allow for a wide variety of situational constraints. The focus must shift once again from tactics which merely manipulate numbers to the long term perspective of improving educational quality and equalizing access to educational opportunities.

This is the direction in which Boston, after a decade of turmoil, finally seems to be moving. With the exception of a few die-hard racial balancers, led by plaintiffs' counsel Thomas Atkins, all parties seem battle-weary and ready for compromise. In an effort to "demonstrate [its] commitment to desegregated education," the Boston School Committee voted seven to five this year to approve the closing of five underutilized schools in predominantly white areas. For his part, Judge Garrity accepted the Committee's package in total. In addition, he gave tentative approbation to the Committee's proposal to create an "experi-

mental district" that would establish, in the quarter of the city where there is reasonable residential integration, a district in which students could once again attend their neighborhood schools, and where additional desegregation would be accomplished by voluntary transfers and recruitment of students outside the district. While confident of the plan's success, Boston School Committee President John Nucci says that if the experimental district does result in resegregation, he would be the "first to admit that it is a total failure" and would be willing to "go back to the drawing board."

Other voluntary programs have already proved successful. This year, over 3,200 black children participated in the Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunities (METCO) program, which provides for one-way busing of black city children to predominantly white suburban schools. While the plan has come under frequent attack—both from city officials, who feel it drains the city school system of its most talented black students, and from suburban leaders, who resent having to subsidize city students at a time when financial resources are already scarce—there is no question that it offers the participants a far better education than they could otherwise obtain. The use of magnet schools has also been effective: city-wide, 15,800 children are voluntarily transported to schools offering special programs. Of these, 48.32 percent are black, 28.21 percent are white, and 23.47 percent belong to other minority groups. Unlike most schools in the system, furthermore, individual magnet schools tend to reflect this balance as well.

In addition, the Boston School Committee can continue to build upon some of the genuine accomplishments of the Garrity decade. These include the end of the patronage system, under which self-aggrandizing and sometimes openly racist politicians were allowed to run the schools. School Committee members are now elected in district-based rather than at-large contests, allowing greater flexibility among communities and higher accountability of members to their constituents. School facilities have been substantially improved, and almost all of the unsafe buildings have been closed or renovated. University and business involvement in the schools is also increasing; by court order, each school is paired with a university which offers special programs to the school, and, in an unprecedented show of support, the Bank of Boston this year donated 1.5 million dollars to the system for "innovative programs." Most importantly, the overtly segregatory aspects of school assignments, feeder patterns, and grade structures have been abolished, and public school students are nondiscriminatorily assigned to their schools each year.

Desegregation in Boston had a great many unintended and damaging consequences. What began as an attempt to allow black children equal access to white schools ended with a school system in which so few white children remain that equal access is no longer an issue. Yet by abolishing the ingrained inequalities within the Boston school system, desegregation ultimately made possible the establishment of a school system in which both quality and equality finally can be the rule. There is still a long way to go before that goal can be realized, but with continued effort locally, and an increased commitment at the state level, voluntary programs may now be able to do what a decade of litigation and court orders could not: educate the children being nurtured in the cradle of liberty. ☩

Books

Escape From Nature

by Naomi Munson

**Myths of Coeducation: Selected Essays
1964–1983**

Florence Howe

Bloomington: Indiana University Press,
1984. 306 pp.

\$35.00 hardcover; \$14.95 paperback.

Taking a good look around nowadays, one might feel safe in saying that women have come a long way in their two-decade-long struggle for “liberation” from what the women’s movement decried as second-class citizenship.

The movement complained that working women were relegated to the “helping” professions: nursing, teaching, secretarial work. Today, law schools, business schools, and medical schools (not to mention journalism schools) are fairly bursting at the seams with women. And what’s more, any one of these budding doctors, lawyers, and corporation heads is well aware that her sex is no small asset in the marketplace.

The movement complained that women were underrepresented in public life. Today, women are mayors; women are senators; a woman sits on the Supreme Court; a woman even held the vice-presidential slot on a major party’s ticket. And, like their sisters in the private sector, political women know that their sex will stand them in good stead in their professional life.

The movement complained that women were imprisoned in their boring suburban houses with their boring children, condemned to boring coffee klatches with their boring neighbors,

Naomi Munson has written for Commentary, The American Spectator, and The New Republic.

while their husbands were off living the high life in the big city. Today, husbands and wives leave for the office together; the coffee klatch has been replaced by the two martini lunch; and the children (if any) are in the hands of one “caretaker” or another, inflicting only “quality” rather than “quantity” time on their relieved mothers.

***We are, in short, a nation
of raised consciousness.
And at least some small
measure of credit for this
accomplishment belongs
to Florence Howe.***

Little girls now arrive at the playground equipped with dump trucks, while little boys carry Cabbage Patch dolls. The word “chairman” has virtually disappeared from the American vocabulary. And a young man wondering to himself, “Will she or won’t she?” is more likely to be worrying about his chances of being permitted to pay for his date’s dinner than about getting her into the sack.

We are, in short, a nation of raised consciousness. And at least some small measure of credit for this accomplishment belongs to Florence Howe, author of *Myths of Coeducation*. President and publisher of *The Feminist Press*, professor of American Studies at the State University of New York, former president of the Modern Language Association, Miss Howe is also one of the founding mothers (if such a term in such a context is permissible) of the scholarly field known as Women’s Studies.

The book is a collection of essays—the first written in 1964, the last in 1983—that chart the development of Miss Howe’s own awareness of oppression and of the method she devised for passing that awareness on to her students.

Miss Howe’s journey to consciousness

began in 1964 at a summer “Freedom School” in Jackson, Mississippi. With her students there—victims of southern racism and of separate but decidedly unequal schools—she discussed school integration and bigotry and read Richard Wright, James Baldwin, Langston Hughes, and e e cummings. By summer’s end, she reports, these benighted youths had become not only political activists but poets as well. (Though no one, it seems, could have been more surprised than the teacher herself to discover that they could produce as passable an imitation of the cummings style as their more privileged northern peers.)

From this experience Miss Howe learned many valuable lessons. She learned, as she herself sums it up, “that our schools are political grounds in which our students begin to learn about society’s rules . . . [t]hat if we would have strong and creative minds we must remove chains from both bodies and spirits . . . [t]hat . . . adults and educators have to listen and respond rather than preach . . . to share with our students a sense of being open to what each uniquely experienced companion can reveal.”

When Freedom School let out, Miss Howe returned, reluctantly, to her regular post teaching English at Goucher, a small women’s college in Baltimore, Maryland. With her she brought the pedagogic theory that was soon to take hold—with such devastating effects—of our educational institutions: namely that creativity rather than knowledge was the goal of education, and that therefore the educator’s role was not to impart knowledge but simply to guide, even coax, the student to the discovery of his (or, of course, her) own creativity.

She had a clear sense of the relevance of her Jackson experience to her Goucher girls. “Why,” she asked herself, “had those Mississippi students been better writers than Goucher undergraduates?” What the Freedom School had provided

Books

for its students, she realized, was "a new connection: between learning and life. Black students needed to feel and love blackness, to want liberation enough to struggle, even die for it. Maybe it would have to be the same for women."

If a few weeks' immersion in Richard Wright and e e cummings had sufficed to instill love of their blackness in Miss Howe's "freedom" students, female self-love was not, apparently, so easily accessible. "[H]ow," Miss Howe wondered, "does one *love* 'being a woman'? . . . What is there in life for women beyond pleasing one's grandfather, father, or husband? And looking forward to having children?"

Back in 1964, Miss Howe simply did not have the answers to those questions. And so she devoted the next two decades to finding them. This she did primarily in relation to her own major interests, literature and education.

In Miss Howe's view, the "male curriculum"—male-created and male-oriented—does no more than teach "girls and women to accept their subordinate position in a male-centered world."

And she found much that was *not* lovable in the state of womanhood—even beyond pleasing all of one's male relatives and bearing children. She found, in literature for example, that the curriculum she had been teaching for more than a decade cast women in a subservient or dependent role; that women who deviated from this literary norm were apt to be treated unkindly by traditional male authors—Henry James and Nathaniel Hawthorne, for instance, both created decidedly unflattering portraits of "liberated" women be-

cause, Miss Howe opines, they were "ignorant or fearful of feminism, and in their novels, therefore, the characterizations become thin, the motivations arch, obscure or absurd;" and that literally thousands of works by women had been unjustly excluded from the literary "canon." (One of these neglected writers had written no fewer than "fifty-seven books and hundreds of shorter pieces.")

On the educational front, things were no less dismal. From infancy, boys were trained to dominate, girls to serve. Boy babies were thrown up in the air and dressed in blue; baby girls wore pink and were "expected" to play quiet games. In elementary and high school boys were nudged toward, and girls away from, math and science; and their school texts showed mommy staying at home and daddy going off to work. In universities, women were also steered gently away from the sciences and into the arts. Even there, however, they were hardly assured a safe haven: far fewer women than men applied for graduate programs or "did anything" with graduate degrees, for example, and the percentage of female professors was distressingly low.

Such details—important though they may be—aside, Miss Howe has an even graver indictment to bring against our educational system. The very notion, it seems, of higher education for women, a privilege which they fought so long and so hard to attain, is little more than a cruel hoax. "One of the central ideas of coeducation," Miss Howe writes, "provides a central myth: that if women are admitted to men's education and treated exactly as men are, then all problems of sexual equity will be solved." In Miss Howe's view, the "male curriculum"—male-created and male-oriented—does no more than teach "girls and women to accept their subordinate position in a male-centered world."

Much has changed for women since Miss Howe began writing the essays in-

cluded in this book. School texts have been adapted; the "canon" has been broadened; percentages of women in every area have risen; a Susan B. Anthony silver dollar has even been minted.

Miss Howe's description of the myth of coeducation, however, was written not in 1975 or even in 1965, but a mere two years ago. The revolution, in short, has not developed to Miss Howe's satisfaction. It is not enough.

For the movement, nothing is ever enough. If women are allowed into West Point and Annapolis, they aren't being promoted fast enough; if they are hired as professors, lawyers, and telephone repairpersons, they aren't paid enough; or they are subjected to dirty jokes and ogling; or their mothers *still* want them to get married and settle down. They cannot, it seems, allow the world, or themselves, a moment's peace.

Nor could it be otherwise. For the real myth of *Myths of Coeducation* is the notion that Miss Howe and her movement have sought to teach women—and to

The real myth of Myths of Coeducation is the notion that Miss Howe and her movement have sought to teach women—and to learn—self-love.

learn—self-love. It is, on the face of it, ludicrous that women should seek to come to terms with themselves while denying the reality—carried with them every day—of their role as bearers of children and makers of families. And yet that denial is the very essence of Miss Howe's teaching. Is it any wonder that those who follow that teaching, who live that lie, become ever more demanding and ever more barren of self-respect? ☹

Books

The Right Tail

by Peter Cachion

Choosing Elites

Robert Klitgaard

New York: Basic Books, 1985, 288 pp.

\$19.95 hardcover.

Each Spring, behind closed doors, admissions officers at the most sought-after colleges and graduate schools in America decide a question of considerable moment: Whom to select? The alumni of these schools are represented out of all proportion among the business, governing, and professional classes. Who will be awarded the next set of tickets into the national elite? In answering that question, admissions officers are guided by two criteria. They are to select a student body capable of academic excellence and they are to ensure that the student population is "diverse"—a catch-all term invoked to justify the admission of some students who, though less qualified than others, are accepted in the hope that their presence in the institution will promote certain institutional goals.

Those for whom special allowances are made include athletes, children of alumni, and most controversially of all, racial and ethnic minorities.

There is a vast statistical literature on the relation of academic predictors to later performance, and the evidence is clear: admitting lesser-qualified students results in a significant decline in the student body's overall academic performance (based on studies which show that scores on standardized tests such as the SAT tend to predict academic success in college rather reliably). Thus, the result of affirmative action is a less than optimally qualified population at the selective

schools. The best schools must be especially careful in guarding their academic standards, for these are a major reason why the schools are desirable, and thus selective.

Administrators at selective schools setting out to make affirmative action policy, for example, might calculate the "marginal cost" of admitting an underqualified minority student and formulate a trade-off between the drop in predicted academic performance on the one hand, and the benefits of increased minority representation on the other. This is the argument Robert Klitgaard makes in *Choosing Elites*, a dense and authoritative study of selective admissions focusing on group representation and affirmative action. *Choosing Elites* is likely to infuriate many of its readers, for Klitgaard's analysis, based on an exhaustive review of the statistical literature, exposes several educational fallacies, including the concept of "test bias" and the validity of measures of blacks' academic performance:

Differences in [standardized test] scores cannot be attributed to predictive bias in the tests. Indeed, predictions made using test scores and high-school grades actually overstate the later performances of blacks relative to whites. Compared to whites with the same test scores, blacks on average under-perform in college, in graduate schools, and on some measures of job performance. The degree of this under-performance is from one-third to two-thirds of a standard deviation at typical right-tail institutions [those picking students whose scores register on the right or better-scoring side of the statistical bell curve].

Klitgaard also cites statistics which reveal that very few blacks have the high test scores and grades which characterize the majority of applicants to the selective schools. For example, "only 143 blacks

who took the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) quantitative test in 1978-79 scored 650 or above, compared to 27,240 whites who did." Similarly, in the Fall of 1976, 13,190 students scored 600 or above on the Law School Admissions Test (LSAT) and had a grade average of "B+" or better; only 39 were blacks. And in 1983, only 570 blacks scored above 1200 on the SAT, out of a total of nearly 61,000 students who did that well.

Were it not for preferential treatment policies, the children of alumni in the Harvard class of 1975 would have been 6.1 rather than 13.6 percent; athletes 4.5 rather than 23.6 percent; and blacks 1.1 rather than 7.1 percent.

It is obvious from looking at the numbers that the selective schools are dipping deep into the barrel to find many of the affirmative action admittees. Of all the characteristics sought in selective college applicants, none (except, perhaps, proficiency in football) is as valuable as membership in a preferred racial minority. Preferential admissions policies decisively shape the composition of the school's entering class: were it not for preferential treatment policies, the children of alumni in the Harvard class of 1975 would have been 6.1 percent rather than 13.6 percent; athletes 4.5 percent rather than 23.6 percent, and blacks 1.1 percent rather than 7.1 percent. As Klitgaard, a former Harvard admissions director, reveals: "[A]t selective institutions being black frequently adds 40 to 50 percentage points to the probability of being admitted, other

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things equal." The dismaying discrepancies between the ability and performance of affirmative action admittees and the average student, says Klitgaard, must be taken into account in any discussion of what the "proper" level of affirmative action should be.

Klitgaard's strategy for calculating the optimal level of affirmative action ("accept[ing] more and more blacks up to the point where the benefits of an additional black student in terms of representation is equal to what we have to give up in terms of predicted academic performance") is couched in the economist's precise language. The marginal cost of admitting an underqualified student can be estimated (relying on the correlation between academic indicators—high school grades and test scores—and performance). But what of the "benefits of representation," the other variable in the equation?

For some beneficiaries of preferential treatment, the benefits to the institution are obvious. Football stars bring in revenue and raise school spirit. Alumni are more likely to contribute if their children are given special consideration and school "tradition" is strengthened when succeeding generations of a family attend. But what do blacks bring, except for the color of their skin? The intangible benefits of admitting minority students are categorized as "diversity;" but the same

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could be said for a son or daughter of any number of groups—e.g., Polish-Americans or farmers.

In truth, Klitgaard makes a very tentative attempt to answer the question. He

cites one possible benefit for which he thinks there is no evidence: the claim that blacks learn better when there are more of them in attendance at a school.

Another "possible benefit" is that "with the introduction of preferential treatment, members of minority groups may have been motivated to study harder, to aim higher and to perceive 'the system' as at least partially open to them." But the opposite may also be true: They may have been led to believe that it was not necessary to study harder or even hard in order to get admitted to Harvard.

Perhaps realizing the dilemmas and paradoxes which such a "marginal cost calculation" representation policy entails, Klitgaard calls for more weight to be given to academic merit in the admissions system. In most schools, the admissions officer combines the skills of publicist and military recruiter; but at elite schools like Harvard his responsibilities involve more academic forecasting and maximizing educational excellence. *Choosing Elites* concludes that of all the predictors available to the selective admissions officer, grades and test scores are the *only* ones that have any more than marginal predictive validity. The call for admissions based on "hard" (objective) measures of academic merit—"admissions by the numbers"—is likely to revolt many. Klitgaard recognizes this and he acknowledges that subjective, "human" input into admissions decisions will remain necessary no matter how reliable academic indicators are or may become:

Selections made by human beings, in lively disagreement using their best if subjective judgments on a variety of subjective data, is qualitatively different in this cultural dimension from selection by a computer based on standardized test scores. The declaration of what is being sought—vague and idealistic as that may be—and the involvement of the culture's best representa-

tives—its "aristocracy" in the good sense—help to create and reinforce an institution's mission. This is so even if someone comes along and shows that what is sought cannot be reliably measured or effectively predicted among young people at the right tail.

As Klitgaard fully realizes, it is this subjective process that keeps affirmative action alive. At present, there is not a selection committee at any of the country's elite institutions that is not committed to admitting many more minority students than would be admitted on the basis of objectively determined scholastic merit. But that commitment will not last forever. There will be pressure to break it as discrimination recedes further into the nation's past. Even now admissions officers are capable neither of articulating the reasons why affirmative action is central to an elite school's "mission," nor of documenting affirmative action's benefits. With the erosion of the commitment, these failures will surely have their effect.

Meanwhile, critics of affirmative action—who do have studies in hand showing its drawbacks—will find an ever-widening audience. As a result, administrators who imagine that they have exclusive control over their admissions policies may begin to realize how bound they are to evolving standards of "justice" and "fairness" which may force a substantial rethinking of preferential treatment policies at the selective schools. ☒

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