

small is occurring even as many urban visionaries speak of sprawling “megacities.” Introducing a potpourri on the “Post Urban Planet” (including contributions by Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas and Massachusetts Institute of Technology dean William Mitchell), the editors of *New Perspectives Quarterly* (Summer 1996) declare that “the future promises to make ruins of the past as the old cities prove too small to inhabit.” Global industry and instantaneous communications are said to be among the forces driving the change.

In planning circles, Joel Kotkin, a Fellow at the Pepperdine Institute for Public Policy, writes in *American Enterprise*, metropolitan government is seen as an antidote to today’s urban problems. In metropolitan gov-

ernment, one unified authority assumes control over a multitude of urban and suburban jurisdictions. But look at Los Angeles, whose city government presides over a huge area, he says. Nearly all of the smaller cities nearby are prospering, and there are movements afoot among communities inside Los Angeles to break away and form their own, smaller political units. What gives smaller cities an edge, Kotkin believes, is “stronger community participation and shorter feedback loops.”

So, at the close of the 20th century, Americans are being pulled in two seemingly opposite directions: toward large-scale cultural and economic institutions and toward smaller and more intimate communities. It’s a conflict that is bound to be felt in every cul de sac and city street in the land.

Welfare Reform That Works?

“New Jersey’s Experiment in Welfare Reform” by Ted G. Goertzel and Gary S. Young, in *The Public Interest* (Fall 1996), 1112 16th St. N.W., Ste. 530, Washington, D.C. 20036.

New Jersey’s controversial welfare reform plan—enacted in 1992 over strenuous protests—has worked, contend sociologists Goertzel, of Rutgers University, and Young, of the Community College of Philadelphia. The “message” it sent to people in the state’s inner cities was received, the “culture” there has changed—and declining birthrates, as well as reduced welfare dependency, are the proof.

The plan’s most controversial part was its

“family cap” provision, which denies an additional cash benefit to an unmarried woman who has another child while receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) payments. The National Organization for Women called it “an impermissible attempt to intrude on the private lifestyle choices of poor women.” But Assemblyman (now Senator) Wayne Bryant, an African-American liberal Democrat from Camden and the architect of

Heterophobia

Daphne Patai, co-author of *Professing Feminism* (1994), writing in *Partisan Review* (Fall 1996), assays the radical feminist intolerance of men and the women “who insist on associating with them.”

It seems that much of the present passionate rejection of men is explained, only apparently paradoxically, by feminism’s embrace of “difference.” This embrace has led to such a splintering of identity that the category “woman” can hardly be used without embarrassment. There are so many newly emergent identities to which any one group of feminists need feel inferior: white women vis-à-vis women of color; heterosexual women vis-à-vis lesbians; women of privilege vis-à-vis poor women (though, characteristically in American society, this theme seems to be of less importance than the others). The fact is that feminism is fragmented by all these divisions, which have created . . . the “oppression sweepstakes.” I believe this jostling for place creates so much tension within feminism that it is barely able to sustain itself as a movement in which separate identity groups keep speaking to one another. But there is one thing that, apparently, can save the day for them all, and that is hostility to men.

the reform plan, wanted, the authors say, “to send welfare recipients the message that welfare must be temporary, not a way of life.” Other elements of the plan included a requirement that recipients meet with social workers to formulate a “family plan” to improve their situation through education, work experience, or marriage, and an increase in the amount of schooling and child care offered to the women.

Bryant’s message got through, Goertzel and Young contend. Between 1992 and ’94, births to AFDC mothers in the state fell by four percent—twice the rate of decline among all New Jersey women. In 10 New Jersey cities where the “welfare culture” is strongest, births to women receiving AFDC dropped much more, by an average of about nine percent. In the largest city, Newark, where half of the children belong to families receiving AFDC benefits,

births to AFDC mothers fell 10 percent; in Camden, such births plummeted by 21 percent. State officials, meanwhile, have found no increase in abortions.

Ironically, the authors point out, the welfare advocates’ attacks apparently helped to get the message of change across even before the reforms were fully implemented. Many inner-city women probably saw the reform package as more punitive than it really was. Governor Christine Todd Whitman’s subsequent proposal for a strict five-year lifetime limit on AFDC benefits, as well as the recent federal action ending AFDC as an entitlement, have also undoubtedly had an impact. “Women are no longer certain that AFDC will be there to support them,” conclude the authors, and this has been affecting their decisions.

Risky Abortions

“Legal but Not Safe” by Candace C. Crandall, in *The Women’s Quarterly* (Summer 1996), 2111 Wilson Blvd., Ste. 550, Arlington, Va. 22201–3057.

With the 1973 Supreme Court ruling in *Roe v. Wade*, abortion became legal throughout the nation, and that, many believed, also meant that it would be safe. Women would no longer have to venture down back alleys to obtain an abortion; now, abortion would be safe and cheap. Unfortunately, argues Crandall, a free-lance writer who says she sympathizes with the abortion rights movement, *Roe v. Wade* did not put an end to unsafe abortions.

Some 550,000 deaths that might have been abortion-related—out of 27 million legal abortions induced between 1972 and 1990—were reported to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). But officials there, Crandall says, suspect that the actual number of such deaths is much higher. Serious infection and other potentially life-threatening complications have occurred in some 250,000 women undergoing legal abortions since 1972, according to the CDC.

The clinics responsible for most of these deaths and complications “are not the pristine establishments where Radcliffe girls might go for a weekend abortion,” Crandall notes, but operations “that advertise in Spanish-language newspapers and neighborhood weeklies, pay kickbacks to sleazy phone referral services, and lure women through

the doorway with names that echo the political lingua franca—‘choice,’ and ‘reproductive health.’” These “abortion mills,” she says, prey upon poor and uneducated women, disproportionately black and Hispanic, who do not know how to find a good clinic or how to take legal action against medical malpractice.

Most abortion providers are reasonably competent, Crandall believes, but that was true even before *Roe v. Wade*, “when Planned Parenthood estimated that nine out of 10 illegal abortions were being performed by qualified physicians.” The fact that they were often breaking the law kept the number of abortions low (as few as 200,000 annually by some estimates), she points out, and also “effectively discouraged most [physicians] from taking unnecessary risks with their patients. Legalization removed these constraints.”

To keep abortion costs low today, Crandall says, “abortion providers and abortion rights activists resist health regulation that would require emergency care equipment and better trained clinic personnel.” Federal and state governments, she believes, need to crack down on abortion malpractice. Data on abortion-related deaths and injuries must be systematically gathered, and medical care standards to ensure “a reasonably safe outcome” must be established and enforced.