

black migrants from the West, as well as from the Northeast and Midwest, reports Frey, a demographer with the University of Michigan's Population Studies Center.

The historic black exodus from the South between 1910 and the late 1960s began to be reversed in the 1970s, Frey notes, as the result of "industrial downsizing in the North and an improving racial and economic climate in the South." Between 1975 and 1980, and between 1985 and 1990, the South gained black migrants, largely from the Northeast and Midwest, while still losing them to the West. Then, between 1990 and 1995, net black migration from the Northeast and the Midwest rose, and began from the West. California's dismal economy in the early 1990s and Texas's economic resurgence explain some of the West-to-South movement.

Most of the recent black migrants to the South are of working age; only seven percent are retirees. About 20 percent of the migrants are college graduates.

"The South's booming metropolitan areas—Atlanta, Houston, Dallas-Fort Worth, and Miami—are responsible for some, but not all, of the South's black population gains," Frey says. Of the 10 metropolitan areas in the country that gained the most black residents between 1990 and 1996, seven were in the South, and Atlanta was the national leader, with an increase of 159,830 black residents. Smaller metropolitan areas and rural areas in the South also showed gains.

More than half (53 percent) of the nation's African Americans now live in the South, Frey notes, and the Census Bureau expects high rates of black migration there to continue.

## *The Breakup Conundrum*

"Transitions in Family Structure and Adolescent Well-Being" by Ed Spruijt and Martijn de Goede, in *Adolescence* (Winter 1997), Libra Publishers, Inc., 3089C Clairemont Dr., Ste. 383, San Diego, Calif. 92117.

Should parents who are always at each other's throats stay together for the sake of the children? The traditional answer is yes; the modern one is no. A study of 2,517 Dutch youths (ages 15–24) suggests there may be something to the older view.

The overwhelming majority (2,177) of the youths studied were in families with both natural parents present, and 139 of them were in homes with serious marital discord. The parents of the remaining 340 youths had divorced (10 years before the 1991 interviews, on average), with 91 of the offspring subsequently acquiring a stepparent.

Spruijt and de Goede, social scientists at Utrecht University, found that the youths in single-parent households were worst off—in terms of physical and psychological health, success in relationships with the opposite sex, and ability

to hold down a job. The youngsters in harmonious families with both natural parents present were best off. No surprises there. Nor, perhaps, in the finding that the youths whose parents were perpetually at odds "are somewhat comparable to single-parent youngsters in their psychological well-being." (On that score, the youths in stepfamilies did better.)

But the authors also found that when it came to relationships and holding down a job, the youths from troubled intact families, as well as the youths in stepfamilies, did better than their counterparts in single-parent homes. Indeed, they did almost as well as those in stable intact families. The researchers' conclusion: parental conflict can hurt children, but "the effects clearly become stronger when the parents are in fact divorced."

## *Stadium Scam*

"Rooting the Home Team" by David Morris and Daniel Kraker, in *The American Prospect* (Sept.–Oct. 1998), P.O. Box 383080, Cambridge, Mass. 02238; "Sports Stadium Boondoggle" by Mark F. Bernstein, in *The Public Interest* (Summer 1998), 1112 16th St. N.W., Ste. 530, Washington, D.C. 20036.

Folks in Denver were jubilant last January when the Broncos won the Super Bowl. Only months later, however, they were handed a blunt message from the team's owners: *Cough*

*up \$250 million for a new stadium—or else.* The *or else* was that the Broncos might move to another city.

This sort of extortion by professional sports

## *Imprisoned by Childhood*

*Requiem*, an exhibition of Vietnam War photographs by photographers who were themselves killed in the war, sets Theodore Dalrymple, an English physician and contributing editor of *City Journal* (Summer 1998), to reflecting.

*I learned early in my life that, if people are offered the opportunity of tranquility, they often reject it and choose torment instead. My own parents chose to live in the most abject conflictual misery and created for themselves a kind of hell on a small domestic scale, as if acting in an unscripted play by Strindberg. There was no reason external to themselves why they should not have been happy; reasonably prosperous, they lived under as benign a government as they could have wished for. Though they lived together, they addressed not a single word to one another in my presence during the 18 years I spent in their house, though we ate at least one meal a day together. . . .*

*It was the time of the Vietnam War. Pictures such as those displayed in Requiem seemed to uncritical and arrogant youth to unmask the falseness, the hypocrisy, the hidden but always underlying violence of Western civilization. It was the time of the Glaswegian psychiatrist R. D. Laing, according to whom only the insane were sane in an insane world, while the sane were truly insane. The family was the means by which society passed on and perpetuated its collective madness. . . .*

*For obvious reasons, I was not entirely well-disposed to family life or to the supposed joys of bourgeois existence, and therefore swallowed some of the nonsense whole. Like the photographers, I was only too desirous of escaping what I supposed to be the source of my personal dissatisfactions. But not for very long: for I soon came to realize that the peculiarities of my personal upbringing were not a reliable prism through which to judge the world. The only thing worse than having a family, I discovered, is not having a family. My rejection of bourgeois virtues as mean-spirited and antithetical to real human development could not long survive contact with situations in which those virtues were entirely absent; and a rejection of everything associated with one's childhood is not so much an escape from that childhood as an imprisonment by it.*

teams has become increasingly common, note Morris and Kraker, both of the Institute for Local Self-Reliance, and Bernstein, a Philadelphia writer. In the last half-dozen years, pro football and hockey teams have pulled out of Cleveland, Los Angeles, Hartford, and four other American and Canadian cities. "During the same period," say Morris and Kraker, "an additional 20 cities paid the extortion that team owners demanded, building a new facility or remodeling an existing one." Some 40 other pro sports teams are planning or lobbying for new facilities—and demanding city subsidies. The tab for these 40 stadiums and arenas may reach \$7 billion, with taxpayers footing most of it. According to *USA Today*, an estimated \$4 of every \$5 in stadium construction now comes from public sources.

Cities began underwriting stadiums in the 1950s, Bernstein observes, though the teams paid substantial rent and split parking and concession revenues with the city. In the 1970s,

after Congress eliminated a lucrative tax loophole, and players (first in baseball, then in other sports) won the right to be free agents, driving up their salaries, team owners went after revenue more aggressively. New, bigger, better facilities were appealing because money from luxury boxes (which rent for as much as \$250,000 a year in Boston's Fleet Center), ads, parking, and concessions—unlike revenue from tickets and TV broadcasts of the games—generally does not have to be shared with the league.

Teams have leverage over cities because professional sports leagues are cartels, which "make money by ensuring that supply—in this case the number of teams—is less than demand," Bernstein notes.

What can be done? Baseball writer Bill James and others contend that Congress should break up the cartels. If that were done, predicts Bernstein, the number of teams would increase, player salaries and ticket prices would drop, and teams would no longer have such powerful

leverage over their host cities. *But*, he adds, something vital would be lost: “the stability and tradition fans cherish. A truly competitive sports world would be as chaotic as the computer and entertainment markets.” The quality of play might be affected, too, as the number of players multiplied. Bernstein thinks some sort of change may be in order, but nothing so radical.

Morris and Kraker have a different idea: community ownership of teams, à la the Green Bay Packers. (They also favor revenue sharing among teams, to make them all “equal,” as now required in the National Football League, and would oblige leagues to grant expansion fran-

chises to cities abandoned by their teams.) “Professional teams have become an integral part of our community fabric and our emotional and civic lives,” they maintain. “This may justify stadium subsidies in certain communities, but common sense dictates that when an owner demands a subsidy two to three times the value of the team itself, fans would be much better off purchasing the team themselves” (assuming the owner will sell it).

Maybe so. But the Packers “are not a model likely to be copied soon,” Bernstein notes. “All the major professional leagues [now] prohibit public ownership.”

## *A Bright Side to Public Housing*

“Are Public Housing Projects Good for Kids?” by Janet Currie and Aaron Yelowitz, *NBER Working Paper No. 6305* (Dec. 1997), National Bureau of Economic Research, 1050 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, Mass. 02138.

The disastrous failures of Chicago’s infamous Robert Taylor Homes and other massive urban high-rise “projects” have given public housing a bad name. Currie and Yelowitz, economists at the University of California, Los Angeles, suggest that it may be undeserved.

The focus on the worst projects, they say, obscures the fact that projects differ. Of the 3,300 local public housing authorities in the country, 70 percent operate relatively small, more human-scale projects of fewer than 300 units. Moreover, not all the high-rise projects are as bad as the worst. The very fact that New York and other large cities have long lists of poor families waiting to get into public housing indicates it may be the best alternative available to them.

But, the authors ask, is it

best for their children?

Combining data from the Census Bureau and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and taking into account such factors as the family head’s age, marital status, race, and educational status, Currie and Yelowitz find that children in the projects fare better than children of similar background who do not live in public housing. The project families are less likely to suffer from overcrowding, and the boys, at least, are less likely to be held back in school.

Though the children living in projects might be better served by a housing voucher program that would provide subsidies for private-sector apartments, the authors conclude, it appears that public housing has gotten a bum rap.



*A public housing project in St. Louis, Missouri: A better life?*

## PRESS & MEDIA

### *No News at the Statehouse?*

“Missing the Story at the Statehouse” by Charles Layton and Mary Walton, in *American Journalism Review* (July–Aug. 1998), 8701 Adelphi Rd., Adelphi, Md. 20783–1716.

“You can vote any way you want to up here,” Carolyn Russell, a state representative from Goldsboro, North Carolina, was told when she

first arrived in Raleigh in 1991, “because the folks back home will never know.” Even as power and money have been devolving from