
SOCIETY

*People Just
Don't Care*

"Are Consumers Concerned About Chemical Preservatives in Food?" by C. S. Martinson and J. McCullough, in *Food Technology* (Sept. 1977), 221 N. LaSalle St., Chicago, Ill. 60601.

Despite aggressive promotion of "natural" products by retailers and widespread revelations of potentially hazardous additives in packaged food, American consumers appear to be less worried by the use of chemical preservatives in their food than they were four years ago.

Using surveys of the Seattle area conducted in 1974 and 1976, Martinson, a University of Washington nutritionist, and McCullough, a University of Arizona marketing specialist, find that in 1974 a uniform 44 percent of consumers at all age and income levels expressed apprehension about preservatives. But by 1976 this concern had dropped sharply for most shoppers—to 25 percent among those over 55 and to 33 percent among those between 25 and 49. Least worried of all were those earning less than \$8,000 or more than \$15,000 a year. Only the 18–24 and 50–54 age groups sustained the same degree of concern they had shown two years before.

Both surveys showed a general lack of knowledge of what preservatives are. Oddly, higher education had no effect on consumption of TV dinners, instant breakfasts, or other convenience foods; and natural products such as granola were more likely to be used by people over 45.

The authors conclude that there appears to be either a general decrease of worry over preservatives or an "acceptance of their presence" by consumers. Their study also suggests a large increase in the number of shoppers who just don't care.

*The Ghetto's
Jobless Core*

"To Be Young, Black, and Out of Work" by the Vocational Foundation, Inc., in *The New York Times Magazine* (Oct. 23, 1977), 229 W. 43rd St., New York, N.Y. 10036.

Federal job training assistance has been extended to hundreds of thousands of inner city youths, but these programs "hardly make a dent" in the ghetto's chronic unemployment. According to Vocational Foundation, Inc. (VFI), the situation has reached a "state of emergency." The most disturbing aspect is that ghetto unemployment seems to have acquired a life of its own, impervious to positive trends among blacks or young people generally.

Half of all black youths in the U.S. work force aged 16 to 19 are unemployed, twice the figure for whites of the same age. Lack of entry-level jobs has combined with large-scale collapse of the urban criminal

SOCIETY

justice system to spawn a rapid rise in juvenile crime (which is declining nationwide). Many black youths unabashedly prefer crime to welfare, VFI reports. Young inner city blacks are 10 to 20 times more likely to be arrested for violent crimes; at the same time, fewer than 1 percent of those arrested actually go to prison.

Conventional government solutions will not work. Employers now consider education instead of race as the necessary "credential" for employment. The effect has been to bar black dropouts from many jobs. Unions have also restricted eligibility for apprenticeship. Insurance companies still penalize employers who hire the unskilled. Prison records handicap growing numbers of blacks.

VFI recommends revision of child labor laws that help to limit teenagers to poor jobs (as stock boys, messengers, mail clerks, and fast-food servers). The legal minimum wage must be lowered for teen-age workers. Insurance and tax rates must be made equitable. Only structural changes—and not the "same barren policies" of education, welfare reform, and periodic attempts at federal job creation—can save a new generation from the "vicious triangle" of joblessness, crime, and family breakdown.

IQ's Link to Juvenile Crime

"Intelligence and Delinquency: A Revisionist Review" by Travis Hirschi and Michael J. Hindelang, in *American Sociological Review* (Aug. 1977), 1722 N St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

For the past 50 years, academic criminologists have discounted evidence of a relationship between low IQ and delinquency; most textbooks, for example, either ignore the matter or question the correlation. Nevertheless, write Hirschi and Hindelang, sociologists at the State University of New York, the facts "strongly support" a relationship between IQ and criminal behavior.

According to the authors, virtually all recent research (conducted in locales as diverse as Philadelphia, London, and Davidson County, Tennessee) indicates a strong correlation between juvenile crime and low IQ, a link at least as strong as that with race or social class, both long recognized as important factors. However, the authors contend, the IQ factor is "threatening" to most criminologists, who consider emphasis on "individual differences" outmoded.

Early in the 20th century, they note, when criminology was dominated by physicians, a relationship between low IQ and delinquency was generally assumed. Then sociologists claimed criminology as a subfield. With this shift, Hirschi and Hindelang write, an "equivalent shift" in the underlying assumptions of criminological research was seen as necessary by many sociologists, who were already alarmed by the "moral" implications of IQ testing and by the growing interest in biological explanations of social behavior. Criminology's blind spot lies in its *a priori* assumptions, they believe, not in the evidence.