

SOCIETY

equivalent of 4.4 ounces of 80 proof whiskey—and were asked to read essays debunking popular beliefs (e.g., “frequent medical checkups are necessary”).

The authors found that the individuals who imbibed the most alcohol registered less change in attitude than the participants who drank no spirits at all (the control group). Differences were less dramatic between the nondrinkers and those who consumed small amounts of alcohol. One unexpected discovery: Although they were less likely to agree with the debunking essays, the heavy alcohol drinkers did not offer a significantly higher number of counter-arguments than the sober people.

According to the authors, most research shows that argumentative messages generate central nervous system activity, or “psychological discomfort.” Since alcohol depresses the central nervous system, Bostrom and White theorize, the subjects who drank large amounts of alcohol were, in effect, immunized against discomfort. As a result, they felt no compulsion to reconsider their attitudes or to offer arguments to dispute those in the essays.

Growth of Black Suburbs

“The Process of Black Suburbanization”
by Philip L. Clay, in *Urban Affairs* (June
1979), 275 South Beverly Dr., Beverly
Hills, Calif. 90212.

In 1960, 2.7 million blacks lived in America’s suburbs; by 1974, the number had grown to 4.2 million. Nonetheless, housing in suburbia is still largely segregated.

So says Clay, professor of urban studies at MIT. Census Bureau data show that the average post-1960 black suburbanite is six years younger than previous black suburban dwellers and is more likely to earn over \$10,000 a year (52.5 percent in 1970 compared to 47.4 percent in 1960). And today, many blacks are moving to formerly all-white communities: In 1960, 53 percent of the neighborhoods in Maryland’s affluent Montgomery County (bordering Washington, D.C.) were less than 1 percent black; by 1970, only 24.2 percent were in that category.

But census data also show that only one-fourth of the blacks going to the suburbs settled in neighborhoods where the average home cost \$25,000 or more; only one-fifth took up residence in locales that had significant amounts of new housing. Black families set up housekeeping, Clay writes, in areas that “share certain striking physical and socioeconomic resemblances” to the “declining central-city neighborhoods they left behind.” Blacks, he says, move into areas where the housing is older and cheaper, while the white former residents depart for the newer communities created during the 1960s housing boom.

Clay’s conclusion: Black suburbanization is following the same patterns found in the racially segregated urban housing markets. Without a new national policy “to open up the suburbs” to blacks, they could become the “crisis ghettos” of the future.