
SOCIETY

best cure for lingering discrimination. Eventually, employers who raise their own costs by excluding blacks from the pool of job candidates will be undercut by competitors and forced to relent. Jencks concedes that this may be true in professional fields (such as law) where discrimination is not universal. But he argues that lower-class black men may face *increasing* job discrimination as crime rates and other "statistical" stigmata of ghetto culture worsen.

Since 1965, affirmative action has raised minority employment by between six and 13 percent over what it would have been otherwise, according to three studies. (A fourth study shows no net gain.) That better-educated blacks have been the chief beneficiaries is no reason to abandon it, Jencks argues. Needed, he says, are affirmative action programs that minimize "reverse discrimination," which penalizes whites.

Federal antidiscrimination efforts do indeed have unavoidable bad side effects and costs, Jencks says. But these, he concludes, are the costs of justice, and well worth bearing.

Revisiting the Housing Boom

"What the 1980 Census Shows About Housing" by Arthur F. Young and F. John Devaney, in *American Demographics* (Jan. 1983), P.O. Box 68, Ithaca, N.Y. 14850.

The real-estate boom of the 1970s, driven by inflation, made high mortgage rates and down-payments Topic A among families seeking new homes. Less noticed was an unprecedented increase in the quantity and quality of the nation's housing.

America's total stock of houses and apartment units jumped from 68 million to 88 million during the 1970s, report U.S. Census Bureau analysts Young and Devaney. The population, meanwhile, grew by only 11 percent, the smallest increase since the 1930s.

All but 58 of the nation's 3,100 counties registered gains in housing, and two slum-ridden counties—Bronx and Kings (Brooklyn) in New York City—accounted for 80 percent of the total decline. The Sun Belt was the big winner. California, Texas, and Florida alone claimed six million of the 20 million new housing units built during the decade. On Census Day (April 1, 1980), while nearly 25 percent of U.S. families reported that they had moved into their current homes during the previous 15 months, the proportion was above 30 percent in four Western states.

Housing quality improved. The number of dwellings without complete private indoor plumbing dropped by more than half, to 2.3 million in 1980, while the average number of rooms per person went up rapidly, reaching two in 1980. Despite higher energy costs, some 23 million households added air conditioning during the 1970s.

In general, the decade was particularly good for homeowners, who comprise nearly two-thirds of all households. The median value of a single-family house rose by 178 percent to \$47,200, and homeowners'

SOCIETY

median family income increased by 104 percent to \$19,800. Mortgage payments consumed 19 percent of family income in 1980, up modestly from 17 percent in 1970. Renters fared less well. Average rents jumped 125 percent, consuming 27 percent of tenant income in 1980 as opposed to 20 percent in 1970. And renters' family incomes in 1980 were only 67 percent of the U.S. average, while those of homeowners grew to 125 percent, widening a gap that first appeared during the 1940s.

More than half of all American blacks and Hispanics today are renters. While the younger middle-class families who failed to profit from the housing boom of the 1970s may feel some regrets, the authors suggest, the poor were the real losers.

Where the Police Went Wrong

"'To Serve and Protect': Learning from Police History" by Mark H. Moore and George L. Kelling, in *The Public Interest* (Winter 1983), 10 East 53rd St., New York, N.Y. 10022.

Big-city police forces have tried everything from high technology to improved classroom training to make policemen more effective crime-fighters. Yet nothing seems to work. Moore and Kelling, both Harvard criminologists, suggest that excessive "professionalization" of police work itself is part of the problem.

The first public city police forces in America were created during the 1840s to fight rising street crime. The police patrolled the streets and performed a variety of mundane "constabular" chores, locating lost children, corralling drunks, discouraging rowdyism. Investigations were carried out by individuals or private detective agencies, who called in the police only to make arrests.

Beginning in the 1870s, however, Progressive reformers condemned big-city police departments for their ties to local politicians and for various abuses of power. In response, the authors say, police chiefs pulled back from maintenance of public order and morals and launched a "professional" war against crime. To avoid charges of unfairness, street cops often ignored certain misdeeds—violations of Prohibition, "victimless" crimes, disorderly conduct. Patrol cars, radios, and other technology grew in importance after World War II. The "cop on the corner" gradually lost touch with the people he served.

Ironically, note Moore and Kelling, "seeing a cop on the beat, allowing one's children to play unsupervised in the park, not being offered drugs on the street" make people feel safer in their neighborhoods than does a drop in the crime statistics. (Indeed, one reason that 80 percent of all violent crimes between strangers go unsolved today is that witnesses are reluctant to cooperate with impersonal police departments.)

The authors argue that police chiefs today should heed the past. Private watchdog groups, such as New York's Guardian Angels, should be encouraged, not simply dismissed as "vigilantes." And putting more