

RESEARCH REPORTS

Reviews of new research by public agencies and private institutions

“Public and Private High Schools: The Impact of Communities.”

Basic Books, 10 East 53rd St., New York, N.Y. 10022. 243 pp. \$21.95.

Authors: James S. Coleman and Thomas Hoffer

What makes a high school successful?

Coleman, a sociologist at the University of Chicago, and Hoffer, a research associate at Northern Illinois University's Public Opinion Laboratory, conducted a four-year study of 1,015 private and public high schools. They conclude that successful high schools result from strong communities reinforcing teachers' efforts.

The authors distinguish between two types of school communities. “Functional communities” are those where the school's goals mesh with the values of the surrounding neighborhood. During the first half of the century, because parents and teachers both taught values “which place[d] importance upon learning” (hard work, respect for teachers), even children from lower-class families mastered the skills needed to better themselves.

Many “functional communities” died during the 1960s, as school consolidation and busing created huge high schools that had little to do with their surrounding neighborhoods. Faced with public schools that were increasingly disorderly and bureaucratic, a growing number of parents placed their children in schools tied to “value communities,” whose common bond is a set of values endorsed by the parents of the children enrolled in them. These schools range from fundamentalist Christian academies to such selective public schools as New York's Stuyvesant High and Walnut Hills High in Cincinnati.

Unlike most private and public schools in the 1980s, Catholic high schools are still part of functional communities; values learned in school are shared by both home and church. Parents are more involved in Catholic high schools than in public schools; 17 percent more parents of Catholic high school students attended a parent-teacher conference and 19 percent more parents

did volunteer work for their school than did public school parents. Fifty-three percent of public high school principals said that parents “lack interest in students' progress,” compared to only seven percent of Catholic high school principals.

Because parents support teachers who make students work hard, Catholic high schools outperform public high schools and match other private schools in learning, even though Catholic schools pay their teachers less. Students in Catholic high schools learn three grades' worth of reading and mathematics in two years; public high school students learn two grades' worth in two years.

In part, the authors attribute Catholic high schools' success to “relative inflexibility” which “has been able to withstand the curriculum watering-down . . . that occurred in American [public] high schools in the 1970s.” Students in Catholic high schools are also more dutiful than those in comparable institutions; 49 percent of Catholic high school sophomores had perfect attendance records compared to 34 percent of other high school students. While 15 percent of public school sophomores and 12 percent of other private school sophomores later dropped out, only three percent of Catholic high school sophomores dropped out by their senior year.

The authors are not optimistic about transforming public schools. They conclude that using tax credits to create private schools affiliated with a factory or other workplace probably would be the best way to restore “functional communities.” These schools, similar to laboratory schools linked to universities, would be “the next step in a social evolution” that has replaced the neighborhood with “formal organizations” as the center of most American lives.

"After Apartheid: The Solution for South Africa."

Institute for Contemporary Studies, 243 Kearny St., San Francisco, Calif., 94108. 253 pp. \$17.95.

Authors: Frances Kendall and Leon Louw

Militance is rising steadily in South African politics. Both white neo-fascist groups (such as the *Afrikanerweerstandsbeweging*, the Afrikaner Resistance Movement) and black socialist groups (such as the African National Congress) are willing to use violence to gain power. Each faction, should it gain power, will have to overcome violent opposition to survive.

Kendall, editor of *The Individualist*, and Louw, executive director of the Free Market Foundation, argue that South Africa should be divided—peacefully. They believe that South Africa should adopt the Swiss solution of cantons—largely autonomous provinces clustered around a weak central government.

If South Africa were divided into dozens of cantons, ideologues of the right and left could impose the political system of their choice. Cantons would permit social democratic, Marxist, anarchist, or even racist local regimes. With free movement between cantons, each South African could choose his own regime. To prevent *swart gevaar*—the race war many whites fear will follow black majority rule—a weak central government would not have the

power to tax citizens directly, and a bill of rights would ensure that private property could not be arbitrarily nationalized.

South Africans would be citizens of three entities—the nation, the canton, and their community. In most cases, citizens' only contact with government would be with canton officials.

Dismantling the current government, the authors say, would remove economic curbs now imposed on blacks under apartheid. Removing licensing restrictions, which prohibit the creation of new businesses, is a better tonic for curing poverty among blacks than is the Botha government's policy of subsidizing inferior housing, transportation, and "independent homelands." While the government has spent 2.2 billion rand (\$1.1 billion) per annum on the homelands, gross domestic product per capita there only rose from 40 rand to 46 rand between 1970 and 1980.

Devolution of power, the authors argue, would mean that racial groups could rule themselves, instead of fighting to control all of South Africa. A canton system, they claim, could make South Africa "blissfully depoliticized."

"The New Consensus On Family and Welfare: A Community of Self-Reliance."

American Enterprise Institute/Univ. Press of America, 4720 Boston Way, Lanham, Md., 20706. 143 pp. \$22.50.

Principal author: Michael Novak

Recently, said U.S. demographer Samuel Preston, "an earthquake [has] shuddered through the American family structure."

Since 1965, the fastest growing group of poor people (now 30 percent of all the U.S.

poor) has been black, Hispanic, and white single mothers and their children under 18 years of age. Today in America, there are 3.7 times as many poor children as there are poor elderly adults. Nearly half of all

7.1 million children receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children in 1983 were born out of wedlock. Among poor urban blacks, clustered in America's central cities, single-parent households now outnumber married-couple families by more than three to one; rates of illegitimacy in some cities exceed 80 percent.

The authors of this data-packed survey were members of the American Enterprise Institute's Working Seminar on Family and American Welfare Policy. They believe that current trends point to a "crisis"—but not yet an intractable one. In fact, they argue, the inability of many able-bodied Americans to break the cycle of dependency is often due as much to their own *behavior*, and that of their parents, as to outside factors, such as racism or local economic doldrums.

What kind of behavior? For starters: failing to complete high school, failing to get married (and stay married), or failing to find (and keep) a steady job. Dependency, the authors argue, is more than just an economic condition; it is a *moral* one. The old popular notions of "self-control, self-

mastery, self-determination, and self-reliance" have eroded since the 1960s.

What was once understood as moral law has come to be described as "social convention," they add, while defiance of convention is portrayed in the popular media as "cool, brave, and heroic." Most affected are poor youths.

Some statistics:

- Seventy percent of poor women surveyed by the *Los Angeles Times* in 1985 agreed ("almost always/often") with the statement that "poor young women have babies so they can collect welfare."

- If the United States had the same proportion of female-headed households in 1985 as in 1959 (about 9.3 percent), there would be 5.2 million fewer persons living in poverty today, according to the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

- Of all U.S. husband-wife families (nearly 51 million), only 6.7 percent fall under the official poverty line, but 34 percent of mother-only families are poor.

- Of those poor Americans who worked only part of the year in 1985, 60 percent said that the inability to find a job was not

NUMBER OF FEMALE HEADS OF FAMILIES, 1985
(thousands)

	Total	Widows	Divorced, Separated	Never Married	Poverty Rate
Total	10,129	2,671	5,607	1,850	34.0
White	6,941	1,967	4,150	825	27.4
Black	2,964	627	1,350	989	50.5
Ages 15-24	785	17	269	499	74.2
25-44	5,155	346	3,759	1,052	40.5
45-64	2,736	1,115	1,443	179	21.1
65+	1,454	1,193	139	121	13.3
Median age	41	63	39	29	—

The number of black female-headed households increased by 133 percent between 1968 and 1985, while white female-headed households increased by 73 percent.

their main reason for not working all the time, according to the Census Bureau. More often than not, surveys show, low-wage entry-level jobs are now *unacceptable* rather than unavailable to native-born poor; new immigrants take those jobs and climb the economic ladder.

- In the poorest 20 percent of American households, total expenditures are more than three times as much as their reported pretax incomes, according to a 1984 survey by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. An "underground economy" allows the poor to earn money without reporting it to the state.

Such realities, the authors argue, sug-

gest that able-bodied poor Americans must be held accountable for their condition to a greater degree than has been done by politicians, academics, and welfare reformers since Lyndon Johnson launched the War on Poverty in 1964.

"At the heart of the poverty problem in 1987 is . . . the problem of behavioral dependency," they conclude. "Dependency will not go away through economic growth alone or through government action alone. In many places it has evidently become encysted and is now impenetrable except by the concerted efforts of all, in a more intensive and imaginative way than the nation foresaw two decades ago."

"Europe's Second Demographic Transition."

Population Reference Bureau, 777 14th St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20005. 59 pp. \$5.00.
Author: Dirk J. van de Kaa

Eastern European nations have failed to deliver the high standard of living that most *Western* Europeans enjoy. But the communist countries, reports University of Amsterdam demographer Van de Kaa, have managed to maintain significantly higher levels of reproduction.

Most Americans would recognize the social and demographic trends that are common in Western Europe. Preoccupied with their careers or individualistic lifestyles, young people are delaying (or forgoing) marriage, postponing (or forgoing) having babies, and usually having only one or two children when they do choose to have them.

Consequently, the overall population of Europe (Eastern and Western) will increase by only six percent (to 524 million) by the year 2025. Indeed, the rate of population growth across Europe has fallen below the "replacement level" of 2.1 births per woman. If that trend continues, the European continent's population will eventually decrease—as the populations of Aus-

tria, Denmark, Hungary, and West Germany already have.

This fertility decline, says Van de Kaa, represents Europe's "second demographic transition." The first transition took place during the late 19th century, when both fertility and mortality rates sharply declined. But whereas the first transition toward low fertility, Van de Kaa says, "was dominated by concerns for family and offspring . . . the second emphasizes the rights and self-fulfillment of individuals."

Indeed, many Western European young people are reluctant to take on the responsibilities associated with marriage and child rearing. The mean age at which women marry has climbed to 26.1 in Denmark and 27.3 in Sweden. Yet many men and women who remain officially single live together *and* have children. That is why virtually all Western European countries have witnessed an increase in out-of-wedlock births since the mid-1950s. In Sweden and Denmark, where 40 percent of all births are illegitimate, the mean age of women at

first marriage has actually exceeded the mean age of women when they have their first child. Thus, in Sweden, Van de Kaa observes, "children tend to be present at their parents' first wedding ceremony."

In most Eastern European countries, by contrast, women usually marry between ages 20 and 22, out-of-wedlock births account for only five to 10 percent of all births, and fertility rates, while not high, hover around the replacement level.

These nations offer young people incentives to have children. In East Germany, for example, a woman bearing her second child is entitled to a "baby year"—that is, a year off from work, during which she receives 70 to 80 percent of her salary.

Eastern European countries have also raised fertility rates by restricting abor-

tion, which had become a common form of birth control. In Romania in 1965, there were 4,000 abortions per every 1,000 live births. During the 1960s, the average Romanian woman had more than seven abortions during her lifetime.

In 1966, Romania, like other Eastern European nations, restricted abortion—making it legal only for victims of rape or incest, women over 45, or those with four or more children. Doctors performing illegal abortions face 25 years' imprisonment, or even death.

With these and other measures, Romania hopes to increase the fertility rate to four children per woman. Having babies, says Romanian president Nicolae Ceausescu, is "the most sublime duty toward the nation and its people."

"Ally vs. Ally: America, Europe, and the Siberian Pipeline Crisis."

Praeger Publishers, 1 Madison Ave., New York, N.Y., 10010. 193 pp. \$37.95.
Author: Antony J. Blinken

One of the Reagan White House's more controversial decisions came in 1982, when American firms (including their European subsidiaries) were barred from selling machinery to equip a proposed 3,000-mile pipeline to bring Soviet natural gas from Siberia to Western Europe.

Western European politicians charged that prohibiting such firms as General Electric and Dresser Industries from exporting turbine engines and pipemaking equipment amounted to American "economic warfare" against her allies. "This day . . . could well go down as the beginning of the end of the Atlantic Alliance," French foreign minister Claude Cheysson said in June 1982.

While the Western alliance has survived the pipeline controversy, Blinken, a former reporter for *The New Republic*, says that U.S. export controls increase the American trade deficit because European corpora-

tions are reluctant to trade with American firms whose exports could be banned if they were declared "strategic." (The Reagan administration banned exports of some thermostats and microwave ovens until 1985; it currently considers some light-bulb filaments and certain pocket calculators strategically valuable.) U.S. prohibitions on pipeline equipment exports, he argues, "warned countries and companies the world over that the United States is not the most reliable trading partner."

Despite U.S. export controls, the Siberian pipeline was operational by late 1985. Energy conservation, however, has reduced European demand for natural gas. Moreover, both Norway and the Netherlands have increased gas exports within Europe. New discoveries in the Troll fields in the North Sea will allow Western Europe to reduce its dependence on the Euro-Siberian pipeline over the next 10 years.

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