“A Call to Order: What the History of the New York City Housing Authority Teaches About the Future and Past of Social Welfare Policy”

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The New York City Housing Authority, at heart a socially and culturally conservative organization, has overseen the growth and preservation of a radical type of community: the “big government,” high-rise public housing project. The particular aspect of conservatism at NYCHA that this paper addresses is the emphasis on *paternalism* at the Authority long after such a stance had fallen into disgrace (Figure 1). Paternalism, state force, and generous spending have made the New York City projects better than most in other cities. Had the Authority been more permissive and sensitive in its policies, and a lot leaner, surely it would have been less successful.

The general trend in liberal social services, conservative circles and the social sciences has been to discredit the notion that the poor are in need of management by a “mothering” or oppressive state authority. This attitude has emerged from a wide range of sources: civil rights and welfare rights activism, a conservative critique of dependency and disorder related to the welfare state, and an analysis of history that views paternalism solely as an attempt to impose middle- or upper-class values (and discipline) on the poor. The story of NYCHA, as described in this brief overview of my current book project for the University of Pennsylvania Press, presents a surprising lesson that I am sure will be uncomfortable to partisans on most sides of the political spectrum.

## Background

NYCHA began operation in 1934 and grew initially out of civic activism in New York including the activities of housing reformers, concerned politicians, Settlement House leaders, and labor activists—a number of whom became part of the Authority’s original board and

professional staff. Unlike anywhere else in the United States, and the result of the broad coalition of support for social housing, the Authority over a number of decades built a mixture of state, city and federally funded projects—allowing for a greater variation in incomes, maintenance, and styles over the decades than anywhere else in the nation. (Figure 2)

NYCHA's era of fastest growth was the late 1940s, 1950s, and early 1960s (Figure 3, 1959 Annual report) as it became a key tool in urban redevelopment and liberal social policy. At its height NYCHA had about 600,000 tenants and today has approximately 400,000 tenants in 195 projects across all the boroughs of Manhattan (Figure 4, 1961, Map of Authority projects). As in other cities the Authority's projects are concentrated in minority, low-income districts, creating the classic "Second Ghetto" configuration found across the United States (Figure 5, Black families, 1934). As in other cities, this concentration was the result of both cynical opportunism (Robert Moses, the guiding power behind the Authority during the post-war and 1950s era, used public housing as a compensation for his redevelopment and highway projects) and humanitarian reasons (blacks and Puerto Ricans were disproportionately concentrated in poor housing and barred from much of suburbia). These combined factors led to whole neighborhoods of public housing as in the Lower East Side (Figure 6, 1951 map) and East Harlem (Figure 7).

By the late 1950s, public officials, social critics, and housing reformers raised questions about this concentration. Civic leaders in East Harlem, for instance, who had once demanded public housing, now questioned why it had been so concentrated in their neighborhood. Nor had public housing become the actual destination of that many victims of redevelopment. NYCHA leaders had, as part of Moses' Title I reports, given credence to the notion that public housing would provide significant space for those displaced. By 1959, however, after a major reorganization of NYCHA, William Reid (its new Chairman), reported to Moses' displeasure that this habit would have to stop, as only 12% of the total Title I site residents had actually been relocated to public housing (whereas 30% of public housing site tenants found new homes in public housing). This was not necessarily the fault of Moses because the low income limits that kept many out were not set by him, but clearly public housing had not fulfilled its stated role.

## Design

A great deal has been written about NYCHA design so this presentation does not treat the subject in depth. Although the first pre-war projects covered a good bit of the land, were low-rise, and well constructed—modeled closely on the best examples of European public housing

and limited dividend housing efforts here--the Authority had already started to cut costs by the late 1930s through the combined efforts of NYCHA Chairman Alfred Rheinstein and the United State Housing Authority's Nathan Strauss (Figure 8, Harlem River Houses, 1936). Designers achieved cost savings through skip-stop elevator systems, higher buildings, cast concrete floors that doubled as ceilings, and no-frills interiors (tileless bathrooms and closets without doors). Achieving lower cost construction early meant, in the long term, that the Authority would be able to construct a massive number of projects even in the face of New York's high land and unionized construction costs.

During the 1940s the Authority constructed high-rise projects of sound construction but minimum amenities. Ground coverage slipped below 20 percent to create, in light of high land costs, the main amenities valued by NYCHA administrators: light, air, and open spaces (Figure 9). Many of these buildings were quite tall and of uniform appearance (by 1951, 43 projects—not buildings--had been built of the same color brick).

Authority officials introduced slight variations in site planning, apartment size, building heights, and brick color under external pressure during the 1950s. By 1969, however, open space still accounted for 84 percent of the Authority's projects, indicating that the Authority had not truly changed its *modus operandi* fast enough to make a significant impact. Certain cost-cutting measures were, however, abandoned in the 1950s, usually as a result of tenant protest, such as skip stop elevators, doorless closets, and untiled bathrooms.

As the large projects were finished during the 1960s, newer projects finally achieved a smaller scale and impact. Such a design shift, in partnership with declining federal and state funding and higher construction costs, meant that the Authority would be severely limited in its ability to build new units. By the 1970s expansion was mainly in Section 8 provision, limited renovation projects, vest pocket developments, or smaller "turn key" private/public partnerships. The Authority thus primarily managed a superblock, high-rise inventory.

In terms of paternalism it is most important to note that NYCHA projects, although minimalist in appearance, had been designed for long life and heavy use. In addition, they were relatively well maintained by a large maintenance staff. (Figure 10, plumber), likely a result of New York's familiarity with the nature and challenges of apartment living. NYCHA staff grew quickly from Civil Service lists and still numbers about 14,000, about a fifth of who live in the projects themselves (Figure 11, workforce chart). By 1974, for instance, a 300 man team maintained the inventory of 3120 elevators (considered by many to be both the most expensive part of these buildings and the lifeline of residents) and received decent marks for what was an increasingly frustrating job. By the 1950s and after there was generally one porter for each high

rise of ca. 14 stories, and 1 caretaker for 3, six story buildings (and other teams of maintenance men attended to more specific tasks such as plumbing and grounds). Foremen of porters made sure that buildings were swept daily, elevators mopped daily, and the buildings mopped weekly. Yearly apartment inspection, to check for maintenance problems, remained an essential part of the duties of housing managers and housing officials continued to inspect apartments annually at least into the 1980s. This is not to say that many buildings were not in difficult shape--careful work could be quickly undone and internal reports indicated that maintenance varied--but in the majority of projects efforts were made to hold the line.

Indeed, vandalism was met with heroic and expensive efforts. Destructiveness had been noted as early as the 1930s, but was well identified by the 1940s. The 1950s worsened as the percentage of minors rose dramatically in most NYCHA projects—malicious vandalism became a common complaint of managers. This attack on property not only led to the NYCHA patrol force, but also led to heroic replacement schedules for windows and other materials. NYCHA, in time, had whole gangs of craftsmen dedicated to such replacement (in contrast to other authorities). In 1972, for instance, yearly glass replacement totaled 188,000 panes of glass for the Authority as a whole. Concerns about vandalism also led to faster elevators (so children spent less time in lobbies), sodium vapor exterior lighting, and to experiments, over many decades, in so-called “vandal proof” lighting fixtures, lobbies, fencing, and benches. NYHCA projects were unpleasantly standardized in form and appearance, but this standardization also made NYCHA a powerful corporation that could commission new products as well as bargain for materials and services. A few contracting scandals over the decades do not seem to have been the rule in Authority maintenance.

Transfer of projects from the city and state system to federal sponsorship during the Carter administration, impressive rent collection, and creative financing has made possible comprehensive updating on a system-wide basis. Hundreds of thousands of windows have been replaced since the 1970s and facades, apartment interiors, plumbing, community centers, heating systems, and entryways have been or are being updated.

## Landscape Design

Any visitor to public housing projects in New York is likely to notice the number of caretakers on the grounds: cleaning up the trash thrown from windows, clipping shrubs, and cleaning sidewalks. The density of staffing is able to keep the grounds of public housing relatively tidy in light of their hard use. The Authority has from its earliest days used professional

landscape architects and dedicated groundskeepers, has consistently updated practices and materials to meet new challenges, and where possible enjoined tenants to play a role in the upkeep of grounds.

The landscape planning of NYCHA projects emerged from the fine example set by limited dividend projects such as Sunnyside Gardens, Knickerbocker Houses, and Hillside Homes. Common landscapes at these projects functioned for both leisure and recreation, were thickly planted, and set high standards for low-income environments. At the First Houses, Harlem River and Williamsburg projects, the Authority created clear boundaries for different play areas and established trees, shrubs, and other landscape features (Figure 20, Harlem River Houses).

This pattern, although not always followed with such sophistication, came to dominate project design during the 1940s and 1950s (Figure 21, 1952 standards). Bench and fence combinations established boundaries around open lawns and other plantings. Early leaders of the Authority encouraged an "unpretentious style" with compact plantings featuring "stout branches or occasionally armed with thorns" that could help maintain boundary spaces. Staff planted shade trees, particularly London Plane trees, in rows. Even though playgrounds for young children were part of every project, NYCHA designers still set aside relatively large areas of passive open spaces that were designed to provide green space, cool air, and contact with nature (Figure 22, Marlboro Houses, 1962, Figure 23, benches, too1967). Fines were levied for walking on the grass at least until the 1950s. (Figure 23.5) Robert Moses often sited new parks near public housing facilities and public housing grounds were designed to be open to the public.

By the late 1950s the Authority, with growing numbers of children in its projects, began to come under pressure for more active recreation. Some of the lawns were not wearing well, either. In limited areas the Authority began to pave over grass areas and create areas for basketball and sidewalk games (Figure 24). Policy officially changed to encourage active recreation in 1958, even though landscape designers at the Authority remained proud of their green spaces and the quiet and cool they provided. In order to maintain these grounds the Authority constantly replanted areas. For example, in 1959 alone, gardeners replanted 35,000 shrubs, and of 41,000 trees that had been planted, they had to replace 624 that year.

Creative playgrounds in projects became the watchword of the 1960s, partly sponsored by foundations. Jacob Riis Plaza was a notable example, and featured a dynamic concrete plaza (Figure 25, Jacob Riis Plaza). Most of these playgrounds (as far as I can tell) suffered from vandalism and have been redesigned over time by the Authority. Tenant gardens became

quite popular as well during this time and a competition for best garden involved thousands of tenants.

By the 1970s the Authority was turning to asphalt instead of Belgian blocks and still converting open space to recreation space. New, hardier shrubs and trees, plastic benches, and ever more formidable and thick metal fencing replaced chain link and post and chain fencing. By the 1980s and 1990s the standard NYCHA landscape was divided into areas of parking, play areas with modern equipment, basketball courts, and extensive bench areas with seating. In most projects outdoor space is remarkably tidy, lawn areas that remain are well maintained (if often so highly gated that they are untouchable), play areas have the latest climbing and sliding equipment and often include fountains, allees of London plane trees cast areas in shade, and tenant gardens are sometimes impressive. Staffing is notably present on NYCHA grounds to this day and must constantly pick up material dropped by tenants from windows and benches.

## Policing

The Authority's forceful approach is also clearly legible in its use of police power. Rather than agents of oppression, the police have been seen by management and most organized tenants as essential to their safety; tenant organizations have usually demanded more police coverage rather than less. Unlike most police officers, who have ventured into projects only in emergency situations, NYCHA policy includes a vertical beat of the stairwells and roofs.

The early and clear function of its internal police force was to maintain order on the grounds. Over time, as crime became more serious, the patrolmen became an additional police force with the full range of policing responsibilities. This change in emphasis worried NYCHA management but was an inevitable change.

Although in the 1930s the Authority optimistically claimed that their projects nearly eliminated juvenile delinquency, by the early 1950s the Authority felt moved to create an internal police force (1952) to patrol their projects. Managers cited rising vandalism and delinquency as the main reason for this new force; thus began the vertical patrol. The Authority claimed that this policing clearly improved conditions at those projects where it was undertaken. On this basis the force consistently and rapidly expanded. Open grounds and often unlocked buildings were difficult to police, but officers tried.

By the 1960s about 60 percent of projects were considered to have vandalism problems and by the late 1960s crime may have been lower on grounds than in city as a whole, but it was

rising at a faster rate. By 1966 almost 1,020 police were on the force and this number quickly expanded to 1500 officers by 1969. (Figure 12, chart). This did not translate into 24 hour coverage of projects, because of the massive scale of the projects themselves, but regular patrolmen on the beat made a difference; they were arresting many tenants and non-tenants for a variety of offenses and complemented NYPD presence. As far as I know, no other housing authority maintained such a system for its projects during this time of increasing anarchy.

During the 1960s the Authority also invested a great deal of money in tenant patrols, mostly composed of groups of residents supervising entry into building lobbies. Annually, over ten thousand tenants participated in these by the late 1960s (and similar numbers participated as late as 1990), and the Authority organized training and paid for small stipends for patrol supervisors. Many observers noted that those buildings with patrols were better maintained, although it was hard to say if socially cohesive buildings simply generated good patrols. The Authority also became the site of Oscar Newman's "defensible space" research and seems to have influenced redesign of certain public spaces along a communal "panopticon" vision.

By the late 1970s NYCHA spent a greater proportion of its budget on security than any other authority; even so, fear of crime grew among the tenants. By the 1980s, person crime in public housing was nearly equal in severity to that of the city as a whole while burglary and other property crimes remained lower. Projects had become more dangerous, as was the city as a whole, but conditions probably would have been worse without police. During the mid-1980s, moreover, a major crackdown on drug dealing began. Arrests jumped from 760 in 1986 to 9,767 in 1988. (Figure 13). Eviction on drug charges became numerous.

In 1994, the management of this police force was transferred to the NYPD, but officers in the Housing Unit are still reserved for service in public housing projects. Public housing has a little above the average of crime today (in proportion to its population) because crime did not fall as fast in public housing during the 1990s as the rest of New York City, but crime has been falling in recent years in the projects (note: my data is still incomplete on this subject).

## Tenant Selection

From the earliest days of the Authority, the tenant selection process has been designed to select the best possible tenants for the projects and to keep out those with serious social problems. External pressure has forced the Authority to accommodate the homeless, welfare tenants, and single mothers, but at every opportunity the Authority has tried, not always successfully, to swing back to greater selectivity. Exerting the kind of judgment on tenants had

become to seem old fashioned, elitist, and even racist, but according to the managers of NYHCA such a policy helped keep projects from becoming uncontrollable slums. Lower levels of social pathology and the leadership role of educated, higher income families has been viewed as essential in keeping order and a community balance.

Even as the Authority's tenants became overwhelmingly minority and had larger percentage of welfare tenants (Figure 14), standards of admittance have been resolutely applied, rescinded, and re-applied depending upon the wider political climate. Just because families have been poor and minority, should not lead one to think that the lowest quality tenants have been found. The Authority has always had long waiting lists and has been able to choose its tenants. The Authority has, in recent decades, tried to find the best of the lower income employed and unemployed minority tenants by focusing on what they call the "working" poor.

The Authority developed a point system (based upon factors such as income, family, employment, housing quality, social background, etc) for admitting tenants in the first projects of the 1930s. The system's designers hoped to curtail political favoritism and admit those "deserving" poor who most needed improved housing (Figure 15). The large number of applicants allowed the Authority to carefully select its tenants and interviews were followed up with home and even work visits (home visits at a low level continued at least until the 1970s). The point system was well adapted to the growing bureaucratic demands of the Authority, with thousands of applicants for every spot during the 1930s and after. (Figure 16, 1950 system at work)

The paternalism continued after admission. Rent was collected at the door by a female housing assistant who also checked on the state of affairs of the tenants (only until 1941). Almost all of the early tenants were employed and married and came from old-law tenements. Remarkably low delinquency rates on rent did not surprise Authority administrators. Early administrators considered it an injustice to admit those without money to pay because they would be quickly evicted, and worried that combining welfare and housing would doom the program. Moreover, they did not believe that those with the lowest incomes always had the greatest housing need—a subtle but often overlooked point in New York (and a contrast to federal policy which stressed the "lowest" income groups).

By 1939 there were only 15-20 percent overall welfare tenants in NYCHA projects but a pattern began to develop. The federally sponsored Red Hook project provoked a crisis at NYCHA because it appeared, in 1939, that there would be 50 percent welfare tenants if tenanted under low federal rules. NYCHA fought for changes and in Red Hook actually

achieved 25 percent relief tenants because the USHA allowed slightly higher income levels for smaller families. This became the pattern at NYCHA: although slightly higher income limits were occasionally gained from the federal government, the federal (and later state) projects collected more welfare tenants because of low income limits; only city built projects admitted higher income poor New Yorkers.

Flexibility was the watchword of the war years, however. Wartime salaries forced upward revision in income levels and the Authority evicted few tenants because of income. A surcharge, however, was created to take in extra money to meet the desired rent equal to 1/5$^{th}$ of the income level. By 1944 half of NYCHA families earned over the maximum for continued occupancy and paid surcharges. The surcharge made extra money for the Authority after the war, too, and nearly 68 percent of tenants were paying surcharges in the late 1940s (Figure 17, Surcharge income and Figure 18, 1948 typical apartment). Veteran's preferences brought in high income tenants during this time. NYCHA did not move fast to push veteran families out as it knew that the welfare, minority caseload was growing more rapidly in the application lines.

African Americans had started moving in larger proportion into public housing during wartime. They had been admitted to pre-war projects, but most blacks had been steered to certain projects (such as the Harlem River Houses) or deferred; effectively, a quota was in place and token integration had been the rule at a number of projects. During and after the war blacks began to outpace their city-wide proportion in public housing.

During the late 1940s and into the 1950 the Authority began clearing out higher income (mostly white) families and many more white families moved on their own into the private housing market. Many moved to city projects where higher income was allowed, thus preserving the mixed income and racial profile of the Authority as a whole. Managers identified unmarried mothers as a problem in the 1950s and blamed the Department of Welfare for encouraging acceptance of Municipal lodging house clients and public housing/redevelopment site tenants. Indeed, during the 1950s, site tenants were given higher income admission standards and site preference mattered in light of the hardship brought by displacement. The management strongly believed, however, that single mothers (often from welfare department of housing sites) had little control over their children and wished to bar them in early fifties, and this they partly did by 1953, by tightening up on marital status, employment history, etc. in admission review.

The Authority continued cherry picking tenants with the use of 21 factors that could be bar to residence including moral character, single parenthood, etc. Administrators set a 20 percent limit, where possible, on welfare families in projects in 1957. Problem families were also addressed with attention and social services and those that did not improve were evicted. Still,

undesired tenants could not be entirely blocked out. Redevelopment under Title I was disproportionably felt by blacks and Puerto Ricans, and although it was the reverse for public housing development, most whites found other housing relatively easily in the discriminatory market that existed.

Authority managers consistently raised income limits during the 1950s and 1960s, but incomes of tenants stopped rising at a similar pace. Projects which turned 50 percent black also generally lost white tenants completely, and the idea of projects being tenanted in proportion to mixed neighborhoods was lost. The number of minority majority projects grew to 14 by 1958 and Puerto Ricans and blacks filled lists for new spots. Many working-class blacks, however, now see the 1950s and early 1960s as a comparative "golden age" of minority public housing, because continuing selectivity meant that working poor minorities received priority and Authority rules on behavior remained strictly enforced.

Attempts at desegregation in the late 1950s, including a "Phase" system dividing projects into four groups by need of minority or white tenants, brought controversy and limited integration; more white applicants came in, but the white outflow was still higher. The system was more successful long-term in moving blacks into all white projects than the reverse. Whites mainly remained in a few outer-borough projects by the 1970s.

The 1960s brought growing civil rights attention to the eviction process and cherry picking of tenants. A state anti-discrimination commission was, however, unable to end the Phase system because voluntary sorting occurred only after the initial pool of tenants had been selected on a race-neutral basis. The federal government also upheld the Authority's moral screening in the 1960s. Still, during the 1960s, the welfare department successfully pressured NYCHA to change its standards by publicly noting that NYCHA had half the rate of welfare public housing tenants than the national average (15 percent in NY vs. 30 percent nationally) (Figure 19). In 1968, the Authority thus eased rules on moral judgment; now the list of 21 behaviors (including a welfare history and out of wedlock children) was not necessarily used as an outright bar to residence.

Welfare tenants thus skyrocketed by the early 1970s. The Brooke Amendment also came to be seen as a disincentive for upper income tenants to stay because a higher proportion of their income was taken than before. Conversion of projects from city to federal program in late 1970s brought revenue to the city for renovation, but also meant that there now existed less variation in income limits overall. The Authority continued to file cases for nondesirability, but eviction slowed because of a federal court case in 1970 that demanded tenant due process.

In 1979, Authority managers introduced a three-tier income level system for new vacancies as a means to bring a better group of tenants into public housing. Higher income, although still poor, groups gained priority. Although there was some success, the progress was undercut by the federal policy of shifting income/rental proportions from 25 to 30 percent income in the 1980s. The Authority was also forced to take in the homeless, too. According to managers, as the welfare caseload and homeless numbers grew, social disorder mounted.

A new shift in policy in the late 1980s attempted to grapple with growing disorder and the crack epidemic. In 1989, the federal government permitted a speed-up in evictions. The Authority effectively ended neighborhood preferences and officially dissolved the old Phase system for racial integration because waiting lists included only 10 percent white applicants. The income tiers, however, remained.

Since the 1990s, the goal remains attracting more of the working poor, but the homeless have been accepted in large numbers (about 29,115 formerly homeless families are in residence today, 77,229 persons, or about 18 percent of NYCHA residents). Those who are employed by 1995 were still getting preference, and the profile of tenants included about 30 percent welfare, 30 percent older, and 40 percent working (the working poor percentage is similar today, while welfare families have slipped to only 17% of total families). Evictions are back for families with misbehaving children and numbered about 1200 a year in 1999. Even with all that eviction, the average resident had lived in the projects for 17 years.

## Community

The scale of the paternalism related to social and community services in NYCHA projects was only possible because of the city government's wider commitment to social services. In the beginning, NYCHA officials created spaces for community use, but considered it the role of the city government and non-profit groups to fill in the infrastructure. As non-profits and the Board of Education (which ran a number of community centers) failed to keep pace with NYCHA growth, the Authority itself began operating community centers. On the other hand, health and child care has been well organized and maintained by the New York City Departments of Health and Welfare. Rather than simply abandoning the idea of the community

centers, however, NYCHA has recommitted itself to the idea of it having a wide role in the everyday lives of its residents. (Figure 26, chart)

At the beginning of NYCHA's history the main focus of social services was the institution of Octavia Hill's rent collection and friendly advisor service carried out by housing assistants on a weekly basis. The general concept that guided provision of space in early public housing was the idea that the project should, in its offerings, simulate the spaces of a single-family home: thus craft rooms, pram rooms, outdoor play areas, and nursery space. The settlement house leaders involved with the creation of NYCHA supplemented the activity of the organization itself and settlement houses staffed and designed many of the early community programs. WPA workers also helped staff early community facilities. Red Hook houses had the first free standing community center, partly funded by the Carnegie Corporation. Social service agencies established day nurseries at Harlem River and Queesbridge houses in the 1930s.

As early as 1941 there were signs that the external organizations did not have the funds to keep up with the staffing needs of NYCHA; a community association designed to run Queensbridge community center had to be bailed out by NYCHA. At the same time, external pressure encouraged NYCHA to do more in tenant services. By 1947, although child nurseries and health centers were well run by the Departments of Health and Welfare (Figure 27), it became increasingly difficult to find sponsors for community centers. Lower East Side settlements saw that their survival depended upon becoming a part of NYCHA operations in their neighborhoods, and so became involved in a few community centers, but outer boroughs, lacking settlements, rarely found sponsors.

NYCHA nevertheless continued to build the community spaces even without sponsors. NYCHA aimed to make whole neighborhoods in the 1950s and worked in tandem with local neighborhood leaders to create facilities. Generally sponsorship problems worsened at settlement (and then Board of Education) sponsored community centers while health and child care nicely expanded. By 1963, 75 percent of the Department of Welfare child care centers and 39 percent of the Department of Health child health stations could be found in NYCHA projects. By the 1960s NYCHA began building more freestanding community centers but these, like those before them, were not well financed, staffed, or programmed (Figure 28, Castle Hill Houses, 1962, also Figure 29, floorplan, Morris Lapidus, 1969). A large number of centers run by the Board of Education, in particular, lacked decent programs.

During the Great Society era Head Start became part of the community centers, neighborhood Youth Corp employed project teenagers, and summer programs expanded. A social service division was also dedicated to problem families by this time. Tenant programs run

directly by the Authority began in the 1960s and proved very popular so that by the 1970s 100,000 tenants annually participated in everything from sports leagues to talent searches (Figure 30, 1969 summer programs). Tenant organizations also became involved in lower level decision making at the projects and NYCHA helped organized them, provided training, and recognized their voice. In 1976 the Board of Education completely pulled out of the community centers and NYCHA was left to run those as well, partly funded with federal subsidy and CETA workers. Currently a 274 million dollar renovation of all the community center projects is underway for NYCHA community centers, almost all now run by NYCHA itself.

The NYCHA story illustrates certain inescapable aspects of social welfare policy. A society that wishes to house the poor in decent conditions cannot expect to do so cheaply or easily. The state will be forced to expend large sums on maintenance and social control, tenants will have to be carefully chosen, and extensive social programs will have to be matched to new developments. More government rather than less may be the only route to sanitary, well-ordered low-income housing.