

**“Living for the City:”
The Political Meaning of Public Housing Residents’ Extraordinary Struggle**

by

LA TONYA M. GREEN

Bachelor of Arts in African American Studies and Political Science
University of California, Berkeley, California (1998)

Master in City Planning
Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts (2000)

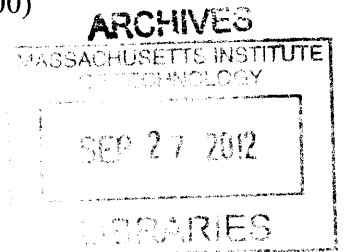
Submitted to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Urban Sociology and Urban Planning
at the
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

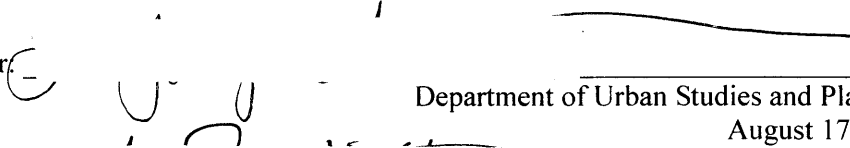
September 2012

© 2012 La Tonya M. Green. All Rights Reserved.

The author hereby grants to MIT permission to reproduce and to distribute publicly
paper and electronic copies of this thesis document in whole or in part.

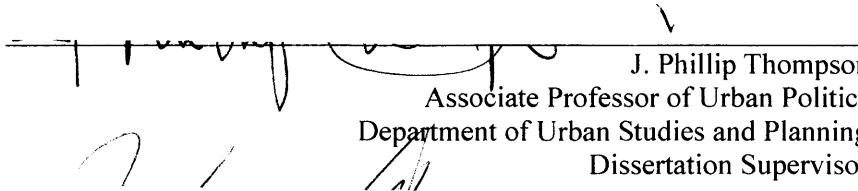


Signature of Author:



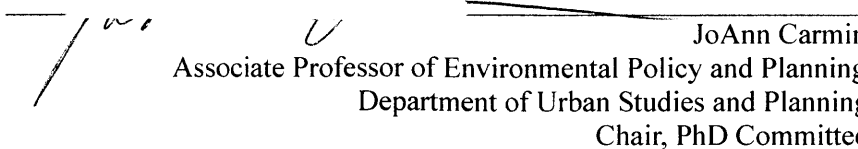
Department of Urban Studies and Planning
August 17, 2012

Certified by:



J. Phillip Thompson
Associate Professor of Urban Politics
Department of Urban Studies and Planning
Dissertation Supervisor

Accepted by:



JoAnn Carmin
Associate Professor of Environmental Policy and Planning
Department of Urban Studies and Planning
Chair, PhD Committee

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT:	5
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:	7
MEDITATION:	9
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	10
CHAPTER TWO: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK	30
CHAPTER THREE: THE IMPETUS FOR JOHNSON HOUSES RESIDENTS’ ACTIVISM: NEW YORK CITY’S EVOLVING SOCIAL-POLITICAL LANDSCAPE	42
CHAPTER FOUR: RESIDENT ACTIVISM AT JOHNSON HOUSES: A CASE OF EXTRA-ORDINARY STRUGGLE	80
CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION: THE POLITICAL MEANING OF EXTRAORDINARY STRUGGLE	128
APPENDIX A: TIMELINE OF IMPORTANT HISTORICAL EVENTS, PUBLIC POLICIES, AND JOHNSON HOUSES INITIATIVES	139
APPENDIX B: LIST OF INTERVIEWS, CONVERSATIONS, AND MEETINGS	142
BIBLIOGRAPHY:	144

**“Living for the City:”
The Political Meaning of Public Housing Residents’ Extraordinary Struggle**

by

LA TONYA M. GREEN

Submitted to the Department of Urban Studies and Planning on August 17, 2012
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Urban Sociology and Urban Planning

Abstract

While the particularities of public housing residents’ hardships often capture the attention of the national media, less recognized and understood is how public housing residents work to address the instabilities they encounter. Much of the existing literature on public housing provides an inadequate narrative for envisioning public housing residents as actors not simply as victims. Contextualized within an analysis of the evolving socio-political landscape of New York City, and through the study of resident activism at the James Weldon Johnson Houses in East Harlem, I examine how institutional arrangements affect public housing residents’ agency. I found that it is the particular institutional arrangements that public housing residents reside within—as opposed to a culture of poverty—that greatly inhibits their ability to exert control over their living environment. My findings provide an account of the poor that challenges conventional depictions of their culture and behavior. I argue that the residents at the Johnson Houses resist the effects of the institutional arrangements they reside within by trying to simultaneously have their ideas incorporated into government established processes for shaping their immediate environment as well as trying to establish their own system for exercising control over their living environment.

Dissertation Supervisor: J. Phillip Thompson, Associate Professor of Urban Politics

Committee Members:

Anne Whiston Spirn, Professor of Landscape Architecture and Planning
Langley Keyes, Ford Professor of City and Regional Planning

Acknowledgements

It truly takes a village to complete a PhD; I have had no less than a village walk with me, and at times, carry me through this endeavor. I am humbled by, thankful for, and very proud of what we have accomplished.

A special thank you to my PhD advisors J. Phillip Thompson and Anne Whiston Spirn and to my mom, Jeanell Dennis. I thank Phil for his gentle persistence and constant encouragement throughout this process; Anne for providing me with enthusiastic guidance while always keeping a watchful eye on the finish line; and my mom for being such a dedicated cheerleader.

I thank my dissertation committee: J. Phillip Thompson, Anne Whiston Spirn, and Langley Keyes. I am grateful to have worked with a team so dedicated to my ideas.

I thank all of my interviewees—all of whom provided insight into the challenges facing people of color living in a low-income neighborhood. In particular, I thank Ethel Velez for all of her guidance, support, and feedback.

I thank professors John de Monchaux, Xavier de Souza Briggs, Phillip Clay, Diane Davis, Frank Levy, Stephen Meyer, Paul Osterman, Karl Seidman, Larry Vale, and Chris Zegras for showing genuine interest in my work.

I thank Dean Blanche Staton, Dwayne Daughtry, Sandy Wellford, and Alice Twohig for their invaluable administrative support and guidance and spirited encouragement.

I thank Ryan Allan, Kim Alleyne, April Veneracion Ang, Shiben Banerji, Ariel Bierbaum, Donnie Blackwell, Will Bradshaw, Grace Carroll, Jason Corburn, Lianne Fisman, Leigh Graham, Erin Graves, Rodney Harrell, Jean Riesman, Francisca Rojas, and Daniela Trammell for the time and energy you invested in helping me succeed. Also, I thank all the others (especially Terry Dennis, Gabriela Lopez de Dennis, and Chanel King) who told me to keep pushing forward when writing became Misery.

I thank the National Science Foundation and the Office of the President, the Office of Graduate Education, the Department of Urban Studies and Planning, and the Horowitz Foundation at MIT for financial support throughout this endeavor.

Lastly, I thank the research staff at The New York City Public Library's Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture (particularly in the Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Books and the Photographs and Prints Divisions); the staff at the Fiorello H. LaGuardia and Robert F. Wagner Archives at LaGuardia Community College and, the staff at the Sophia Smith Collection Archives at Smith College.

Meditation

Her brother's smart he's got more sense than many.
His patience's long but soon he won't have any.
To find a job is like a haystack needle;
Cause where he lives they don't use colored people.
Living just enough, just enough for the city.

....

His hair is long; his feet are hard and gritty.
He spends his life walking the streets of New York City.
He's almost dead from breathing on air pollution.
He tried to vote but to him there's no solution.
Living just enough, just enough for the city.

I hope you hear inside my voice of sorrow;
And that it motivates you to make a better tomorrow.
This place is cruel; nowhere could be much colder.
If we don't change, the world we'll soon be over.
Living just enough, just enough for the city!
—Stevie Wonder, "Living for the City," 1973

Lift every voice and sing,
'Til earth and heaven ring,
Ring with the harmonies of Liberty;
Let our rejoicing rise
High as the listening skies,
Let it resound loud as the rolling sea.
Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us,
Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us;
Facing the rising sun of our new day begun,
Let us march on 'til victory is won.
—James Weldon Johnson, "Lift Every Voice and Sing" ("The Black National Anthem"), 1900

We must always make it clear that in our society there is a violence of poverty,
a violence of slums. There is the violence of inferior education, and it is a kind
of psychological and spiritual violence that's much more injurious than the
external physical violence that we see.
—Dr. King, 1968¹

¹ "Retracing the Hunt for MLK's Killer." *CBS Sunday Morning*. April 3, 2011.
<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2011/04/03/sunday/main20050122.shtml?tag=contentMain;contentBody> (accessed April 5, 2011).

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

There are neighborhoods in the United States (US) where parents walk their children to school and then go to work; where mail is delivered daily; streets get cleaned four times a week; and where “Blacktina” t-shirts, Puerto Rican and Black Liberation flags, and posters of President Obama are sold in the barbershop on the corner. Even in those places however, collective efficacy falls apart in ways that are unmistakable: a woman gets raped inside of a laundromat, bodegas get held up, and the Purple City Crack Gang claims dominion. These signs of social fraying often capture the attention of the national media, urban scholars, and policy makers.

While the focus on those signs might reveal some of the most acute local problems, they reveal very little about how the residents of those places address the social, political, and economic instabilities they encounter or how they improve their living environment. As a result, the media, urban scholars, and policy makers often offer an image of the residents of those places that is negative and one-dimensional.

When I embarked on this research in New York City in the summer of 2007 I intended to study the social mechanisms that link high rates of incarceration, low rates of education attainment, and residential location in order to understand their interdependence. I began my field research with a set of descriptions and concepts (e.g. the “school to prison pipeline” and “million dollar blocks”) that I intended to explore based on how they are manifested spatially.² I began studying the neighborhood surrounding the James Weldon Johnson Houses, a public housing development in East Harlem. A year and a half into my field research, my notes, memos, and preliminary codes

² For an overview of the “school to prison pipeline” concept, please see Johanna Wald and Daniel Losen’s article “Defining and Redirecting A School-to-Prison Pipeline.” *New Directions for Youth Development*. Special Issue: Deconstructing the School-to-Prison Pipeline. Volume 2003, Issue 99, 9-15. For an overview of the “million dollar blocks” concept, please see Sara Wakefield’s article “Invisible Inequality, Million Dollar Blocks, and Extra-legal Punishment: A Review of Recent Contributions to Mass Incarceration Scholarship.” *Punishment and Society*. April 2010, Volume 12, 209-215.

and categories were leading me to a different line of inquiry than the one I began my research with: understanding the extraordinary struggles of public housing residents. By “extraordinary struggles” I mean that public housing residents, because they reside in government-owned housing, are subjected to an oppressive loose network of overlapping silos of control (i.e. institutional arrangements) that create instabilities and undermine their ability to exert control over their living environment. Because public housing residents are the most vulnerable participants in the real estate market in the United States, they are often permanently and intensely tied to the place they live (Logan and Molotch 1987, 23). The description of the neighborhood that opened this chapter reveals the complex relationship between people and place. Most public housing residents do not have the financial means to move when they do not agree with changes in management, have problems with their neighbors, or are victimized by a sudden spike in violence in their neighborhood. By “institutional arrangements” I am referring to the informal and formal arrangements that “enable public bodies and private interests to function together in making and implementing governing decisions” (Stone 1989, 231). Institutional arrangements “structure the connections between social origin and educational attainment, between educational attainment and early labor force placements, and between early and later placements in the labor force” (Kerckhoff 1995, 323). Kerckhoff (1995) argues that

institutional arrangements constitute the sorting machines whose structures provide pathways to the levels in industrial societies’ stratification systems. The linkages they provide between family and school, between school and work, and during the labor force career define the societies’ opportunity structures. As a matrix of probabilistic connections, they establish the odds that individuals at particular locations at one stage in the stratification process will reach other particular locations at the next stage. Individual differences are bound to alter those odds at the individual level, but the institutional arrangements provide the most probable connections and thereby make other connections less probable (342).

For example, public housing residents are often subjected to several additional layers of

surveillance and monitoring by police and by staff from other government agencies than individuals residing in privately owned housing.³ Also, public housing residents are often immediately and materially affected by public policy changes based on the political views of those in elected or appointed office at the local, state, and federal levels. The additional layers of surveillance and monitoring and the immediate and material effect of changes in public policy seemed to affect the residents of the Johnson Houses in a way that needed to be better understood.

Although I originally approached this research with questions—such as: “how does the ‘school to prison pipeline’ get manifested in a particular time and place, “what is the lived experience of those residing on a million dollar block,” and “what is the relationship between low education attainment, high rates of incarceration, and residential location?”— I allowed the questions to change as I became more immersed in the research. Over the course of three years I observed that changes in management, the maintenance of facilities, harassment by police, and spikes in violence heightened Johnson Houses residents’ sense of urgency that they needed to obtain the legal power to be able to exert control over their living environment, namely their housing development. By “control,” I found that the Johnson Houses residents I spoke with talked about control as possessing the authority granted by government agencies to be able to make decisions about the care, modification, and/or enhancement of the social and physical environment of their housing development—including possessing the authority to construct, program, and manage a community center on the grounds of their development. For example, Ms. Evelyn Carter,* a

³ According to the New York City Affordable Housing Resource Center, as part of an individual’s eligibility to reside in New York City Public Housing, he must agree to “a criminal background check for all household members over the age of 16” and allow a representative from New York City Housing Authority to conduct a home visit, in addition to other eligibility requirements.

http://www.nyc.gov/html/housinginfo/html/apartments/apt_rental_public_housing.shtml (accessed March 2, 2010).

Black woman in her 50s who has lived in the Johnson Houses since the early 1980s and is a core member of the James Weldon Johnson Houses Residents' Association, stated that "NYCHA [New York City Housing Authority] keeps telling us that's our community center but they won't let us make any decisions [about how who's going to use it]." Ms. Mary Johnson,* also a Black woman in her 50s who has lived in the Johnson Houses since the early 1980s and who is also a core member of the James Weldon Johnson Houses Residents' Association added: "that's right...and we're the ones who fought to get it built in the first place. We should be the ones who make all of the decisions about it."⁴ I began asking myself, as Robert Dahl (1961) did, "who actually governs this place?" Is it NYCHA? The New York City Police Department? The James Weldon Johnson Houses Residents' Association? The elderly and disabled who sit in the courtyard each day from sunrise to sunset? The people hurrying through the development ushering their children and pushing their grocery cart? There were many different ways I could approach Dahl's timeless question. It became clear to me after one of my first informal conversations with current and former residents at Johnson Houses that they believe they have the right, granted by the laws governing public housing in New York City and in the US, to determine for themselves, what the operation of their development and quality of life standards should be.⁵ Ms. Carter, Ms. Johnny Esther,* Ms. Johnson, Mr. Samuel Lawrence,* Mr. Jesse Mitcham,* and Ms. Velez spoke about their decades-long struggle with NYCHA for meaningful participation in all decisions that affect public housing residents; that struggle intrigued me. Over time I came to understand that, to the residents, participation meant that they would be directly involved in the process for any decision-making effecting their community. For example, during my first conversation with Ms. Velez, she talked about persuading NYCHA in the 1980s to build a higher fence around the

⁴ The names with the "*" after them are aliases. No other information about the individual has been changed. Informal conversation in the Johnson Houses Residents' Association office on June 10, 2008.

⁵ Informal conversation in the Johnson Houses Residents' Association office on May 13, 2008.

development to protect the residents from the New York Police Department's police officers.⁶ I began to wonder about the nature of the relationship between NYCHA and the New York Police Department in governing of the public housing development. Mr. Mitcham, a Black man in his mid-50s who was one of two men on the Executive Board for the James Weldon Johnson Residents' Association, spoke about residents standing patrol in the hallways in the early 1990s when there was an explosion of drugs and guns in the surrounding community. He recalled:

At that time things were bad. There was a lot of drugs and guns coming through Johnson. We had to do something to keep all the residents safe, and NYPD [The New York City Police Department] was not helpful...so we increased the number of residents on Tenant Patrol.⁷

I began to wonder what it was about how NYCHA and the New York Police Department govern that did not meet the residents' expectations as partners in making certain the James Weldon Johnson Houses remains a safe living environment for everyone. Empowered participation is dependent upon institutional supportiveness as well as the agency of participants and institutional space available to them (Das and Takahashi 2009, 214). My conversations led me to begin asking questions about governance, control, and institutional arrangements; as a result, my research questions evolved into: 1) how do public housing residents contend with the social, political, and economic instabilities they encounter? and 2) how do public housing residents exert control over their living environment?

PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH

The purpose of this research: is 1) to illuminate the power that public housing residents possess, 2) to illuminate the ways in which they exert that power as they struggle for control over their living environment and, 3) to inquire into the "political meaning" of the struggles the residents of

⁶ Informal conversation in the Johnson Houses Residents' Association office on May 6, 2008.

⁷ Informal conversation in the Johnson Houses Residents' Association office on June 10, 2008.

Johnson Houses encountered. Through a description of how the residents of the Johnson Houses challenged NYCHA and other public authorities, this research challenges the widely accepted notion that public housing residents do not possess the wherewithal or the motivation to improve their living conditions.

Writing about public housing residents' struggle for control over their living environment in Chicago, Feldman and Stall, utilizing Hooks' (1990) description of "homeplace," describe homeplace as a "site of resistance" against white supremacy forged through the intergenerational struggle of Black women.⁸ Hooks contends that Black people, especially Black women, design the homeplace to be a physical and social space where "black people could strive to be subjects, not objects, where we could be affirmed in our minds and hearts despite poverty, hardship, and deprivation, where we could restore to ourselves the dignity denied us on the outside in the public world" (42). Hooks' evidence is her experience growing up in Kentucky in the 1950s and 1960s. She recounts:

"When I was a young girl the journey across town to my grandmother's house was one of the most intriguing experiences....I remember this journey not just because of the stories I would hear. It was a movement away from the segregated blackness of our community into a poor white neighborhood. I remember the fear being scared to walk to Baba's (our grandmother's house) because we would have to pass that terrifying whiteness—those white faces on the porches staring us down with hate. Even when empty or vacant, those porches seemed to say "danger," "you do not belong here," "you are not safe."

Oh! that feeling of safety, of arrival, of homecoming when we finally reached the edges of her yard, when we could see the soot black face of our grandfather, Daddy Gus, sitting in his chair on the porch, smell his cigar, and rest on his lap. Such a contrast, that feeling

⁸ Hooks' description of homeplace is focused on an individual's residential unit and its immediate surroundings. Throughout this study I use the term "living environment" because the residents at Johnson Houses spoke mainly about the space in their community that was outside of their individual residential unit. Thus, when I state "living environment," I am referring to the social, physical, economic, and political site one resides within. Living environment, in my definition, is not gender nor ethnicity or culture specific, but is a description of the manifestation of the interaction and interweaving of institutional arrangements.

of arrival, of homecoming, this sweetness and the bitterness of that journey, that constant reminder of white power and control.

I speak of this journey as leading to my grandmother's house, even though our grandfather lived there too. In our young minds houses belonged to women, were their special domain, not as property, but as places where all that truly mattered in life took place—the warmth and comfort shelter, the feeding of our bodies, the nurturing of our souls (41).

Hooks argues that Black people experience a deep sense of yearning when they do not have a homeplace. They also experience a deep sense of yearning when they cannot create, are working to reclaim-, are embattled about-, or are embattled in keeping one. Yearning, Hooks argues, is an individual's psychological and emotional longing for a sense of connectedness to a place; this rootedness to a place is affirmation of that individual's sense of social and cultural identity. In her discussion of homeplace, Hooks highlights the cultural, historical, political, racial, and social consciousness necessary for understanding the lived experiences of Black people. Hooks writes:

Historically, African-American people believe that the construction of a homeplace, however fragile and tenuous (the slave hut, the wooden shack), had a radical political dimension....Black women resisted by making homes where all black people could strive to be subjects, not objects, where we could be affirmed, where we could restore to ourselves the dignity denied us on the outside in the public world (42).

As a critical site of resistance, the homeplace is where Black people develop political consciousness, devise strategies for confronting white supremacy, and resist racist stereotypes and oppression. She argues that the

overall devaluation of the role black women have played in constructing for us homeplaces that are the site for resistance undermines our efforts to resist racism and the colonizing mentality which promotes internalized self-hatred. Sexist thinking about the nature of domesticity has determined the way black women's experience in the home is perceived....The assumption then is that the black woman who works hard to be a responsible caretaker is only doing what she should be doing. Failure to recognize the realm of choice, and the remarkable re-visioning of both woman's role and the idea of "home" that black women consciously exercised in practice, obscures the political commitment to racial uplift, to eradicating racism, which was the philosophical core of dedication to community and home (45).

Throughout our history, African-Americans have recognized the subversive value of homeplace, of having access to private space where we do not directly encounter white racist aggression. Whatever the shape and direction of black liberation struggle (civil rights reform or black power movement), domestic space has been a crucial site for organizing, for forming political solidarity. Homeplace has been a site of resistance. Its structure was defined less by whether or not black women and men were conforming to sexist behavior norms and more by our struggle to uplift ourselves as a people, our struggle to resist racist domination and oppression (47).

Feldman and Stall (2004) argue that when scholars better understand the role of homeplace in “everyday and transgressive resistance, we reveal new understandings of politics and social change” (351). They describe “everyday and transgressive resistance” as the organized efforts and organizations public housing residents create “to defend their community and homeplace against threats to its survival, and to assert their rights and protections as equal citizens in polity” (12). Through the new understandings of politics and social change that Feldman and Stall refer to, which occurs as a result of illuminating the everyday and transgressive resistance public housing residents engage in, dominant, politically motivated portrayals of public housing residents are challenged. This study is an attempt to add empirical meat to Feldman and Stall and Hooks’ claims.

METHODOLOGY

In *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy*, William Julius Wilson (1987) argues that in public housing projects social disorganization (such as residents’ difficulty identifying their neighbors) is at the root of many of the problems public housing residents face. He argues that residents, because they do not know their neighbors, are “less likely to engage in reciprocal guardian behavior” and that “events in one part of the block or neighborhood tend to be of little concern to those residing in other parts” (38). Wilson uses statistical measures such as “Arrests in Cities, by Type of Offense and Race, 1984;” “Proportion

of Families at Selected Income Levels, by Race, Head of Household, and Metropolitan Residence, 1978;” and “Unemployment Rates, by Race, Selected Years, 1948-1984” to argue that residents in Chicago’s ghettos—such as the Taylor Homes and Cabrini-Greens—are “truly disadvantaged” because of their social and physical isolation from wider society. He also contends that public policy that “deconcentrates” impoverished people is very important to eradicating the population of individuals who comprise the truly disadvantaged. Deconcentrating them, he argues, would, among other advantages, expose youth to individuals who work in mainstream jobs and women to men who are marriageable. Wilson’s study is much broader than what I describe above; he writes extensively about the shuttering of factories and the loss of manufacturing jobs in central cities at the same time many public housing projects were being constructed. Wilson employed methods that resulted in findings that do not take account how the residents make political meaning of their own lives, which I believe contributes to the popular notion that the poor do not have any control over themselves, their lives, or their communities. By “making meaning of their own lives” I am referring to residents’ analysis of culture, norms, social reality, understandings and definitions of a situation, worldview, perspective, or stereotypes (Lofland and Lofland, 1996). Understanding how public housing residents make meaning of their own lives is important because meanings do more than describe behavior: they define, justify, and interpret it as well. Thus, meaning and meaning-making have many implications for learning. One key implication emerges through the notion of perspective transformation, in which “learning is defined as the social process of constructing and appropriating a new or revised interpretation of the meaning of one’s experience as a guide to action” (Mezirow 1994, 222-223). Learning is a mechanism for making meaning in life (Merriam and Heuer, 1996). Learning can inform or challenge existing conceptions of meaning

and, in the process, provide an opportunity for acquiring new meaning or confirming currently held views. Wilson applied an analysis of culture as a by-product of social forces to Black American culture and failed to seriously consider that poor people themselves might have revealed that the causal flow between social forces and culture might be more complex than that which he utilized to devise his public policy prescriptions. An assumption underlying Wilson's approach is that a more equitable society can be devised if policy-makers think of social forces as causing culture. Another assumption underlying Wilson's approach is that economic and political structures emerge and operate independently of culture. If both of those assumptions are accurate, why does democracy and capitalism differ from country to country, or even between the different regions of the US? Perhaps it was Wilson's adaptation of the Marxian split between the economic base (cause) and superstructure (cultural effect) that created the problem. He did not see the culture of the subjects of his research, nor that of the external population's, as a "cause" as well as an effect.

Another critically-acclaimed study that greatly influenced public policy in the 1990s as it pertained to social policy is Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton's (1993) *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*. Massey and Denton's study also uses statistical measures such as "Black-white segregation," "Black isolation," "probability of white loss and Black gain within different kinds of urban neighborhoods," and "neighborhood racial preferences probability of encountering racial distribution in selected United States housing markets," among others, to argue that racial segregation is the most important reason why the Black "underclass," post-emancipation, has not been able to make significant social, political, and economic gains in the United States. Although Massey and Denton do not speak exclusively about public housing

residents, they contend that “by 1970, after two decades of urban renewal, public housing projects in most large cities had become black reservations, highly segregated from the rest of society and characterized by extreme social isolation” (57). The replacement of slums with high-density towers of poor families, they state, “reduced the class diversity of the ghetto and brought about a geographic concentration of poverty that was previously unimaginable” (57). While their solution for racial segregation is public policies that encourage the deconcentration of poverty and the aggressive enforcement of anti-discrimination laws, none of their solutions include the voice of the poor themselves. If descriptions of meaning making of the poor had been included as a critical component of Massey and Denton’s study, their findings might have resulted in a different, or additional, mechanism being the most important for understanding why poor Black people in the United States, post emancipation, have not been able to make significant social, political, and economic gains. Urban scholars’ exclusion of the voices of the poor contributes to the notion that poor people, especially public housing residents, are incapable of the formation and management of a productive life and community (Ventakesh 2000). If one assumes that ‘making meaning’ is a precursor to political action—the thinking before the action—then Massey and Denton, by not studying residents’ perceptions and beliefs, cannot consider that the residents themselves, rather than government, might want to or are organizing and planning to take the lead in changing their conditions. Because Massey and Denton’s methodology is focused on statistical measures as opposed to, or in addition to, methods that consider seriously the lived experience, they miss the everyday acts of resistance that residents engage in to change their living environment.

I employed methodology that assisted me in inquiring into what conclusions and implications

would be illuminated if research is conducted in such a way that public housing residents' struggles are assumed to be real, documented carefully, and then analyzed as a source of indigenous knowledge and collective efficacy. Thus, I employed qualitative methods because they generate data rich in detail and embedded in context. These methods allowed me to describe and analyze the "real-life interventions that are too complex for survey or experimental strategies" (Yin 2003). Moreover, these methods allow for the investigation of politics and power. By "politics" I am referring to: 1) the activities associated with governance; 2) the competition between various interest groups for power and leadership; and 3) the decisions that drive the complex web of relations among people living in a particular society. As for power, I utilize Emerson's (1962) definition, within which he argues that power is not in a person but is held within the relationship between entities. He also argues that power is a social good and is relational.⁹

Qualitative methods allowed me to investigate whether the residents at Johnson Houses believe that the invisible and unintentional effects of the social, political, and/or economic structure, despite human intervention, causes poverty and oppression. If this is the case, 'causal links' between that structure and poverty and oppression can be found, and once discovered, a technical fix could be applied to end poverty and oppression; this would be an apolitical approach and solution. A contrary view, which argues that poverty results from decisions people with power and resources knowingly make to protect their superior positions, is possible in this latter case. Simply stated, there is no "causal" link—poverty is not inevitable or due to unknown forces that have yet to be discovered. Thus, change is more a matter of political engagement than technical

⁹ Emerson, Richard M. "Power-Dependence Relations" in the *American Sociological Review* (February 1962)(27)1; 31-41.

fixes. The residents at Johnson Houses, based on their more than sixty-year struggle for control over their living environment, believe in the latter, and, therefore do not believe poverty is a technical problem that can be solved by employing a yet to be discovered combination of apolitical mechanisms. Through this study I attempt to illuminate Bates et al's (1998) argument that

the urban poor and the rural peasantry, denied access to wealth and power, nonetheless make their preferences known and affect political outcomes...by transforming public festivals into political theater, engaging in politically charged acts of symbolic protest, and infusing day-to-day life with "hidden transcripts" of political dissent. In doing so, they make possible political transitions: overthrows of governments and revolutionary redistributions of power.¹⁰

Lastly, I utilized the case study method because my research questions are explanatory questions that are concerned with institutional arrangements that needed to be traced over time rather than questions that are concerned with a measure of frequencies or incidences.

DATA COLLECTION

Over the course of three years I utilized Johnson Houses residents' voices and the voices of those who have had direct contact with them, such as the NYCHA staff and New York Police Department officers, to guide the course of my inquiry. I conducted formal interviews with fifteen current and former Johnson Houses residents. I conducted interviews with two US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) staff members. I engaged in participant-observation of myriad informal meetings, conversations, and celebrations with current and former Johnson Houses residents. I attended two meetings with Johnson Houses residents, NYCHA facilities staff, and the City Council Member representing the district the Johnson

¹⁰ Bates, Robert H.; Rui J. P. De Figueiredo, Jr.; and Barry R. Weingast. "The Politics of Interpretation: Rationality, Culture, and Transition" in *Politics & Society* (December 1998)(26); 5.

Houses are in, Melissa Mark-Viverito (Democrat, District 8), to discuss barriers to the completion of a newly constructed the James Weldon Johnson Houses Community Center. I attended two James Weldon Johnson Houses Residents' Association meetings. I attended two Manhattan North District Council of Presidents meetings and attended their retreat spring 2009. In December 2009, I co-facilitated a retreat with residents from Johnson, East River, and Woodrow Wilson Houses during which I was able to speak with residents about not only the history of Johnson Houses, but was able to work with them to put plans in place for projects to be implemented in the near future. I also attended one meeting and facilitated another meeting of Johnson Houses residents and staff members from NYCHA, the Department of Youth and Community Development, and the Supportive Children's Advocacy Network to discuss the management and programming of the Johnson Houses Community Center. I utilized the personal files of Ms. Velez, who has been the Residents' Association President of Johnson Houses for over the past thirty years, and the files of the James Weldon Johnson Houses Resident's Association. I recorded the formal interviews and some of the informal conversations; I also took notes and jotted down my observations. I wrote analytic memos and contact summaries following most of my observations, conversations, and interviews (Miles and Huberman 1984).

In addition to the data I collected from the activities detailed above, I utilized the NYCHA collection files in the Fiorello H. LaGuardia and Robert F. Wagner Archives at LaGuardia Community College in Long Island City, Queens, New York. I also used the archives of several community-based organizations such as the James Weldon Johnson Houses Community Center Incorporated held at the New York City Public Library's Arturo Schomburg Center for Research

in Black Culture in Harlem.¹¹ I also consulted the National Congress of Neighborhood Women's Records held in the Sophia Smith Collection and Smith College Archives, Neilson Library at Smith College. Finally, I used various newspaper archives and United States Census data.

DATA ANALYSIS

Analysis of the collected data was ongoing throughout the study. Periodically, I reviewed all of the data I collected and devised a list of emerging questions about my research. I analyzed and coded transcribed interviews and analytic memos until a pattern emerged. Themes were generated inductively using the grounded theory approach (Glaser 1965). Grounded theory is theory that is developed iteratively over the course of the collection of data as opposed to theory that is conceptual and then tested against collected data to determine if and how well the data fits the theory (Glaser 1965, Creswell 2003, Maxwell 2005). I employed grounded theory as opposed to another methodology because I was researching a phenomenon that is not well understood empirically or conceptually, making super-imposed theory or quantitative methods of little value. Through pattern-matching, writing, member-checking, and revising, I was able to construct a story of episodes of resident activism at Johnson Houses over the past sixty years. Also—through the triangulation of archival data, current and former Johnson Houses residents' perspectives, the perspectives of various institutional actors from NYCHA, the New York Police Department, HUD, the Department of Youth and Community Development, and Supportive Children's Advocacy Network, and, when appropriate, my own perspective of events—I was able to validate the data. Theoretical validation of my study was achieved by reviewing relevant literature and by discussing emerging conclusions with current and former residents of Johnson

¹¹ This James Weldon Johnson Community Incorporated is a completely separate organization from the James Weldon Johnson Community Center that is discussed at-length as a part of this research but is an organization that was housed in Johnson Houses when they were first constructed.

Houses, my dissertation committee, and with colleagues familiar with social science research.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study has four main limitations: 1) it is a single case study of activism at one public housing development, 2) it privileges race and class over gender, 3) the voice of one person, Ms. Velez, who was mentioned earlier, who has been the Residents' Association President at Johnson Houses for the past thirty years, dominates the narrative of activism at Johnson Houses, and 4) many of Ms. Velez's quotes utilized for this research are from an interview with Tamar Carroll and Martha Ackelsberg she gave on March 30, 2004 as part of their "New York Community Activists Oral Histories" project.

In defense of the first limitation, the focus of this research being a single case, I attempted to study the activism of the residents of Johnson Houses in detail, over time. Studying multiple cases in detail longitudinally would have required decades. The importance of the contribution of this research, however, is not in its ability to be able to generalize its findings to other case studies. Instead, the importance of its contribution is in the ability to be generalized in comparison to the broader theoretical issues in urban planning, such as who should govern the distribution of power in democracy and the process of appropriating space.

Several highly cited studies of activism in public housing have highlighted the contribution of Black women in the struggle against inequality (see Feldman and Stall 2004 and Williams 2004). Although almost all of the individuals I witnessed engaging in the everyday transgressive resistance at Johnson Houses were women, gender, with relation to activism, was rarely mentioned during any of my interviews. The women did not devote any time to discussing the

absence of men. They were more focused on trying to recruit as many people as possible to join them in their resistance to decisions that NYCHA or the Department of Youth and Community and Development had made than they were at launching a campaign to recruit men into their struggle. Instead of gender, race and class were the two prominent and reoccurring themes that dominated most of my interviews and observations. The absence of the focus on gender in this study does not diminish gender's importance in understanding poor peoples' struggle for self-determination; instead the absence of gender as a secondary or tertiary reoccurring theme in my findings raises the question of *why* gender was rarely mentioned by current or former residents. That question will not be addressed as part of this study.

Third, you will find that Ms. Velez's voice dominates the narrative of resident activism at Johnson Houses, particularly in Chapter 4 "Resident Activism at Johnson Houses: A Case of Extraordinary Struggle." While there have been a multitude of resident-leaders at Johnson Houses, I was referred to Ms. Velez every time I spoke with any current resident, former resident, or any staff member or former staff member of any New York City agency about activism at Johnson Houses. I did not encounter, nor did I hear about, any other resident-leader from Johnson Houses who has the institutional memory that Ms. Velez has; when triangulated, her institutional memory is accurate. Moreover, I did not encounter any other current or former Johnson Houses resident who could not only recount an incident of everyday and transgressive resistance, but who can also position the incident of activism within its larger political, social, economic, and racial context. Lastly, Ms. Velez has been the driving force behind activism at Johnson Houses for thirty years; the fact that she has been re-elected the Johnson Houses Residents' Association for consecutive terms, should be appreciated.

The fourth limitation, my extensive use of quotes from Carroll and Ackelsberg's 2004 interview with Ms. Velez, might raise question about why, given the amount of time I spent with Ms. Velez over the course of the three years, I did not use more of Ms. Velez's words from my own interviews with her. After reviewing the interview transcripts, notes, and memos from my own interviews with Ms. Velez in comparison to the interview transcript from Carroll and Ackelsberg's interview, Ms. Velez's retelling of what occurred at Johnson Houses the previous twenty years was much more succinct than the retelling in my interview transcripts.

STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

The chapters that follow aim not only to describe how the residents of Johnson Houses devised and implemented a plan to construct a place where they could resist the multiple, overlapping institutional arrangements that restricted their ability to control their living environment, but also to illuminate the importance of situating local struggles within their larger social, political, economic, and racial context. My examination of the residents of Johnson Houses struggles led me to see much of the previous work focused on the poor, particularly public housing residents, as politically or ideologically motivated. While behavior and culture are important components of this study, the focus of the study is an analysis of the social and political landscape the poor reside within and that they must navigate to exert control of their living environment.

Chapter Two, "The Conceptual Framework," details the underlying assumptions, concepts, and propositions that guided my research on resident activism at Johnson Houses. In particular, the chapter discusses the concept of the culture of poverty and how it shapes the negative image of the individuals who live in public housing. From there, the question of how power is distributed

in a democracy is discussed. Then I discuss how the distribution of power is important to understand when analyzing residential location because one's residential location is often the place where the consequences of institutional arrangements become visible. Finally, the role of everyday and transgressive resistance and the role of learning in understanding how residents at Johnson Houses have attempted to resist political and economic instabilities are discussed.

Chapter Three, "The Impetus for Johnson Houses Residents' Activism: New York City's Evolving Socio-Political Landscape," describes the changing socio-political context of New York City from the mid-1880s to the present. The purpose of detailing this history is to be able to situate Johnson Houses residents' history of activism and their current struggle for control of the newly constructed James Weldon Johnson Houses Community Center with a larger historical context. Positioning Johnson Houses residents' history of activism and current struggle within this larger historical context allows me to examine the decisions that underlie the institutional arrangements that result in some of the residents at Johnson Houses being compelled to resist those arrangements.

Chapter Four, "Resident Activism at Johnson Houses: A Case of Extraordinary Struggle," recounts how the residents of Johnson Houses, since the late 1950s, have managed and mitigated the social, political, and economic instabilities they have encountered. It also describes how the residents have attempted to exert control over their living environment. Lastly, this chapter illuminates how the interlacing and interaction of institutional layers that are supposed to result in better services for public housing residents have resulted in the residents losing control of the vision, management, and programming of the Johnson Houses Community Center.

Finally, Chapter Five, “The Conclusion: The Political Meaning of Extraordinary Struggle,” summarizes my argument that understanding the institutional arrangements that Johnson Houses residents reside within is essential to understanding the poor’s ability to exert control of their living environment. It also offers analysis of what the extraordinary struggle the residents of Johnson Houses engaged in reveals about the relationship between poverty and the distribution of power in a democracy.

CHAPTER TWO: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

My motivation to do community work stems from my upbringing. I grew up in East Harlem hearing that the ‘American Dream’ was to go to school, get a good education, and move out of the ghetto. I always wondered who would be left to lead if we all moved ‘up and out.’ There seemed to be a big vacuum left in the neighborhood and I felt that it had to be filled. My mother and other family members had a strong influence on me. They were active in the community and fraternal organizations. As a small child I saw my mother organizing in the church. Without thinking about it I began to see a contradiction between “moving out of the ghetto” and “investing your life” in the community.

—Ms. Velez, James Weldon Johnson Houses Resident Association President¹²

Although few social scientists conducting research in the twenty-first century utilize the “culture of poverty” concept as an explanatory variable in their analysis of the poor, its underlying premise about the behavior of the poor remains durable while contributing little knowledge to understanding persistent poverty. From a theoretical perspective, the “culture of poverty” concept has resulted in a legacy of social science research that binds the perpetuation of poverty to individual behavior and family transmission of values. The concept assumes the rise of certain personality traits in response to social, political, and economic deprivation and chronic racial and ethnic subordination (see Harrington 1962, Lewis 1969, and Banfield 1970). Oscar Lewis, largely credited for popularizing the concept, identified a subculture of lowered aspirations and short-term gratification in his 1959 study of Mexican slum dwellers. He wrote that the culture of poverty:

...has a structure, a rationale, and defense mechanisms without which the poor could hardly carry on. In short, it is a way of life, remarkably stable and persistent, passed down from generation to generation along family lines. The culture of poverty has its own modalities and distinctive social and psychological consequences for its members. It is a dynamic factor which affects participation in the large national culture and becomes a subculture of its own (Lewis, 1964: 150).

¹² Unpublished material from Velez’s personal files.

Illustrating this structure and rationale, Lewis (1965) argued that traits such as “a provincial perspective,” “unemployment,” “absence of savings,” “lack of privacy,” “gregariousness,” “frequent use of physical violence in child training,” “predisposition to authoritarianism,” “inability to defer gratification,” “fatalism,” “mistrust of government,” and “strong feelings of powerlessness, marginality, and helplessness” characterize the culture of poverty. He grouped the traits into four basic categories—“the attitudes, values, and character structure of the individual;” “the nature of the family;” “the nature of the slum community;” and “the relationship between the culture and the larger society”—to assist in the analysis of those residing within a culture of poverty (1965: xiv).

The culture of poverty concept underlies Massey and Denton’s (1993) study for they contend that while the poor are faced with institutional racism and residential segregation, an “oppositional culture that devalues work, schooling, and marriage and stresses attitudes and behaviors that are antithetical and often hostile to success in the larger economy” is also present (8).¹³ Through socialization, the concept purports, coping mechanisms are passed from one generation to the next, creating a cycle that is impossible to escape. Lewis (1965) argued that approximately twenty percent of the poor are trapped in the self-perpetuating cycle of dysfunctional behaviors and attitudes, contending that “by the time slum children are age six or seven they have usually absorbed the basic values and attitudes of their subculture and are not psychologically geared to take full advantage of changing conditions or increased opportunities” (xlv). He purported that fatalism—the poor feeling that their living condition is intractable—is the key mechanism in the replication of the culture of poverty. His contention aligns with

¹³ For criticisms of the “oppositional culture” thesis see: Ainsworth-Darnell and Downey 1998; Cook and Ludwig 1998; Fordham and Ogbu 1986; and Ogbu 1978.

scholars who split the poor into two groups: those who simply lack money but possess middle-class values and can benefit from government support, and those who do not value work, sacrifice, or self-improvement (Katz 1989). It is the latter who are the focus of the culture of poverty concept.

Although the culture of poverty concept is theoretically weak because of its lack of a clear definition of culture; its failure to link structural, political, and economic forces to culture; and its reduction of all social activity and behavior to psychological characteristics, it has been used analytically and politically to explain persistent poverty, especially during times when the United States was experiencing economic abundance (Glazer 2000). The popular narrative about the chronically impoverished has focused on ethnic stereotypes, morality, and behavior constructed on the underlying premise that it is the individual himself who must change before social equality, economic integration, or political enfranchisement can be achieved (Shelby 2005, 5). This persistent negative depiction is also often manipulated by politicians as a means to limit the publics' support, and consequently, funding for social service programs.

This study provides a strong point of departure from those frameworks, particularly the culture of poverty concept, that have been mobilized to argue that the persistently poor are unable or unwilling to create a better quality of life for themselves—particularly those residing in public housing. This study, in contrast, argues that: 1) the poor, particularly public housing residents, face extraordinary struggles because of the various, multiple, and overlapping institutional arrangements that encompass their lives; 2) the concept of the culture of poverty teaches very little about how the poor contend with the social, political, and economic instabilities they

encounter; and 3) without conducting an analysis of the overlapping institutional arrangements and of how residents contend with them, the political meaning of public housing residents' efforts to exert control over their living environment might continue to be unrecognized.

Understanding the political meaning of public housing residents' efforts to exert control over their living environment is important because it reveals that institutional arrangements—which, I argue, are mechanisms of government—as opposed to a culture of poverty, prevents residents from being able to live freely and democratically.

Institutional Arrangements and Extraordinary Struggles

This study challenges the literature that utilizes culture as a way to explain the poor's lack of ability to exert control over their living environment. Instead, it argues that the poor have difficulty exerting control over their living environment because of the various, multiple, and overlapping layers of institutional bureaucracy that impede upon their life. Cultural explanations often do not account for the role of institutional arrangements in shuttling individuals from point to point through the stratification system (see MacLeod 1995, Lareau 2003, and Young 2004).

Talcott Parsons (1969) defines an institution as “patterns which define the essentials of the legitimately expected behavior of persons insofar as they perform structurally important roles in the social structure” (126). As such, institutions are the rules or norms that regularize social behavior—both in an enabling and in a restraining sense. By serving these functions, institutions provide the stability necessary for the reproduction of society (Johnson 1992, 26). Institutions emphasize the dynamics of conformity, standardization, path dependency, and the difficulty of allocating scarce resources in the midst of a given social and political arrangement. The arrangements of institutions can expand or limit the range of an individual's possible activities and provide incentives and disincentives for particular actions. Institutions are political; in

addition, it is important to understand how they are changed. Thus, I am arguing that all of the institutional arrangements—essential components of the social welfare state that are ostensibly there to help poor people—create extraordinary difficulties for them. As a result, liberals are as much a problem for the poor as conservatives; a problem that underscores the need for investigation and thinking about how the poor negotiate institutional arrangements during conservative administrations *as well as* liberal ones.

Although every individual must contend with institutions and the consequences of how they are arranged, public housing residents encounter additional specific institutional arrangements because, in addition to being poor, they reside in government-owned housing. These institutional arrangements cause public housing residents to have to struggle extraordinarily in order to contend with them. For example, one reoccurring issue reported by Johnson Houses residents is regular harassment by New York Police Department officers. Residents, mostly male, reported being “stopped and frisked” in the lobby of their development on almost a bi-weekly basis for several months.¹⁴ Mr. Charles Wright,* a Black man in his late 30s who has been living in Johnson Houses for the past ten years, spoke angrily about being “stopped by NYPD three times” in front of the front door of his building. He talked about being turned away from his building and being told that if he returned without identification, he would be cited for trespassing.¹⁵ These encounters caused the men and their families stress as they did not

¹⁴ The New York Police Department employs a policing practice called “Stop and Frisk,” which is the practice of “temporarily detaining, questioning, and, at times, searching civilians on the street” (Spitzer 1999). The U.S. Supreme Court ruled police stop-and-frisk procedures to be constitutional under certain restrictions (*Terry v. Ohio*, 1968). Although the New York Police Department’s aggressive policing policies during the 1990s have been generally praised, there were repeated complaints of harassment by residents of communities of color; they reported being harassed particularly by the New York Police Department’s elite Street Crimes Unit (Spitzer 1999). According to the New York Civil Liberties Union, between 2004 and 2009 there was a reported 2,798,261 “stop and frisks;” of those who were stopped and frisked 2,467,630 (98.9%) were not charged with a crime.

¹⁵ Field notes from February 8, 2010.

understand why they were targeted or whether or not they would be arrested. In addition to being stressed out, some of the residents I spoke with reported feeling helpless, as individuals, to challenge the “stop and frisk” policy.¹⁶ Many of the residents turned to the Johnson Houses Residents’ Association for assistance in facilitating a meeting between them and the New York Police Department. The New York Police Department’s “stop and frisk” policy is an example of policy touted as a strategy for reducing crime throughout New York City. The policy, however, has been applied disproportionately to racial minorities and the poor, particularly to those who reside in or visit public housing developments.¹⁷ Mr. Lawrence, a Black man in his 50s, who is a former Johnson Houses resident, reported:

...so although my son and his friends had never had any involvement with law enforcement before then, when they were stopped, frisked, and then arrested for trespassing, it was almost...‘normal.’ Him and his friends were at the [public housing] development to visit another friend. They had just walked up to the development when they were stopped by NYPD [New York Police Department]. Although he was not formally charged and was released, about six months later, I found out that his name was on a ‘list’ kept by NYPD. The only reason I found out his name was on this list is because of the contacts I have in law enforcement. I have these contacts because of the work I do. Despite my contacts however, it took me about six months to figure out how to get his name off the list.¹⁸

¹⁶ Informal conversations and field notes dated: May 6, 2008; May 13, 2008; June 10, 2008; July 11, 2008; and October 29, 2009.

¹⁷ While there is no data currently available detailing the number of individuals who were stopped and frisked who are residents of public housing, there are several indicators that public housing residents and their guests fall within the New York Police Department’s main target group. One of those indicators is the lawsuit filed against the City of New York and NYCHA in January 2010 by the Legal Aid Society, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) Legal Defense and Educational Fund, and the firm of Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison claiming “that public housing tenants and their visitors are subject to police aggression and unwarranted trespass arrests, especially during so-called vertical sweeps, when officers patrol buildings floor by floor.” Source: Cara Buckley, “Lawsuit Takes Aim at Trespassing Arrests in New York Public Housing,” *The New York Times*, January 29, 2010, N.Y./Region, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/26/nyregion/30housing.html> (accessed March 1, 2010).

Another indicator that public housing residents and their guests fall within the New York Police Department’s main target group is the Interim Order the New York Police Department’s Commissioner Raymond Kelly issued on June 8, 2010. Interim Order 23 explains to officers working in public housing developments that: “an officer may not stop a suspected trespasser unless the officer ‘reasonably suspects’ that the person is in the building without authority.” He adds: “If, but only if, reasonable suspicion exists, a stop, question and frisk report shall be prepared.” Source: Graham Raymond, “The NYPD Tapes Ray Kelly, Police Commissioner, Makes Change To Stop and Frisk Policy,” *The Village Voice*, June 14, 2010, http://blogs.villagevoice.com/runninscared/archives/2010/06/ray_kelly_polic_1.php (accessed June 16, 2010).

¹⁸ Mr. Lawrence in conversation with the author on July 11, 2008. Mr. Lawrence is executive staff at a very

Although the former resident was able to have his son's name removed from "the list," he did not know the name of the list or exactly who monitors it.

The arrangement between the New York Police Department and NYCHA to police public housing residents has caused the residents to have to engage in a struggle to be able to move freely throughout their living environment in a way that a resident of private housing does not.

James C. Scott (1998), argues that

the more static, standardized, and uniform a population or social space is, the more legible it is, and the more amenable it is to the techniques of state officials...many state activities aim at transforming the population, space, and nature under their jurisdiction into the closed systems that offer no surprises and that can best be observed and controlled. State officials can often make their categories stick and impose their simplifications, because the state, of all institutions, is best equipped to insist on treating people according to its schemata. Thus categories that may have begun as the artificial inventions of cadastral surveyors, census takers, judges, or police officers can end by becoming categories that organize people's daily experience precisely because they are embedded in state-created institutions that structure their experience...paper records are the operative facts in a court of law, in an administrative dossier, and before most functionaries...If you wish to have any standing in the law, you must have a document a birth certificate, passport, or identity card. The categories used by state agents are not merely means to make their environment legible; they are an authoritative tune to which most of the population must dance (82-83).

The consequences of police harassment of Johnson Houses residents is not only time-consuming and affects their mental, spiritual, and physical health, but it also might affect their future job prospects. Several individuals who were stopped as a part of the "stop and frisk" policy reported that although they were arrested but not charged, there is an arrest record, an arrest record that could be a barrier to employment. Johnson Houses residents' experiences reveal the complexities

successful non-profit organization that was founded in the mid-80s at Johnson Houses. The internationally recognized organization is known for its work with the low income families, single parents, and the formerly incarcerated.

of race and poverty in the US.

Everyday and Transgressive Resistance and Space Appropriation

While I am not arguing that the culture of poverty concept has no merit, I am arguing that culture is not a helpful concept for understanding what has occurred at Johnson Houses. Instead, I am utilizing a framework that includes citizenship, agency via collective efficacy, and resistance to analyze Johnson Houses residents' struggles for control.¹⁹ While the term "social contract" is not widely used in the United States, the idea of mutual obligation between a society and the individuals that comprise it is deep-seated in the American view of society. The United States social contract is a political agreement based on the idea that individuals should have the

¹⁹ For a recent debate about the merit of the culture of poverty concept—through review of William Julius Wilson's (2009) book *More Than Just Race: Being Black and Poor in the Inner City*—please see: William Darity Jr's article "The New (Incorrect) Harvard/Washington Consensus on Racial Inequality," Mark Gould's article "More Than Just Social Structure: The Poverty of Cultural Analysis," and William Julius Wilson's article "More Than Just Race: A Response to William Darity, Jr. and Mark Gould" in *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race* 8(2) (2011); pp 467-495. Darity, in his article, contends "that the cultural frame has run its course, that there is no compelling evidence to support cultural factors as a viable explanation for racial disparities. Indeed, the evidence is not even light as a feather; it is nonexistent. There is no good reason to sustain a perspective that is simply wrong" (467). In addition, in his article, Gould states: "Wilson (2009) argues for a framework "that integrates cultural factors with two types of structural forces: those that directly reflect explicit racial bias and those that do not" (p. 144). While he emphasizes the latter type of structural forces, mainly by focusing on governmental policies and economic transformations that have affected the inner city (pp. 144–147), he devotes more attention to the former type than previously, addressing how racism in the society at large (for him a cultural factor) generates structural constraints for poor African Americans. This racist ethos is one of two forms of culture that he discusses; the other is the set of cultural attributes that may have emerged in the social situations that characterize the inner-city (Black) experience. We will see that his failure to characterize adequately the normative sources of the first, racism, inhibits his ability to satisfactorily characterize the second" (478). Wilson responded stating: I begin with William Darity, Jr.'s critical review of my book. I hasten to emphasize straight away that many of Darity's claims amount to little more than *ex cathedra* assertions backed mainly by his assured personal conviction that culture is irrelevant to the study of social outcomes among the inner-city poor. Darity does not let empirical data challenge his strongly held beliefs. Indeed, he firmly asserts that evidence to support the use of cultural factors in explanations of racial disparities is "nonexistent," despite the many pages in *More Than Just Race* describing empirical research findings on how cultural variables contribute to racial inequality. I will not take up valuable space detailing this obvious evidence. Readers of my book can judge for themselves, but I am sure they will reach the conclusion that Darity's claim lacks substance (489). . . . Finally, in the concluding paragraph, and elsewhere in his review, Gould carelessly labels my discussion of cultural traits in the inner city as 'culture of poverty.' This notion carries a lot of baggage and is often used to belittle or dismiss a scholar's work on culture. More careful writers make a distinction between 'culture of poverty' and a cultural analysis of life in poverty. I associate my work with the latter. The former is often associated with the idea that the cultural traits of the poor are immutable and cannot be changed through social policy. This position is clearly so far removed from the discussion of culture in *More Than Just Race* that the unqualified attachment of the label "culture of poverty" to my arguments in the book is, to put it politely, misleading. (495)"

freedom to pursue their individual goals and use their talents for advancement. The underlying assumption of this contract is that there are reciprocal obligations between society and its citizens. The obligation of a society is to assure individuals that no one will suffer unreasonable hardship because of factors beyond their control. Government's role is to create adaptable institutions to manage and enforce those obligations. When both parties, the citizen and the government, fulfill their responsibilities, there is a sense that the social contract is working.

Citing Martin R. Delany (1972), Shelby (2005) argues that citizenship includes

not only the equal protection of the laws but also the right to enjoy positions of honor and public trust. Citizenship, then, is a matter of not merely having the right to vote for members of the dominant group but also, on possession of the requisite abilities and skills, having fair opportunity to occupy positions of authority within the country in which one permanently resides (33-34).

Shelby also argues that

closely related to the principle of democratic citizenship is the right of *self-government*. Delany maintained that true political freedom requires that each adult citizen forms an indispensable part of the sovereign authority of the republic: "A people, to be free, must necessarily be *their own rulers*; that is, *each individual* must, in himself, embody the *essential ingredient*—so to speak—of the *sovereign principle*, when not exercised by himself, may, at his pleasure, be delegated to another—his true representative." Delany argued that self-government is necessary for self-defense, because one cannot be secure in one's life, welfare, property, or liberty without an equal and effective say in matters of public concern.

Juxtaposed to Shelby's arguments about citizenship, many of the most familiar depictions of public housing residents portray them as spectators or victims of an ambivalent economical, political, and social system—stripping them of any possession of agency. During my study, I observed Johnson Houses residents engaged in everyday and transgressive resistance to challenge the institutional arrangements they reside within. Everyday and transgressive resistance are the efforts that the residents engaged in "to defend their community and homeplace

against threats to its survival, and to assert their rights and protections as equal citizens in polity” (Feldman and Stall 2004, 12). For example, I witnessed several Johnson Houses residents engaged in a fight with NYCHA over the design of the Johnson Houses Community Center. In one discussion, Johnson Houses residents asked NYCHA to utilize glass instead of cement blocks for one of the walls in the community center. The residents felt that the clear view would help foster community. NYCHA refused to utilize glass because they had already chosen a material for the wall. Although it might appear to be mundane, the battle over materials for the community center was at the heart of what the Johnson Houses residents wanted for their development: the power to make decisions that best meet their needs. Stone (1989) argues that “what is at issue is not so much domination and subordination as a capacity to act and accomplish goals. The power struggle concerns, not control and resistance, but gaining and fusing a capacity to act – *power to*, not *power over*” (229).

Operating in concert with citizenship, I argue, is the importance of agency. Portes and Sensenbrenner (1993) define social capital as “expectations for action within a collectivity” (1323). The sources of social capital stem not from the attributes of individuals but rather the structure of social organization. Social organization fosters social control. Wilson (1996) defines social control as feelings that individuals have control over their immediate environment. Bursik (1999) argues that neighborhoods lacking social capital are less able to maintain social controls. In some neighborhood contexts strong ties may impede efforts to establish social control. Morenoff, Sampson, and Raudenbush (2001) argue that neighborhood “collective efficacy” is the linkage of trust and cohesion with shared expectations for control. In addition, Bandura (1997) argues that the meaning of efficacy is captured in expectations about the exercise of control;

embedded in his argument is the valuation of the agentic aspect of social life over the accumulation of resources. It is when residents feel that they lack agency that they begin resisting against the institutional arrangements.

Feldman and Stall (2004) argue that “traditional research and dominant cultural portrayals of politics focus on the public, official actors and workings of government, not only ignoring, but devaluing, community-based struggles of people to gain control over their lives...” (8). This research challenges the culture of poverty concept and critiques its use as a variable in understanding the poor’s, particularly public housing residents’, lack of agency over the living environment. Instead, the conceptual framework for this study operationalizes institutional arrangements as important variables to understanding why public housing residents have difficulty exerting control over their living environment.

As a critical site of resistance, one’s living environment is where everyday power struggles to maintain households and communities are manifested (Feldman and Stall 2004). Feldman and Stall (2004) “explain that public housing residents’ struggles for material and spatial resources of their homeplace are a critical source of resistance in their lives” (10). They introduce the concept of “space appropriation into their theoretical analysis of resistance to elevate the importance of individuals’ and groups’ creation, choice, possession, modification, enhancement of, care for, and/or simply intentional use of space in grassroots activism” (10). Space appropriation is defined as “a concept that has been used to explain the ways in which individuals or groups transform the physical environment into a meaningful and useful place, one that the individuals or groups consider their own, and in doing so, transform themselves” (184). Feldman and Stall

argue that, in engaging in everyday resistance,

Wentworth resident activists have organized and participated in grassroots efforts to protect their community against the deterioration of the physical environment and social services necessary for everyday life. These women have drawn upon critical skills and strategies that they have cultivated through the everyday routine activities of maintaining their households and communities, activities necessary to the ‘social reproduction’ of individual households as well as social arrangements they make to protect, enhance, and preserve the cultural experiences of all members of the community’ (Feldman & Stall, 1994, p. 192; see also Morgan & Bookman, 1988; Naples, 1988; Stall, 1991; Stoecker, 1992) (11).

Like the residents of Wentworth, the residents of Johnson Houses have engaged in activities to protect their development from physical and social deterioration by utilizing the skills they developed over time. The Johnson Houses residents employ their skills to engage professionals to assist them in learning and understanding how to maneuver through the institutional arrangements. The concept of the culture of poverty does not reveal how the poor contend with the social, political, and economic instabilities they encounter, because embedded in its underlying assumption is that the poor lack the will or ability to effect their life conditions. The conceptual framework for this research argues that the poor have agency and that they exert agency through every day, transgressive resistance. The residents were trying to have their ideas incorporated into defining and shaping their immediate environment. Trying to have their ideas incorporated into defining and shaping their immediate environment is more than resistance, it is—on a small scale—establishing an alternative regime.

CHAPTER THREE: THE IMPETUS FOR JOHNSON HOUSES RESIDENTS' ACTIVISM: NEW YORK CITY'S EVOLVING SOCIO-POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

One of the things that happens that is really terrible is when a new mayor comes in, the appointees come with them. A lot of the time they appoint people who are just about the dollar. They have no understanding what's going on in housing. Don't have a clue....It's just a trickle-down effect of a lot of uncaring people who come in and wreck havoc in the Housing Authority. It is just unbelievable what goes on.

—Ms. Velez²⁰

Over the past one hundred and thirty years, New York City's social and political history “has been closely tied to the immigration of ethnic and racial groups, their political mobilization, and the ultimate elevation of their leaders to positions of political power” (Berg 2007, 15). New York City's status as a majority ethnic-minority city, coupled with its segregated residential patterns, heightens the importance of race and ethnicity in its evolving socio-political landscape. I grouped this evolving social and political landscape into four time periods: The Political Machine (1880-1934), Liberal Reform (1934-late 1950s), Urban Liberalism (late 1950s-1980), and Conservative Backlash (1980-present). For each time period, I provide a brief history of how the evolving socio-political landscape has affected New York City's inhabitants particularly public housing residents. The evolving landscape discussed in this chapter serves as the impetus for the resident activism that takes place at the Johnson Houses; resident activism at Johnson Houses is the focus of the next chapter.

The Political Machine (1880-1934)

Since the early 1800s, New York City has been the primary port of entry for Europeans immigrating to the US. The potato famine in Ireland in the 1840s hastened the first big wave of

²⁰ Ethel Velez, interviewed by Tamar Carroll and Martha Ackelsberg, March 30, 2004. Oral History Project, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

European immigrants. By 1850, a quarter of the residents of New York City were Irish.²¹ Then, by 1855 New York City had the third largest German population of any city in the world.²² In the 1880s, large numbers of Eastern European Jews and Italians arrived in New York City. Many immigrants did not speak English, nor did they know the laws of the country when they arrived in the US. Staff members of political machines—“an American version of the patron-client relationship”—assumed responsibility for these “untrained, friendless men” and converted them into citizens (Riordan 1963, 91). The political machine provided immigrants, many of whom lived in extreme poverty, with subsistence items such as money to pay rent, food, and fuel for heat and for cooking, as well as a job if one was needed (Riordan 1963). For recent immigrants and the poor, the political machine furnished important goods, services, and protection. The political machine also served as a powerful intermediary between immigrants and the poor and the political institutions in the United States. For example, a staff member of a political machine might speak to a judge to secure the release of a constituent who was arrested for public drunkenness, an offense that might not have warranted arrest in his country of birth. The political machine also integrated immigrants socially by familiarizing them with American society and by helping them become naturalized citizens (Connable and Edward 1967). Political machines also coordinated favors and government jobs and contracts (Hamilton 1979, 213). These mutually beneficial relationships provided the faithful “client” with goods and services in exchange for their political support—especially with their vote on Election Day. Hamilton (1979) argues that

the patron-party captured institutional positions of power, positions supported by ‘hard-money’ tax revenues that had patronage jobs attached to them and that offered divisible and indivisible benefits to the polity....ethnic groups could clearly see a connection between the process (voting) and the products (be they divisible benefits in the form of jobs and favors or, less likely, indivisible benefits in the form of cleaner streets,

²¹ Rayor, Ronald H. *The New York Irish*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997; 91.

²² Burrows, Edwin G. and Mike Wallace. *Gotham: A History of NYC to 1898*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999; 745.

community facilities, and the like). Perceiving such a connection, clients had some incentive to participate. If the patron-party failed to deliver or if the client-constituent failed to support the party, the relationship could be expected to be abrogated (214).

These patron-client relationships provided a clear connection between voting and the products and services that the political machine produced. These relationships were not only reciprocal, but they were personal and informal (Scott 1972).

The most powerful political machine during this time, and the base of the Democratic party in New York City, was headquartered in Tammany Hall. Tammany Hall was a complex network of neighborhood-based machines that linked New York City's increasingly diverse and segregated communities (Angotti 2008, 59). In 1870 a new charter for New York City (i.e. Manhattan) was passed and signed into law by the Tammany Hall-supported Governor of New York State, John Hoffman. The charter mandated new elections for all fifteen alderman seats on the City's Common Council (i.e. the city council).²³ The elections resulted in Tammany Hall taking control of the City's Common Council when its members won all fifteen of the seats (Burrows and Wallace 1998, 927-928). The new charter also delegated control of the City's finances to a County Board of Supervisors, which consisted of the commissioner of public works, who at the time was William M. Tweed, who was also the leader (i.e. "boss") of Tammany Hall, the mayor of New York City, who, at the time, was Abraham Oakley Hall, a member of Tammany Hall, and the comptroller Richard B. Connolly, who was also a member and former "boss" of Tammany Hall. In addition to the governor's office, the Common Council, and the Board of Supervisors, Tammany Hall controlled the Department of Public Parks, the department Robert Moses utilized seven decades later to rearrange the social, political, economic, and racial landscape of New York

²³ In 1898 the New York City Charter was dissolved and the local governments of the five boroughs (Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, Stanton Island, and the Bronx) and was replaced with a centralized city government that would be administered by a mayor and city council.

City. Tammany Hall controlled New York State and City governments, which meant that Tweed and other members of Tammany Hall had control of New York City coffers and contracts (Burrows and Wallace 1998, 927-928 and Paine 1974, 140). By controlling City coffers and contracts, Tweed was able to compensate himself generously, award public contracts to his associates, bribe (or coerce) judges and other city officials to assist loyal constituents in acquiring citizenship, and provide jobs for the immigrants—especially Irish laborers—who were the electoral base of Tammany’s power (Burrows and Wallace 1998, 837).

By the 1920s, the section of Manhattan that had once been known as “Haarlem” and that had been settled by the Dutch, who were succeeded by the Germans, Irish, and Jews, was experiencing a great immigration of Blacks (Watson 1995, 11). Blacks from the south, the Caribbean, and various countries in Africa—seeking opportunities in the northern United States created by industrialization and World War I (1914-1918)—transformed Harlem (which at the time extended from 130th Street to 145th Street and from Madison Avenue to Eighth Avenue) from a “bourgeois German-style enclave” into a Black urban mecca (Watson 1995, 11). Most of the businesses in Harlem however, were owned by the Irish, Greeks, or Italians (Watson 1995, 13). Due to limited residential options because of segregation, Blacks, along with other ethnic minorities, were forced to live in crowded conditions and often paid above the market rate to do so.²⁴

²⁴ Watson (1995) writes that the “first uptown Negro settlement can be pinpointed to an apartment house at 31 West 133rd Street in 1905. The combination of a national depression, overbuilding in Harlem, and a murder within the apartment house made rooms unrentable; the owner turned to a black realtor named Philip A. Payton, who filled the building with reliable Negro tenants who would willingly pay \$5 more than any white renter (a common practice)” (11).

Ahead of the national conversation about the housing and social conditions of the poor, the availability of quality and affordable housing became prominent in New York City politics in the late 1920s. An inventory of properties revealed that most of the City's older multi-family buildings were in disrepair and dangerous. Reformers claimed that the slums, “bred tuberculosis, crime, juvenile delinquency, immorality,’ and a general breakdown of social morale” (Bloom 2008, 15). New York City's socialist tradition, shared by many individuals residing in tenement neighborhoods, assisted in expediting local government action for improved housing (Bloom 2008, 24). Both Mayor James Walker (Democrat; January 1, 1926 - September 1, 1932), a product of the Tammany Hall machine, and Mayor John O'Brien (Democrat; January 1, 1933 - December 31, 1933), also a product of the Tammany Hall machine, reluctantly endorsed public housing and the creation of a municipal housing agency as part of their agenda for the City. Walker and O'Brien endorsed public housing and the creation of a municipal housing agency because mayoral candidate Fiorello LaGuardia (Republican), a former Congressman from an Italian enclave of East Harlem, publically criticized the Tammany Hall political machine as part of his 1932 campaign. He stated that “tenement crowding and misery seemed to serve Tammany well by keeping the poor dependent on local politicians.” He hypothesized that “eliminating the slum would not only improve the city's health and welfare but might also weaken patronage” (Bloom 2008, 26). He argued that eliminating slums would deconcentrate the mostly poor, mostly immigrant Tammany Hall electoral base.

LaGuardia won office that year on a ticket that included Republicans, Democrats, and independents, which shifted control of New York City government from Tammany Hall to city hall (Capeci 1977). That same year Franklin D. Roosevelt (Democrat; March 4, 1933-April 12,

1945) was elected President of the United States. With Roosevelt and LaGuardia's election, the strength of the Tammany political machine diminished significantly. The kind of coalition across party affiliation and ethnic ties of the kind that won Roosevelt national office and LaGuardia local office was in direct opposition to machine politics, which depended on unwavering political loyalty to one political party (Thompson 2006). Roosevelt stripped Tammany Hall of federal patronage, which had been expanded under the New Deal and in response to the Great Depression (1929 to 1940)—and instead directed the resources to Edward J. Flynn, the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Bronx County Democratic Committee (i.e. the Democratic “boss” of the Bronx County).²⁵ During LaGuardia's eleven years in office (1934-1945) public policy in New York City was shaped by labor leaders like Sidney Hillman of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America; social activists like B. Charney Vladeck, who was a founding member of NYCHA's board, and politically progressive politicians such as Vito Marcantonio, who like LaGuardia, served as a Congressman from East Harlem (Bloom 2008). All of them sought to assist the poor and working class but without replicating the patronage system of the political machine.

Liberal Reform (1934-late 1950s)

“Formulated by the most progressive leaders of the housing movement, longtime housing reform advocates, social workers, lawyers, housers, [and] with the support of politicians as well as labor leaders,” NYCHA was founded in 1934 to oversee the clearing of slums and the construction and management of public housing in New York City (Marcuse no date, 9). As such, LaGuardia structured NYCHA so that the mayor would appoint an unsalaried, rotating board of five

²⁵ Uncredited author. “Milestones.” *Time Magazine*. August 31, 1953. www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,823014,00.html?iid=chix-sphere (accessed January 26, 2010).

members to manage the Authority. Langdon Post, NYCHA's first chairman, was a dedicated housing reformer who was also the Tenement House Commissioner, a department within New York City government. Post endeavored to position NYCHA as a powerful organization with the ability to shift the city's political economy. He wanted to build housing "on vacant land, explicitly to bring the value and the price of slum housing down" and "with his tenement house department arm[,]...enforce the building codes in the slums and accomplish slum clearance at the expense of the slumlords, not the public" (Marcuse no date, 10). Hearing of Post's plan, LaGuardia promptly fired him and replaced him with Alfred Rheinstein, an engineer and real estate executive whose vision was more in line with LaGuardia's view that the government-sponsored housing should not compete with the private market. Rheinstein "had no interest in deflating land prices. He desired only a piecemeal program that might serve as a demonstration to private industry" (Marcus no date, 46).

With the power of public housing in the hands of the technical and professional elite, NYCHA operated like public agencies in European cities where white collar workers and bureaucracy dominated municipal government (Bloom 2008, 27). In 1938, housing advocates pushed for NYCHA to adapt civil service standards. LaGuardia supported the standards, and, by 1941, 84% of NYCHA's employees had been selected through the civil service process (Bloom 2008, 27). The civil service examination was expanded as a way to continue to relocate power from neighborhoods into city and state agencies (O'Connor 2002). Jobs—such as law enforcement, fire-fighting, corrections, and sanitation, which were once distributed through patronage, were subject to examination.

Blacks did not, as they had hoped, benefit proportionately from the expansion of the New Deal programs heralded by Roosevelt's election (King 1995, 31). They had hoped that the civil service would provide them with the equal opportunity to compete for employment opportunities; however, it did not. Unionized white "workers dominated skilled positions while Black workers, frequently unable to obtain membership or apprenticeships, were concentrated in unskilled...jobs. In the civil service, Black employees were disproportionately concentrated in custodial and menial jobs..." (King 1995, 173). While the federal Civil Service Commission, which was established in the 1880s, emphasized meritocracy, during its first thirty years, inequality in the civil service was common practice after 1913 (King 1995, 9). The lack of equal opportunity in employment that the civil service was supposed to secure, was a source of great tension between Blacks and the political Left. Blacks were "disproportionately concentrated in the lower- and middle-rank positions, rarely achieving senior promoted positions" (King 1995, 10). King (1995) argues that Progressives understood that Blacks would not benefit from a government that replaced patronage with a system that valued merit and rationality because Blacks were not, for the most part, "acquiring the skills and resources—principally formal education—privileged by meritocracy" (41). He argued that the urban elites driving reform in public life and government implemented policies that appeared to offer equal opportunity to all while also understanding that acquiring a formal education "was beyond the reach of not only many White Americans, but the vast majority of Black Americans (though some institutions such as Howard University and Fisk University permitted a trickle of Black American graduates to enter public life)" (41). This tension between Blacks and the Left would be a reoccurring theme throughout the evolving New York City socio-political landscape.

Another reform that was introduced as part of liberal reform was the creation of several public agencies to coordinate and administer social service programs. City services were divided up and became the responsibility of different agencies. The services were administered and managed with funds specifically allocated for the administration of a particular program. In contrast to the patron-client relationships of political machines, the relationships between this new centralized form of government and the public were patron-recipient relationships. Hamilton (1979) describes patron-recipient relationships as relationships “whereby goods and services (benefits) are supplied by one party (patron) to another (recipient) under circumstances that do not require the recipient to reciprocate in any sustained, systematic way. The patron does not depend on the support or loyalty of the recipient to maintain the patron’s role” (Hamilton 1979). He argues that

unlike the political patron-client relationship where the client clearly has to give continuing support (for example, vote), the recipient is not called upon politically to support the patron. The client becomes a political actor; the recipient remains a political nonactor. The recipient, for the most part, is a passive partner...because the basis of the relationship is the recipient's needs, not necessarily the patron's resources. Presumably, that need can be met. Therefore, it is not expected that a permanent or even long-term relationship be developed between the patron and the recipient. Again, unlike the patron-client association, it is hoped that the particular patron-recipient relationship will be ephemeral and transitory. Indeed, such a relationship creates a model of process-product-participation that does not stress the efficacy of a major process (electoral politics) in the political system. Recipients receive benefits (products), but these are not a function of their voting (active participation); rather, recipients receive these benefits through nonactivity and passivity or through episodic protest politics-another process. Thus, this process is ‘depoliticizing’ precisely because it fails to take into account the very important fact that it is the elective political offices that ultimately control the fate of these ‘soft-money’ programs (214-215).

Political machines were managed mainly by the working class; within the reformed system very few working-class, especially Black or Puerto Rican, could attain significant resources. New York City’s failure to respond to the problems and demands of its minority populations revealed the limits of its liberal racial image (Taylor 1997). Because there was no institutionalized channel

to power, professionally trained Blacks and Latinos had difficulty obtaining access to opportunities for social, political, and economic upward mobility (Kilson 1989, 120).

The lack of opportunity for social, political, and economic upward mobility was particularly salient to the poor and working-class residents of Harlem. The lack of opportunity for upward mobility coupled with the additional hardships caused by the Great Depression, provoked a two-day uprising.²⁶ On March 19, 1935 a crowd of onlookers thought a police officer had killed a 16 year old Black Puerto Rican after he was detained for stealing a penknife from a white-owned store on 125th Street. After two days of violence, three Black people had died, seventy-five people had been arrested, and over \$200,000,000 in property damage had taken place (Knopf 1975). The uprising reflected Black and Puerto Rican's frustration with a rate of unemployment, illness, and mortality that was higher than other ethnic groups in New York City. After the uprising, federal, state, and local government officials attempted to improve some of the conditions Blacks and Puerto Ricans were contending with. For the first time in New York City, federal funds were allocated to construct a public housing project (Marcuse, no date, 62-67). As part of Roosevelt's New Deal program, in 1936 the Harlem River Houses was to be built for Black residents.²⁷ Although the Harlem River Houses were constructed at a time when public housing "was built with family rooms, day-care centers, large recreation areas, and other amenities that implicitly recognized and facilitated social capital," the project, because only Blacks could live there, reinforced a segregationist residential order (Thompson 1999, 127). Reeling from the race-centered violence of the uprising, and recognizing that new social networks that could be

²⁶ Harlem Renaissance author Alain Locke wrote an excellent account and analysis of the events surrounding the uprising in Harlem in 1935. "Harlem: Dark Weather Vane." *Survey Graphic Magazine* (August 1936)(25)(8); 457. <http://newdeal.feri.org/survey/36457.htm> (accessed October 20, 2010).

²⁷ Simultaneous to the Harlem River Houses being built for Black residents, the Williamsburg Houses were being built for white residents.

developed in the new housing development, reformers were concerned with residents organizing, uprising, and demanding to participate in the management of their development (Thompson 1999, 124). The first groups of individuals who resided in NYCHA's developments were screened stringently and managed closely. Despite the screening and explicit rules about how residents were to maintain their homes, NYCHA administrators feared that residents would not make a smooth adjustment from tenements to public housing and that there would be social disorder (Bloom 2008, 94). To prevent disorder and to help enforce housing laws, May Lumsden, NYCHA's Director of Tenant Relations, implemented a policy requiring NYCHA staff to make weekly visits to each resident's home to collect their rent and to "assist them with maintenance problems." Lumsden insisted that staff develop their role as allies rather than simply agents of social control (Bloom 2008, 95). During the weekly home visits the manager or management assistants were expected to learn of any difficulties residents were facing. Despite the stated intentions of the policies, residents from the Harlem River Houses Tenants' League complained vehemently to NYCHA officials about the home visits stating: "We demand a stop to the notorious system started by Mrs. Lumsden giving permission to rent collectors to enter tenant apartments in the event the tenants are not home....It violates the principle of 'privacy in your home' and is ILLEGAL." The League also informed NYCHA officials that they lived in a housing project, "not a concentration camp" (Bloom 2008, 96). As the number of housing developments increased, NYCHA officials did not have the staff to be able to maintain such a paternalistic approach to managing their developments.

While NYCHA officials encouraged resident involvement in their development, officials did not want residents to utilize the developments as a place to organize a political agenda. NYCHA

officials did not want its own progressive and socialist leanings to encourage resident activism. Having studied European public housing as a model for public housing in New York City and as opponents of machine politics, NYCHA leadership did not want residents of public housing to utilize their development to engage in activity that questioned the power structure. One of NYCHA officials' criticisms of European public housing was that it was utilized by socialist parties to organize the poor. NYCHA officials encouraged residents to engage in a narrow range of activities such as holiday parties, tenant newsletters, and other community recreation (Bloom 2008, 104-105). As a result, tenant leagues formed with the goal of organizing community activities and focused mainly on issues affecting their development. During that time period residents did not have any influence on major NYCHA policies (Bloom 2008, 105). NYCHA enacted policies that repressed political activity by residents or their visitors; Bloom (2008) wrote that "in 1952 NYCHA had, like all housing authorities, complied with the Gwinn Amendment, which required loyalty oaths for public housing tenants (310)."²⁸ The Gwinn Amendment stated "that no federal funds may be spent on any low-rent public housing that shelters a tenant who belongs to any organization designated by the Attorney General as subversive." The subversive list numbered "more than 100 organizations, mostly Communist and Communist-front outfits."²⁹ NYCHA officials were concerned that residents would be influenced by the militant protests and rent strikes that were taking place against mostly absentee white

²⁸ See "Mayor Backs State on Housing Inquiry," *New York Times*, March 8, 1957, 27 <http://select.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=F00613FF3D5D167B93CAA91788D85F438585F9> (accessed June 30, 2012); "Subversives' Face Housing Eviction," *New York Times*, December 18, 1952, 24 <http://select.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=F3071FF63A5E177B93CAA81789D95F468585F9> (accessed June 30, 2012); "City Dropped 3 in Red Inquiry," *New York Times*, March 20, 1957, 22 <http://select.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=F60F13F93D5D167B93C2AB1788D85F438585F9> (accessed June 30, 2012); and "No Red Cells Found in Housing Agency," *New York Times*, November 12, 1957, 1 <http://select.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=F70C12FC355F11738DDDAB0994D9415B8789F1D3> (accessed June 30, 2012).

²⁹ "Bill Calls for Check Up: Amendment in Senate Would Keep Reds Out of Housing Projects," *Reading Eagle*, Reading PA, April 19, 1952, <http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1955&dat=19520420&id=T14tAAAAlBAJ&sjid=JdoFAAAAlBAJ&pg=1310,1022743> (accessed June 30, 2012).

landlords in the 1950s and 1960s. The rent strikes were occurring simultaneous to the growing national fight for civil rights (Angotti 2008, 91).

By the 1940s, power and resources had moved out of neighborhoods and into government agencies that served the entire city of New York. Although the decline of the urban political machine, civil service reforms, and the power of white ethnic groups decreased and other ethnic groups such as Blacks and Puerto Ricans began to emerge as an important constituency in New York City, very few Blacks and Puerto Ricans were employed at the new agencies. Black leaders such as Adam Clayton Powell Jr. (Democrat), a city council member (1941-1943) and later congressman (1943-1971) from Harlem, demanded that LaGuardia and the Governor, Herbert H. Lehman (Democrat; 1950-1957), extend equal civil, political, social, and economic rights to everyone (Biondi 2007, 8). While political machines did not provide Blacks with greater opportunity for stable employment or housing, neither did the new political system implemented by LaGuardia and other liberal elites. Despite his effort to consult Black leadership and to learn about the problems Black residents faced, LaGuardia's belief in gradual change was not appreciated by leaders like Powell who argued that the Black community had not, in general, reaped the benefits of the patron-client relationship of the political machines and were not reaping the benefits of this new centralized system of government (Hamilton 1991, 133). Powell demanded swift and immediate change in racial discrimination. Powell and other activists argued that despite a labor shortage, particularly in industries related to defense, employers resisted changing their hiring practices. Blacks in Harlem organized boycotts and fought to work in the factories in their neighborhood (Biondi 2003, 3-4). Focusing on Harlem as well as the rest of the country, Powell and activists such as A. Philip Randolph threatened to have a massive march on

Washington if Roosevelt did not desegregate the defense industry. In 1941 Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802 ‘Reaffirming Policy of Full Participation in the Defense Program by All Persons Regardless of Race, Creed, Color, or National Origin.’ With the Order, “cases of employment discrimination in war industries, government contracts, government employment, and unions” were to be investigated by the Fair Employment Practice Committee (King 1995, 25). While the Executive Order put federal resources behind desegregating the defense industry, it did not address other policies of inequality such as residential segregation. Judicial authority—including the Supreme Court’s 1896 ruling on *Plessy vs Ferguson*—racial attitudes, partisan interest (namely those of southern Democrats), and congressional legislation initiated, maintained, and justified residential segregation.

The issue of residential segregation in New York City brought Black activist such Powell and Councilmen Stanley M. Isaacs and the Left together in the battle to integrate a new planned middle-income residential complex named after the last Director-General of New Amsterdam (i.e. lower Manhattan), Peter Stuyvesant (1647-1664). Championed by the powerful New York City Parks Commissioner Robert Moses, the City of New York signed an agreement with the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company in the spring of 1943 to build Stuyvesant Town, which, at the time, was the largest planned urban redevelopment apartment complex in the United States. The City of New York acquired the land utilizing eminent domain and exempted the \$50 million project from taxes for several years. The complex was planned to provide housing for white WWII (1939-1945) veterans and their families. The Metropolitan Life Insurance Company openly denied Black veterans and their families the opportunity to reside there. The denial of Black residents was met with resistance not only because of its overt racist policy but also

because “the dollars of Black taxpayers and policyholders were going to be used to subsidize homes that Black people could not occupy” (Biondi 2003, 121-122). Powell and other activists argued that although housing was needed in New York City, a segregated housing project should not be built. Liberal forces throughout the City began writing letters to LaGuardia urging him not to support the project when it came up for vote before the Board of Estimate. For one of the few times during this time period, there appeared to be substantial liberal support in favor of a major civil rights issue. Liberals argued that the project was a blatant contradiction given that the United States military was fighting Fascism abroad while racial segregation was sanctioned domestically (Hamilton 1991, 126-135). They argued that a great injustice was being perpetrated when a Black service man could not reside in the same housing complex as the white man he fought next to. Isaacs and Powell sought to introduce a provision into New York City’s contract with the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company that would prevent racial or religious discrimination in tenant selection. This provision was not accepted, with those rejecting it, including Moses, arguing that the company’s profitability would be harmed and that opponents were “obviously looking for a political issue and not for results in the form of actual slum clearance.”³⁰ Lawsuits were filed to stop the project on the basis that it was semi-public and thus violated anti-discrimination laws for New York City public housing. In July 1947, the New York Supreme Court determined that the development was private and that, in the absence of laws to the contrary, the company could discriminate as it saw fit. The court wrote, “it is well settled that the landlord of a private apartment or dwelling house may, without violating any provision of the Federal or State Constitutions, select tenants of its own choice because of race, color, creed or religion...Clearly, housing accommodation is not a recognized civil right.”³¹

³⁰ *New York Times*, May 29, 1943.

³¹ *New York Times*, July 29, 1947.

The effects of residential segregation would be most acute in the management of New York City schools. Another liberal reform of City services was the reorganization of the public school system from local to a citywide. In 1940 LaGuardia created a citywide board of education, which was controlled by the mayor until John Lindsay (Republican; January 1, 1966 – December 31, 1973) created the Department of Education in 1969.³² The Department of Education was managed by seven members appointed by the mayor and borough president and thirty-two community school boards whose members were elected. A very effective tool for assimilating, and, in some cases, liberating past generations of immigrants, the New York City public schools were incapable of helping Black and Puerto Rican children. Because of the migration of the white population to the suburbs, three-quarters of Manhattan's public-school students were Black or Puerto Rican and their parents complained that the schools were educationally inferior. Blacks and Puerto Ricans had little to no access to the school boards and no control over the Department of Education. Powell's impatience with the white, liberal power structure that LaGuardia represented would re-emerge as a major point of contention a decade and a half later during the fight for community control of New York City public schools. The battle for school integration challenged the structural inequality and institutional racism that relegated Blacks and Puerto Ricans to the lowest socioeconomic conditions in the City.

The battles around housing and school desegregation connect to public housing during this time period in that NYCHA, in addition to providing decent housing, endeavored to expand housing options for Blacks. However, it is NYCHA's integration policies that resulted in its developments

³² In 2002 Michael Bloomberg became the first mayor since 1969 to be granted control of the New York City public school system.

being segregated not by law but defacto. For example, in the late 1940s, Blacks displaced by the construction of the Amsterdam Houses on the Upper Westside of New York City were denied admission to one of the relocation apartments because NYCHA deemed that their presence would make the building all Black, violating NYCHA's policy against having separate but equal developments for whites and Blacks. A 1947 *New York Times* article recounts the case:

“Mix-up On Housing Laid to an Error; Officials say Negro Families Were Barred Because Quota Already Had Moved In”

The New York City Housing Authority explained yesterday why it had refused to permit four Negro families to move into a rehabilitated tenement at 220 East Ninety-five Street. Four of the building's ten apartments already are occupied by Negro families and the authority (sic) said that permitting such a preponderance of Negroes would violate its policy against “Jim Crowism.”

The Authority members continued to refuse to confer with Benjamin J. Davis, Communist member of the City Council, and Luis Okin, serving as legal counsel to the tenants. Frank R. Crosswaith, Authority member, whose telephoned promise to receive the tenants had brought an end to a sit-down demonstration at the Authority offices, 122 East Forty-Second Street, on Wednesday night, offered to talk to the tenants involved but not to their representatives. This offer was refused.

Twenty of the fifty persons who had been present on Wednesday returned yesterday. They found a score of uniformed policeman and nearly as many officials and detectives guarding entries to the building and to the Authority's quarters on the sixth floor. The groups was formed mostly of tenants of buildings in West Sixty-second and Sixty-third Streets, which will be torn down to make room for Amsterdam Houses, a low-rent project of the Authority.”

Sleeper (1990) adds:

The plan was not entirely naïve. NYCHA managers understood that if public housing became identified with Negroes in the public mind, their integration efforts would collapse entirely and, of course, NYCHA itself might suffer in its efforts to obtain increased federal funding. Yet the policy was unrealistic because whites were moving up the income scale and moving out of the city. By 1950, New York City was home to 750,000 blacks and 250,000 Puerto Ricans, many of them in young, poor families on the housing authority's growing waiting list.

Sleeper argues that it is NYCHA's sometimes “absurdly bureaucratic lengths” to integrate public

housing, under pressure from activists, that resulted in NYCHA developments being segregated: NYCHA's policies hastened "a white exodus from public housing to middle income developments" (83). He states:

In 1959, the housing authority, which managed approximately 100,000 apartments in public projects, announced that it would give whites priority in mostly Negro buildings; move some Negroes and Puerto Ricans for overwhelmingly minority projects to new ones, where they would be mixed with whites; hold half of the prospective vacancies in predominantly white projects for Negroes and dark-skinned Puerto Ricans; and in some overwhelmingly Negro projects and neighborhoods, hold vacancies for light-skinned Puerto Ricans. Thus substituting an abstract conception of integration by skin color for actual need, NYCHA wound up discriminating against dark-skinned applicants, generally the neediest of all and making up the majority of new applicants.

Challenges in the 1960s to NYCHA's integration policy resulted in the policy being changed from integration to equal access. Whereas 60% of NYCHA's residents in the 1950s were white, by 1970, 67% of the residents were minorities and many of NYCHA's developments were comprised almost entirely of minorities (Sleeper 1990, 83).

Unlike racism in the southern US at the time, which followed a strict code of segregation of whites and Blacks in all aspects of life—Jim Crow—racism in the northern US not only included segregation but it also included the elimination of key institutions such as political machines, which had helped European immigrants amass and consolidate power at the neighborhood level. After eliminating the mechanism that had helped their parents win power from elites, the now middle-class children of the European immigrants transferred power into bureaucracies that they managed so that power was not fragmented and not held at the neighborhood level.

Urban Liberalism (late 1950s-1980)

By the late 1940s, reformers, including labor unions and liberal politicians, continued to build

upon the anti-political machine sentiment that dominated New York City politics throughout LaGuardia's eleven-year term. They continued to institutionalize a form of politics that would permanently neutralize the political machine (Bloom 2008). This form of politics, urban liberalism, combines "entrepreneurial economic development strategies, personal rehabilitation and social work approaches to social problems, and tolerance of social differences in the form of broad support for civil liberties" (Vitale 2008, 54). Also, within urban liberalism, the power of the state is utilized to try to reduce social problems and enlarge urban liberals' electoral base (Vitale 2008, 56). The state's resources are used to regulate the housing and labor markets as opposed to using the power of the state to restructure the markets altogether. One result of urban liberalism was that graduates of professional programs in social work and urban planning gained jobs supervising the poor; almost none of those professionals were Black or Latino (King 1995, 172).

An alliance between organized labor and politicians helped Robert F. Wagner win his mayoral bid in 1953; he served as Mayor of New York City from January 1, 1954 – December 31, 1965. Wagner represented an arm of the Democratic Party that stressed political inclusion of ethnic and racial groups. He sought to make New York City socially tolerant by taking direct action to eliminate racial, ethnic, and other forms of discrimination. He helped construct a welfare state in New York City that was far more robust than the national norm (Freeman 2000). Also, he issued an executive order granting municipal unions the right to collective bargaining and supported the construction of additional public housing and health care and other services for the poor (Freeman 2000, 101-103).

During the same time period Wagner was attempting to make New York City socially tolerant, Black activists were criticizing postwar urban liberalism. They argued that liberalism was inadequate to force desegregation and to achieve full equality. Despite New York City's liberal traditions (including Wagner appointing Black elites to powerful positions, his establishment of anti-discriminating agencies, and his public support for school integration) his efforts could not overcome the decades of customs and practices that maintained a system of structural inequality based on race (Biondi 2003, 100-101). Reformers like him, and LaGuardia before him, were reconcentrating power in institutions they controlled, such as unions. Although unions could have been used to disrupt the high rates of unemployment among Blacks and Latinos, Wagner did very little to stop unions from using seniority and apprenticeships systems to deny Blacks employment (Thompson 2006 21-22, 88-90).

In 1954 psychologist Kenneth Clark claimed that the New York City Department of Education was aware that educational facilities, academic standards, and the curriculum in neighborhoods like Harlem were inferior when compared to predominantly white neighborhoods. He reported that schools in Harlem had a disproportionate number of substitute teachers compared to predominantly white schools, arguing that the Department of Education assigned the least experienced teachers to Black and Puerto Rican schools. He provided data that revealed that schools in Harlem had one hundred and three classes for mentally disabled students and only three classes for intellectually gifted students (Taylor 1997). Clark's statements embarrassed the Department of Education and a city that saw itself as a beacon of racial tolerance and racial liberalism. Furthermore, Clark's findings exposed how those who managed the school system (most of whom lived in predominantly white neighborhoods and many of whom considered

themselves members of the city's liberal community) maintained an educational system that was separate and unequal (Taylor 1997, 65-66). Clark's claims were made in the same year his research was cited in the Supreme Court's ruling on the *Brown v. Board of Education*, a test of the *Plessy v. Ferguson* case; *Brown* marked "the end of constitutional and legal legitimacy for this ['separate but equal'] system, and provided a legal framework with which opponents of racial inequalities could pursue equality" (King 1995, 18-19).

Despite his public support of school integration, Wagner took a "hands off" approach to what was quickly evolving into a crisis. Cannato (2001) argues that the civil rights movement posited a form of Black exceptionalism that put the problems of Blacks in a special category. He argues that "the Irish, Germans, Italians, and Jews never demanded that their children attend the same schools as more well-to-do 'Americans,' nor did they try to force their way into restrictive trade unions. Not only did the demands of Blacks create resentment among whites, but traditional politicians like Wagner simply did not know how to handle such demands" (33). Wagner's brand of liberalism was inadequate to address the concerns of all New Yorkers. Racial tolerance, even outlawing discrimination, did not go far enough as long as structural barriers were realities in the lives of Blacks and Puerto Ricans (34). Wagner's liberalism helped provide services to organized labor but did little for those outside of the institutions of the working class. The failure of city elites to address the concerns of the poor, particularly Black and Puerto Ricans, helped fuel a grass roots civil rights movement that became less concerned with compromising with the liberal establishment and preoccupied with tactics to force them to capitulate to its demands (Vitale 2008, 55, 61-62). Although Wagner was uninterested in education, especially when it became ideological on the issue of race, to appease some of his critics, he appointed Reverend Doctor

Gardner C. Taylor, a Black man, to be a board member for the Department of Education in 1958 (Gittell 1967).

Regarding the integration of public housing, in 1957 Wagner asked the New York City Comptroller, Charles F. Preusse, to study and make recommendations for reforming NYCHA into a more socially and racially equitable authority. After conducting the study, Preusse recommended ending segregated public housing projects. He proposed that white applicants should receive preference for predominantly Black housing projects and Black and Latino applicants for predominantly white housing projects. While there were problems with the plan, it represented a strategy to integrate the public housing projects, which had not been attempted before (Kelly 1964). Preusse's plan reflected the New York City's racial liberalism during a time when the demand for integration and racial equality was amplified by the national civil rights movement.

In 1963, in response to the Department of Education plan to consolidate and integrate two elementary schools in Queens, white parents formed the organization Parents and Taxpayers and rejected that plan (Rogers 1968). As an alternative to the Department of Education's plan, Parents and Taxpayers advocated for a "neighborhood school" plan. Their plan for the "neighborhood school" made elementary education a local endeavor; an endeavor that could only take place if children went to school close to where they live (Gittell and Hevesi 1969). Parents and Taxpayers blocked integration plans by convincing the Department of Education that they possessed the political clout to disrupt the entire school district if their demands were not met (Rogers 1968, 82). Moreover, the New York City Teachers Guild opposed all of the city-wide

integration plans offered by the Department of Education. The Guild, which had a long history of supporting liberal causes including civil rights, did not deny that Black and Puerto Rican children were receiving an inferior education compared to white children; instead, members of the Guild argued that the best way to promote integration was to improve the quality of each individual school. Guild membership believed that the involuntary transfer of teachers would result in their mass exodus from the school system. Critics of the Guild and the Department of Education argued that they did not care about the needs of Black and Puerto Rican children, that the Guild and the Department of Education's primary concern was to protect the interest and privilege of white teachers (Taylor 1997).

In September 1963, the Brooklyn-based Citywide Committee for Integrated Schools and the Parents Workshop For Equality began to assemble a coalition that demanded the immediate integration of schools. In early 1964, the Parents and Neighbors United for Integrated Quality Education—a citywide organization comprised mostly of white, middle class, college educated, Jewish professionals—which supported school integration and advocated for it to occur immediately, built a coalition with Citywide Committee for Integrated Schools (Rogers 1968, 159). As a result of feeling that their only recourse to the Department of Education's inaction to improve the educational opportunities for Black and Puerto Rican students, the coalition called upon civil rights activist Bayard Rustin to assist them with organizing a one-day protest and boycott of New York City schools. They wanted the New York City Department of Education to commit to a timetable to integrate the schools. On February 3, 1964 the Citywide Committee for Integrated Schools led a coalition of parents, teachers, clergy, and community activists in a boycott of New York City public schools. The boycott was one of the largest civil rights

demonstrations for school integration in the United States (Berube and Gittell 1969). Although the Department of Education agreed to amend its rule that students must attend their neighborhood school and allowed students to attend schools outside of their neighborhood, the Citywide Coalition for Integrated Schools and its allies felt that school officials failed to take any meaningful steps toward changing the school system to better serve Black and Puerto Rican students. The Citywide Coalition for Integrated Schools held three boycotts that year—in February when over 440,000 students did not attend school, in March when 300,000 students did not attend school, and in September when over 20,000 students did not attend school (Rogers 1968, 130). The boycotts drew attention to the abysmal conditions of schools located in all Black and Puerto Rican communities. Despite garnering broad support, the boycott failed to force the Department of Education to undertake immediate reforms. After years of unsuccessful lobbying, Black and Puerto Rican parents began to reject the idea that “the only way a Black child can learn was to be seated alongside a white child” (Gittell and Hevesi 1969, 328). Black and Puerto Rican parents began to demand the control and power to create their own educational institutions. The concept of local control offered the Black and Puerto Rican communities the opportunity to restructure public school education so that it served the needs of students not the bureaucracy (Berube and Gittell 1969). The Citywide Coalition for Integrated Schools and its allies decided to abandon integration and called for local control of schools. From this point on, Black and Puerto Rican parents and their supporters focused on understanding school governance mechanisms and how to control them (Rogers 1968).

The battle for control of New York City schools was also taking place simultaneous to the Black Power movement (Forman 1972). Stokely Carmichael (who, in the 1970s, changed his name to

Kwame Ture), who had served as the chairperson of Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, defined “Black Power” as the “full participation in the decision-making process affecting the lives of Black people” (Berube and Gittell 1969). The Black Power movement called for a change in the way public education was being managed. The education system in New York City was a closed organizational system within which decisions such as selecting a superintendent, allocating a school budget, and determining the curriculum were decided by a few individuals and parents were not able to participate.³³ Black and Puerto Rican parents demanded that the system be opened up and that the Department of Education be responsive to their demands. Parents argued that the education system in a democracy should be transparent and participatory and that the decentralization of the school administration could be used as a way to distribute power.

In 1965, the Black and Puerto Rican communities helped elect John V. Lindsay (Republican-Liberal) Mayor of New York City. Unlike his predecessor Wagner, he promised to intervene in educational policy matters. In April 1967, he assembled a committee to provide recommendations for how to structure a more transparent public school system (Rogers 1968, 475). The chair of the committee was McGeorge Bundy, who was the president of the Ford Foundation. The committee’s report, the Bundy Report, recommended the immediate decentralization of the school system. It recommended that the school system be divided into autonomous districts that would be administered by local school boards composed of parents and representatives selected by the mayor and the Department of Education. The local boards would

³³ In 1962, when Adam Clayton Powell became chair of the Committee on Education and Labor in the Congress, it was the first time test scores were released to his constituents in Harlem. The test scores proved that children were not learning: 87% of Harlem students were below grade level in reading and mathematics and two-thirds of students dropped out of school before graduation from high school (Clarke 1969).

have the power to make staffing, curriculum, budget, and educational policy decisions; the Department of Education would retain oversight over the local boards. The report also recommended the abolition of the Board of Examiners and recommended that teachers and administrators be required to pass the National Teachers Examinations and State Certification (Rogers 1968, 476).

A few months after the Bundy Report was released, the Ford Foundation announced that it would fund the creation of three demonstration districts—one in Ocean Hill-Brownsville in Brooklyn, one in East Harlem, and one on the Lower East Side—to engage parents and communities in the process of developing a more responsive school system. In July, the Ford Foundation gave local planning groups funds to begin the process of local control. Many hoped that this experimental venture would be a real opportunity for the transfer of power from the intransigent white bureaucracy to parents and local communities (Berube and Gittell 1969).

As Ocean Hill-Brownsville's planning council moved forward with the planning process, they were met with opposition from the teachers' union. The United Federation of Teachers (which, until 1960, was named the New York City Teachers' Guild), was the nation's largest union local with a membership of 55,000 (Taylor 1997). Although Harlem was the site of contentious battles for equal rights including the uprisings in 1935 and 1964, the Ocean Hill-Brownsville district became the site of controversial and racially charged union strikes as parents fought for greater community control and the teachers' union fought to maintain the status quo.³⁴ The teacher's

³⁴ Until the 1960s, Brownsville, Brooklyn had been a predominantly Jewish neighborhood that was well-known for being politically radical from the 1880s to the 1950s. Residents consistently elected Socialist and American Labor Party candidates to the state assembly. Also, residents were strong supporters of unionized labor and collective bargaining. By the late 1960s however, Brownsville had become a Black neighborhood (Pritchett 2002).

union argued that decentralization was the equivalent of union busting because the union would have to negotiate with each individual school board, which would reduce their collective bargaining power.³⁵

On May 10, 1968 the community-controlled Ocean Hill-Brownsville Governing Board announced that they had transferred several staff members out-of-district for sabotaging the demonstration project; most of those who were transferred were white. The Central Board did not tell the three experimental boards precisely what powers they had until summer 1968 so the Ocean Hill-Brownsville Governing Board felt that it was well within its rights to transfer staff that did not fit their desired personnel profile (Berube and Gittell 1969). The teachers' union argued that firing staff without due process was a violation of union contracts (Berube and Gittell 1969). The Ocean Hill-Brownsville school district quickly became the setting of a protracted and highly contentious teacher strike. The 1968 school year ended with the Ocean Hill-Brownsville Governing Board and the United Federation of Teachers deadlocked.

What began as a local labor dispute quickly evolved into a fundamental debate about the distribution of power. The strike strained traditional alliances between liberals, labor, Blacks, and Jews. William Booth, chairman of the City's Human Rights Commission commented that: "Every day this strike goes on, things are getting worse. You can sense there is much more antiwhite feeling among blacks and much more anti-black feeling among whites."³⁶ The City's

³⁵ Unattributed author, "John Lindsay's Ten Plagues," *Time*, November 1, 1968, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,839580,00.html#ixzz1JuHEL6Wy> (accessed November 15, 2010).

³⁶ Unattributed author, "John Lindsay's Ten Plagues," *Time Magazine*, November 1, 1968, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,839580,00.html#ixzz1JuHEL6Wy> (accessed November 15, 2010).

liberal intelligentsia was unsympathetic to the teachers union and was in favor of local control of schools. *Time Magazine* reported:

In one Manhattan school, 47% of the second grade are below the national reading norm; in the third grade, 52% of the children were behind, while 72% of the fourth grade lagged. The notion is often advanced that black parents do not care. The experience of Ocean Hill-Brownsville, as well as simple observation, says differently. Few can forget a demonstration last year in an East Harlem school where an elderly black woman, tears streaming down her face, cradled the head of her nine-year-old grandson and lamented, as if chanting a dirge: “He don’t read! He don’t read! He don’t read!”³⁷

By November 1968 teachers had gone on strike three times, shutting-down the public schools for a total of 36 days. In February 1969 the teachers’ strike ended when the New York State Legislature passed a decentralization law that created thirty-two separate school districts in New York City. The school districts were to be governed by locally-elected school boards. Also, the teachers who had been transferred out of the district, or walked out in sympathy, were re-instated (Berube and Gittell 1969). Although the legislation mandated that the school board be locally-elected, there was no real transfer of power and the governance of the school system remained insular, bureaucratic, and closed. *Time Magazine* reported:

Blacks and Puerto Ricans generally believed that decentralization was a valid solution to the dysfunction of the New York City schools. Thousands of previously uninvolved city parents, white and black, who had been content to let the schools run themselves, became personally involved in their children’s schools, and their operation. Those who were “radicalized” by the strike are not likely to continue to let the professional—teacher, supervisor, board-of-education bureaucrat—have full say in the question of what should be taught and how.³⁸

One of the main goals of the struggle for community control was to end the centralized, yet fragmented, control of Black and Puerto Rican communities by New York City government bureaucracies. One of the consequences of the struggle for community control was the creation

³⁷ Ibid

³⁸ Uncredited author. “Public Schools: Strike’s Bitter End,” *Time Magazine*, November 29, 1968, <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,841534,00.html> (accessed November 10, 2010).

of the United States Revenue Code 501(c)3 tax code in 1954. The 501(c)3 tax code exempts organizations that met certain criteria (such as reporting to the United States government all of their sources of income, all assets and liabilities, and disbursements) from paying taxes; it also puts limits on the political activities of organizations filing taxes under 501(c)3 status. This code laid the legal framework for the creation of community development corporations; “community-based” organizations that ultimately undermined the grassroots activism and were a part of the beginning of the privatization of government activities and weakening community organizations’ political efforts (see Milward and Provan 2000). The fight for local control included the fight against urban renewal projects, such as highway building, which destroyed many, often poor, Black communities. In February 1966 Senator Robert Kennedy (Democrat-New York; January 3, 1965 – June 6, 1968), studying poverty in the United States, participated in a walking tour of the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood in Brooklyn. Following the visit, Kennedy directed his staff to devise a program that could address the issues specific to Brooklyn neighborhoods as well as serve as a model for other local organizations across the country. The Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 provided funding for the first cohort of community development corporations (Ferguson and Dickens 1999). The second cohort of community development corporations, which were established in the 70s and 80s were less focused on protest and advocacy and more focused on distinctly urban and local issues (Vidal 1992, 35). The formation of community development corporations dropped during the eighties. Under the administration of President Ronald Reagan (Republican; 1981-1989), federal funding for community development corporations was cut drastically, which caused community development corporations to “put a premium on attention to the ‘bottom line’” (Vidal 1992, 36). The Community Service Block Grant, passed in 1981, rescinded the Economic Opportunity Act. Community development corporations recognized by

the federal government's Community Services Administration were eligible for Community Service Block Grant funding. However, funding was greatly reduced under the Reagan administration. This new system of grants consolidated over two hundred federal programs into eight blocks of funding. Community development corporations were forced to form public-private partnerships for local support and funding, leading to a more professionalized, less activist-based approach to community change (Stoutland 1999).

Another consequence of the struggle for community control is that many white New Yorkers felt ignored, arguing that Lindsay was only interested in the Blacks and Puerto Ricans. Whites felt that Lindsay was focused on raising the standard of living for Blacks and Puerto Ricans without providing anything specifically for the white middle class. The Ocean Hill-Brownsville battle for school decentralization, in addition to being credited for hastening a white exodus from New York City to the suburbs, is credited with illuminating the changes in ethnic and class structure that had taken place in New York City the previous quarter century.³⁹ It also established the white middle class as an independent force, with interests distinct from both the city's poor and elite. Although New York City had become a majority non-white ethnic-minority city, the white minority consolidated their positions and blocked the new majority from assuming their proportion of political power (Angotti 2008, 97). Angotti (2008) argues that "the white backlash of 1970 was much more than a union dispute or a matter of education policy. It was the opening of a decades-long effort of a disappearing white majority and a powerful financial sector to hang

³⁹ The federal government provided mortgage insurance through the Veteran's Administration to veterans for the purchase of a single-family home. Suburbs outside of New York City became home to many white war veterans who benefitted from not only federal housing and tax policies, but from federal and state transportation policies that paid for the construction of freeways (Thompson 2006). This process was well-documented in Kenneth T. Jackson's *Crabgrass Frontier: The Suburbanization of the United States*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1985 and Jim Sleeper's *The Closest of Strangers: Liberalism and the Politics of Race in New York*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1990.

on to their privileged positions of political power” (97). This effort is a kind of liberal paternalistic racism that was part of why the demand for community control became so contentious between minorities and liberals, and especially between Blacks and liberal Jews. The elections of Edward Koch and then Rudolph Giuliani added a politically, socially, and economically conservative approach to governing that created the worst of both worlds—limited power at the neighborhood-level and power consolidated into bureaucracies—institutional arrangement for poor and minorities in New York City.

Conservative Backlash (1980-present)

White backlash against Blacks became policy during the Edward Koch (Democrat; January 1, 1978 – December 31, 1989) mayoral administration. He was particularly irritated by issues related to race, which contributed to his popularity amongst New York City’s white ethnic groups and middle class (Shefter 1992). Shefter argues that “in contrast to his predecessors, Mayor Koch did not select his black appointees from among the city’s black political establishment, nor did he clear his selections with that leadership group, and this they denounced as an ‘act of political contempt’” (179). Kilson (1987) adds that

in dealing with blacks, the typical New York white power group (or politician) frequently circumvents the politically tested and viable sectors of the black community and its leadership, and instead deals with a marginal leadership sector composed essentially of client-politicians...The power structures thereby creates within the black community a faction beholden to it” (119).

Consequently, Kilson continues,

this sort of politics reached a high point in the 1960s and 1970s for a very good reason. It was in this period that black New York was gaining the *potential* to bid for parity in political incorporation. This potential appeared, however, precisely at the point when several white ethnic groups—especially Italians and Jews—were overcoming the longstanding hegemonic pretensions of the Irish in New York politics. A politics of fragmentation towards blacks helped by Italian and Jewish politicians to consolidate their

positions, without contending with black empowerment (119).

Koch not only contributed to a politics of fragmentation towards Blacks but his reorganization of

the city's poverty program, evoking even louder protests from black political leaders and activists....the mayor proposed closing some municipal hospitals in black neighborhoods, and for this he was charged with being willing to sacrifice black lives for the sake of balancing the city's budget....Black politicians responded with such fury to the behavior of the Koch administration because these actions withdrew concessions that black politicians had extracted from previous administrations. In particular, Koch's appointment of blacks who were not approved by New York's black political leadership violated the principle, first established by Adam Clayton Powell, that blacks, rather than whites, should determine who will speak for black New Yorkers. The autonomy that previous administrations had conceded to community corporations in poor neighborhoods had enabled those who controlled these agencies to distribute jobs and other benefits to their personal and political supporters. Many black and Puerto Rican politicians relied upon this patronage to establish and maintain their political followings. The Koch administration's reorganization of the city's antipoverty program made it difficult for black politicians to continue these practices (179-180).

White backlash was reified during the Rudolph Giuliani (Republican; January 1, 1994-December 31, 2001) mayoral administration. In 1993 Giuliani ran a contentious and racially-charged campaign against the incumbent mayor, David Dinkins. Dinkins was the former Manhattan Borough President (1986-1989) who in 1990 became the first Black mayor of New York City (Democrat; January 1, 1990 - December 31, 1993). Dinkins had won office in 1990 with a strong grassroots base but narrowly beaten (by just over 50,000 votes) by Giuliani in the 1993 elections. Giuliani received 33% of the Latino vote and just 5% of the Black vote in the election; he was not concerned with those poll numbers however, because he did not feel that Blacks or Latinos were his core constituency.⁴⁰ His election represented a significant shift in the political ideology of New York City: it mirrored the conservatism of the President Reagan and George H. W. Bush (Republican; 1989-1993) administrations.

⁴⁰ Jonathan P. Hicks, "Giuliani Planning to Close Community Affairs Offices," *New York Times*, N.Y./Region, January 13, 1994, <http://www.nytimes.com/1994/01/13/nyregion/giuliani-planning-to-close-community-affairs-offices.html?scp=91&sq=rudolph+giuliani&st=nyt> (accessed June 7, 2010).

New York City is a “strong mayor” city (Thompson 2006, 67-68).⁴¹ Strong mayor cities have a centralized government within which the mayor is the chief executive officer and manages the budget (Thompson 2006, 67). This characteristic was particularly glaring when Giuliani took office as mayor. Giuliani fostered a change in public attitude toward socially marginal people that had evolved “from passive sympathy to active antagonism” (Vitale 2008, 2). The community control programs that were hard-fought between the 1950s and 1970s and that were championed by Republicans such as Jack Kemp while he was secretary of HUD (February 13, 1989 – January 19, 1993), were largely rescinded in New York City during the Giuliani administration. Giuliani’s repeal of the community control programs revealed some of the tensions within the Republican Party: one approach that utilized technical skills upgrade and free enterprise as strategies for cutting services to the poor (for example, Kemp’s initiatives) and another approach, much like Daniel Patrick Moynihan’s “benign neglect,” within which the problems of under-represented minorities and other marginalized groups were not managed or improved but ignored. Giuliani inquired publically into why money was being spent on social service programs that were not producing an improved quality of life for the residents of New York City (Vitale 2008, 22-25, 30-31, 44, 50-52). He attacked social service programs and framed the attacks in racial terms; he often talked about under-represented minorities being over-privileged and being the recipients of government hand-outs. For many who supported Giuliani, Blacks were privileged minorities, who since their attempt to integrate the public schools in New York City in the 1950s and early 1960s received a largess of governmental resources at the expense of working- and middle-class whites. This view led many who had once considered

⁴¹ *City of New York City Charter*, 2004, <http://www.nyc.gov/html/charter/downloads/pdf/citycharter2004.pdf> (accessed October 20, 2010).

themselves sympathetic to the injustices marginalized groups faced, to oppose the efforts of the civil rights movement. Giuliani “rarely met with black leaders and on numerous occasions outraged them by allowing police officers to engulf demonstrations in black neighborhoods with overwhelming and intimidating force” (Angotti 2008, 87). Vitale argues that Giuliani represented a distinct shift in social policy, compared to the prior paradigm of urban liberalism, a change that occurred along three axes: 1) “a transition from socially inclusive, rehabilitation-oriented policies to socially exclusive, punitive ones;” 2) “a rejection of government-centered approaches to social problems in favor of market- and community-based efforts;” and 3) “a move away from the social tolerance of individual and group differences and toward communitarian outlook that privileges majoritarian views of appropriate public behavior at the expense of the socially marginalized” (13).

Giuliani’s conservative approach to governing affected the administration of NYCHA in that he shifted the approach of public housing from a municipal service to public housing as “affordable housing.” This shift in policy was not benevolent. NYCHA has a portfolio of 180,000 units that account for 12% of the nation’s public housing stock and is located on some of the most valuable real estate in the country; over the course of his administration, Giuliani argued that public housing was not the highest and best use of the land and he threatened to sell the developments to private developers (Schwartz 2006, 101). Giuliani was a proponent of an approach to government within which it should be run as a business and is based on reducing its cost by encouraging privatization and managing government agencies by making them compete against each other for resources (Weikart 2001).

The federal government’s approach to public housing also changed. While it did not return to the policies of “tenant management” of the 1980s, it made an attempt to redefine the relationship that public housing authorities have with their residents. With the adoption of the §964 Regulations in 1994,—regulations that authorized HUD to “promote resident management of public housing projects through financial assistance (limited to \$100,000 to a single resident council—public housing authorities were mandated to encourage resident participation in the management of housing developments.⁴² Per the §964 Regulations, each public housing development is permitted to have one residents’ association. The president and board of each residents’ association is permitted to participate in the District-wide Council of Presidents. The president of each District-wide Council of Presidents is permitted to participate in the Citywide Council of Presidents. Each public housing authority is also mandated to have a Resident Advisory Board. The Resident Advisory Board is a city-wide resident organization composed of the District-wide Council of Presidents members. The main purpose of the Resident Advisory Board was to provide NYCHA with input on the annual plan NYCHA is required to submit to HUD each year. While the Resident Advisory Board may provide input, NYCHA is not obligated to incorporate

⁴² In 1994, in an effort to continue to support resident participation in their housing developments, HUD introduced the Title 24.964 Regulations. The Regulations redefined resident participation policy by removing the provisions on resident management that characterized the period from 1980 to 1993. The §964 Regulations outlines public housing resident participation by defining the structure of resident organizations, the election procedures of resident leaders, and the role and responsibilities of the local public housing authority and HUD. Among areas, their stated purpose is to: “...recognize the importance of resident involvement in creating a positive living environment and in actively participating in the overall mission of public housing.” It also details that public housing authorities are required to cooperate with resident groups: public housing authorities must allow resident groups to participate in decision-making and must keep residents’ associations informed about management issues. They are required to support participation activities and meet regularly with resident councils as well as jurisdiction-wide resident councils “to discuss problems, plan activities and review progress.” In addition, public housing authorities are mandated to support efforts of residents’ associations by providing them with office space.

Title 24, Code of Federal Regulations, part 964 sets the implementing regulations for Section 20. Councils may “use HUD technical assistance to develop management capability, identify social support needs of the residents and secure such support, and implement a wide range of activities to further resident management.” It provided support for “training and technical assistance for the establishment of new resident management groups. It also allowed residents’ associations to reinvest savings from resident management to establish small business enterprises. Other key features of the Act were that it provided “new opportunities for public housing residents to take control of their own lives by managing or buying their own housing.”

the input. In 1996, unsatisfied by the bureaucratic channels for resident involvement in NYCHA adapted by the Giuliani administration, Ms. Velez, the Resident Association President from Johnson Houses, and others formed the New Public Housing Resident Alliance (Residents' Alliance). The Residents' Alliance was founded to raise tenant awareness of congressional legislation that would affect NYCHA (Susi 2005). Since then, the Resident Alliance has opposed, with mixed results, NYCHA on issues such as increasing income levels for new residents, privatization schemes, public accountability, and community service requirements.

DISCUSSION

From the 1880s to the 1940s, the poor and immigrants in New York City were concentrated in slums. Despite their abysmal conditions, slums served as places for the poor to interact and develop alliances. Political machines were used to control resources and maintain political control. They were patron-client relationships within which the “party official provided favors, divisible benefits, [and] jobs for the constituents. In return, grateful constituents gave their votes on election day” (Hamilton 1979, 214). Urban reformers used slum clearance to deconcentrate the poor and to restructure the social and political economy of New York City. The poor were dispersed and political machines were neutralized, leaving the poor without concentrated social, political, and economic power. Various bureaucratic agencies were founded to distribute goods and services that were once distributed by party bosses. Patron-client relationships typical of machine politics transformed into patron-recipient relationships within which the poor and marginalized receive public benefits regardless of whether or not they vote or are loyal to one political party or another.

The poor and marginalized have also received benefits as a result of political protest. In contrast

to patron-client relationships, patron-recipient relationships make less obvious the power of elective and appointed office in that recipients cannot easily hold one person accountable for their failure to delivered needed goods and services; it is difficult to hold the inanimate bureaucracy accountable for failure to deliver goods and services, which is depoliticizing. The patron-recipient relationship might appear to foster more equality of opportunity than patron-client relationships but neither of them has resulted in the meaningful transfer of power from a small, centralized group of decision-makers to a decentralized community of individuals, namely Blacks and Latinos in New York City. White-collar, mostly white, professionals manage the various public agencies that replaced the neighborhood clubs that used to control the distribution of goods and services throughout the city. The children of European immigrants, who had entered the middle class, eliminated the machines that helped their parents win power from elites and transferred that power into bureaucracies that they managed. Urban liberalism supported this centralized planning of social programs while utilizing an elaborate bureaucracy to oversee social service spending (Vitale 2008, 65). The fight for school decentralization in the 1960s, which started as a movement for the integration of public schools, challenged the closed, highly bureaucratic public school system. It is during this fight for community control of schools that Ms. Velez became deeply involved in political activism and resident empowerment; her activism and fight for resident empowerment is detailed in the next chapter.

In short, Blacks and Puerto Ricans in New York City fought for full inclusion in all aspects of their life without their existing communities being restructured. However, the power they were able to acquire was not institutionalized. Political activism of the 50s and 60s was undermined by government-funded community development corporations. In the 1970s and 1980s Black and

Latino middle-class professionals were relied upon to lead these newly funded organizations and for comprehensive planning on an array of urban issues. Vitale (2008) argues that one implication of relying “on experts is that it creates an elitist orientation that denies the input of local groups in the formation of social policy priorities, which also undercuts their connection to a grassroots constituency” (56). Despite their percentage of the population and geographic concentration, Blacks and Puerto Ricans were not been able to achieve the kinds of social, political, and economic gains that other ethnic groups had. Blacks and Puerto Ricans “received little support for their education, housing, and employment needs, which further removed them from positive government action;” government action liberals purported to utilize to create a more equal society (Vitale 2008, 62). Urban liberalism not only failed to end inequality, but it also unleashed a conservative backlash against community control of government, which does not fit into either the urban liberalism or traditional conservative paradigm; a backlash that persists in New York City today.

CHAPTER FOUR: A CASE OF EXTRAORDINARY STRUGGLE

The James Weldon Johnson Houses were constructed during the 1940s on land cleared as part of the slum clearance program. By the time the construction of the Johnson Houses was complete, most of the white ethnic residents who lived in the tenements adjacent to the development had been forced to relocate. Many of the former white ethnic residents complained that, despite their need, they were ineligible to move into any of the developments in East Harlem because the developments were segregated. Johnson Houses were built with hope that its residents and the surrounding community would greatly benefit from “the clearance, replanning and reconstruction of a sub-standard and insanitary area...by the development of a low-rent housing project.”⁴³ The development was named after the poet and civil rights activist and was completed December 27, 1948. Constructed in the central section of East Harlem, the 11.88-acre site is located between East 112 and East 115 Streets, and between Park and Third Avenues. Comprised of ten, fourteen-story buildings with 1,308 apartment units, the development is now home to an estimated 2,957 official residents.

By the late 1950s residents began to organize themselves to discuss the physical and social deterioration of Johnson Houses. Some residents were unhappy with the litter that was scattered across the grounds, the broken windows that had remained unfixed, the garbage in the hallways, the pools of urine in the elevators, as well as the uncontrolled groups of children and teenagers congregating in the hallways. In spite of the relative comfort of the interior of the apartments, this group of residents felt that Johnson Houses had become undesirable and unsafe to live in and to rear children. The group of residents met for several evenings in a row and then formed the

⁴³ New York City Board of Estimate No. 351. The Resolution was adopted September 16, 1946. Box 69D, Folder 1, the New York City Housing Authority Collection in the La Guardia and Wagner Archives at LaGuardia Community College.

James Weldon Johnson Houses Tenants' League. During the meetings the group also identified the core problems at Johnson Houses: inadequate porter (i.e. facilities) service; poor building repair and maintenance; a fragile resident-management relationship; and weak resident to resident relationships. The Tenants' League met with the property manager, Albert Drusine, and the foreman of janitorial services to discuss the list of priorities they had devised. During the meeting they asked that Drusine explain the functions of his staff and his strategy for addressing their concerns. Although the meeting did not result in a promise of immediate allocation of resources to address their concerns, the meeting was of great importance to the residents: for the first time, residents at Johnson Houses acquired a sense of participation and some insight into the functioning and administration of their housing development.⁴⁴

Residents organized a three-month clean-up campaign and met with the Housing Police about vandalism and dangerous behavior that was occurring on development property.⁴⁵ Sixteen building captains were elected and a list of duties was devised. As the clean-up campaign neared its end, it became evident that however essential and salutary the tenants' cooperation, substantial improvement could not be realized without a greater police presence and increased janitorial and maintenance services. To test these conclusions and assess the results of the clean-up campaign, the Tenants' League's Education Committee devised and circulated a questionnaire among the tenants of two representative buildings. Analysis of the questionnaires revealed that most residents were aware of the work of the Tenants' League and had noticed some improvement in their building. Most residents felt that the porters were doing an adequate job in the face of

⁴⁴ Jeannie Rosoff, "Report of the Work of the Tenants League of the James Weldon Johnson Houses," July 30, 1957. Sc Mg 589 Box 2 in the Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Books Division at Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.

⁴⁵ At that time, the Housing Police was a department within NYCHA.

overwhelming odds but showed less satisfaction with the attitudes of maintenance and property management staff. Residents were also critical of their neighbors' lack of parental supervision. Destructive children, vandalism, and unsafe conditions inside the buildings as well as on the grounds were linked to infrequent and superficial police patrols and difficulty locating a police officer during an emergency.⁴⁶

The Tenants' League decided to request additional police protection and services from NYCHA Chairman Philip Cruise directly. Feeling a strong sense of accomplishment but needing to continue to foster change at Johnson Houses, the Tenants' League approached Cruise. NYCHA responded by agreeing to assign two additional porters to Johnson Houses, three additional maintenance men, and a new maintenance superintendent to Johnson Houses.⁴⁷ Although many initial victories were won, by the end of the 1950s, Johnson House's property management team had stopped showing interest in working with the Tenants' League. In addition, NYCHA had not delivered on the promised resources.⁴⁸

The backdrop to the Johnson Houses residents' first acts of space appropriation in the 1950s occurred simultaneous to a time in Harlem when there was immense activism and massive political repression. The decade began by a city councilman from Harlem, Benjamin Davis (a member of the Communist Party, 1943-1949), being sentenced to federal prison for six years for sedition for his involvement with the Communist Party. Before being sentenced to federal prison

⁴⁶ Jeannie Rosoff, "Report of the Work of the Tenants League of the James Weldon Johnson Houses," July 30, 1957. Sc Mg 589 Box 2 in the Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Books Division at Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.

⁴⁷ Ibid

⁴⁸ Jeannie Rosoff, "Report of the Work of the Tenants League of the James Weldon Johnson Houses," August 7, 1959. Sc Mg 589 Box 2 in the Manuscripts, Archives, and Rare Books Division at Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.

and being forced to resign from the city council, Davis participated in the rent strikes to protest the lack of upkeep of apartment buildings in Harlem by their white absentee owners. He also participated in protests about the lack of quality schools in Harlem and fought, initially, to have the public school system racially integrated and a few years later for local control of the public schools in the neighborhood.

Although it is unclear how political activism and repression nationally and in Harlem affected the residents of Johnson Houses because they did not speak at length about it, by the 1960s, the national Civil Rights movement and local civil rights movement in Harlem was at its height. Malcolm X's presence in Harlem and his message about Black Power was growing in strength nationally and internationally. In summer 1964 there was an uprising in Harlem to protest police brutality after an off-duty police officer shot and killed an unarmed Black teenager.⁴⁹

In the 1970s and 80s, heavy drug traffic on Lexington Avenue and 115th Street severely affected Johnson Houses. It was not unusual for someone to run through Johnson Houses as they were being chased by and shot at police. One resident described the 1970s and 80s in Johnson Houses and East Harlem as "madness."⁵⁰ Residents stated that, on any given day, more than a hundred people could be observed congregating, waiting for their drug of choice to arrive.⁵¹ In addition, drug use and sales took place in front of the buildings, in the lobbies, the staircases, hallways,

⁴⁹ .In 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Department of Housing and Urban Development Act that created HUD. In 1966, Congress passed the Model Cities program, a program to help address some of the problems exposed by the uprisings that occurred a few years earlier in major cities across the US including Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, and Newark. The Model Cities program "required local citizen participation in the preparation and implementation of five-year comprehensive plans for each designated city; it stressed the need for social services as well as physical improvements; and it sought to involve many other federal domestic agencies in a government-wide coordinated effort" (Thompson 2006, 7). The program expanded HUDs role in cities across the US; the program was funded into the early 1970s.

⁵⁰ Author in conversation with Mr. Lawrence on July 11, 2008.

⁵¹ Informal conversation in the Johnson Houses Residents' Association office, May 13, 2008.

and apartments. Residents were witnesses to robberies, violence, and prostitution. Residents recalled that acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and homicide were the two leading causes of death in the neighborhood.⁵² The neighborhood was suffering from an underfunded educational system, scarce private housing options, a high rate of unemployment, and limited recreational and cultural activities for youth. The Tenants' League was largely ineffective in controlling the problems in and around Johnson Houses because many of the most acute problems they identified were not being caused by Johnson Houses residents.⁵³

The Johnson Houses Residents' Association and Devising a Long-term Vision

In 1980, Ms. Velez, who was a resident of Johnson Houses, was working with the East Harlem Block Schools, a community-controlled daycare program. East Harlem Block Schools' staff assigned her to Johnson Houses to start an organization and to begin to develop a community-controlled community center. There was a community center—The James Weldon Johnson Houses Community Center, Incorporated—in the basement of 1820 Lexington Avenue at Johnson Houses being operated by a non-profit organization of the same name that was founded at the same time Johnson Houses was being constructed. It offered limited programming and, given the breakdown of collective efficacy in and around Johnson Houses, Ms. Velez and other residents felt that the Johnson Houses needed a community center that offered services such as early childhood education, remedial education, job training, and a senior citizens' program in addition to recreational programs to engage the youth. Ms. Velez reflected:

I'd walk through here and people like, they'd run when they saw the teenagers. Man, I go up to them and say, 'Look, what are you doing? Blah, blah, blah.' I've sent more kids to GED programs. I can't understand. How do you drop out of school in 11th grade to come stand on the corner? I don't understand it. I just don't understand it. But what would

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

happen is that even the toughest kids didn't want to stay in school because of so much crime. So there's a lot of things that they were up against.....So I would try to look at this whole thing.....If we didn't help the parents keep their housing, we couldn't help them. It's a whole thing. You can't look at it piecemeal: you got to look at the whole picture.⁵⁴

By 1982, Ms. Velez, still working with the East Harlem Block Schools, had built a strong senior citizen/youth program that had broken down some of the mutual suspicion and fostered a relationship of mutual respect. At this time Bessie Pritchard, one of the founding members of the Tenants' League, approached Ms. Velez and asked her to run for president of the Residents' Association.⁵⁵ Although Ms. Velez attended meetings regularly, she was busy with other community organizing activities and declined. That same year, through her work at East Harlem Block Schools, Ms. Velez met women from the National Congress of Neighborhood Women, an organization founded "to empower poor and working class women to become community leaders—to give them a voice, and to raise their consciousness of their own power so they would be better able to define and solve problems facing their communities."⁵⁶ After attending some of the meetings about community organizing that National Congress of Neighborhood Women facilitated at the East Harlem Block Schools, Ms. Velez decided to join the organization. During one of their meetings with public housing resident leadership in New York City, National Congress of Neighborhood Women introduced Ms. Velez to Ms. Bertha Gilkey who, in 1976, was responsible for transforming the Cochran Gardens Housing Development (Cochran) in St.

⁵⁴ Ethel Velez, interviewed by Tamar Carroll and Martha Ackelsberg, March 30, 2004. Oral History Project, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

⁵⁵ During my conversations with the Johnson residents, they referred to themselves as residents and insisted that I refer to them as such as well. In the 1980s, NYCHA residents insisted that they be referred to as "residents" as opposed to "tenants." The residents argued that the term "tenants" indicated that their residence in their development was as temporary renters with no rights in decisions made for their development. As such, by the 1980s the Tenants' Leagues had evolved into being renamed Tenants' Associations, Tenants' Associations renamed into Tenants' Councils, and Tenants' Councils renamed into Residents' Associations. These resident-led and managed organizations will be referred to as Residents' Associations for the remainder of the reporting of this study unless noted otherwise.

⁵⁶ "Agents of Social Change: National Congress of Neighborhood Women."
<http://www.smith.edu/library/libs/ssc/curriculum/ncnw.html> (accessed June 29, 2010).

Louis, Missouri into a model tenant-managed community. Although not exclusively a high-rise development, Cochran had two 12-story buildings and four 6-story buildings. Constructed in 1952, it was the first development built by the St. Louis Housing Authority that included high-rise buildings. It served as a model for Pruitt Igoe and other exclusively high-rise public housing developments in St. Louis.⁵⁷ Ms. Gilkey talked about her experience organizing residents and about how she started the Cochran Tenant Management Corporation. In 1969, at the age of twenty, Ms. Gilkey led the first public housing resident rent strike in the US. The rent strike was initiated to protest the inhuman living conditions at Cochran and lasted nine-months. Ms. Gilkey, dissatisfied with the social welfare model of dealing with the poor, started working to introduce a new model. With the help of the Ford Foundation, Ms. Gilkey and other residents were provided with training and technical assistance on property management. In 1976, Ms. Gilkey's Cochran Tenant Management Corporation was awarded a property management contract from the City of St. Louis.⁵⁸ Ms. Gilkey gained national recognition for her efforts in 1987 when President Ronald Reagan announced the Housing and Community Development Act of 1987, an Act that

⁵⁷ Author unknown, "Cochran Gardens Demolition Nearing Complete," March 25, 2008.

<http://ecoabsence.blogspot.com/2008/03/cochran-gardens-demolition-nearing.html> (accessed April 15, 2010)

⁵⁸ Resident management began in the 1970s in Boston and then in St. Louis. The Ford Foundation was an early supporter of the resident management in St. Louis. In 1974, HUD and Ford Foundation entered into a partnership to conduct a demonstration program of resident management. The program, the National Tenant Management Demonstration Program, began in early 1975; HUD funded the physical improvements to the housing developments and the resident training and the Ford Foundation funded program implementation. The demonstration operated between 1975-1979 and included seven public housing sites in six cities including New Haven, Connecticut; Louisville, Kentucky; New Orleans, Louisiana; Jersey City, New Jersey; Rochester, New York; and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. HUD and the Ford Foundation recognized the assets of resident management but understand that it would need a significant infusion of capital for property maintenance and modernization and for resident training and on-going technical assistance (Kolodny 1983, 68)

In 1981, a study of the demonstration was conducted by the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation. The study revealed under resident management, there was no improvement in rent collection, vacancy rates, or processing maintenance requests residents reported being more satisfied with public housing staff. Residents also reported being satisfied with employment opportunities and opportunities for personal development. The study also found that resident management was costly. Expenditures were from 13 to 62 percent above conventional management costs, primarily because of training, employment, and technical assistance. The program ended in 1979 when external funds for the program disappeared. Despite the emphasis on resident management during the George H. W. Bush administration, very few additional public housing developments became managed by residents. Resident management was not a popular initiative the Clinton (Chandler 1991, 475-477).

provided funding for tenant management of public housing developments, and commended Ms. Gilkey and other public housing resident leaders for their efforts in tenant management. Ms. Gilkey received additional national attention from HUD Secretary Kemp when he utilized her tenant-management strategies as a model to lobby Congress to pass and fund the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988, the Public Housing Drug Elimination Program, the Tenant Opportunity Program, and Resident Management Tenant Assistance Grant programs.⁵⁹ Ms. Velez was very impressed by Ms. Gilkey but thought that the things she had accomplished in her development were unbelievable: Ms. Velez did not believe the St. Louis Housing Authority, the City of St. Louis, and HUD had allowed public housing residents to manage their own development.

In 1983, the National Congress of Neighborhood Women organized a trip for public housing resident leaders in New York City to travel to St. Louis to see Ms. Gilkey's work for themselves. Ms. Velez found Ms. Gilkey's model of resident participation in the management of public housing to be extremely powerful. Ms. Gilkey gave the group a tour of the land that Pruitt Igoe was located on before it was completely demolished in 1976. Ms. Gilkey explained to them that she did not want what happened to Pruitt Igoe to happen to her development. Once the group returned to Cochran, Ms. Gilkey explained how Cochran Tenant Management Corporation redesigned the façades of the buildings and the play areas. She also explained that they designed their community center and that, through Cochran Tenant Management Corporation, residents were hired to construct it. The Cochran Tenant Management Corporation also constructed several two-story houses adjacent to Cochran. The houses were targeted at Cochran residents who were being evicted because their household income was higher than the regulations allowed. Cochran

⁵⁹ Jason DeParle, "Cultivating Their Own Gardens," *New York Times*, Magazine, January 5, 1992. <http://www.nytimes.com/1992/01/05/magazine/cultivating-their-own-gardens.html?pagewanted=all> (accessed October 17, 2009).

Tenant Management Corporation also marketed the houses to other working-class individuals seeking affordable housing. The buildings built by Cochran Tenant Management Corporation mirrored some middle-income houses that had been recently built across the street from Cochran. During the visit Ms. Velez thought, “Okay, now how do *we* do this at Johnson?”⁶⁰ Seeing the results of tenant empowerment in St. Louis inspired Ms. Velez to run for president of the residents’ association of Johnson Houses that year; she won the election and has been the President ever since. This moment of Ms. Velez and other public housing resident-leaders meeting Ms. Gilkey was critical for several reasons. First, public housing residents were learning from other public housing residents as opposed to being trained by a contractor, by the local public housing authority, or by HUD. This case of the poor teaching the poor challenges those notions that the poor are not capable of collective efficacy. Second, the meeting parallels Shelby’s (2005) argument about the role of “vigor” in the Black tradition. Citing Martin Delany, Shelby argues that Black people should possess autonomous thinking, laudable ambition, courage, independence of mind, and self-reliance in their struggle to become full citizens. Ms. Velez and Ms. Gilkey’s meeting was critical to the public housing residents learning how to exercise their power as residents of the US.

In January 1985, the Community Service Society—a nonprofit social welfare agency in Manhattan that provides direct services to low-income individuals and families, conducts research on poverty and social policy, and advocates for low-income New Yorkers—awarded Ms. Gilkey, in partnership with the Johnson Houses Residents’ Association and National Congress of Neighborhood Women, a \$10,000 grant to train public housing resident leaders in East Harlem in resident management strategies. Ms. Gilkey facilitated a process during which

⁶⁰ In conversation with the author, May 5, 2008.

those who attended the trainings developed a “wish list” for improving and redeveloping the Johnson Houses community. With Ms. Gilkey’s help, Ms. Velez began organize the Johnson Houses residents. Also, as part of the partnership, National Congress of Neighborhood Women leadership trained Johnson Houses residents in running an effective organization, in social networking, and in community organizing. They devised a plan to strengthen the entire organizational and participation structure of the Residents’ Association including electing building and floor captains and starting a Tenant Patrol program. Each building captain was responsible for disseminating information about what was going on at the Johnson Houses to the residents in their building. Each building captain was responsible for sitting in or near their building’s lobby from 6:00-9:00 pm every night. As they sat, they had conversations with the other residents in the building to keep the lines of communication open about what was going on at the Johnson Houses. These concrete measures that Johnson Houses residents were engaged in were manifestations of their concept of control; they possessed the authority to make decisions about the care and modification of the social or physical environment of their housing development.

Congress, HUD, and Resident Management

By the mid-late 1980s, HUD embarked on a major policy initiative to utilize resident management in public housing as a means to address problems such as aging and deteriorating properties, lack of social services, and escalating crime (Koebel and Cavell 1995). In addition to typical management responsibilities such as collecting rent and selecting residents, resident management also often included reworking institutional arrangements so that those arrangements better served residents. For example, as part of resident management, residents worked with their local public housing authority to enforce housing development rules; they worked with law

enforcement officials to reduce crime in and around their housing development; and they worked with social service providers to increase educational attainment, job skills and employment opportunities (Koebel and Cavell 1995). HUD Secretary Kemp began championing public housing resident empowerment and home ownership.⁶¹ Economic freedom, in his view, could provide the poor what socialism and liberalism could not: hope of becoming wealthy. He criticized the failures of urban liberalism and argued that the bureaucratized welfare state kept people dependent on government assistance. Kemp was representative of a “new” type of conservatism that purported that free enterprise was the key to lifting people up from poverty. While this type of conservatism was not new in its “uplift” frame—Booker T. Washington (1896) advocated an uplift type of conservatism—Kemp’s type of conservatism was new in juxtaposition to conservatism with an underlying premise that Blacks were simply incapable of ever competing with whites on an equal basis, no matter what the intervention.⁶² He designed the Enterprise Zone program to induce businesses to locate in impoverished neighborhoods and to hire local residents; in return, businesses would receive tax exemptions and other economic advantages. Kemp argued that supply-side economics, the argument that economic growth can be most effectively created by lowering barriers for people to produce goods and services, would help the poor and middle class.

Further expanding resident management, in 1987, under the Republican administration of

⁶¹ In 1990, with Kemp’s urging, Congress passed several home-ownership initiatives; the most notable is the Homeownership and Opportunity for People Everywhere (HOPE) program. Under the HOPE program HUD was to provide financial assistance to residents to purchase a unit in their public housing development or in other HUD-held, -assisted, or -insured properties. There are no documented cases of residents purchasing any properties under the HOME program (Edson 2011, 19).

⁶² Please see: Booker T. Washington, “The Atlanta Compromise” (speech, Atlanta, Georgia, September 18, 1895), *Social Justice Speeches*, http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/speeches/booker_atlanta.html (accessed August 14, 2012) and Washington, Booker T. “The Awakening of the Negro.” *Atlantic Magazine*, 1896. <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1896/09/the-awakening-of-the-negro/305449/> (accessed August 14, 2012).

President Ronald Reagan, Congress passed the Housing and Community Development Act of 1987 (amending Section 20 of the United States Housing Act of 1937), which authorized HUD to “promote resident management of public housing projects through financial assistance (limited to \$100,000 to a single resident council).”⁶³ In order to secure support for the Act, Democratic Congress women and men made legislative compromises with the Republicans and the real estate industry. Republicans and the real estate industry were assured that the public housing program, originally designed for the working poor and young families, would be restructured so that it focused on being permanent housing for the very poor and would not interfere with private development. Simultaneous to those deals being made, conservatives launched vicious attacks against the poor through the media. As a result, public housing became more unpopular, and funding for public housing diminished significantly. Conservatives were in support of resident management because they viewed it as an avenue for instilling responsibility in individuals who they believed lacked any accountability. Conservatives also supported resident management because they thought it would reduce and, at some point eliminate, federal involvement in public

⁶³ Title I, Subtitle A, Part 2 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1987 states: “Permits public housing residents to form resident management corporations. Requires such corporations to obtain fidelity bonding and insurance and have their records audited annually. Authorizes such projects to receive comprehensive improvement assistance. Provides for: (1) retention of excess revenues; and (2) resident management technical assistance and training. Limits financial assistance to: (1) \$100,000 for any particular project; and (2) \$2,500,000 for the total program for each of FY 1988 and 1989. Requires the Secretary to submit a program report to the Congress within three years of enactment of this Act. Provides lower income public housing residents with the opportunity to purchase project dwelling units through a qualifying resident management corporation. Requires, as conditions for resident ownership, that: (1) a resident management corporation be formed; (2) the corporation has entered into a contract with the PHA; and (3) the corporation has demonstrated its managerial ability for at least three years. Authorizes the Secretary to provide comprehensive improvement assistance to a project undergoing resident ownership activities through FY 1989. Sets forth purchase conditions, including: (1) PHA public hearings; (2) safety and livability determinations; and (3) PHA certification of sold unit replacement if justified by local low-income housing needs. Sets forth resale conditions, including: (1) permitted resale only to the resident management corporation, PHA, or other eligible low-income family; and (2) family priorities. Requires that sale or recapture proceeds be used only to increase the number of available units. Permits PHA financing if no other source is available. Sets the interest rate at not less than 70 percent of the conventional mortgage rate. Requires HUD to continue to pay annual assistance to the project. Eliminates operating subsidies for a purchased building. Sets forth the following protection for nonpurchasing families: (1) eviction prohibition; (2) tenants' rights; and (3) rental and relocation assistance. Directs the Secretary to: (1) provide PHAs with the necessary financial assistance to carry out such ownership program; and (2) report annually to the Congress.”

housing.⁶⁴

Conservatives were not the only interest group to protect their interests at the expense of the poor; liberals have a history of it as well. Atlas and Drier (1994) argue:

In the New Deal coalition, defenders of traditional public housing – mayors, building-trades unions, local civil servants” were often too tolerant of incompetent and paternalistic public housing management that increased tenant dependency and undermined community. Tenant management, as a remedy, entered the debate only in the late 1960s and never became the policy favored by HUD or by most local housing authorities. At the same time, some of the most vocal advocates for the poor, including housing activists and poverty lawyers, became unwitting allies of conservatives. In a climate of declining resources, many anti-poverty activists demanded that public housing give priority to the very poor and also turned mainly to the courts to protect tenant rights – often at the cost of further isolating the poor and undermining any management authority to bring order to public housing neighborhoods.”

The Johnson residents seemed to trust neither liberals nor conservatives; residents’ struggle for control has remained the same no matter which political persuasion was in office. While the residents at the Johnson Houses did not express any desire to own their development, they were interested in acquiring the skills to manage it.⁶⁵

Funding Allocated for and Regulations Devised to Protect Resident Empowerment

During the presidency of George H. Bush (Republican; January 20, 1989 – January 20, 1993), Kemp successfully lobbied Congress to pass the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 and to fund the

⁶⁴ Since the 1960s, operating expenses for public housing has been much higher than the rent collected from residents and from federal and state subsidies. As a result, local authorities lacked the income needed to provide day-to-day maintenance and to make regular capital improvements. Funding cutbacks during the Reagan administration resulted in repairs being further deferred, which contributed to the rapid decay of even the most well-managed housing developments (Degrafinried and Bishop 2009).

⁶⁵ Title 24, Code of Federal Regulations, part 964 sets the implementing regulations for Section 20. Councils may “use HUD technical assistance to develop management capability, identify social support needs of the residents and secure such support, and implement a wide range of activities to further resident management.” It provided support for “training and technical assistance for the establishment of new resident management groups. It also allowed residents’ associations to reinvest savings from resident management to establish small business enterprises. Other key features of the Act were that it provided “new opportunities for public housing residents to take control of their own lives by managing or buying their own housing.” President Regan introduced the Act at 11:57 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. S.825, approved February 5, was assigned Public Law No. 100 – 242.

Public Housing Drug Elimination Program, a grant program that “provided public housing authorities with relatively unrestricted funding for reimbursement of local law enforcement agencies, drug prevention and treatment programs, and tenant-operated security initiatives” aimed at reducing drug-related crime in public housing projects.⁶⁶ Cities around the country administered the program using a variety of models that included increasing police presence in and around public housing developments, funding social service agencies for on-site drug treatment programs, funding for summer camps for youth, and providing drug prevention education.

Between 1990 and 1996 NYCHA received \$165 million in Public Housing Drug Elimination Program funds. Within that time period NYCHA invested \$42 million of its Drug Elimination Program funds in physical repairs to facilities and the remainder in programs such as community center programs, Tenant Patrols, and in Operation Safe Home, which created intensive patrols in and around public housing.⁶⁷ Throughout the seven years NYCHA received Drug Elimination Program funds, the priority for their use shifted based on the law enforcement strategy and social policy priorities of the mayoral administration in office at the time of the fund’s release. In 1991, during the Dinkins administration, one-third of NYCHA’s Drug Elimination Program funds were allocated to drug abuse treatment and services. As part of his strategy to improve all aspects of the management of NYCHA, in 1990, Dinkins appointed Laura D. Blackburne, a prominent Black civil rights attorney and close ally, to head the agency; she was the first woman to head the agency. She was well-known in public housing for speaking out against the New York Police

⁶⁶ “As Federal Aid Drops, City’s Cost for Policing Public Housing Climbs.” New York City Independent Budget Office. *Inside the Budget*. Number 129. April 15, 2004.

⁶⁷ HUD, “Information Package: Public Housing Drug Elimination Program Model Programs,” Drug Information & Strategy Clearinghouse, Rockville, MD, 2001.

Department shooting of Eleanor Bumpurs, a resident of the Sedgwick Houses, a NYCHA development in the Bronx, on October 29, 1984. Blackburne accused the New York City Police Department of using unnecessary and excessive force when trying to evict Bumpurs, a 66-year old Black woman. The shooting provoked heated debate about police brutality and racism and positioned Blackburne to reorganize NYCHA so that it engaged residents instead of just managing them.⁶⁸ Despite acquiring \$375 million dollars in modernization funds for NYCHA developments and being credited with introducing successful drug elimination programs, Blackburne resigned from her position in 1992.⁶⁹ A series of high profile allegations of lavish spending on renovations to her office and on expensive hotels while travelling to conduct NYCHA business were launched against her.⁷⁰ Her expenditures were serious enough to be investigated by Dinkins' office, the city's Department of Investigation, the State Attorney General, HUD, and the United States Attorney.⁷¹ Blackburne's departure was a major setback for NYCHA residents' gains in civil rights and collective efficacy.⁷²

By 1996, during the Giuliani administration, less than three percent of the funds were utilized for drug abuse treatment and services (Fagan, Davies, and Holland 2005). In 1995 the Housing Police became a sub-division within the New York Police Department and NYCHA began paying the City for police protection. According to the September 1994 agreement between the

⁶⁸ "New Housing Chief Takes Post with Determination for Change," *The Amsterdam News*, October 13, 1990.

⁶⁹ Sims, Calvin, "Housing Chief Quits Her Post under Pressure," *New York Times*, N.Y./Region, February 23, 1992. <http://www.nytimes.com/1992/02/23/nyregion/housing-chief-quits-her-post-under-pressure.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm> (accessed August 4, 2011)

⁷⁰ Sims, Calvin, "Housing Chief Gets Rebuke from Dinkins," *New York Times*, N.Y./Region, February 19, 1992. <http://www.nytimes.com/1992/02/19/nyregion/housing-chief-gets-rebuke-from-dinkins.html> (accessed August 4, 2011).

⁷¹ Sims, Calvin, "Aides Call Dinkins Irate At Housing Chairwoman," *New York Times*, N.Y./Region, February 22, 1992. <http://www.nytimes.com/1992/02/22/nyregion/aides-call-dinkins-irate-at-housing-chairwoman.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm> (accessed August 4, 2011).

⁷² Sims, Calvin, "200 Rally to Support Housing Aide," *New York Times*, N.Y./Region, February 20, 1992. <http://www.nytimes.com/1992/02/20/nyregion/200-rally-to-support-housing-aide.html> (accessed August 4, 2011).

New York Police Department and NYCHA, NYCHA agreed to pay the City to provide a level of policing “over and above baseline services.” It describes those services as including vertical sweeps of buildings, bicycle patrols, narcotics enforcement, anti-graffiti and elevator vandalism, and administrative services.⁷³ A large percentage of funds were allocated to the Operation Safe Home program for street-level law enforcement, which began in 1994 during the Giuliani administration.⁷⁴ Although most of the Drug Elimination Programs were indistinguishable from other policing programs—which the Johnson Houses residents felt were highly racialized and discriminated against poor, “especially poor public housing residents,” because police officers were constantly harassing them—some Drug Elimination Program funds were made available for residents to start their own businesses.⁷⁵ Some of these funds were allocated through NYCHA’s youth entrepreneur program, which was initiated as a crime-deterrent program. With Drug Elimination Program funds, Ms. Velez helped some of the youth at Johnson Houses start their own not-for-profit business called Ghetto Gear. They designed, silk-screened, and sold t-shirts. Ms. Velez recalled:

I always have to give the Bush, the daddy Bush, administration credit for giving—for at least attempting to give—residents the kind of money they needed. Bertha [Gilkey] was very influential in that...as far as Jack Kemp...making him see that residents needed other options....Community economic development hadn’t proven to have a sizable impact...yet we need economic strategies that strengthen the community and its residents not that just focus on people as consumers. We wanted to develop our own economic options and ensure residents jobs. Low income people need to market and consume from

⁷³ Manny Fernandez, “City Criticized for Fees Paid by Its Agency for Housing,” *New York Times*, N.Y./Region, July 7, 2008, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/07/nyregion/07housing.html?scp=24&sq=&st=nyt> (accessed March 17, 2010).

⁷⁴ For descriptions of the street-level enforcement strategy implemented in New York City during this time period see: Judith A. Greene. “Zero Tolerance: A Case Study of Police Policies and Practices in New York City.” *Crime and Delinquency* 45, no. 2 (April 1999).and William Bratton and Peter Knobler. *Turnaround: How America's Top Cop Reversed the Crime Epidemic*. New York: Random House, Inc, 1998. For analysis of the strategy of street-level law enforcement see: Jeffery Fagan and Garth Davies, “Street Cops and Broken Windows: Terry, Race, and Disorder in New York City.” *Fordham Urban Law Journal* 28 (2000): 457-504; Spitzer, Eliot. Office of the New York State Attorney General, *Stop and Frisk Report*, 1999; and George Kelling and Catherine Cole. *Fixing Broken Windows: Restoring Order and Reducing Crime in Our Communities*. New York: The Free Press, 1996.

⁷⁵ Informal conversation with Johnson residents in Residents’ Association office, July 7, 2008.

each other.... Too many of our resources just flow right out of the community like capital flight in the Third World. Local businesses are mainly run by people from outside the neighborhood and many take advantage of poor people. Social service organizations are even worse: they receive funds to serve the poor of East Harlem with no accountability or pay back. Public services—welfare—the Housing Authority often mistreat the poor and don't form principled partnerships. These endeavors need to be turned over to local residents to run—welfare reform should be about community control and economic development—which can be achieved if it's focused at the neighborhood level.⁷⁶

Utilizing the wish lists that the residents developed under Ms. Gilkey's direction as a guide for what Johnson Houses could become, in 1993 the Johnson Houses Residents' Association, in partnership with National Congress of Neighborhood Women, applied for a HUD Tenant Opportunity Program grant to continue organizing the Johnson Houses residents. The purpose of the Tenant Opportunity Program was to provide funds to public housing residents' associations "for technical assistance and implementation of such things as tenant management corporations, resident-owned businesses, child care services, youth programs, and tenant patrols" to continue to encourage residents to become homeowners by providing them with experience and technical assistance in managing their own development.⁷⁷ It "was designed to prepare residents to experience the dignity of meaningful work, to own and operate resident businesses, to move toward financial independence, and to enable them to choose where they want to live and engage in meaningful participation in the management of housing developments in which they live."⁷⁸ The Johnson Houses Residents' Association received a \$40,000 Tenant Opportunity Program grant; and utilized the funds for resident leadership training and capacity-building.

⁷⁶ Ethel Velez, interviewed by Tamar Carroll and Martha Ackelsberg, March 30, 2004. Oral History Project, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

⁷⁷ Theodore Koebel and Marilyn S. Cavell, "Tenant Organizations in Public Housing Projects: A Report on Senate Resolution No. 347," report prepared for the Virginia Housing Study Commission by the Virginia Center for Housing Research, October 1995.

⁷⁸ US Department of Housing and Urban Development Title 24, Part §964—Tenant Participation and Tenant Opportunities in Public Housing; §964.12 "HUD policy on the Tenant Opportunities Program (TOP)."

In 1994, the Tenant Opportunity Program/Resident Management Tenant Assistance Grant program was funded by Congress to “expand resident participation...by conducting resident outreach and planning activities.”⁷⁹ With the first round of the Tenant Opportunity Program/Resident Management Tenant Assistance Grant program, funding applications were required to be submitted to HUD by the local public housing authority. The Johnson Houses Residents’ Association, with the help of the National Congress of Neighborhood Women, submitted an application to NYCHA to endorse and submit to HUD. Johnson Houses Residents’ Association and National Congress of Neighborhood Women leadership, after inquiring with HUD officials about their application, learned that NYCHA never submitted their application. The Johnson Houses Residents’ Association and National Congress of Neighborhood Women leadership speculated that the application had not been submitted to HUD in retaliation for the organizing activities Ms. Velez, other public housing leaders, and the National Congress of Neighborhood Women had been initiating throughout the five boroughs of New York City.⁸⁰ This behavior was met with suspicion because one day Giuliani made a list of everyone who had been hired by the City of New York, including NYCHA, during the Dinkins administration and then fired them.⁸¹

The following year, HUD changed the submission rules and residents’ associations were asked to submit their application to HUD directly. The application had to include a letter of support from the local PHA. The Johnson Houses Residents’ Association was awarded \$100,000 for additional community organizing, resident training, and capacity-building. However, very little training was

⁷⁹ Ethel Velez, Needmore Fund Application Form, May 1, 1995, p. 3, Box 101, Folder 35, National Congress of Neighborhood Women Collection.

⁸⁰ Ms. Velez in conversation with the author, June 17, 2008.

⁸¹ Account told to me during a conversation with J. Phillip Thompson.

provided by HUD to assist public housing resident leadership in drawing-down their funds. Ironically, when the Tenant Opportunity Program grant was initially approved by Congress the popular narrative about public housing residents was that they could not, even with proper training and financial support, control their own environment.⁸² About being awarded the Tenant Opportunity Program grant Ms. Velez reflected:

One of the scariest things was after I got my money: I don't think that anyone else was able to spend the money. Everybody I know has turned their money back. Because they've just made it so difficult to spend this \$100,000. So difficult, you could not believe how difficult. That's a whole other thing. You talk to TA presidents and they just cringe at the sound of hearing about any HUD money because they make it so difficult for people to spend it.⁸³

Expanding the Long-term Vision of Johnson Houses

Also in 1995, through National Congress of Neighborhood Women leadership, Ms. Velez was introduced to leadership from the Housing Environmental Research Group at the City University of New York's Graduate Center. The Johnson Houses Residents' Association formed a partnership with Housing Environmental Research Group and embarked on a participatory community-planning community-building process. The three-year strategic community-building and planning effort was named Project Wheel. About the goals of the project Ms. Velez said:

It must help people refocus and take control of their own lives—go beyond saying to doing. A group discipline must be established to counter individual 'up and out.' Since we are in a bottom-up process where tenants take charge of their own planning process, a lot of learning needs to be done about the economic, political, and social systems. Finding experienced effective organizers and trainers in this new mode is a challenge.⁸⁴

⁸² During a House of Representatives Subcommittee on Human Resources and Intergovernmental Relations, Committee on Government Reform and Oversight hearing entitled "Wasteful Management of HUD Funds in Public Housing Tenant Programs" held November 9, 1995, Representative Edolphus Towns (D-NY Congressional District 10 in Brooklyn, NY) addressed the committee stating: "Even so, the theory that public housing residents could somehow manage their own communities was not met with enthusiastic congressional support. In the beginning, it was only \$2.5 million, in 1988. Then, of course, in 1991, we increase it to \$5 million, and now it is up to \$25 million, in 1995." <http://ftp.resource.org/gpo.gov/hearings/104h/22829.pdf> (accessed April 12, 2010)

⁸³ Ethel Velez, interviewed by Tamar Carroll and Martha Ackelsberg, March 30, 2004. Oral History Project, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

⁸⁴ Ethel Velez, Needmore Fund Application Form, May 1, 1995, p. 3, Box 101, Folder 35, National Congress of Neighborhood Women Collection.

Through Project Wheel, the Residents' Association, with assistance from Housing Environmental Research Group, devised a questionnaire about quality of life issues at Johnson Houses and administered it to the residents. Ms. Gilkey had demonstrated to the resident leaders that data from surveys can give the community direction. Residents were hired to go door to door and administer the survey. At that time Johnson Houses had 1,307 apartments available for occupancy; approximately 950 questionnaires were completed. A response rate that high, 72%, is very impressive. The results from the questionnaire were utilized as Johnson Houses' blueprint for how to proceed in the community-building and planning process. Ms. Velez's main focus for Project Wheel was to:

...turn James Weldon Johnson Housing Complex into a comprehensive community model where residents have created the capacity to control their development. To get there we need to change our relationship with the NYCHA and HUD by forming new types of partnerships with tenants taking the lead and establishing accountability standards.

Another challenge is to change the way people work with each other in the community and restore their faith in the value and importance of participation. The 'new way' must support cultural strength and foster a familial and community spirit. This new way must assist the poor in their personal survival, yet add to the growth and transformation of the community. The process must build a value and accountability system.

I want to ensure public housing leaders that they can take charge of their own complexes—turn them into communities with real economic resources. East Harlem, which is likely to become an Empowerment Zone, will be a place where tenants across the country and around the world will come to learn from tenants how they took control and turned their community around.⁸⁵

One of the issues residents identified in the questionnaires that needed attention was lighting.

There was not enough lighting in the development, and people who did not live in the development, residents reported, would use that fact to their advantage—especially after those

⁸⁵ Ethel Velez, interviewed by Tamar Carroll and Martha Ackelsberg, March 30, 2004. Oral History Project, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

individuals committed a crime. “There’s no doorman downstairs to stop people from coming into these developments,” Ms. Carter reflected.⁸⁶ Through Project Wheel, the Residents’ Association drafted petitions to NYCHA for more lighting. The building captains went throughout their buildings and got the petitions signed. One week later the Johnson Houses Residents’ Association sent the petitions to NYCHA staff. In 1996 NYCHA allocated the Johnson Houses \$40,000 for new lighting and seventy-seven new lights were purchased. Ms. Esther described the development as having gone “from pure darkness to almost daylight.”⁸⁷ Although the lighting improvements were aimed at deterring crime, residents, in my conversations with them, did not make any correlations between, for example, the lack of adequate lighting and a grand theory about the social breakdown of their community as James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling (1982) argued through their “broken windows” theory. Wilson and Kelling’s theory links social disorder and crime and claims that in socially orderly communities crime and low-level anti-social behavior is deterred (2-3). They argue that “a stable neighborhood of families who care for their homes, mind each other’s children, and confidently frown on unwanted intruders can change, in a few years or even a few months, to inhospitable and frightening jungle” if there is a breakdown of the community controls that results in broken windows that are not repaired immediately after they are broken (3). A more accurate description of what I observed the residents at Johnson engaged in is collective efficacy. Sampson and Raudenbush (1993) dispute Wilson and Kelling’s premise that social disorder and crime are strongly correlated and argue that the relationship between social disorder and crime is weak. Sampson and Raudenbush contend that instead, collective efficacy, “...cohesion among residents combined with shared expectations for the social control of public space,” is the actual cause of varying crime rates”

⁸⁶ Author in informal conversation with Johnson Houses residents, June 10, 2008.

⁸⁷ Author in informal conversation with Johnson Houses residents, July 7, 2008.

(190). They argue that

...collective efficacy is a task-specific construct that highlights shared expectations and mutual engagement by residents with respect to issues of social control (Sampson et al. 1999). Moving from a focus on private ties to social efficacy signifies an emphasis on shared beliefs in neighbors' conjoint capability for action to achieve an intended effect, and hence an active sense of engagement on part of residents. As Bandura (1997) argues, the ultimate meaning of efficacy is captured in expectations about the exercise of control, elevating the agential aspect of social life over a perspective centered on the accumulation of resources. This conception is consistent with the redefinition of social capital by Portes and Sensenbrenner as "expectations for action within a collectivity" (1993, 1323)."

After success with getting additional lighting, the Residents' Association turned to getting fencing installed around the development. Situated within what some call "Project Row" because of the number of public housing developments located adjacent to each other in a row, the Johnson Houses residents felt they were victims of individuals who were committing crimes in other parts of the neighborhood but running through the developments to become anonymous by blending in with all of the people residing in and congregating around the developments. Ms. Velez recalls:

And now we're on our wish list. Ah ha! What did we want? Well, we wanted to redesign our development. So what we did was follow the dollar. We said 'How much money are we going to have?' And we talked about what we wanted done. One of the things we wanted done was fencing and seating. For about four years NYCHA said they were going to do fencing...but they were going to do three-foot fencing. Our crime problem was so hard here that we knew we needed higher fencing. That was to deter people from running through here as they shoot. So one of the things that we fought for was the six-foot fencing.⁸⁸

The fencing is a representation of the residents attempting to exert control over their space. More specifically, Ms. Carter informed me: "The fence was to keep the police from running through here shooting at people."⁸⁹ In addition to the lighting and fencing, the Johnson Houses residents

⁸⁸ Ethel Velez, Needmore Fund Application Form, May 1, 1995, p. 3, Box 101, Folder 35, National Congress of Neighborhood Women Collection.

⁸⁹ Informal conversation with Johnson Houses residents, June 10, 2008.

fought to be able to reconfigure the seating in all of the courtyard areas in front of all of the buildings:

We fought to get the sitting areas so that all of our benches faced our buildings and no benches were isolated. And the seating is really based on what the National Congress had talked about. Sitting in circles. So all of us sitting connected. No longer sitting isolated, a bench over here, a bench over there. All of our seating is together. So if anybody comes in and out of our building, the person sees them, they can't say that they don't see them.

The residents also wanted NYCHA to make repairs to the building:

They wanted to brick it all up and just put a window there instead of glass block. So that was a big plus and besides that we got our residents hired. So our residents were hired to work on the grounds as the jobs were being done and it just made really a big difference. So the empowering feeling of doing that was like, wow.⁹⁰

In addition to lighting, fencing, and seating, the Johnson Houses Residents' Association started a group, the Youth Patrol, through to engage youth in the community planning and building process, counted all the damages to the glass blocks in the building. The Youth Patrol found that only 3% of all the glass blocks were broken—at that time, the glass blocks had been in place for twenty years. Ms. Velez commented:

So statistics were saying that we don't need to have the windows bricked up. We said [to the NYCHA staff], 'Look, the glass is important to have light in the hallways. And if you think about air, let's put up to the top so they can't throw things out the window. The windows open up about seven inches, we want air and light.' And the bricking was going to cost us as much as the block glass because it was masonry type of work. And so we got our block glass.⁹¹

After successfully lobbying NYCHA for new lighting, seating arrangements, and glass blocks, the Johnson Houses Residents' Association had gained a sense of greater control over their environment. In addition, as part of control, having a visually beautiful place to live was

⁹⁰ Ethel Velez, interviewed by Tamar Carroll and Martha Ackelsberg, March 30, 2004. Oral History Project, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

⁹¹ Ibid.

important to the residents. One of the effects of poverty and racism is for the poor and minorities to be housed in undesirable places. Successfully improving the aesthetics of the Johnson Houses positively affected the residents' sense of self and of citizenship.⁹² Ms. Velez reflected:

They [NYCHA staff, the architects, and the designers] kind of hate coming here because I'm ruthless with them. Some folks, even the fact that they're able to sit at the table with them. Now they [NYCHA] stopped piece-mealing developments. The piece-mealing for me would be, they would have chain-linked fence, railroad fencing, steel bar fencing. It would just look all messed up. Now they try to make it look much nicer.⁹³

Political Backlash to Resident Organizing

In early 1997 while Ms. Velez was in Tennessee at a conference, New York Police Department, closed-down all of the tenant-managed programs. Ms. Velez recalled:

NYPD [the New York Police Department] had moved all the stuff I had into one little room. They had thrown stuff all around; it looked like a jungle when I went up in there. They had thrown stuff all over the place. It was like 'okay I'm never going to be using this room.' So I started working out of my house and I had to pull files together. They had gone through my files. They tried to find stuff that they could use against me. They wouldn't let me go and get none of my records out of the office.⁹⁴

Some residents thought the programs were closed-down for political reasons: in particular because the Mayor, Giuliani, thought that Ms. Velez's activities to organize residents were too effective and that she was gaining too much power through her organizing activities. Giuliani wanted to sell off public housing in marketable areas to his friends in real estate. Ms. Velez and

⁹² There is a deep legacy of racism in the physical planning of New York City. Robert Moses, the New York City Parks Commissioner and head of the Triborough Bridge and Tunnel Authority in the 1930's through the 1950s I wrote about in the previous chapter, was involved in the destruction of many of the city's ethnic and minority neighborhoods to provide space for private developers and for highways. His approach to planning the city "depended on collaboration with planners whose broad views (and personal gains) coincided with Moses' agenda. Although his intimidation of the City Planning Commission was whispered about in the professional circles, the ready compliance of key members, who supported superblocs, bulldozer clearance, and arterial highways, was often overlooked. As a matter of course, commissioners failed to disqualify themselves from voting on projects in which they were vitally interested.... To make room for hospitals and universities, they shoved aside lofts and warehouses as well as the tenements that housed their workers. Those sickened by Negro removal had in reality sealed the fate of Negroes' jobs and, all things considered, their future in the city" (Schwartz xx, xix-xx).

⁹³ Ethel Velez, interviewed by Tamar Carroll and Martha Ackelsberg, March 30, 2004. Oral History Project, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

others strongly resisted this and organized residents citywide. The groups' efforts reflected negative light on the Giuliani administration. Although the Giuliani administration took pride in not folding to public pressure, Giuliani retaliatory action indicated that he took criticism of his administration personally (Angotti 2008). Johnson Houses Residents' Association leadership was initially told that the youth program in particular was closed down because they were selling drugs out of the community center, which was also where the Residents' Association office was located. Ms. Carter remarked: "Police hung around here all the time...so if we were selling drugs, so were the police." When New York Police Department could not document the selling of any drugs, they told the Residents' Association that that they could not utilize space in the community center because they were not on the lease for the space.⁹⁵ Many residents recalled the community center "being the hub of the community."⁹⁶ There was a garden, dance, and computer literacy program in addition to other programs many of the residents participated in. Ms. Velez commented:

One of the biggest things that the kids missed, they missed the Youth Patrol. So as they were kicking me out of the community center, my thought was that we're going to get another community center. So we fought that for a year or so; going back and forth. Jan Peterson [who was the Director of National Congress of Neighborhood Women] got us a lawyer...several lawyers. We had to go to court, even just to get our equipment from them. They had taken most of the stuff I had and threw it in the garbage.

When Giuliani ran for office in 1993, he ran on a "quality-of-life" agenda. He argued that marginalized groups created crime. He stated that the key to a better quality of life in New York City was to cut down on crime and that the poor did not need programs, they needed discipline. Vitale (2008) contends that Giuliani's quality of life agenda helped transform the way New York City addressed a whole range of social problems. He argues that: "while the previous paradigm

⁹⁵ Informal conversation with Johnson Houses residents, June 10, 2008.

⁹⁶ Informal conversation with Johnson Houses residents, August 18, 2008.

of urban liberalism place[s] a premium on social tolerance, government planning, and rehabilitation, the new paradigm was driven by a concern with social intolerance, market- and volunteer-driven mechanisms of social change, and punitiveness” (2). Some residents in the Johnson Houses reported that Giuliani was the impetus for New York Police Department to act aggressively towards them.⁹⁷ Vitale argues that over the course of his eight years in office, Giuliani’s quality of life agenda, which was racially antagonistic, fostered “active antagonism” towards the socially marginal (2). Not only had “prostitution, graffiti, and young men hanging out on street corners, as well as pan handlers and squeegee men, viewed as a source rather than symptom of urban decline” but local Black and Latino communities were allowed little voice in how local problems would be addressed (2). For over a year and a half into his first term in office, Giuliani refused to have a meeting with Black elected officials. Thus, by ordering New York Police Department to close-down all of the programs at the Johnson Houses Community Center, Giuliani not only violated the protections afforded public housing residents in the §964 Regulations but he grossly abused the power of his office. Ms. Velez reflected that sometime after that incident she:

...left doing the community center work. I had to do the organizing which led me to do citywide organizing. I wasn’t really doing the organizing in that level in East Harlem right here. I was just trying to say, we should all develop this in our area; we could all go for the same thing. Since they thought I was organizing, now let’s really consciously think about organizing.

We were doing a conference with CUNY and with the Secretary of HUD. The Assistant Secretary was coming and he wanted to walk on the development grounds and NYCHA staff told him he could not come onto the property. They told him that if he stepped on the grounds, he would be arrested. He came on the grounds anyway but him and his staff left before the police came. The manager came out and said, ‘Look, I have to call the police because they told me if he came to call the police.’ During that time, no politicians were allowed on the grounds.

Now with citywide organizing that we were doing...we were really running up

⁹⁷ Informal conversation with Johnson Houses residents, June 8, 2008.

against...the Housing Authority...Even though they keep saying the things that we're talking about are not the truth—that we're alarmists. Folks need to be scared, so yeah, we're going to scare you. They use to have hearings and people wouldn't turn out to the hearings. The hearings that we had at Pace University, they had to call the police because not only was the inside totally full, we had the outside. People were jam-packed all over the streets. So they had to move to the Marriott to start having these meetings.

We would pull in two to three thousand people and the Housing Authority would never again have HUD meetings and not have people there. So the organizing goes on and the folks who were scared about organizing really have to be scared.What I know I share with people, I share with as many people as I possibly can. And all the time I'm getting calls from different groups who are sending people over, saying help these people do this and help these people do that.

I go to meetings and the board members don't sign the agenda. Don't sign the attendance sheet because they take that as you agreed to everything. You don't sign anything until after the meeting is over. We write on the attendance sheet what we agreed to and what we didn't agree to and then we sign it. And they hate that. Because then they can't take the paper and do whatever they want to afterwards. And then you give us all copies before you leave. And so I've been teaching others, just little, simple things, because they'll come and say, 'You agreed to that.' And you have nothing to say that you did or didn't. Get copies. Give all the board members copies, somebody lose one they'll know we have 5 or 6 other copies out there.⁹⁸

Residents felt they had very little recourse for the routine violation of the §964 Regulations.

Although there was some vocal opposition to Giuliani's aggressive rhetoric and behavior, residents felt they did not have any real, direct recourse for his abuse of the power of his office. They appealed to the HUD Secretary, Henry Cisneros (Democrat; January 22, 1993 – January 19, 1997) who had the power to hold NYCHA accountable, their appeals went unanswered; residents did not have the relationship with Cisneros, or any other HUD secretary, that they had with Kemp. As a result, the Regulations outlined residents' rights but were only aspirational in providing a clear pathway for enforcement.

⁹⁸ Ethel Velez, interviewed by Tamar Carroll and Martha Ackelsberg, March 30, 2004. Oral History Project, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

The Struggle for a Space to Contend with the Overlapping Institutional Arrangements

Shortly before Michael Bloomberg took office January 1, 2002, the Johnson Houses residents started making plans to rebuild the community center. After Bloomberg reappointed Tino Hernandez as the Chairman of NYCHA, Ms. Velez moved forward on the wish list she and other residents had devised while working with Ms. Gilkey in the 1980s. She met with NYCHA staff to begin discussion about building a new community center for Johnson Houses. Ms. Velez reflects:

The new administration said, 'Okay, we're going to renovate the center that you have.' And I'm like, 'No, we're going to build a community center from the ground.' And they're like, 'Well, we can't do that, there's no space.' They came, they looked. They said, 'No we can't build it: there's no space here.'⁹⁹

The Johnson Houses Residents' Association embarked on a planning process that would help the community not only maintain a strong vision and purpose for the community center but would ensure that the entire community felt that they owned it. She said:

Youth were given the opportunity to be asked and then to express their vision and to see their ideas coming into fruition. That was one of the things I'd ask especially the young people. I'd ask what did they want this community center to look like? What did they want on the inside? Of course, nobody thought it would actually happen.¹⁰⁰

Ms. Velez was very clear about articulating the community's vision for the Johnson Houses Community Center with NYCHA staff:

So I went outside and I said 'why can't we build it this way?' and I showed them how a community center could be built. They said, 'It can't be built this way because there's not enough space in between the buildings. There's not enough roof space.' Everything that they came up with I took under consideration and I went around visiting other developments and I took footage about how far it was away from the buildings, what was the roofing. I said to the planners and architects, 'How come over there in the Bronx it's like this and over in Brooklyn I saw that this was there?' And by the time it was finished, it was like, 'Okay, let's look at what you want to do.'

⁹⁹ Ethel Velez, interviewed by Tamar Carroll and Martha Ackelsberg, March 30, 2004. Oral History Project, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

Me and this architect, the consultant, argued for three years: he wanted it his way and I wanted it my way. I really wanted it to be something different. I wanted it to be a state-of-the-art looking facility. The child care center is going to be huge. The after-school program, where that's going to be put is going to be huge. The dream of that is coming. There is no gym in this area for kids; we're going to have a gym. There's going to be a computer center. The kids wanted a recording studio; there's going to be a recording studio, a dance studio, a culinary kitchen, a regular kitchen and sewing center. This is being built on Lexington Ave., a two-story child care center. It's going to be all glass. I didn't want bricks; I wanted glass. A playground roof on top. We do a lot of shows and stuff. Our gym is going to open out. The stage opens into the community to a nice little amphitheatre.

I wanted as much air to come in and I wanted light to be in this building. The biggest thing is going to be glass. People are like, 'Aww God. Why glass?' I'm like, 'Look, why a brick building? Let's get as much light as possible.'

These developments could be much better than what they are. One of the things...when they were building the community center here, I argued a lot with them about colors. Most of the developments have orange, yellow, blue. What is this? Why are we sitting on yellow and orange benches? I just couldn't understand why they have to look so crazy. And changing the color has a big deal; changing from their regular orange and blue. They like red too. They like the primary colors. They do like those colors. I think we probably kind of scared them when we started changing the colors around.¹⁰¹

The Johnson Houses Residents' Association worked with NYCHA to try to get residents to help construct the community center through the unions.

We work with all the unions right now; we've been working with the trades. When a contractor comes on the grounds, he has to pay people prevailing wages. They weren't doing it: been on the books for years. But they never paid them. They would pay them \$6 or \$8 an hour. Which people were grateful for. But now they can't pay them anything less than \$27 an hour. Which now means that the contractor, when he goes out to bid, he has to bid within reason so that includes hiring residents, which means his bid has to be, has to be a reasonable bid even if a union contractor wanted to bid on it. Because if your bid was so low, that means your bid was low that you weren't paying your people any money.¹⁰²

The Johnson Houses Residents' Association worked with NYCHA to create a pre-apprentice program and an apprentice program that would train young people to work in the construction

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid.

trades.¹⁰³ The purpose of the program was to train residents so that they could go right into a union upon successful completion of the program. The unions would train them in spite of any criminal record they might have. What the residents were able to achieve was a major accomplishment.¹⁰⁴

Over the years, however, NYCHA had developed a reputation for not following through on promises so the City Council created an oversight committee to make sure the program was implemented.¹⁰⁵ The residents also wanted to protect themselves from the whims of a new mayor

¹⁰³ Over the years NYCHA has “developed a number of in-house employment programs, such as plastering, heating, and janitorial services. These programs were uniformly successful, mainly because NYCHA hired the graduates of their programs” (Thompson 1999, 124-125). NYCHA spends nearly \$1 billion each year on rehabilitating properties.

¹⁰⁴ The history of pre-apprentice and apprentice programs connected to HUD have roots in the uprisings of the 1960s. In effort to understand the root causes of the uprisings of the 1960s, in 1967 President Johnson appointed a commission, the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. The Commission’s report, the “Kerner Report on Racial Discrimination and Civil Unrest in the US,” found that the primary cause of racial unrest and violence was residential segregation. The report concluded that America was “moving toward two societies, one black, one white separate and unequal,” noting that “white society is deeply implicated in the ghetto. White institutions created it, white institutions maintain it, and white society condones it.” Less than a year after the report was released, on April 4, 1968, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated. One week later, on April 11, 1968, the Civil Rights Act of 1968, which expanded previous Civil Rights Acts by prohibiting discrimination based on race, color, religion and national origin, was passed.

The Civil Rights Act of 1968 stated that “the Secretary of HUD shall: a. require, in consultation with the Secretary of Labor, that to the greatest extent feasible opportunities for training and employment arising in connection with the planning, construction, rehabilitation; and operation of housing assisted under such programs [the section 235 homeownership program, the section 236 rental assistance program, and the section 221(d)(3) below market interest rate program] be given to lower income persons residing in the area of such housing; and b. require, in consultation with the Administrator of the Small Business Administration, that to the greatest extent feasible contracts for work to be performed pursuant to such programs [the section 235 homeownership program, the section 236 rental assistance program, and the section 221(d)(3) below-market interest rate program] shall, where appropriate, be awarded to business concerns, including but not limited to individuals or firms doing business in the fields of design, architecture, building construction, rehabilitation, maintenance, or repair, located in or owned in substantial part by persons residing in the area of such housing (Housing and Urban Development Act of 1968, Pub. L. No. 90-448, § 2, 82 Stat. 476, 476 (1968).)//////Id. at § 3, 82 Stat. 476, 476 (1968)).

¹⁰⁵ Section 3 is a provision of the 1968 Act aimed to stimulate local economic development and individual self-sufficiency. Section 3 requires that recipients of HUD contracts “to the greatest extent feasible,” provide job training, employment, and contracting opportunities for low- or very-low income residents in connection with projects and activities in their neighborhood. Section 3 is Congressional acknowledgement that HUD funds are one of the largest sources of federal funding expended in communities throughout the US. The objectives of Section 3 “are: (1) to use HUD program funds to provide a springboard for residents to become economically empowered through direct participation in construction and other activities designed to physically improve and revitalize their neighborhoods, and (2) to anchor Departmental efforts to strengthen communities, promote individual responsibility and reduce dependency on Federal assistance such as welfare and housing subsidies.” (See: the *Legal Authority: Section 3* of the HUD Act of 1968; 24 CFR Part 135).

or a staff change at NYCHA. They wanted “something in-place that won’t be disbanded.”¹⁰⁶

Looking at the community, you can’t change the community without giving job opportunities. You have to have opportunities that work with the lifestyle of what’s going on. You cannot say that people work for minimum wage and it’s going to be okay; it just doesn’t work. Minimum wage don’t work for people; it doesn’t work. And if we want to pull them away from the drug dealers, because they are our number one employer, we have to give them something. For a young kid now, I mean, to come home with \$700 a week is a big deal. And you don’t have to run from the cops...and in four years, if you stayed with this group, you’d be making \$50,000 and you’ll have your dignity and you can have a family and you could move to any state you wanted to because you have a union card and you’re able to do a job. But more so than that, you could be a handyman and it’s okay because it’s on your terms and you have a skill.

They’ve taken all that stuff out of school. They had carpentry, they had electrical, they had homemaking, they had all those things that would help people to do other things. All that stuff has been taken out. All this ‘Don’t Leave No Child Behind,’ all that stuff is crap. You’ve left them behind because you’ve stripped music from the programs; you’ve stripped gym, you’ve taken away. Everyone is not going to be a scientist, they’re not going to be a doctor, lawyer, none of that stuff. So all of those other trades they’ve taken out of the schools; you’ve not allowed young people to pick up anything else. So the kids, you know they control their school, they control their neighborhood.¹⁰⁷

The enactment of Section 3 has had problems from the beginning. It took HUD three and a half years to publish the regulations to implement the Section. HUD was sued for failing to issue the regulations in a timely manner. When the regulations were finally issued, they contained several defects that crippled the effectiveness of the Section. For example, HUD exempted contracts for less than \$500,000 and any subcontract for less than \$50,000 from Section 3’s requirements. As a result, start-up businesses owned by low-income residents were systematically excluded from earning those federal dollars. Also, “rather than subjecting all HUD-financed projects to the employment and contracting requirements of Section 3, the original legislation applied only to privately owned housing developments associated with low-income housing programs. As a result, employment and contracting opportunities that were associated with the construction and rehabilitation of large-scale public housing developments and/or other public works projects were not subject to Section 3” (Degrafinried and Bishop 2009).

An audit by the HUD Inspector General found that despite the Section 3 program being in existence for more than thirty-five years, it suffers from poor monitoring and compliance procedures. The audit noted that HUD has developed an online reporting system, “but the recipients of Section 3 are not required to use the system”. The study also found that contractors are often unaware of their Section 3 obligations and are seldom subject to consequences if they fail to meet their obligations. (See: Office of Inspector General, United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, Survey of HUD’S Administration of SECTION 3 of the HUD ACT OF 1968 at 2 (Audit Case #2003-KC-0001) (2003)).

The Section 3 program was not supported during the George W. Bush administration. The Obama administration has focused resources on its enforcement, requiring housing authorities across the country to address it. (See: “HUD Expands Job and Contracting Opportunities for Low-income Individuals and Businesses that Hire Them.” HUD Press Release No. 12-007. Washington, DC, January 18, 2012. http://portal.hud.gov/hudportal/HUD?src=/press/press_releases_media_advisories/2012/HUDNo.12-007. (Accessed January 30, 2012)).

¹⁰⁶ Ethel Velez, interviewed by Tamar Carroll and Martha Ackelsberg, March 30, 2004. Oral History Project, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

After a ten year process, in 2002, ground was broken and construction began on the community center. Between 2002 and 2008 construction of the Johnson Houses Community Center progressed slowly as several residents had to be relocated to make space available for the Johnson Houses Community Center. There were also several budget shortfalls—NYCHA began to run a budget deficit. Despite the starts and stops throughout the planning and construction process, the residents remained optimistic. Ms. Velez stated:

Well, they still want to build it. It shouldn't be finished in July. I anticipate it won't be done until December. They never finish on time, never, never, never, never....But what's coming out of this is something...this is the end of the wish list...and it's taken 20 years. All of the things that the residents have wanted in their wish list, this community center finishes it.¹⁰⁸

In early 2008, Johnson Houses Residents' Association leadership was told by NYCHA staff that the management for the Johnson Houses Community Center would most likely be privatized. They were told it would be programmed and managed either by the Boys and Girls Club, the Children's Aid Society, or some other youth-serving agency.¹⁰⁹ Residents felt that those organizations are great but the staff alienated some of the members of the community by excluding them from their programming. One of the main purposes of the Johnson Houses Community Center as envisioned by the Johnson Houses community is that it be available to everyone in the community. Having any entity other than the residents themselves program and

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ As discussed in the previous chapter, there was a plethora of poor-serving non-profit organizations founded in the 1960s both nationally and in New York City in response to the Civil Rights Movement, the Black Power Movement, and the movement for community control. Often the organizations were headed by middle class Black or Latino professionals or white (often Jewish) liberals like the women who ran the National Congress of Neighborhood Women. These non-profit organizations—and more recently, powerful social service agencies—headed by Black and Latino professionals sometimes complicates criticism from neighborhood activists like Ms. Velez. Often activists are angered by the paternalistic policies of the organizations or agencies but who do not to dismiss the leadership of the organization or agency publicly—especially when it pertains to holding a Black or Latino professional accountable in the presence of white people. While these activists often want sweeping policy changes, they do not want to eliminate any avenues to individuals in positions of power who might be useful in acquiring resources, including information.

manage the community center would most likely mean, the residents hypothesized, that their vision for a space that would serve as a place to resist all of the institutional arrangements they were encumbered by would not come to fruition.¹¹⁰

In May 2008 NYCHA announced that a budget shortfall could force it to close hundreds of community centers; senior centers; and recreational, job-training, and educational programs throughout the five boroughs.¹¹¹ NYCHA officials said that without increased government financing, they would have no choice but to close all of the programs and community centers they operate. With an operating budget of \$2.8 billion; NYCHA faced a \$170 million deficit in its operating budget in 2008. NYCHA is the largest landlord in New York City with 403,000 residents living in 178,000 apartments. It oversees 406,000 residents in 2,600 buildings with more than 3,300 elevators. It spends millions of dollars each year operating 21,000 units that the city and the state built. But the agency no longer receives regular financing from the New York City or the State of New York for those units. Of NYCHA's 343 developments, twenty-one were built by the city and the state but NYCHA receives very little federal or state financing for those complexes, which cost them \$86 million to operate in 1997. To pay for maintenance and to trim costs overall, it eliminated hundreds of jobs, deferred or cut capital projects, and considered raising the rents on its highest income-earning households. NYCHA is facing a \$195 million deficit in its operating budget this year and expects that gap to grow to \$207 million by 2012.¹¹²

From 2001 to 2008, it lost a total of \$611 million in federal funds for operations and \$450

¹¹⁰ Conversation with Ethel Velez, June 5, 2008.

¹¹¹ Manny Fernandez, "Public Housing Residents Face Loss of Their Community Centers," *New York Times*, NY/Region, June 17, 2008. http://www.nytimes.com/2008/06/17/nyregion/17center.html?pagewanted=1&_r=1&sq&st=nyt&scp=25 (accessed June 19, 2008).

¹¹² Manny Fernandez, "For Housing Authority, One Blow After Another," *New York Times*, NY/Region, October 12, 2008. <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/13/nyregion/13housing.html?scp=14&sq=&st=nyt> (accessed October 12, 2008).

million more for capital projects, including elevator replacements—money it qualified for under a federal spending formula but did not receive because of shortfalls in Congressional appropriations.¹¹³

NYCHA residents and New York City Council members argued that the City could help NYCHA by eliminating or reducing the payments NYCHA pays it for services. In lieu of property taxes NYCHA makes payments to the City for the delivery of certain services. The agreements are partly an outgrowth of the City's view of NYCHA as a steady source of federal money. The 1994 agreement on police services between NYCHA and the City, for example, was based, in part, on the fact that NYCHA received money from HUD for the Drug Elimination Program mentioned earlier. However, the financing for that program, which provided NYCHA with \$35 million annually for police services, was eliminated in 2002 but the City continues to charge NYCHA for the services.¹¹⁴ NYCHA pays for the New York Police Department's Housing Bureau, which patrols public housing developments in nine districts called Police Service Areas; last year, it paid the City \$65.6 million. In addition to those services, NYCHA pays for basic police, fire, and other municipal services; in 2007 the payment was \$18 million. NYCHA also pays the Department of Sanitation for an extra trash pickup each week at thirty developments that have no centralized garbage compound. That payment was \$842,000 in 2007. Moreover, NYCHA pays the City's Department for the Aging to operate one hundred and one senior centers in its buildings; in 2007 the cost of that service was \$29.4 million. NYCHA started making that

¹¹³ Ray Rivera, "A History of Problems, in a Time of Dwindling Budgets" *New York Times*, NY/Region, August 19, 2008. <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/20/nyregion/20elevators.html?scp=23&sq=&st=nyt> (accessed October 12, 2008).

¹¹⁴ Gina Holland, "President Proposes Scrapping Drug Program," Associated Press, March 11, 2001. "The President's Budget: Breakdown; Who Gets What Slice of the President's First Federal Budget," *New York Times*, US, April 10, 2001. <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/04/10/us/president-s-budget-breakdown-who-gets-what-slice-president-s-first-federal-795445.html> (accessed January 22, 2010).

payment in 2003 after the Department for the Aging faced deep budget cuts.

Payments to the City of New York have contributed to NYCHA's financial problems and reflect a double standard in the way the City treats NYCHA compared to its treatment of private landlords and other large agencies.¹¹⁵ Given tighter federal aid, housing advocates and several Council members say the NYCHA's payments for basic services are outdated and are forcing NYCHA to reduce services to residents. Ms. Velez recalled:

The elimination of the drug elimination money left NYCHA with no options for residents. Because without the money, all the extra is gone. So there's no cushion. So whereas the residents might have had...like businesses. What they had was something; a revolving loan. You could take some money, you pay that money back, take. We are now in the process of applying community economic development strategies to Johnson.

I've had to learn to keep my vision and values our front with basic organizing and not let funding take me off course. I've been pushed to create self reliant economic development approaches which can help us generate and control our own resources. My vision rests on viewing public housing as a very large business and trying to figure out how residents can be the producers—not just consumers—within that business so that housing dollars create jobs and resources in East Harlem.¹¹⁶

On January 13, 2009 Bloomberg announced that the City Council allotted 12.25 million dollars in funding for a partnership between NYCHA and the Department of Youth and Community Development to ensure continuity of services at twenty-five community centers, including the Johnson Houses Community Center. Bloomberg also announced that Department of Youth and Community Development would issue a Request for Proposals from qualified community-based organizations interested in operating the centers. He said that the “initiative is designed to serve two distinct age groups: younger youth (ages 5-12) and older youth (ages 13-21)” and that

¹¹⁵ Manny Fernandez, “City Criticized for Fees Paid by Its Agency for Housing,” *New York Times*, NY/Region, July 7, 2008. <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/07/nyregion/07housing.html?pagewanted=2&sq&st=nyt&scp=24> (accessed October 12, 2008).

¹¹⁶ Ethel Velez, interviewed by Tamar Carroll and Martha Ackelsberg, March 30, 2004. Oral History Project, Sophia Smith Collection, Smith College, Northampton, MA.

“NYCHA residents and other stakeholders will help to shape the programming model outlined in the RFP [Request for Proposals].”¹¹⁷

In 2005 the Department of Youth and Community Development became the lead agency providing comprehensive services to New York City’s youth, families, and communities. NYCHA owns the land that the Johnson Houses Community Center is on but the Department of Youth and Community Development is responsible for its programming and management. The Department of Youth and Community Development supports youth and adults through 2,841 contracts with community-based organizations throughout New York City. These include 558 contracts that comprise the Citywide Out-of-School Time initiative. The Out-of-School Time offers a balanced mix of academic support, sports/recreational activities, the arts and cultural experiences, which take place after school, on weekends, and during school vacations. The Department also administers a network of 80 Beacon community centers in public schools that serve youth, adults and families during out-of-school hours. In 1945, the New York State Commission Act is created by the State Legislature to focus on juvenile delinquency and youth development. In 1947, in accordance with the Act, the New York City Council passes a resolution leading to the creation of the New York City Youth Board. Its principal purpose is to coordinate and supplement the activities of public and private agencies devoted to serving youth. Since its creation it has undergone many different administrative structures but in 1996 The Department of Youth Services and the Community Development Agency merge to create the

¹¹⁷ “Mayor Bloomberg, Speaker Quinn, Deputy Mayor Walcott, NYCHA Chairman Morales and DYCD Commissioner Mullgrav Announce Plans to Continue Youth Programming at 25 NYCHA Community Centers Throughout the Five Boroughs.” The City of New York Office of the Mayor. January 13, 2009. http://www.nyc.gov/html/dycd/downloads/pdf/mayor_bloomberg_speaker_quinn_deputy_mayor_walcott_nychachairman_morales_and_dycd_commissioner_mullgrav_announce_plansto_continue_youth_programming_at_25_nycha_community_centers.pdf. (Accessed July 1, 2010).

Department of Youth and Community Development.¹¹⁸

The residents at Johnson Houses felt that the NYCHA/Department of Youth and Community Development partnership meant that they had definitely lost control of the Johnson Houses Community Center. In response, the Johnson Houses Residents' Association decided to draft a petition entitled "We Just Cannot Let This Stand" and every day for over two weeks they faxed it to Bloomberg and to all of the city council members. The petition stated:

We the undersigned residents are very displeased with the process that has led to a Beacon program being placed at the James Weldon Johnson Houses and we would like to make it clear that we must be included in the decision-making that affects our community. Since 1992 we have been working to make sure that there is a fully-functioning community center at our development. We have been steadfast in our goal: to have a place for **everyone** [bold and underline in original document]—children, teenagers, adults and seniors.

As NYCHA's budget shortfalls became more and more evident, we recognized that changes to our community center would likely take place. We as residents understand as well as anyone the effects of the budget shortfalls, and we have been doing our part to help to reverse them. What we did not expect, however, was that these budget shortfalls and operating challenges would be used as an excuse to exclude us from decision-making processes—especially after we have worked with NYCHA to design and develop the new community center over the past 17 years. And please note that our work with NYCHA to develop the new community center was not inconsequential. We have participated in countless meetings with the center's design dept., architects, been the overseers of the contractors for the past 6 years during which the Center has been under construction, and have even worked with NYCHA to secure a grant to facilitate resident involvement in the new center.

Imagine our surprise, then, when we learned that the center would be housing a Beacon intended only for school age children, and that our adults and seniors would be excluded from center programming. The decision to bring the Beacon program to the Johnson Houses community center was made in meetings to which we were not invited even though we are the ones who will be most affected by the decision. We have recently been assured that the center will have programs for residents of all ages, but frankly our trust has again been undermined and we will continue to press for full inclusion until it becomes a reality.

¹¹⁸

www.nyc.gov/portal/site/nycgov/menuitem.75aa618d7e509ced6bce0ed101c789a0/index.jsp?cf01pg=3&cf01sz=10. (Accessed June 28, 2010).

We the residents of the Johnson Houses need to be at the table especially in times of emergency. NYCHA and the Mayor's office cannot let crisis situations be an excuse for excluding residents from decision-making processes. In fact, it is especially in times of crisis that the love we have for our community is most necessary. Who lives day and night in our development? We do. Who knows our neighbors and the challenges that we all face? We do. And who knows the strengths of our selves and our neighbors that can be built upon in times of crisis? WE DO.

When the City leaves us out of crucial decisions we become angry and hurt, but we will no longer be demoralized. We do not need a Beacon program that addresses the needs of only some of our residents. We need green jobs training, senior programs **and** [bold and underline in original document] youth programs. Shame on those supposedly working on our behalf. And please do not forget that NYCHA and the Mayor's office has a legal responsibility—the 964 regulations—to include us. The point, however, is that we should not have to ask to be included.

We the undersigned residents are very displeased with the decision made to place a Beacon program at the James Weldon Johnson housing development. We urge you to reconsider your actions of a beacon program at our site. Our residents have lobbied for funds, planned the design and worked for 17 years to develop this community center.

No one came to us with this DYCD plan or asked if the resident association had their own plans. Our organization had received a joint grant [from the Ford Foundation] with NYCHA to develop and neighborhood advisory board and develop a survey. Our residents never dreamed that the center was going to be taken away from the community after 6 years of construction. But most of our seniors who started this dream and have worked so hard are now omitted from the building. SHAME ON NYCHA. We don't need another Beacon Program we need green job training, senior programs and youth programs. What happened to the HUD 964 regulations?¹¹⁹

Although the Johnson Houses Residents' Association received verbal expressions of sympathy from several city council members, none of their issues were addressed in any way that made a difference to them: they still did not have any confidence they would have control of the Johnson Houses Community Center. In addition to the petition, on March 30, 2009, the Johnson Houses Residents' Association leadership drafted a protest letter to Bloomberg. The Mayor did not respond to the petitions or the letter, strengthening residents' belief that the Mayor is unresponsive to the requests of constituencies that are not wealthy or well-connected.

¹¹⁹ The petition was dated March 27, 2009.

Frustrated by the lack of response to their petition and letter, the Johnson Houses Residents' Association enlisted the help of their City Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito, to help them be included in the programming and management of the Johnson Houses Community Center. Mark-Viverito had been very helpful in assisting them to push the construction of the Johnson Houses Community Center forward despite NYCHA's deficit. In March 2009, the Johnson Houses Residents' Association asked her to intervene on their behalf in six ways: 1) to ensure that the residents have a decision-making role in the Johnson Houses Community Center within which they would be in the position to decide programming and policy and not to have just an advisory role; 2) to ensure that there are no other advisory groups or board of directors with oversight for the Johnson Houses Community Center; 3) to devise a board of directors that reflects the community (including residents of Johnson Houses including youth, seniors, business owners, clergy, and others from the surrounding community); 4) to ensure that the Johnson Houses Community Center not be limited to children; 5) to ensure that the Johnson Houses Community Center is open seven days a week until at least 10 pm; and 6) to ensure that Johnson Houses residents be hired to run programs in the Johnson Houses Community Center.¹²⁰ Despite her success in helping them with the Johnson Houses Community Center in the past, she was unable to deliver on their six requests. Residents' inability to get any of their demands met, fits with the earlier battles for community control in that the residents were up against a mayoral administration that was unresponsive to their requests.

On May 6, 2009 the Department of Youth and Community Development released a Concept Paper about the "Cornerstone Initiative" to outline the vision for the Cornerstone programs. It

¹²⁰ Unpublished memo written March 27, 2009.

claimed that “youth in poor communities, particularly teenagers residing in public housing, are among the most threatened by worsening economic conditions” (2). To respond to the claim, the Request for Proposals stated that “the programs selected for funding will offer innovative and engaging approaches that help participants gain the skills and attitudes they need to stay on track in school, graduate, be successful in work and life, and contribute to the well-being of their peers, families, and communities” (2). The Request for Proposals was released August 18, 2009 and was due October 1, 2009.

While residents’ associations are legally recognized decision-making entities as declared by the §964 Regulations, they are not recognized as legal not-for-profit organizations by the 501(c)3 tax code. They have the legal right however, to apply for 501(c)3 tax status. Because it was not a non-profit at the time the Request for Proposals was due, the Johnson Houses Residents’ Association could not respond to the Request for Proposals. Not only was the Johnson Houses Residents’ Association not able to respond to the Request for Proposals but the Department of Youth and Community Development did not include them in a meaningful way in the review of the responses to the Request for Proposals—they were given an advisory role in the process as opposed to a decision-making role. NYCHA’s Department of Community Operations oversees the resident participation system and is responsible for providing technical assistance to resident bodies; despite its role, it was unsuccessful in persuading the Department of Youth and Community Development to include the Johnson Houses residents in the decision-making process.

Late fall 2009, the contract for the programming and management of the Johnson Houses

Community Center was awarded to the Supportive Children’s Advocacy Network, New York, a non-profit organization that programs and manages the current community center at Johnson Houses.¹²¹ Their contract began January 1, 2010 and extends to June 30, 2012. At a “Community Committee Project at the James Weldon Houses” meeting held February 8, 2010 at Supportive Children’s Advocacy Network between staff from NYCHA, Department of Youth and Community Development, the Supportive Children’s Advocacy Network, the Aspen Institute (an international nonprofit dedicated to fostering enlightened leadership and open-minded dialogue through seminars, policy programs, conferences and leadership), and Johnson Houses Residents’ Association leadership, the Supportive Children’s Advocacy Network stated that they had not engaged very many residents from Johnson Houses as they were drafting their response to the Request for Proposals, yet they were awarded the contract.¹²² The lack of involvement in the preparation of the response to the Request for Proposals was of no surprise to the Johnson Houses Residents’ Association because they had not been contacted by the Supportive Children’s Advocacy Network about the Request for Proposals. During the meeting, NYCHA tried to put pressure on the Department of Youth and Community Development officials to include Johnson Houses residents in the programming and management process, but was only marginally

¹²¹ Bloomberg has been accused of awarding contracts to liberal non-profits, in effect, buying-off the usually staunchly Democratic white middle class who would oppose his unfair treatment of poor communities. His administration was recently accused of ignoring systematic fraud at a well-regarded nonprofit organization, Seedco, which had a \$7 million annual contract with the City of New York assisting unemployed New Yorkers in finding jobs. After an investigation from the *New York Times*, the Bloomberg administration launched an investigation; shortly thereafter, New York City investigators discovered evidence of large-scale fraud at Seedco. Seedco lost its contract with the City. Powell, Michael, “When Scandal Is Outsourced,” *New York Times*, NY/Region, August 8, 2011. <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/09/nyregion/seedco-official-reports-fraud-in-jobs-program.html> (accessed September 12, 2011). Powell, Michael, “Fraud Found in Jobs Effort; Blow to Bloomberg,” *New York Times*, NY/Region, March 9, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/10/nyregion/city-job-agency-accused-of-filing-false-job-claims.html?pagewanted=all> (accessed March 20, 2012).

¹²² That meeting, and a series of others, was convened as part of a joint grant between the Johnson Residents’ Association, NYCHA, and the Aspen Institute Roundtable on Community Change. The Community Change Project was awarded funds by the Ford Foundation to help them “ensure that the Center becomes a positive hub of neighborhood life in East Harlem...and that it has the resources to advance the civic and economic capacity of the community in sustainable and measurable ways.” Source: The Proposal to the Ford Foundation for the Community Committee Project at the James Weldon Johnson Houses submitted May 2008.

successful. After the meeting Ms. Velez vented:

So they love the word empowerment, but they don't really understand what that means. My goal is to put a board together of folks that are not in the housing world to just kind of figure out how to raise money. Because we've lost this community center and our kids are going to be devastated over this. It's going to be devastating.¹²³

Johnson Houses residents are seeking meaningful decision-making power. What I gleaned from my three years of listening and observing is that to some of the Johnson Houses residents, in this specific case, empowerment meant possessing the authority to make decisions not only about how the space in their development was going to be utilized but also how the space would be managed, indefinitely. As with the community control movement in New York City in the 50s and 60s, the Johnson Houses residents' attempt at local control was undermined by the Mayor deciding to utilize a non-profit organization to program and manage the community center. Given the number of years it took for the community center to be designed and constructed, if NYCHA had truly wanted community-control of the center, NYCHA staff could have been assisting the residents in building capacity and acquiring all of the necessary certifications they need to program and manage the community center themselves.

As of July 2010, two residents from the Johnson Houses Residents' Association are on the Johnson Houses Community Center's advisory committee; the creation of an advisory committee was a part of the Cornerstone Initiative Request for Proposals. Despite the requirement, the Supportive Children's Advocacy Network leadership was reluctant to work with the Johnson Houses Residents' Association to program and manage the Johnson Houses Community Center as it was intended. Lastly, the ribbon-cutting occurred on December 2, 2011.

¹²³ Informal conversation, January 19, 2010.

DISCUSSION

Over the past seventy-six years public housing residents have largely been engaged in a paternalistic relationship with NYCHA. Most of the residents' decision-making rights have been symbolic, "in which communities participate in governing but have no effective power" (Vitale 2008, 66). No real access to power points to another tension in liberalism: "extending individual rights without creating true opportunities to exercise those rights" (Vitale 2008, 68).

A history of the lack of decision-making power over their living environment is one of the reasons why the Johnson Houses residents' vision for their community center holds political meaning: it is an attempt to have a patron-client relationship with service delivery instead of a patron-recipient relationship. The residents attempted to create this type of relationship when they were supported by various funds allocated to them by Kemp in his support of tenant management. Although the funds were not sustained, residents were able to begin to devise a vision for what a place would be like that would represent a real departure from the patron-recipient relationship they had with many of the social service agencies and poverty professionals who are assigned to manage them. In many ways, the residents agreed with Giuliani's argument that some of the social programs, and many of the poverty professionals, have not assisted the poor in achieving self-sufficiency. While the poverty professionals might argue that the poor need stable employment to become self-sufficient, the residents at Johnson Houses argued something different: that employment is only one component of many that must be in place for them to be able to achieve self-sufficiency; to them, *a fundamental component of self-sufficiency is being able to exert control over one's living environment*. They argued that the institutional arrangements that contribute to them being poor (such as poor quality education; a criminal justice system that preys on poor people of color, particularly males; underemployment;

and professionals who are not accountable to them) must be rearranged if not eliminated and reconstructed on principles of equal opportunity.

Both liberal and conservative administrations did not have the interest of public housing residents as an important factor in decision-making. As a result, Johnson residents had mixed feelings about both liberals and conservatives. The residents felt that both liberals and conservatives enacted policies that in some cases ameliorated their conditions and others that exacerbated them. Residents' loyalties', despite the residents' voting record, were to their fight for agency not a particular political party or political leaning. Although the residents voted Democrat, many of them did not feel that the Democrats were particularly sympathetic to their needs. It was the Republicans, particularly Kemp, who more than one resident discussed with tears in eyes. Kemp and the Republicans supported a program that the residents felt met their needs: it provided funds to build resident capacity so they could manage their development effectively. While the program had mixed results—some residents acquired skills and were able to manage their development for a few years—however, a program is not a comprehensive framework or strategy for addressing more complex problems; the Republicans do not have one.

Regarding complex problems, New York City is not manageable for the ordinary citizen living in it but it is even more unmanageable for those who are poor. It is not manageable for four main reasons: 1) it is dense and crowded, 2) there are limited resources, 3) the cost of living is high, and 4) it is highly bureaucratic. Because of those four factors, the poor in New York City must spend a significant amount of time waiting in line. Waiting is a cost the poor have to pay that if quantified in billable hours, would probably amount to many thousands of dollars. The cost is

exacerbated for the poor who: are illiterate and/or computer illiterate, do not have access to the Internet (to access information about agency hours, policies, and procedures), who do not have access to debit or credit, and who do not have a strong social network outside of their development. The poor in New York City have to manage all of the same things that other residents have to contend with in addition to constantly having to negotiate public authorities that often manage them with a hierarchical, top-down management model (Walker 2001). Over the course of this study, Johnson residents mentioned having interactions with the following governmental agencies were mentioned by various Johnson residents for various reasons during my conversations and meetings with them: New York City Administration for Children's Services, New York City Public Schools, New York Department of Education, New York Police Department, New York City Human Resources Administration, New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Department of Youth and Community Development, Department of Probation, New York City Department of Corrections, New York State Department of Corrections, Department of Juvenile Justice, and the Workforce Investment Board in addition to NYCHA.

As discussed in Chapter 2, poor residents are particularly vulnerable to changes in public policy. For example, as NYCHA regulations and policies rules change, residents are forced to adjust to be able to exercise any agency. The adjustments the residents are forced to make might appear to be normal activity one must make as a result of typical organizational change; however, what residents are struggling against are arbitrarily imposed rules and regulations that shift unannounced or without resident participation or oversight. While there is some resident oversight in the policies and procedures that govern NYCHA, its policies and procedures are

often changed based on the political views of the individuals in power. Public housing management is generally discredited, regardless of performance. This is one area where the bureaucratic myth of efficiency does not seem to be effective. Blaming dysfunction on the residents does not do management any good in the broader context. Maybe this is one of the barriers residents have to overcome – the feeling among NYCHA staff that nothing they do matters. As a result, while organizations are the building-blocks of social order and “represent socially sanctioned[,]...collectively enforced expectations with respect to the behavior of specific categories of actors or to the performance of certain activities” (Streeck and Thelen 2005, 9), this stability is not absolute as NYCHA is constantly being re-interpreted and restructured by various institutional actors to meet their specific needs (Giddens 1984).

My findings reveal that, despite the fact that the instabilities had become normalized, the residents of Johnson Houses planned, designed, and constructed a community center to resist them. The Johnson Houses Community Center was not going to be merely a place for social service programs or for children to play, which is why the decision to issue a Request for Proposals for the programming and management of the Johnson Houses Community Center was devastating to the residents. The Johnson Houses Community Center had political importance: it was going to serve as a place where all residents in the community could shed some of the institutional layers that defined their lives and impinged on their life chances. My findings also reveal that the residents understood that the institutional actors who make policy and enforce regulations did not understand the political importance of the Johnson Houses Community Center. Johnson Houses residents equated the loss of control of the Johnson Houses Community Center’s vision, management, and program as equivalent to the right of meaningful participation

and self-determination at the hands of professionals charged with implementing programs, rules, and regulation; professionals who are not accountable to the residents. While the residents had concerns about whether or not the Supportive Children's Advocacy Network was going to offer a particular program, the most important concern was whether or not they were going to have decision-making power over the Johnson Houses Community Center. What gives the struggle over the Johnson Houses Community Center political meaning is what its purpose was.

Residents were utilizing the Johnson Houses Community Center to reclaim authority over not only their physical environment, but over the various multiple, intersecting, invisible institutional arrangements that shape their lives. They understood that institutions are built on a set of assumptions and practices that are treated as real; that institutional actors utilize those assumptions and practices to continuously confer and withhold power and to some extent that power can be granted and removed arbitrary. After understanding the function of institutions in their lives, the residents determined that, while they might not be able to rearrange the institutions, they could create an institution that pushes back on the institutional norms that had caused the need for extraordinary struggle. They attempted to create an environment that reflected their values and that would challenge institutional arrangements that appeared to be unable to be reconfigured.

What some might deem as a benign battle over a community center was not only a very important part of the Johnson Houses residents' struggle for control of their living environment, but also for self-determination: the right to determine their own life chances despite the institutional impingements they faced because they were poor and residing in public housing.

Without examining the specific ways institutional arrangements affect the lives of public housing

residents simultaneous to examining how they view themselves, public housing residents are often only viewed as resisting middle class values. The persistent struggle by the Johnson residents is itself extraordinary, and that struggle continues. The residents' persistent struggle alone demonstrates their agency and refutes the culture of poverty thesis that the key mechanism to the poor remaining poor is their feeling that their living conditions are intractable.

CHAPTER FIVE: The Political Meaning of Extraordinary Struggle

This study reveals that there is a more complicated story about poverty and public housing than is often reported on local news or addressed by politicians or public policy. With low rates of education attainment, high rates of incarceration and unemployment, and institutional arrangements that inhibit their individual and collective efficacy, the struggles that the poor face are extraordinary. The political meaning of extraordinary struggle that the Johnson Houses residents faced is not merely a result of recent events; their struggle is a result of decisions that were made throughout history. In New York City, just as there were negative reactions to the influx of foreign, mostly European, immigrants in the 19th and early 20th centuries, there were negative reactions by whites to the migration of minorities, mostly Blacks, into cities in the northern US in the 20th century. With the changes in New York City's population came changes in city leadership and governance. Ethnic minorities were elected and appointed as city leaders. These new leaders dissolved political machines, transferred decision-making power from neighborhoods, and consolidated it in various newly-formed government agencies.

One of the goals of community control in the 1960s was to end the fragmentation and control of Black communities by bureaucrats. It was during this time period, in the late 1950s, that the residents of Johnson Houses organized a residents' association and made their first attempt at exerting control over their environment. Almost thirty years later, when Ms. Velez became the Johnson Houses resident association president, she embarked on a community development process that would result in the Johnson Houses residents' resisting the undereducation and underemployment that they had been confronted with for decades. The Johnson Houses leadership mitigated the unique institutional arrangements they resided within by becoming students of the policies and procedures that governed their life. Ms. Velez met Ms. Gilkey, a

woman from St. Louis who was at the forefront of resident management, through the National Congress of Neighborhood Women. Ms. Gilkey helped train Ms. Velez and other Johnson residents in how to negotiate the government bureaucracy. Ms. Gilkey also introduced Ms. Velez to HUD Secretary Kemp, who lobbied Congress to provide funds for technical assistance programs that would guide public housing residents in the process of assuming control of their development. Ms. Velez discussed feeling that Kemp and the Republicans in Congress in the 1980s helped poor people in ways that other HUD secretaries and the Democrats did not. Kemp's support of public housing residents entering the housing market as private owners represented a real, but temporary, break in what conservatives felt the poor could achieve; however, conservatives did not have, and still do not have, a framework for addressing more complex, and comprehensive, problems. A few years later, Johnson Houses residents were able to exert control over their environment by acquiring funds for the installation of additional lighting and new fencing and for the reconfiguration of their outdoor seating areas. While these victories might appear to be minor, they were of great importance to the residents of Johnson Houses; they were developing the confidence and the know-how to challenge the institutional arrangements that impinged on their vision for themselves and their community.

While conducting this study I found that the larger social, political, and economic forces operating in New York City were not merely the backdrop to what occurred at Johnson Houses. As Ms. Velez began to navigate the New York City bureaucracy successfully and to share her knowledge with other community activists, she was met with resistance by members of the Giuliani administration. Despite their knowledge of their rights and of federal rules and regulations, the residents often felt that they had no recourse to change many of the decisions

that affected them, especially when a powerful institutional actor like Giuliani violated those rights and regulations. For example, in the 1990s, after the New York Police Department removed the Resident Association's belongs from their office in the Johnson Houses Community Center, Ms. Velez began organizing the residents to plan for the construction of a new community center that would be resident-programmed and managed in a way that would resist the institutional arrangements that impinged on their individual and collective efficacy. I am not arguing that the culture of poverty concept has no merit, but I do argue that culture is not a helpful concept for understanding what occurred at Johnson Houses. Instead, I utilize a framework that includes citizenship, agency via collective efficacy, and resistance to analyze Johnson Houses residents' struggles for control. Employing that framework I found that although Giuliani and Kemp are both considered conservative, there are important differences between them; differences in the underlying premise of the type of conservatism each practiced. Having a more nuanced understanding of the varying underlying premises within conservatism and liberalism, I realized that the terms were not very useful for detailing accurately what's important to public housing residents. What is important to the residents at Johnson Houses is that they be treated as full citizens with the agency to make decisions about their living environment—it did not matter to them if that treatment was administered by a conservative or a liberal.

Almost six years into the planning and construction of the community center, Johnson Houses resident leadership was told that they would not be eligible to manage it. Through the community center, the residents intended to buffer themselves from social service professionals who purported to be assisting them in achieving self-sufficiency, but who some residents felt did not have their best interests' in mind. Some residents questioned the intentions and motivations of

some of the staff from agencies such as Supportive Children's Advocacy Network because the residents felt that these professionals were not accountable to them. For example, although NYCHA owns the building and the land that houses the Johnson Houses Community Center, the Department of Youth and Community Development is responsible for staffing and managing it. Because the Department of Youth and Community Development is accountable to the Mayor, not NYCHA, the Department of Youth and Community Development has no formal relationship with the Johnson Houses Resident Association. Unlike having regulations from the federal government in addition to local regulations, the Department of Youth and Community Development is not legally specifically accountable to the Johnson Houses Residents Association. The Department of Youth and Community Development has required that the Supportive Children's Advocacy Network have a James Weldon Johnson Houses Community Center Advisory Board; however, the Supportive Children's Advocacy Network was not transparent in the process of who would be on the Board. Despite the fact that the residents worked for over twenty years to have a community center designed and constructed to meet their social and political vision, Johnson Houses residents do not have policy-making, programming, or management control of it.

Throughout the sixty years the residents of Johnson Houses have attempted to exert control over their environment, institutional actors along the entire political spectrum, at various times, were supporters of their efforts and at other times were inhibitors. Johnson Houses residents not only had to contend with fighting conservatives who wanted to limit help to the poor, but also liberals who wanted to socially engineer them. To the residents at Johnson Houses, their struggle was not extraordinary. What was extraordinary to them was the community they had been able to build

and maintain despite all of the barriers they faced from various institutional actors whom the residents felt did not have their best interests' in mind. It is this history of racism, poverty, and undemocratic practices the residents faced that created the conditions within which resistance is inevitable.

CONCLUSION

The ways public housing residents contend with the social, political, and economic instabilities they encounter is not a simple story, nor are the ways public housing residents exert control over their living environment. A casual observer of community conflict might argue that public housing residents' struggle for resources has been documented. What this study emphasizes, however, is that institutional arrangements converge on public housing residents differently from the way that they converge on individuals living in private housing. While the poor in the private housing market are also vulnerable, the residents at Johnson Houses were immediately and materially affected by the policies and procedures put into place by elected and appointed government officials. Because the poor are connected to place in ways that other economic groups are not, the setting for where the poor are struggling for control is as important as what they are struggling for. As was the case for the residents at Johnson Houses, the struggles of the poor frequently take place in their neighborhood and are often struggles for the right to exercise control over spatial resources such as a community center. The combination of residence in housing that made them susceptible to the changing political climate, coupled with the concentration of socio-economic conditions that limited their social mobility, resulted in the residents having to employ extraordinary struggle to mitigate all of the various instabilities they resided within. This analysis of a single case study, while not generalizable, is representative of some of the challenges the poor, particularly public housing residents, face.

Institutional arrangements are complex and much disputed. Understanding how they impinge on public housing residents is important for two reasons: one, poverty is a function of many different factors, and, two, poverty is a function of political choices. In focusing on poverty, class was an obvious factor to the residents at Johnson Houses having difficulty exerting control over their living environment. Their success in negotiating the New York City bureaucracy was not only important to document because it speaks of their resilience and persistence, but because it speaks to the fact that they had identified not only where power lays, but how to affect it—an achievement that can be difficult even for some members of the middle class.

In addition to their own economic class, residents commented on the middle-class Black and Latino bureaucrats who are the managers of public and social services agencies; these professionals are important members of the group of individuals whom the residents considered “poverty professionals,” professionals who, the residents at Johnson Houses argued, built their career by keeping the poor dependent on social services for subsistence. Also, residents argued that these professionals who work for social service agencies are part of a larger project of privatizing government. Ms. Velez and other residents feel that privatizing NYCHA is another example of middle-class professionals making money at the expense of the poor because the poor do not have a genuine avenue to hold those professionals accountable or to attain those positions for themselves. Professional schools produce graduates who are ill-educated and ill-equipped to work in low-income communities of color; as a result, these professionals are unable to address the most acute issues public housing residents face. On several occasions the residents at Johnson Houses spoke about working with institutional actors who lacked any understanding

about low-income people of color and the specific issues they face. More egregious to the residents than the actors lacking such core competency was when institutional actors interacted with them as if the residents did not know what was best for themselves. However, because the residents at Johnson Houses have been working for their community for decades and have acquired a diverse array of technical skills, they are very good at working with institutional actors to incorporate their local knowledge with the best technical skills that the institutional actors have to offer.

Also, the residents at Johnson Houses argued that social service programs can be rearranged so that the needs of the poor can be better met. The popular narrative that all poor people want are social service programs is inaccurate. My findings reveal that the poor believe that social service programs could be very helpful if they were actually designed to meet the needs of the poor, but, instead, they are designed to assist well-educated individuals and well-connected non-profit organizations in “getting rich off of the poor.”¹²⁴ The residents at Johnson Houses argued that most social service programs are not designed with their input, do not address the issues that they deem are the most important, nor do many of the public agencies and non-profit-organizations hire poor people to assist in the programming and management of the programs. The residents, through their vision of how the community center would be programmed and managed, attempted to offer one strategy for working with public agencies to offer social services that might offer more positive outcomes for the poor residing in the Johnson Houses community. The battle for the community center could be viewed simply as a community attempting to acquire resources; however, through institutional analysis, I found that the battle for the community center was a struggle for a space where the Johnson Houses community-at-large could not only

¹²⁴ Ms. Velez in conversation with the author August 16, 2008.

get reprieve from, but learn strategies for resisting, the institutional arrangements that impinged on their ability to determine their own life course.

In his research the poor, Lewis (1965) identified a subculture of lowered aspirations and short-term gratification. The popular narrative about the chronically impoverished that emerged from his findings focused on ethnic stereotypes, morality, and behavior constructed on the underlying premise that it is the individual himself who must change before social equality, economic integration, or political enfranchisement can be achieved. The case of the Johnson Houses residents' struggle reveals that Lewis' approach to studying the poor not only can result in concepts that are misrepresentations of their but can result in the exclusion of important mechanisms that deeply affect the poor. Thus, instead of studying marginalized groups like public housing residents by reducing all of their social activity and behavior to psychological characteristics, the groups should be studied within the context of the various, multiple, and overlapping institutional arrangements that encompass their lives. Employing a methodology that can illuminate how the poor contend with the social, political, and economic instabilities they encounter provides a more accurate and meaningful analysis. Ideally, social scientists would be able to study marginalized groups and their neighborhoods longitudinally (for a decade or more if possible) and produce studies as rich with detail that journalist Adrian Nicole LeBlanc (2003) was able to do in *Random Family: Love, Drugs, Trouble, and Coming of Age in the Bronx* over the course of ten years but with the rigor of social science. Four subject matter for a longitudinal study of a marginalized group and their neighborhood could be: 1) place—such as “the city” itself or “homeplace”—as critical sites for understanding social reproduction, 2) how the powerless maneuver through urban government agency bureaucracy, 3) how to effectively

document the marginalized's mundane acts of resistance (in order to have institutional memory about one's struggle), and 4) how marginalized groups manage and storage institutional memory and local knowledge.

A FINAL NOTE

There is no technocratic solution to enfranchising marginalized groups such as public housing residents into US society. The US citizenry as a collective simply lacks the political will to make the radical decisions necessary to result in an American society that achieves equality of opportunity. For a number of complicated political reasons, the collective narrative of the marginalized in the US is often predicated on an analysis of the problems of the marginalized that focus on their individual behavior as explanation for their collective arrested development. As a result, marginalization's link to the institutionalization of white supremacy is not a serious factor in the conversation of poverty in the US in the 21st century; especially after the election of the first Black President of the United States in 2008 and his possible reelection in November. The political climate that produced the local and national movements of the 1950s and 1960s no longer exists.

An enormous amount of time and resources are spent by individuals in institutions of higher education studying marginalized groups with the presumption that with the appropriate model, implemented with fidelity, marginalized groups of individuals would be able to participate fully in society. As such, most current public policy is still focused on short-term interventions that target individuals' behavior. In *In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio*, Phillippe Bourgois (1995), argues:

While these initiatives are not harmful, and might even help superficially on the margins,

it is the institutionalized expression of racism—America’s de facto apartheid and inner-city public sector breakdown—that government policy and private sector philanthropy need to address if anything is ever to change (323)... Any long-term paths out of the quagmire will have to address the structural and political economic roots, as well as the ideological and cultural roots of social marginalization. The first step out of the impasse, however, requires a fundamental ethnical and political reevaluation of basic socioeconomic models and human values.

It is my deepened understanding of the devastation that the basic socioeconomic models that govern the US—and most of the world—and their valuation of various forms capital over people that emerged as one of the most important findings of this study and also one of the most disheartening.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: TIMELINES

		<u>MACHINE POLITICS</u>						
		1840-1865	1865 -1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930
<u>National</u>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·Potato Famine (1840s) ·Reconstruction Amendment (13th: Abolition of Slavery – 1865) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·Reconstruction Amendments (14th: Due Process and Equal Protection – 1868; 15th: Voting Rights no matter of race, color, or previous servitude – 1870) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·Plessy v. Ferguson (5.18.96) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·The Great Migration (1910-1930) ·World War I (1914-1918) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·US Supreme Court approves the use of racial covenants (1926) ·Great Depression (1929) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·The Federal Housing Administration and Federal Home Loan Bank Board is formed via the Housing Act (1934) ·The National Housing Act (1937) ·World War II (1939-1945)
	<u>New York City</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·Influx of a large number of European Immigrants 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·Five boroughs of New York City reorganized into one city (1.1.98) ·New York City boroughs/ Borough President Office established (1.1.98) 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·Marcus Garvey speech in Harlem (7.8.16) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·James Weldon Johnson undersigns an anti-lynching bill (1920) ·Harlem Renaissance (20s-30s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ·LaGuardia elected mayor (1.1.34-12.31.45) ·NYCHA is established (1934) ·Harlem uprising (1935) ·NYCHA adopts policy of residential segregation (1937) ·NYCHA adopts policy of residential integration (1939)

	<u>Liberal Reform</u>		<u>Urban Liberalism</u>		<u>Conservative Pushback</u>		
	<u>1940s</u>	<u>1950s</u>	<u>1960s</u>	<u>1970s</u>	<u>1980s</u>	<u>1990s</u>	<u>2000s</u>
<u>National</u>	·1949 Housing Act	·Brown vs Board of Education (5.17.1954)	·Medgar Evers assassinated (6.12.1963)	·Charles Rangel Elected to Congress (1971-present)	·Housing and Community Development Act of 1987 passed	·HUD introduces the Tenant Opportunity Program/Resident Management Tenant Assistance Grant Program (1994)	
	·Adam Clayton Powell, Jr elected to Congress (1945-1971)	·Emmett Till murdered (8.28.1955)	·March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom (8.28.1963)		·Anti-drug Abuse Act of 1988 passed		
	·Second Great Migration (1940-1970)		·Freedom Schools (8.1964)				
			·Harlem uprising (7.16.1964)				
			·Civil Rights Act of 1964				
			·Malcolm X assassinated (2.21.1965)				
			·1965 Voting Rights Act				
			·John Lindsay elected mayor (1.1.1966-12.31.1983)				
			·Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. assassinated (4.4.1968)				
			·Robert F. Kennedy assassinated (7.6.1968)				

		<u>Urban Liberalism</u>		<u>Conservative Pushback</u>				
		<u>1940s</u>	<u>1950s</u>	<u>1960s</u>	<u>1970s</u>	<u>1980s</u>	<u>1990s</u>	<u>2000s</u>
<u>New York City</u>		·Davis-Isaacs Bill passed—prohibits discrimination in publically supported housing developments; permitted discrimination in privately supported projects (1944)	·New York City passes law ending discrimination in all subsidized housing (1951) ·Malcolm X selected to lead Temple #7 in Harlem (5.1953)	·New York City Public Schools boycott (1960) ·Percy Sutton elected first Black Manhattan Borough President (1.1.1966-12.31.1977)			·The New York City Charter was revised; borough presidents' powers are reduced ·David Dinkins elected mayor (1.1.90-12.31.93)	·Michael Bloomberg elected mayor (1.1.02-present) ·Mayor Bloomberg was granted control over New York City public schools (6.30.02)
		·Harlem uprising (8.1.43) ·William O'Dwyer elected mayor (1.1.46-8.31.50)	·Robert F. Wagner elected mayor (1.1.954-12.31.1965)	·Newark uprising (7.12-7.17.1967) ·Community Schools movement began (1963)			·Rudolph Giuliani elected mayor (1.1.94-12.31.01)	
<u>Johnson Houses</u>		·James Weldon Johnson Houses constructed (12.27.48)	·Johnson Houses residents begin organizing ·Johnson Houses Tenants' League formed			·James Weldon Johnson Houses Residents' Association formed (1982) ·Ethel Velez is elected president of the James Weldon Johnson Residents' Association (1982)	·Johnson Houses receives Tenant Opportunity Program Grant (1994) ·Johnson residents begin Project Wheel (1995) ·Johnson residents successfully lobby NYCHA for new lighting (1996)	·Johnson Houses residents begin planning new community center (2000) ·Construction on Johnson Houses Community Center begins (2002) ·Ribbon-cutting for Johnson Houses Community Center (12.2.2011)

APPENDIX B: LIST OF INTERVIEWS, CONVERSATIONS, AND MEETINGS

- Informal conversation with Johnson Houses residents, May 6, 2008
- Informal conversation with Johnson Houses residents, May 13, 2008
- Conversation with Ethel Velez, June 5, 2008
- Conversation with Ethel Velez, June 8, 2008
- Informal conversation with Johnson Houses residents, June 10, 2008
- Conversation with Ethel Velez, June 17, 2008
- Conversation with Ethel Velez, July 3, 2008
- Informal conversation with Johnson Houses residents, July 7, 2008.
- Conversation with Samuel Lawrence,* former Johnson Houses resident, July 11, 2008
- Conversation with Ethel Velez, July 17, 2008
- Conversation with Ethel Velez, July 25, 2008
- Conversation with Felicia Dominique,* current Johnson Houses resident and youth leader, August 15, 2008
- Conversation with Ethel Velez, August 16, 2008
- Conversation with Lisa Dominique,* current Johnson Houses resident, Aug. 18, 2008
- Conversation with Felicia Dominique,* Aug. 18, 2008
- Informal conversation with Johnson Houses residents, Aug. 18, 2008
- Conversation with Ethel Velez, January 23, 2009
- Conversation with Ethel Velez, February 2, 2009
- Conversation with Jeffery Esther, former Johnson residents, March 18, 2009
- Informal conversation with Johnson Houses residents, March 27, 2009
- Attended Manhattan North District Council of Presidents Meeting, May 13, 2009
- Conversation with New York Police Department officers, May 13, 2009
- Attended Manhattan North District Council of Presidents Leadership Retreat, May 15-17, 2009
- Conversation with Ethel Velez, May 23, 2009
- Informal conversation with Johnson Houses residents, August 2, 2009
- Conversation with Ethel Velez, August 18, 2009
- Conversation with Ethel Velez, August 20, 2009
- Informal conversation with Johnson Houses residents, April 28, 2009.
- Conversation with Ethel Velez, September 3, 2009
- Attended James Weldon Johnson Residents' Association General Meeting, October 29, 2009
- Conversation with Rose Brito, current Johnson Houses residents, October 29, 2009
- Conversation with New York Police Department officers, October 29, 2009
- Conversation with Ethel Velez, November 4, 2009
- Conversation with Ethel Velez, November 6, 2009
- Informal conversation with Johnson Houses residents, November 13, 2009
- Conversation with Ethel Velez, December 1, 2009
- Conversation with Ethel Velez, December 4, 2009
- Informal conversation with Johnson Houses residents, December 11, 2009
- Co-facilitated leadership retreat with residents from Johnson-, East River-, and Woodrow Wilson Houses December 4-6, 2009
- Conversation with Ethel Velez, December 14, 2009
- Conversation with Ethel Velez, December 15, 2009
- Conversation with Ethel Velez, January 5, 2010
- Conversation with Ethel Velez, January 16, 2010

- Attended meeting with residents from Johnson Houses and staff from NYCHA, the Department of Youth and Community Development, and the Supportive Children's Advocacy Network, January 19, 2010
- Informal conversation with Johnson Houses residents, January 29, 2010
- Facilitated meeting with residents from Johnson Houses and staff from NYCHA, Department of Youth and Community Development, and the Supportive Children's Advocacy Network, February 8, 2010
- Interviewed Ron Ashford, former NYCHA employee and current director of Public Housing Supportive Services at HUD, March 16, 2010
- Interviewed Stan Vosper, Jr., former spokesperson for public housing programs at HUD, March 16, 2010
- Participated in conference call with residents from Johnson Houses and staff from NYCHA and the Aspen Institute, March 16, 2010
- Conversation with Department of Youth and Community Development employee, May 10, 2010
- Attended Manhattan North District Council of Presidents Meeting, May 12, 2010
- Attended James Weldon Johnson Houses Residents' Association Meeting, August 29, 2010
- Attended meeting with residents from Johnson Houses and staff from NYCHA, the Department of Youth and Community Development, and the Supportive Children's Advocacy Network, January 10, 2011

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ainsworth-Darnell, James W. and Douglas B. Downey. "Assessing the Oppositional Culture Explanation for Racial/Ethnic Differences in School Performance." *American Sociological Review* 63 (1998): 536-553.
- Atlas, John and Peter Dreier. "Public Housing: What Went Wrong?" *Shelterforce Online* (74) September/October 1994.
- Bandura, Albert. *Self Efficacy: The Exercise of Control*. New York: W. H. Freeman, 1997.
- Banfield, Edward C. *The Unheavenly City: The Nature and Future of Our Urban Crisis*. New York: Little Brown & Co, 1970.
- Burrows, Edwin G. and Wallace, Mike. *Gotham: A History of New York City to 1898*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.
- Berube, Maurice R. and Marilyn Gittell. *Confrontation at Ocean Hill-Brownsville: the New York School Strikes of 1968*. New York: Praeger, 1969.
- Biondi Martha. "How New York changes the story of the Civil Rights Movement in Afro-Americans." *New York Life and History: An Interdisciplinary Journal*. The Afro-American Historical Association of the Niagara Frontier, 2007.
- _____. *To Stand and Fight: the Struggle for Civil Rights in Postwar New York City*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003.
- Bloom, Nicholas. *Public Housing that Worked: New York in the Twentieth Century*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008.
- Bourdieu, Pierre and Jean-Claude Passeron. *Reproduction in Education, Society, and Culture*. London: Sage Publications, 1977.
- Bourgois, Philippe. *In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Bratton, William and Peter Knobler. *Turnaround: How America's Top Cop Reversed the Crime Epidemic*. New York: Random House, Inc, 1998.
- Bremer, William W. "Along the 'American Way': The New Deal's Work Relief Programs for the Unemployed." *The Journal of American History* 62, no. 3 (December 1975): 636-652.
- _____. *Depression Winters: New York Social Workers and the New Deal*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984.
- Bridges, Amy. *A City in the Republic: Antebellum New York and the Origins of Machine Politics*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008.

- Burawoy, Michael. "The Extended Case Method" in *Sociological Theory* 16:1 (March 1998).
- Burawoy, Michael, et al. *Ethnography Unbound: Power and Resistance in the Modern Metropolis*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991.
- Cannato, Vincent J. *The Ungovernable City: John Lindsay and His Struggle to Save New York*. New York: Basic Books, 2001.
- Capeci, Dominic J. "From Different Perspectives: Fiorello H. LaGuardia, Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., and Civil Rights in New York City, 1941-1943." *Journal of Negro History* (1977).
- Clarke, John H. *Harlem: A Community in Transition*. New York: Lyle Stuart, 1964.
- Cloward, Richard A. and Frances Fox Piven. *The Politics of Turmoil: Essays on Poverty, Race, and the Urban Crisis*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1969.
- Cook, Philip J. and Jens Ludwig. "The Burden of Acting White: Do Black Adolescents Disparage Academic Achievement?" In *The Black-White Test Score Gap*, edited by Christopher Jencks and Meredith Phillips, 375-400. Washington, DC: Brookings Press, 1998.
- Connable, Alfred and Edward Silberfarb. *Tigers of Tammany: Nine Men Who Ran New York*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967.
- Das, Ashok K. and Lois M. Takahashi. "Evolving Institutional Arrangements, Scaling Up, and Sustainability : Emerging Issues in Participatory Slum Upgrading in Ahmedabad, India." *Journal of Planning Education and Research* (2009) 29: 213-232.
- Davis, Diane E. "Taking Place and Space Seriously: Reflections on 'Disparity and Diversity in the Contemporary City.'" *British Journal of Sociology* 60.1 (2009): 39-47.
- Degrafinried, Alaric and Catherine Bishop. *An Advocate's Guide to the HUD Section 3 Program: Creating Jobs and Economic Opportunity National Housing Law Project*, 2009.
- Delany, Martin R. *The Political Destiny of the Colored Race in The Ideological Origin of Black Nationalism*, ed, Sterling Stuckey. Boston: Beacon Press, 1972; 196-197.
- Denzin, Norman K. *The Research Act in Sociology*. Chicago: Adline, 1970.
- Department of Housing and Urban Development. "Section 3 HUD" <http://www.hud.gov/offices/fheo/section3/Section3.pdf>> (accessed January 15, 2012).
- Edson, Charles L. *The Legal Guide to Affordable Housing Development, 2nd ed.* Tim Iglesias and Rochelle E. Lento, eds. Chicago, IL: American Bar Association, Forum on Affordable Housing and Community Development Law, 2011; 3-20.

- Elster, Jon. *Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- Fagan, Jeffery and Garth Davies. "Street Cops and Broken Windows: Terry, Race, and Disorder in New York City." *Fordham Urban Law Journal* 28 (2000): 457-504.
- Fagan, Jeffrey, Garth Davies, and Jan Holland. "The Bustle of Horses on a Ship: Drug Control in New York City Public Housing." *Columbia Law School Columbia Public Law & Legal Theory Working Papers* (2005).
- Fordham, Signithia and John U. Ogbu. "Black Students' School Success: Coping with the 'Burden of acting White.'" *The Urban Review* 18, no. 3 (1986): 176-206.
- Forman, James. *The Making of Black Revolutionaries*. New York: Macmillan, 1972.
- Freeman, Joshua. *Working Class New York: Life and Labor since World War II*. New York: The New Press, 2000.
- Fullilove, Mindy T. *Root Shock: How Tearing Up City Neighborhoods Hurts America, And What We Can Do About It*. New York: Ballantine, 2004.
- Giddens, Anthony. *The Constitution of Society. Outline of the Theory of Structuration*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986.
- Glaser, Barney G. "The Constant Comparative Method of Qualitative Analysis." *Social Problems* 12 (1965): 436-445.
- Glazer, Nathan. "Disaggregating Culture." In *Culture Matters*, edited by Lawrence E. Harrison and Samuel P. Huntington. New York: Basic Books, 2000; 219-230.
- Gittell, Marilyn. *Participants and Participation: A Study of School Policy in New York City*. (1967). < <http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED011687.pdf> >. (Accessed November 10, 2010)
- Greene, Judith A. "Zero Tolerance: A Case Study of Police Policies and Practices in New York City." *Crime and Delinquency* 45, no. 2 (April 1999).
- Gupta, Akil and James Ferguson J, eds. *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology*. Duke University Press, Durham, NC, 1997.
- Halper, Jeff. *Obstacles to Peace: A Re-framing of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict, 4th Edition*. Jerusalem, Israel: Israeli Committee Against House Demolition, 2009.
- Hamilton, Charles V. *Adam Clayton Powell Jr.: The Political Biography of an American Dilemma*. New York: Atheneum, Macmillan Publishing Company, 1991.

- _____. "The Patron-Recipient Relationship and Minority Politics in New York City." *Political Science Quarterly* 9, no. 2 (Summer 1979).
- Harrington, Michael. *The Other Poverty: Poverty in the United States*. Macmillan, New York, 1962.
- Hayden, Dolores. *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History*. MIT Press: Cambridge, 1997.
- Hirsch's Arnold. *Making the Second Ghetto: Race and Housing in Chicago, 1940-1960*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1983.
- Hooks, Bell. *Yearning: Race, Gender, and Cultural Politics*. New York: South End Press; 1999.
- Hopkins, June. "The Road Not Taken: Harry Hopkins and New Deal Work Relief. Presidential." *Studies Quarterly* 29 (1999).
- Kahlenberg, Richard. *Tough Liberal: Albert Shanker and the Battles Over Schools, Unions, Race, and Democracy*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2007.
- Katz, Michael B. *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse: A Social History of Welfare in America*. New York: Basic Book, 1996.
- _____. *The Undeserving Poor: From the War on Poverty to the War on Welfare*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1989.
- Katznelson, Ira. *City Trenches: Urban Politics and the Patterning of Class in the United States*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1981.
- _____. *Black Men, White Cities: Race, Politics and Migration in the United States 1900-30, and Britain, 1948-68*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1976.
- Kelling George and Catherine Cole. *Fixing Broken Windows: Restoring Order and Reducing Crime in Our Communities*. New York: The Free Press, 1996.
- Kelly, Joseph B. "Racial Integration Policies of the New York City Housing Authority, 1958-61." *Social Service Review* (1964).
- Kerckoff, Alan C. "Institutional Arrangements and Stratification Processes in Industrial Societies." *Annual Review of Sociology* 21 (1995), pp. 323-347.
- Kilson, Martin. "The Weakness of Black Politics." In *In Search of New York*, edited by Jim Sleeper. New York: Transaction Publishers, 1988.
- King, Desmond. *Separate and Unequal: Black Americans and the US Federal Government*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

- Koebel, C. Theodore and Marilyn S. Cavell. "Tenant Organizations in Public Housing Projects: A Report on Senate Resolution No. 347." Prepared for the Virginia Housing Study Commission by the Virginia Center for Housing Research, October 1995.
- Kolodny, Robert. "What Happens When Tenants Manage Their Own Public Housing." A National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials Study. The Office of Policy Development and Research, United States Department of Housing and Urban Development, August 1983.
- LeBlanc, Adrian Nicole. *Random Family: Love, Drugs, Trouble, and Coming of Age in the Bronx*. New York: Scribner, 2003.
- Lewis, Oscar. "The Culture of Poverty." *Scientific American* 215 (1969): 19-25.
- _____. *La Vida: A Puerto Rican Family in the Culture of Poverty San Juan and New York*. Random House, New York, 1965.
- Logan and Harvey Molotch. *Urban Fortunes: The Political Economy of Place*. (With John Logan.) Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press. 1987.
- Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation. "Tenant Management Demonstration: First Annual Report." December, 1977; 13-14.
<http://www.huduser.org/Publications/pdf/HUD%20-%2050104.pdf>. (accessed September 20, 2011)
- Marcuse, Peter. Unpublished manuscript. No date.
- Massey, Douglas and Denton, Nancy. *American Apartheid: Segregation and the Making of the Underclass*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993.
- Metz, Mary Haywood. "Clashes in the Classroom: The Importance of Norms for Authority." *Education and Urban Society* 11. (November 1978): 13-47.
- Meyer, John W. "The Effects of Education as an Institution." *American Journal of Sociology* 83: (1977): 53-77.
- Meyer, John W. and Brian Rowan. "Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony." *American Journal of Sociology* 83, no. 2 (1977): 340-363.
- Miles, Matthew and Huberman, A. Michael. *Qualitative Data Analysis*. London: Sage, 1984.
- National Housing Law Project. "An Advocate's Guide to the HUD Section 3 Program: Creating Jobs and Economic Development." February 2009.
<http://www.nhlp.org/files/03%20Sec.%203%20Guide.pdf> (accessed August 20, 2011).

- Newton, Huey. *To Die for the People*. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2009.
- O'Connor, Alice. *Poverty Knowledge: Social Science, Social Policy, and the Poor in Twentieth-Century U.S. History*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002.
- Ogbu, John U. *Minority Education and Caste: The American System in Cross-Cultural Perspective*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press, 1978.
- Paine, Albert B. *Thomas Nast, His Period and His Pictures*. Princeton: Pyne Press, 1974.
- Parson, Talcott. *Politics and Social Structure*. New York: Free Press, 1969.
- Peterman, William. "The Meanings of Resident Empowerment: Why Just About Everyone Thinks It's a Good Idea and What It Has to Do with Residents Management." *Housing Policy Debate* (7)3, 1996.
- Podair, Jerald E. *The Strike That Changed New York: Blacks, Whites, and the Ocean Hill-Brownsville Crisis*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004.
- Powell, Walter W. and Paul J. DiMaggio, eds. *The New Institutionalism in Organizational Analysis*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.
- Pritchett, Wendell. *Brownsville, Brooklyn: Blacks, Jews and the Changing Face of the Ghetto*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002.
- Rainwater, Lee. *Behind Ghetto Walls: Black Family Life in a Federal Slum*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1970.
- Riordin, William L. *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall: A Series of Plain Talks on Very Practical Politics*. New York: E.P. Dutton, 1963.
- Rodgers, David. *110 Livingston Street: Politics and bureaucracy in the New York City Schools*. New York : Vintage Books, 1968.
- Sampson, Robert J. and Jeffrey D. Morenoff. "Durable Inequality: Spatial Dynamics, Social Processes and the Persistence of Poverty in Chicago Neighborhoods." In *Poverty Traps*, edited by Samuel Bowles, Steve Durlauf, and Karla Hoff. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006; 176-203.
- Sampson, Robert J. and Raudenbush, Stephen W. "Systematic Social Observation of Public Spaces: A New Look at Disorder in Urban Neighborhoods." *American Journal of Sociology* 105(3) (1 November 1999): 603-651.
- Schneiberg, Marc and Elisabeth Clemens. "The Typical Tools for the Job: Research Strategies in Institutional Analysis." *Sociological Theory* 3 (2006): 195-227.

- Scott, James. *Comparative Political Corruption*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J. Prentice-Hall, 1972.
- Sleeper, Jim. *The Closest of Strangers: Liberalism and the Politics of Race in New York*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1990.
- Spitzer, Eliot. Office of the New York State Attorney General, *Stop and Frisk Report*, 1999.
- Stone, Clarence. *Regime Politics: Governing Atlanta, 1946-1988*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas (1989).
- Stoutland, Sarah. "Community Development Corporations: Mission, Strategy, and Accomplishments" in *Urban Problems and Community Development*. Ferguson, Ronald F. and William T. Dickens, Eds; 1999.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. *The Spivak Reader: Selected Works of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak*. Edited by Donna Landry and Gerald MacLean. New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Streeck, Wolfgang and Kathleen Thelen, eds. *Beyond Continuity: Institutional Change in Advanced Political Economies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005.
- Susi, Gretchen, *Represent: The New York City Public Housing Resident Alliance and Its Struggle Against the Imposition of the Neoliberal Agenda*. PhD dissertation. City University of New York, 2005.
- Taylor, Clarence. "Introduction." *New York Life and History: An Interdisciplinary Journal*. The Afro-American Historical Association of the Niagara Frontier. 2007.
- _____. *Knocking at Our Own Door: Milton A. Galamison and the Struggle to Integrate New York City Schools*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997.
- Thompson, J. Phillip. *Double Trouble: Black Mayors, Black Communities, and the Call for a Deep Democracy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2006.
- _____. "Public Housing in New York City." In *Housing and Community Development in New York City: Facing the Future*." Michael H. Schill, ed. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1999.
- Thompson, Lawrence L. "History of HUD" Publisher unknown, 2006.
http://www.haws.org/documents/A_History_of_HUD.pdf (accessed October 9, 2011)
- United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. *Title 24, Part §964—Tenant Participation and Tenant Opportunities in Public Housing: §964.12 HUD policy on the Tenant Opportunities Program*, 1994.
- United States National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders. *Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government

Printing Office, 1968.

Vale, Lawrence. *From the Puritans to the Projects*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006.

_____. *Reclaiming Public Housing*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002.

Venkatesh, Sudhir Alladi. *American Project: The Rise and Fall of A Modern Ghetto*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000.

Vitale, Alex S. *City of Disorder: How the Quality of Life Campaign Transformed New York Politics*. New York: New York University, 2008.

Walker, Richard M. "How to Abolish Public Housing: Implications and Lessons from Public Management Reform." *Housing Studies* 16, no 5 (September 2001): 675-696.

Weick, Karl. "Educational Organizations as Loosely Coupled Systems." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 21 (1976): 1-19.

Weikart, Lynne A. "The Giuliani Administration and New Public Management." *Urban Affairs Review* 36(3) (January 2001); 359-381.

Weiner, Melissa. "Elite Versus Grassroots: Disjunctures between Parents' and Civil Rights Organizations' Demands for New York City's Public Schools." *The Sociological Quarterly* 50 (2009); 89-119.

Wilson, William Julius. *More Than Just Race: Being Black and Poor in the Inner City*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2009.

_____. *The Truly Disadvantaged: The Inner City, the Underclass, and Public Policy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987.