

leverage over their host cities. *But*, he adds, something vital would be lost: “the stability and tradition fans cherish. A truly competitive sports world would be as chaotic as the computer and entertainment markets.” The quality of play might be affected, too, as the number of players multiplied. Bernstein thinks some sort of change may be in order, but nothing so radical.

Morris and Kraker have a different idea: community ownership of teams, à la the Green Bay Packers. (They also favor revenue sharing among teams, to make them all “equal,” as now required in the National Football League, and would oblige leagues to grant expansion fran-

chises to cities abandoned by their teams.) “Professional teams have become an integral part of our community fabric and our emotional and civic lives,” they maintain. “This may justify stadium subsidies in certain communities, but common sense dictates that when an owner demands a subsidy two to three times the value of the team itself, fans would be much better off purchasing the team themselves” (assuming the owner will sell it).

Maybe so. But the Packers “are not a model likely to be copied soon,” Bernstein notes. “All the major professional leagues [now] prohibit public ownership.”

A Bright Side to Public Housing

“Are Public Housing Projects Good for Kids?” by Janet Currie and Aaron Yelowitz, *NBER Working Paper No. 6305* (Dec. 1997), National Bureau of Economic Research, 1050 Massachusetts Ave., Cambridge, Mass. 02138.

The disastrous failures of Chicago’s infamous Robert Taylor Homes and other massive urban high-rise “projects” have given public housing a bad name. Currie and Yelowitz, economists at the University of California, Los Angeles, suggest that it may be undeserved.

The focus on the worst projects, they say, obscures the fact that projects differ. Of the 3,300 local public housing authorities in the country, 70 percent operate relatively small, more human-scale projects of fewer than 300 units. Moreover, not all the high-rise projects are as bad as the worst. The very fact that New York and other large cities have long lists of poor families waiting to get into public housing indicates it may be the best alternative available to them.

But, the authors ask, is it

best for their children?

Combining data from the Census Bureau and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and taking into account such factors as the family head’s age, marital status, race, and educational status, Currie and Yelowitz find that children in the projects fare better than children of similar background who do not live in public housing. The project families are less likely to suffer from overcrowding, and the boys, at least, are less likely to be held back in school.

Though the children living in projects might be better served by a housing voucher program that would provide subsidies for private-sector apartments, the authors conclude, it appears that public housing has gotten a bum rap.



A public housing project in St. Louis, Missouri: A better life?

PRESS & MEDIA

No News at the Statehouse?

“Missing the Story at the Statehouse” by Charles Layton and Mary Walton, in *American Journalism Review* (July–Aug. 1998), 8701 Adelphi Rd., Adelphi, Md. 20783–1716.

“You can vote any way you want to up here,” Carolyn Russell, a state representative from Goldsboro, North Carolina, was told when she

first arrived in Raleigh in 1991, “because the folks back home will never know.” Even as power and money have been devolving from