



The Mutual Housing Experiment: New Deal Communities for the Urban Middle Class (Urban Life, Landscape and Policy)

Kristin M Szylvian

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In 1940, the U.S. Federal Works Agency created an experimental housing program for industrial workers. Eight model communities were leased and later sold to the residents, who formed a non-profit corporation called a mutual housing association. Further development of housing under the mutual housing plan was stymied by controversies around radical politics and race, and questions over whether the federal government should be involved in housing policy.

In *The Mutual Housing Experiment*, Kristin Szylvian examines 32 mutual housing associations that are still in existence today, and offers strong evidence to show that federal public housing policy was not the failure that critics allege. She explains that mutual home ownership has not only proven its economic value, but has also given rise to communities characterized by a strong sense of identity and civic engagement.

The book shows that this important period in urban and housing policy provides critical lessons for contemporary housing analysts who continue to emphasize traditional home ownership for all wage-earners despite the home mortgage crisis of 2008.

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