

REAGAN'S AUSTERITY BUREAUCRATS

Examining the Racial and Gender Bias of Ronald Reagan's Housing Vouchers

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Abstract

In 1982, President Ronald Reagan's administration initiated a dramatic policy shift towards a new housing voucher program, which simultaneously resulted in a near-halt in public and project-based assisted housing funding. When analyzing this historic policy shift, many affordable housing scholars have overemphasized race-absent narratives about fiscal austerity to explain the Reagan administration's policy rejection of public housing and embrace of housing vouchers. To present a more comprehensive and intersectional history of the Reagan administration's transition to housing vouchers, I employ an alternative methodological lens that I call Black feminist critical policy studies. This paper traces how the Office of Management and Budget and Housing and Urban Development officials relied on obscured racial and gender bias in their debate informing Reagan's alternative housing voucher program. By revealing the social bias endemic in the Reagan administration's housing debate, this article illustrates that housing vouchers were not simply a neutral, cost-efficient policy tool but helped ensure low-income black mothers' continued subjection to anti-welfare backlash, housing discrimination, and paternal supervision.

Keywords: Housing Vouchers, Low-Income Black Women, Welfare Reform, Austerity, and Black Feminist Critical Policy Studies

INTRODUCTION

During the presidential election year of 1988, the National Tenants Organization (NTO), an advocacy organization of public and assisted housing renters mainly comprised of urban African American mothers, petitioned House Democrats to hold a legislative hearing on the NTO's proposed bill, the Jesse Gray Act, which called for massive investment in public housing construction and rehabilitation. In the lone congressional hearing held on the Jesse Gray Act, NTO members condemned President Ronald Reagan's administration's retrenchment tactics for public and project-based assisted housing. Maxine Green, NTO's Chairperson and longtime public housing activist, decried the Reagan administration's austerity tactics of rent hikes, cuts to public housing rehabilitation, termination of public and assisted housing construction, as well as public housing demolition, contending that these tactics contributed to increased homelessness and housing insecurity. Another NTO leader, Jim Horton, went further, asserting that the Reagan administration's retrenchment strategy valorized privatization

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through a modified housing voucher program (that is, a rent supplement given to income-qualified renters to find housing in the private market). Horton asserted that the NTO felt “hoodwinked” because they did not fully understand how Reagan’s modified housing vouchers justified public housing demolition and disinvestment until the end of Reagan’s second term (U.S. Congress 1988, p. 31).

This paper takes these tenant activists’ critique of housing vouchers as an intellectual point of departure and analyzes the Reagan administration’s internal debate leading to the passage of Reagan’s modified housing voucher program. By applying what I call a Black feminist critical policy analysis to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) internal documents for the Reagan administration’s 1983 HUD Budget, I present OMB and HUD’s differing perspectives on how a modified housing voucher program could advance multiple austerity goals. In 1982, HUD proposed a sixty percent reduction in its public and assisted housing costs. HUD’s massive budget reduction hinged on HUD zeroing out public and assisted housing construction funds and shifting HUD’s low-income housing assistance to a modified housing voucher program that had lower payouts, higher rent levels, stricter eligibility standards, and shorter lifespans.

While HUD ultimately supported the massive budget slashes, HUD and OMB differed on how the modified housing voucher program could secure different austerity goals including privatization, deregulation, federal downsizing, character modification, *and* stakeholder conflict. OMB’s policy staff championed a modified housing voucher program because it could control and curb federal costs and induce stakeholder compliance by undercutting potential tenant solidarity and decoupling shared stakeholder interests. Initially, for OMB’s senior leadership, a modified housing voucher program was a second-best strategy to a “non-differentiated welfare payment,” which, for them, justified the termination of all low-income housing assistance programs. OMB’s senior leadership feared a housing voucher program with annual inflation adjustments would incentivize low-income and welfare-assisted Black and Brown mothers with their children to move into ‘homogenous’ neighborhoods indiscriminately, thereby destabilizing these places with their alleged cultural disregard for property upkeep and civility.

Only after Reagan expressed his support for a voucher program did OMB’s senior leadership back a modified housing voucher program; but OMB’s support came with a specific austerity provision: OMB inserted a no-inflation adjustment which disproportionately restricted welfare-assisted Black and Brown renters’ movement and housing options. Even with OMB senior leadership’s newfound support for a modified housing program, HUD’s senior leadership challenged OMB’s use of housing vouchers. For HUD, a (modified) housing voucher program would allow local and federal officials to better connect housing policy with welfare reform. HUD saw housing vouchers as a preferred disciplining instrument for low-income Black and Brown mothers. Consequentially, HUD tied housing vouchers to welfare reform efforts emphasizing disciplinary interventions like personal responsibility and wage work, whereas OMB tied welfare reform to punishment and exclusionary uses.

By reviewing OMB and HUD’s differing uses of the modified housing voucher program, I reveal a more complex political history of housing vouchers by recognizing how housing vouchers were a malleable political tool that helped redefine housing problems not as a structural issue but as a personal, racialized, gendered, and politically vulnerable issue of welfare reform. Lastly, I illustrate how anti-Black-women bias was central to OMB and HUD’s differing perspectives on housing vouchers.

THE FEDERAL TURN TO HOUSING VOUCHERS REVISITED AND RE-POLITICIZED

Many urban housing policy scholars have eschewed a racial and gender analysis of the political history of housing vouchers, in part, because they have placed higher explanatory value on a race-absent narrative of fiscal austerity that presumed federal and local bureaucrats chose vouchers because of fiscal prudence and efficiency. For example, housing policy scholars like Charles Orlebeke (2000), R. Allen Hays (2012), and Alex Schwartz (2006) helped naturalize a race-absent history of housing vouchers by arguing that the bipartisan shift to housing vouchers resulted from a growing consensus that the private market was a more efficient medium to deliver housing to low-income households. These scholars detailed how housing vouchers—as a policy instrument—gained Democratic support in the mid-1960s as federal housing officials sought to avoid public housing's costly upkeep, production lags, bureaucratic maleficence, and conservative resistance. They proposed that privately owned but project-based assisted housing fell into similar problems. Because President Jimmy Carter's administration sought to counter the country's persistent post-1970s stagflation, this administration backed block grants, a conservative policy idea that would grant localities flexible-use grants instead of use-specific categorical grants (Jones 2014). The Reagan administration built upon Carter's austerity tactics in the early 1980s by repealing future commitments to production-focused public and project-based assisted housing, which resulted in housing vouchers being the only form of low-income housing assistance available. These authors noted that two types of housing vouchers were in use during the early years of Reagan's administration. One was the Section 8 Existing Use Rental Certificate, which was established in 1974 and allowed local housing authorities to pay Fair Market Rents to landlords in exchange for renting to low-income households. The second type of housing voucher was Reagan's modified housing voucher program, which started as a demonstration program in 1983. Before the Reagan administration advocated this modified housing voucher program, the administration inherited and oversaw the housing voucher program President Richard Nixon implemented in 1974. However, Reagan's modified housing voucher differed from Nixon's vouchers in three key ways. First, it gave a fixed subsidy, and its subsidy level was intentionally fifteen to twenty percent lower than existing Section 8 rental certificates; second, renters were expected to pay for any future increases in rents and utilities. Third, it had fewer geographical restrictions (Hays 2012; Schwartz 2006; U.S. Congress 1982). Interestingly enough, in addition to presidential backing, civil rights activists, liberal housing advocates, and some public housing tenants supported housing vouchers because they felt vouchers could facilitate racial integration (Arias 2013; Goetz 2018; Vale and Freemark, 2012; Winnick 1995). Albeit these liberal advocates backed housing vouchers as a policy tool, as they assumed it would be one of many policy efforts used to support low-income housing.

When reflecting on housing vouchers' eventual policy dominance, these scholars implied administrative efficiency, research, and fiscal prudence drove the Reagan administration's determinative shift to housing vouchers. For Charles Orlebeke (2000), housing vouchers "triumphed" because "vouchers also benefit from *not* being production programs, which seem forever burdened with the weighty baggage of blighting projects, excessive costs, social pathologies, bureaucratic bungling, and outright scandal" (emphasis in original, p. 505). Orlebeke implies that bipartisan support eventually solidified once Reagan's administration released findings from the Experimental Housing Allowance Program, a HUD-commissioned, ten-year study on housing vouchers,

that argued: “the core housing problem stemmed, predominately, not from deficits in supply but deficits in income” (Orlebeke 2000, p. 505).

Critical urbanists and race scholars challenged housing policy scholars like Orlebeke by contending the federal shift to vouchers reflected an ideological turn to neoliberal governance. In this shift to neoliberal governance, scholars have examined how the Reagan administration manifested Republican political strategist Lee Atwater’s “Southern strategy” by justifying fiscal conservatism and welfare rollbacks through racially coded and gendered narratives about welfare queens and urban crime (Inwood 2014). Critical urbanists John Arena (2012), Daniel Stedman Jones (2014), and Keeanga-Yamatta Taylor (2016) argued post-1960s federal and local housing officials embraced pro-market policy instruments like housing vouchers because conservatives successfully mobilized anti-welfare backlash by blaming post-1970s economic crises on means-tested welfare programs like public housing. Black feminists like Rhonda Williams (2005) and Dorothy Roberts (2014) add to this historical insight by arguing that racial and gender bias informed post-1970s welfare reform officials’ austerity turn. For example, Black feminist scholar Dorothy Roberts (2014) suggests that “welfare retrenchment relied on stereotypes of black women, especially the ‘Welfare Queen,’” which justified “racist and implemented policies targeted specifically at them as the vilified beneficiaries of state largess” (p. 1777).

This paper adds to critical urbanists’ and Black feminists’ historical and theoretical insights in three ways. First, this paper connects the Reagan administration’s housing voucher proposal to welfare reform debates. Second, I complicate the pro-voucher turn in Reagan’s administration by illustrating how different political factions within OMB and HUD used welfare reform as a medium to articulate not only racial and gender bias but also to justify fiscal austerity. Third, I reveal how Reagan’s OMB and HUD saw housing vouchers as a flexible tool for austerity because it could politically achieve multiple goals including (stakeholder) demobilization, (stakeholder) behavior modification, and privatization.

METHODOLOGY

To understand how housing vouchers served as a medium for racial and gender bias as well as other austerity goals like stakeholder behavior modification and demobilization, I employ a methodological approach I call Black feminist critical policy studies. Like feminist critical policy studies, Black feminist critical policy studies blends historical and literary methods together (Berger 2005). Furthermore, this approach is inspired by a critical realist version of grounded theory, which encourages researchers to derive theory from analyzed data (Kempster and Parry, 2010). Black feminist critical policy studies synthesizes policy information to theorize inter-connected political and ideological forces that may credibly explain policy outcomes. This approach also pays close attention to capitalist social relations of power, which enable and structure historical and asymmetrical power relations between racialized and gendered social groups. This approach recognizes that capitalism’s asymmetrical social relations require bureaucrats to determine which stakeholders espouse capitalist principles like private production. Lastly, Black feminist critical policy studies traces how bureaucrats identify which stakeholders prove useful for their political reforms while also examining how bureaucrats may envision or deploy new techniques of social control over demonized or vulnerable social groups (e.g., low-income Black mothers). Indeed, these new social control techniques may be legitimized through regulatory reform or knowledge production.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

To excavate this critical, alternative, and interpretative policy analysis, I employ a historical review and close reading of the Office of Management and Budget and Housing and Urban Development's archival material including memos, letters, and other executive correspondence. Enforcing Reagan's campaign mandate to reduce welfare spending, balance the federal budget, increase defense spending, and cut taxes (primarily for the wealthy), OMB played an enlarged role in HUD's budgetary and policy-making agenda because much of HUD's funding structure relied on long-term, recurring, but often discretionary appropriations (Jones 2014; Pierson 1994). Because OMB was responsible for reconciling Reagan's policy priorities with budget cuts, OMB increased its involvement in HUD's policy reforms to ensure alignment with Reagan's desired cuts in social welfare. Therefore, I went to the National Archives in College Park, Maryland to review and analyze OMB papers. My close reading focused on OMB and HUD bureaucrats' attempts to tie low-income housing assistance programs to means-tested welfare reform. I detail how OMB saw housing vouchers as a versatile tool to influence stakeholders, namely landlords, low-income renters, and housing advocates. To reveal gender and racial bias, I examine how OMB and HUD bureaucrats brainstormed or deployed sociological and political terms like "welfare mothers," "welfare families," "social pathology" and "welfare reform" to justify budget cuts or policy reform (e.g., disciplinary uses of housing vouchers). To demonstrate how these terms were coded attacks/narratives for low-income Black mothers, I supplement this archival research with an analysis of primary sources including newspapers and congressional hearings that covered the Reagan administration's effort to reform low-income housing assistance. Lastly, I see if or how low-income Black women were able to contest negative stereotypes about their welfare usage.

Finding 1: Housing Vouchers—A Useful Tool for Stakeholder Control/Conflict

Before one can understand how Reagan's administration inscribed its internal housing voucher debate with racial and gender bias, one must briefly contextualize OMB's high involvement in HUD's budget during the Reagan years. In January 1981, President Ronald Reagan appointed David Stockman as OMB Director. Charged with delivering on Reagan's contradictory campaign promises, Stockman planned to attack the country's economic woes through reduced domestic spending while also challenging Communism with increased defense spending (Jones 2014; Pierson 1994). Since HUD's budget had steadily grown since the 1960s, OMB's senior leadership empowered OMB's policy staff to craft policy recommendations to reduce HUD's budget. After OMB won eligibility reforms that reduced HUD's funding and beneficiaries in HUD's 1982 budget, OMB policy staff quickly mobilized to propose its most sweeping budgetary changes in HUD's 1983 budget. In 1981, OMB policy staff produced two memos to assess cost-saving policy alternatives like housing vouchers and block grants. OMB's policy staff highly favored a (modified) housing voucher program because it advanced multiple austerity goals, including stakeholder conflict and control.

For the Office of Management and Budget's policy staff, housing vouchers could engender stakeholder conflict because this policy alternative would compel owners of current project-assisted projects to reconsider assisted housing's building use. To validate terminating production-based contracts, OMB staffer Alan Rhinesmith postulated: "we stand a better chance of terminating current HUD subsidy contracts if tenants are given a reasonable alternative and landlords are likewise permitted to operate their buildings on a strictly competitive basis by charging market rents."¹ OMB's staff also

suggested housing vouchers could “provide project owners the opportunity to use their building in the most economical way (presumably not strictly low-income rental housing).”² To maximize buildings’ profitability, OMB’s policy staff implied housing vouchers could better exploit the structural inequities in local housing markets with low vacancy rates by enticing assisted-housing landlords to conduct a cost-benefit analysis of renting to low-income renters instead of potentially higher income renters. Even with this proverbial carrot, OMB’s policy staff advocated the metaphorical stick of pressuring owners’ compliance by forcing them to reapply for continued funding more frequently.³ Nevertheless, OMB’s policy staff assumed landlords’ pursuit of profit would compel landlords to align with OMB’s policy alternative.

By inducing stakeholder conflict, OMB policy staff could also use housing vouchers to control HUD beneficiaries’ potential alliances. Rhinesmith suggested, “if the vouchers were allocated—at least in the short term—primarily to tenants already living in HUD-subsidized housing, they could provide a highly useful mechanism for allowing us to get out from under current long-term subsidized housing contracts.”⁴ He continued, “vouchers could provide the means needed to break the linkage between HUD subsidized building operators and their tenants.”⁵

For OMB’s policy staff, housing vouchers had significant instrumental value in individuating tenants but also disincentivizing a potential alliance between landlords and tenants, who could conceivably jointly lobby for continued funding for project-based assisted housing. Additionally, they believed housing vouchers allowed HUD to control the number of assisted renters better, insisting that housing vouchers would enable the administration to “get out of the business of adding households to the [HUD] program.”⁶ Lastly, OMB’s policy staff could use vouchers to control which tenants had priority access to housing vouchers, consequentially recommending tying housing vouchers to a “quid pro quo for termination of further HUD subsidized housing program commitments.”⁷ They minimally hoped that housing vouchers could be used to target higher-income renters or renters recently housed in newly constructed assisted housing to ensure substantial savings.⁸ With implicit attention to controlling HUD stakeholders’ growth and incentivizing stakeholder compliance, OMB’s bait-and-switch strategy with housing vouchers suggested that OMB did not necessarily care about existing tenants’ housing needs more but most likely saw these renters as politically useful to their primary goal of ending public and assisted housing construction. OMB’s policy staff was even willing to consider extending housing vouchers to a select number of unassisted households if it would help “fend off any political pressures arising from cancelation of pipeline commitments.”⁹

OMB’s political focus on stakeholder control became evident when OMB’s policy staff did not want HUD to pursue block grants as the alternative to public and project-based assisted housing. For OMB, block grants threatened the Reagan administration’s ability to control the growth of HUD’s potential stakeholders. For example, OMB staffer Rhinesmith opined: “We believe that this arrangement [block grants] would not be as workable as vouchers in eliminating the current outlay commitments since it would not provide for any method of forcing localities to assume responsibilities for current Section 8, [Section] 236, and rent supplement contracts and may not even lead to successful termination of the Federal government’s responsibilities for public housing.”¹⁰ Worried that “housing block grants [...] may become a permanent new revenue sharing device,” OMB’s policy staff instead preferred housing vouchers because it would allow the administration to limit the number of assisted tenants, emphasize the devolution of responsibility to localities, and prevent the creation of another political base demanding continued HUD funding.¹¹

Only after they considered how to minimize stakeholder political pressure did OMB's policy staff articulate how a modified housing voucher program could be used to demand renters absorb more of their housing costs. With a modified housing voucher program, OMB's policy staff argued the administration could secure "considerable savings" by granting "shallower subsidies" to "many current and prospective tenants" and "forcing [these] households either to contribute more of their own resources to their housing costs or lower the quality of housing services they consume."¹² Moreover, they conceded that their tighter eligibility standards would force the 500,000-plus renters who earned between fifty to eighty percent of a region's median income to pay market-rate rents. Although these OMB policy memos made no mention of race, this austerity recommendation disproportionately impacted urban Black and Brown households, who did not earn enough to keep pace with the private rental market's rising rents in major urban centers (Stegman 1981 in U.S. Congress 1982).

Finding 2: Welfare Reform—A More Desirable Austerity Tool

As OMB's policy staff enumerated the numerous political and budgetary benefits of a modified housing voucher program, OMB's senior leadership initially resisted this alternative policy because they harbored bias against Black urban women and their families. OMB senior leadership's bias was articulated and obscured in three ways. First, OMB leaders reduced all public housing to multi-family (and urban) public housing to dismiss its socio-political value. Second, they mobilized and exploited the racial and gender bias inherent in the political frame of welfare reform to justify complete termination of low-income housing assistance. Third, OMB senior leadership circulated and referenced racially and gender biased sociological scholarship that depicted housing voucher-assisted low-income Black urban mothers as property destroyers. And while these leaders did not reference this research in later negotiations with HUD and President Reagan, it was clear that this scholarship was used in part to justify OMB senior leadership's policy preference for cash allowances. Moreover, this scholarship adds context for understanding why OMB may have stressed no-inflation adjustments for the Reagan administration's modified housing voucher.

OMB's leaders initially disagreed with OMB policy staffers' support for housing vouchers because OMB's senior leadership believed this alternative policy would still enable social deviance and condone government involvement in socio-economic matters. By August 1981, Annelise Anderson was one of the first OMB leaders to record her disagreement with OMB's internal recommendation of housing vouchers. As Associate Director for Economics and Government, Anderson supervised OMB's policy and budgetary proposals for HUD. In response to OMB's earlier memo in support of housing vouchers, Anderson ordered Rhinesmith to revise OMB's policy recommendations because she did not consider them "radical" enough.¹³ "Let's get out of this business altogether," Anderson proposed, since "the federal government has failed in providing subsidies; provides deep subsidies to a small percentage of the poor; spends more on housing than people would themselves; creates social pathology; builds housing at a greater cost than does the private sector."¹⁴ To realize this goal, Anderson advised the Reagan administration to "stop building subsidized housing now; provide no new mechanism (no vouchers, no block grant); allow current tenants to remain in subsidized housing; allow no new subsidized tenants; get out of current contracts for units not built; reduce payments as subsidized tenants leave subsidized housing."¹⁵

While Anderson eschewed direct mention of race and gender in her denouncement of OMB's policy recommendation, one can link synecdoche reference to Black and urban mothers through her critique that public and assisted housing enabled

social pathology. First, Anderson reduced all public and assisted housing to a narrative of “social pathology.” Taking no time to mention the distinctions between the type, demographic, or location of public housing (e.g., senior-only vs. multi-family housing; rural vs. urban), Anderson’s comment presumed public and assisted housing’s alleged “social pathology” was self-evident and ubiquitous. However, just because Anderson did not specify what constituted social pathology, one cannot discount her exposure to conservative-circulated narratives that named urban and multi-family public housing as sites of social pathology. In fact, Anderson’s husband and one of Reagan’s top domestic advisors, Martin Anderson penned one of the popular conservative books that linked welfare assistance like public housing to the creation of a new caste—“the dependent Americans”—who disregarded heteronormative and puritanical moral norms including marriage and wage work, yet enjoyed continued welfare assistance (Blumenthal 1980). Welfare scholar Francis Fox Piven (2001) notes that Martin Anderson’s scholarship underpinned the growing post-1970s conservative scholarship that coded this “new caste of dependent Americans” as low-income women of color. Nevertheless, Anderson’s coded and racial bias became more evident as OMB leaders, including Director David Stockman, led an internal push to oppose the Reagan administration’s policy shift to housing vouchers.

Reagan’s Presidential Commission on Housing Policy issued its interim report in fall 1981 and argued that the country no longer suffered an acute housing shortage and therefore no longer needed extensive investment in the construction of public and project-based assisted housing. Consequentially, the commission backed housing vouchers—specifically, the Section 8 Existing Housing program—as the primary medium to deliver low-income housing assistance. Once this interim report was issued, OMB leaders redoubled their efforts to resist the Reagan administration’s increasing turn to housing vouchers by calling for a comprehensive welfare reform effort instead.

In September 1981, Kenneth Ryder, OMB Deputy Associate Director of Housing, Treasury and Finance, asked Executive Associate Director for Budget and Legislation and second to OMB Director David Stockman, Don Moran, to join OMB’s “Public Assistance” concept group. Ryder wanted to join this group because he was considering “a fundamental welfare reform initiative as one option for achieving the Director’s 1984 outlay reduction target for entitlement programs.”¹⁶ Ryder continued, “we are much interested in welfare reform as a possible rationale for terminating the current subsidized housing programs.”¹⁷ Challenging Reagan’s Presidential Commission’s support for housing vouchers, Ryder argued, the “voucher is, however, only a second best alternative for addressing what may now be recognized as a fundamental income problem among poor people (and not a housing problem).”¹⁸ Ryder continued, it was “inconceivable that the Administration could propose a housing voucher if, at the same time, it is considering a more basic welfare reform for current categorical income assistance programs.”¹⁹ Although his policy ideas remained in skeletal form, Ryder believed maximum austerity would result from comprehensive welfare reform plus major policy reforms like rent hikes, rent subsidy caps, and the cancellation of new construction and rehabilitation commitments.²⁰ While Ryder did not outline what this comprehensive welfare reform effort would specifically involve, he was not alone in his thinking about this strategy. OMB Associate Deputy Director Alan Rhinesmith also considered and agreed that welfare reform would legitimate the cancellation of all commitments for public and project-based assisted housing, but Rhinesmith still preferred housing vouchers because welfare reform did not “facilitate a strategy of ‘buying off’ current subsidized tenants.”²¹ Rhinesmith also worried that a successful welfare reform strategy would require many “financial ‘sweeteners’ and would ironically prove financially costly and challenging to win in Congress.”²²

Although OMB's staff expressed ambivalence about pursuing a framing strategy of welfare reform to address low-income housing assistance, it was ideologically revealing that OMB sought the most substantial austerity cuts through welfare reform. Many conservatives, particularly President Reagan, used sweeping welfare reform to obscure their racial, class, and gender bias in electoral campaigns. Black feminist scholar Ange-Marie Hancock (2006) noted that post-1960s national efforts to advance welfare reform were linked to Reagan's deployment of symbolic racism through his caricature and censure of the "welfare queen," whom he depicted as undeserving, incompetent, conniving; single black mother(s) who also "usurp the taxpayers' money, produces children who will do the same, and emasculates the titular head of her household, the Black male" (p. 60). With this racialized and gendered caricature of the welfare queen, Reagan's administration mobilized public and political support to slash funding for means-tested welfare programs, including public housing (Arena 2012; *New York Times* 1976). Even though Reagan administration officials presented these cuts as every income group's civic sacrifice and necessary pain needed to revive the country's then-stagnant economy, Black feminist scholars argue these austerity cuts justified racially and gendered punishment for Black welfare-assisted mothers, who were seen by many officials as contemptible mothers flouting heteronormative norms of marriage and wage work.

Despite OMB's avoidance of explicit reference to low-income Black mothers, OMB's senior leadership referenced a book review written by neoconservative sociologist by Nathan Glazer (1981) to argue different forms of welfare assistance enabled and incentivized single Black and Brown mothers to destroy private property and initiate neighborhood decline. In November 1981, OMB's General Counsel Michael J. Horowitz circulated a memo denouncing the Reagan administration's increasing advocacy of housing vouchers. "I want to offer my formal dissent from the bandwagon rush to housing vouchers," Horowitz penned.²³ Horowitz's primary anti-voucher argument was not "related to the outlay/entitlements issue" since he was confident housing vouchers would not "become another food stamp program."²⁴ He worried voucher recipients would be encouraged to move into traditionally homogenous neighborhoods, bringing their domestic dysfunction, destabilizing communities, and creating "zones of destruction."²⁵ Citing sociologist Nathan Glazer's (1981) book review published in the then leading neoconservative *Public Interest* journal, Horowitz believed the federal government, with housing vouchers, would doubly assist "socially destructive families on welfare," giving them the "means to move into neighborhoods to which they had minimal commitment."²⁶ In Glazer's review of political scientist and Manhattan Institute senior fellow Peter D. Salins' (1980) book called *The Ecology of Housing Destruction: Economic Effects of Public Intervention*, he agreed with Salins, claiming that a "separate rental check (in effect, the housing voucher)" was the primary reason why New York City's rental housing market experienced post-1970s decline (Glazer 1981, p. 103). Horowitz cosigned Salins' perspective, writing "rent vouchers impose welfare families on lower middle class and working poor communities, whose difficult survival struggles are disadvantageously and disastrously tipped by the infusion of rental voucher housing beneficiaries."²⁷

OMB General Counsel Horowitz referenced sociologist Nathan Glazer's (1981) book review to depoliticize and de-historicize asymmetrical and hierarchal social relations between renters and landlords. Historian Daryl Scott (1997) contended conservatives like Horowitz employed psych-sociological concepts like welfare mothers to depict the urban and Black low-income families as damaged and thus "beyond rehabilitation" (p. 199). As such, Horowitz used Glazer's book review not only to condemn these families as contemptible but also to recast discriminatory landlords and

prejudiced White residents as self-interested, color-blind, rational actors who seek to protect their homes, communities, and properties from moral corruption and (racially triggered) value depreciation. More specifically, according to Glazer (1981), Salins pinned New York City's rising rates of "disinvestment, abandonment, vandalism, and arson" on welfare-assisted families receiving a separate housing allowance check (p. 102). After claiming thirty-six percent of welfare-assisted tenants were rent delinquent, Salins insisted that inflated-adjusted housing vouchers incentivized welfare-assisted families to find better apartments and skip rent payments (Glazer 1981, p. 104). Glazer, like Salins, contended that over one-quarter of all NYC welfare-assisted tenants moved from one apartment to the next, spreading their cultural disregard for property maintenance and neighborhood stability because of the "social character of the welfare population" prevented them from doing so (1981, p. 105). Because of these renters' alleged propensity to property destruction and deception, Glazer condoned White tenants' and landlords' racial bias insisting that racist White people were rational actors because their discriminatory actions were in response to "examples of previously devastated neighborhoods where poorer blacks and Puerto Ricans have moved in" (1981, p. 105). With Horowitz's promotion of this research, he misrepresented the social relations of power between low-income Black and Puerto Rican mothers who were renters institutionally marginalized in an American housing market that valorized White nuclear families, high-wage earners, and home buyers (Cohen 2003; McGirr 2002; Sugrue 1997). But by focusing on arguably vulnerable groups like low-income Black and Puerto Rican mothers, Horowitz deflected attention away from the historical, structural, and gendered legacies of residential segregation.

Horowitz relied on Glazer's article to also legitimate and obscure his racial and gender bias. While Horowitz used race-absent but gender-implicit terms like "welfare families," his study revealed which welfare families he worried about the most. In his book review, Glazer noted "the concentration of social problems in these families (they are, by definition, mostly female-headed with young children)" (Glazer 1981, p. 105). And he argued that these welfare-assisted families were increasingly Black and Puerto Rican.

Horowitz used this research to champion welfare reform that would produce a "non-differentiated welfare payment" because it would curb these welfare-assisted families' mobility. According to Glazer (1981), because New York provided rent control, an inflation-adjusted housing voucher and a separate welfare check, welfare-assisted families were incentivized to move from one rental property to the next with little regard for property upkeep (p. 104). To reduce this mobility trend, Glazer said public officials must change policies so "housing costs are not a 'free good' but are paid out of the welfare allotment, and eliminating a system in which the tenant is a fool not to move so as to get the highest rental allotment allowable" (p. 106). Glazer hoped—albeit with reservations—that this welfare reform proposal would be "an easier thing to manage politically than the elimination of rent controls and the reformation of the housing court" (p. 106).

Horowitz shared Glazer's perspective that a "non-differentiated welfare payment" would be better than two separate forms of assistance, but his anti-housing voucher stance informed his political fear that OMB would not be able to control potential stakeholders' growth. More specifically, Horowitz worried that housing vouchers would encourage a potential stakeholder and opponent, namely fair housing advocates. Horowitz fretted,

the existence of a nation-wide housing voucher program will also create a pressure likely to be irresistible in favor of so-called "fair housing" statutes [...]. It is precisely the communities and landlords most concerned about preserving their own

place and status and sense of community that will be become the targets of the “fair housing” lobby who, armed with “clients” now able to afford rents in random communities of their choice, will have the means to break down neighborhoods in precisely the fashion that Salins describes.”²⁸

Because Horowitz saw himself as a conservative protecting Americans’ (read: Whites’) choice to discriminate and self-segregate, he recommended that OMB, “at an absolute minimum,” back Reagan’s alternative housing vouchers only if there were federal provisions that permitted “easier evictions of housing voucher tenants.”²⁹

Far from being a lone wolf, Horowitz had the support from OMB’s top leadership. On the side of Horowitz’s memo appeared to be a handwritten note of support from OMB Director David Stockman. Stockman wrote: “Mike: I agree with you 100%. You should work with Annelise [Anderson] to develop full case against budget, housing, social policy—as [HUD Secretary Samuel] Pierce will appeal to RR [Ronald Reagan].”³⁰ With Stockman’s support, OMB’s senior leadership led an internal battle against housing vouchers.

Horowitz’s memo exposed tensions within the conservative debate regarding low-income housing assistance. While scholars like Lawrence Vale and Yonah Freemark (2012) have noted that many conservatives favored a single welfare payment (i.e., cash allowance in lieu of separate categorical assistance programs), Horowitz’s memo revealed that this political perspective was also fueled, in part, by the age-old belief that welfare reform must constrain and, if necessary, exclude undesirable people like welfare-assisted (Black) mothers.³¹

By December 1981, OMB’s senior leadership recognized that they had lost the battle regarding housing vouchers and instead they lobbied for regulatory provisions to maximize multiple austerity goals including stakeholder conflict, federal downsizing, and programmatic reform. Before HUD could present its budget to Reagan and Congress, OMB had to review and approve HUD’s recommended budget and policy priorities. During HUD’s budget review process in December 1981, OMB rejected HUD’s initial budget proposal and demanded HUD revise its eligibility protocol to include food stamps, refuse income deductions, and count all household members’ sources of income. True to OMB’s promotion of stakeholder conflict, OMB demanded HUD force local housing authorities to decide whether to spending reduced funds on rehabilitation or new construction.³² Moreover, OMB wanted HUD to convert expiring project-based assisted housing units to the modified housing voucher program. To ensure budgetary savings and federal downsizing, OMB wanted HUD to set a lower number for Reagan’s modified housing voucher program and use these new vouchers as justification for cancellation of previous presidential administrations’ public and project-based housing production commitments. Lastly, OMB denied inflation adjustments for the modified housing voucher program.

OMB’s budgetary and policy amendments infuriated HUD Secretary Samuel Pierce. Even though Pierce did not criticize OMB publicly, he internally denounced OMB’s counter-budget proposal and also implied OMB’s positions contained racial, class, and geographical bias. Pierce defended HUD’s existing low-income housing assistance programs. Pierce was especially upset at possibly overseeing the massive reduction of housing assistance within one budget cycle. In his formal appeal of OMB’s counter-proposal, Pierce decried, “in my view, the proposed reductions would leave the administration without a credible policy in the area of housing and community development.”³³ He continued, “at a time when the administration’s commitment to America’s poor and revitalization of urban areas is being severely questioned, OMB is proposing to send exactly the wrong signal.”³⁴ After blasting OMB’s cancellation of pipeline units for

public and project-based housing units and its voucher conversion proposal as “practically and legally impossible to achieve,” Pierce condemned OMB’s housing voucher reform proposal as a simple ruse to cut housing production funds and increase assisted renters’ rent burden.³⁵ He especially disagreed with OMB’s no-inflation indexation for Reagan’s alternative housing voucher program. But, to be sure, even as Pierce questioned and denounced the specifics of OMB’s counter budget proposal, his primary objections were about public relations and political backlash, not about the racial and gender bias inherent in OMB’s regulatory provisions. Pierce worried that OMB’s massive cuts would reinforce the public perception that Reagan was unfair and unduly harsh on low-income Black communities; an impression that intensified after the media shared reports on how Reagan’s 1981 budget cuts increased urban (and Black) poverty (Allegra 1981; Coleman 1983; Rich 1983; Rosenbaum 1981). Pierce instead recommended HUD pursue OMB’s austerity cuts over seven years.³⁶

Unable to resolve their disagreements, OMB and HUD presented their case to the White House’s Budget Review Board. Reagan’s modified housing voucher’s provisions and the cancellation of pipeline units were two of the three matters disputed.³⁷ In OMB’s petition to Reagan, OMB did not mention Glazer’s book review, which contended inflation-indexed vouchers enabled undesirable welfare-assisted families’ residential mobility or incentivized property destruction. Instead, they argued vouchers, without inflation, will compel tenants to “shop around for the lowest cost standard rental unit.”³⁸ But once with a voucher, OMB argued no-inflation would induce tenants to stay put. To counter HUD’s argument about OMB’s unfairness, OMB claimed even with no-inflation adjustments renters would be able to use their vouchers and move into forty-five to sixty percent of their respective rental communities in 1983. And by 1987, OMB insisted that assisted recipients would still be able to afford thirty to forty percent of available rental units if landlords only increased rents by five percent.³⁹ While OMB conceded no inflation-indexed housing vouchers constrained renter mobility, it implied that this was a civic sacrifice that would have to be endured by assisted renters since they reframed the problem as a cost-benefit analysis and consistent with the Reagan’s administration’s entitlement reform. HUD countered that OMB’s voucher cap of \$1,800 would enforce a higher rent burden and ensure displacement. Instead of a subsidy cap of \$1,800, HUD recommended a cap of \$2,189 and gradual adjustment for inflation which HUD suggested would allow for “sharing effects of inflation” and preventing excessive rent burdens.⁴⁰ Reagan decided to give both agencies some of what they wanted. He capped modified housing vouchers’ subsidy at \$2,000 and refused inflation adjustments.⁴¹

Finding 3: Limited Resistance—Hesitant and Excluded Stakeholders

With Reagan’s backing of the OMB recommendations for the modified housing program, OMB and HUD went to Congress to defend these massive reforms and cuts in HUD’s 1983 budget. Notwithstanding OMB and HUD’s leaked documents regarding their internal debate over HUD’s 1983 budget, HUD and OMB appeared united in front of Congress. Both agencies insisted HUD’s pro-voucher turn and public housing cuts were necessary, generous, and fair (U.S. Congress 1982).

During these congressional hearings on HUD’s 1983 Budget, invited affordable housing stakeholders contested the Reagan administration’s proposed cuts yet lacked any representation from tenants or community organizations. Furthermore, public housing or project-based assisted renters were not present at these hearings, even after a HUD staffer internally predicted that OMB’s massive cuts would incite urban uprisings and rent strikes (Spencer and Evans, 1981). The affordable

housing advocates present were policy researchers, local housing officials, mayors, landlords, or realtors. OMB's implicit strategy to engender stakeholder conflict appeared to show small signs of success when realtor associations embraced budget cuts, and even one affordable housing developer suggested the Reagan administration's eligibility reforms could make it harder to win local zoning approval due to local fears of poverty concentration (U.S. Congress 1982b). The few affordable housing advocates present did not explicitly challenge vouchers as a primary assistance medium. Most supported it—but with one crucial caveat: they wanted to make it an entitlement program with higher subsidies (U.S. Congress 1982, 1982a, 1982b). For example, National Low-Income Housing Coalition Director Cushing Dolbeare supported vouchers but preferred higher subsidy amounts (U.S. Congress 1982b). And even as Dolbeare insisted that some production was still needed, it was unclear how she would reconcile housing vouchers with and redress persistent discrimination and structural impediments like real estate speculation and limited private investment in rental housing designed for families. Moreover, liberal Congress members seemed to value affordable housing policy researchers like Dolbeare's policy expertise, but they quickly dismissed her entitlement demand as unfeasible and unrealistic (U.S. Congress 1982b).

The non-participation of welfare-assisted Black mothers in the Reagan administration's internal debates and congressional hearings meant that their voices—particularly counter-arguments—were not represented. With arguably no organized resistance led by directly-impacted tenants, few affordable housing advocates directly challenged the racial and gender bias low-income families would have to endure in a private housing system that valorizes homeownership and marginalizes renters viewed as undesirable. Undoubtedly aided by non-existent tenant advocacy, Congress ultimately did little to blunt the effects of Reagan's policy bias towards housing vouchers. Even though Democrat-controlled Congress delayed approval for Reagan's modified housing voucher, Congress finally authorized Reagan's alternative housing voucher program to begin as a small-scale demonstration program in 1984 (Johnson 2016). In Congress' final authorization of Reagan's alternative housing voucher program, Congress agreed to adjust Reagan's housing voucher program for inflation only twice in five years (Mariano 1985b). But Congress forced the Reagan administration to produce pipeline units for public and assisted housing. Congress' demand for increased production funding was limited in the wake of the Gramm-Rudman-Hollings Deficit Reduction Act in 1985, which mandated cuts to production contracts not yet finalized or signed. These cuts (approximately 265,000 public housing units) were central in HUD's sixty percent budget cut within the first four years of Reagan's administration (Mariano 1985b).

Democrat-controlled Congress' eventual acceptance of the two-time inflation adjustment for Reagan's housing vouchers demonstrated the technocratic power of hiding bias within the minute regulatory details of low-income housing policy. In its internal debates, OMB's senior leadership circulated research that connected its anti-housing voucher stance to attacks on welfare-assisted Black mothers' tenancy yet OMB made no mention of this research in later internal debates, arguing instead that their anti-inflation position was an innocuous and de-political problem of cost-benefit analysis. To be sure, it is impossible to know whether OMB's senior leadership intended to reform housing vouchers to ensure continued bias against low-income Black mothers. Notwithstanding intentionality, austerity-minded OMB bureaucrats did capitalize on internal opportunities to mobilize selective welfare reform scholarship and anti-Black women stereotypes to legitimate a massive shift in low-income housing policies.

Finding 4: HUD's Contrasting Welfare Reform and Anti-Black Mother Bias

After 1982, HUD used housing vouchers to articulate their own racially and gender-biased version of welfare reform. For HUD, its racial and gender bias became evident in its belief that housing vouchers could be tied to reform efforts that disproportionately targeted at low-income urban Black mothers. HUD Secretary Samuel Pierce saw welfare reform as an opportunity the state needed to teach low-income renters how to demonstrate personal responsibility and self-sufficiency. With Reagan's modified housing voucher program still a demonstration program, in June 1984, Pierce announced Project Self-Sufficiency (PSS), a brainchild of HUD's Office of Policy and Development, as a national project meant to fuse welfare reform with housing vouchers (Arax 1985a). HUD then earmarked 5,000 Section 8 Existing Housing Certifications to low-income single mothers who agreed to "show motivation" and participate in counseling and job training programs ostensibly meant to end these mothers' alleged welfare dependency (Arax 1985a). HUD distributed Section 8 Existing Housing Certificates to public housing authorities who applied to participate in the program. During a time of massive federal cuts, this program offered localities a chance to receive much-needed financial assistance in exchange for practicing HUD's version of welfare reform. Project Self-Sufficiency required housing authorities to recruit private actors who would provide job training and jobs in exchange for public supports like housing vouchers and childcare (Arax 1985a). For Pierce, this program was a "coordinated approach to breaking the poverty-dependency cycle among low-income, single parents" (Pierce cited in Johnson 1985, p. D-01).

With housing vouchers' linkage to local welfare reform efforts to curb welfare dependency, public housing officials articulated anti-Black women bias through their avoidance of critiques against the structural discrimination and challenges low-income Black mothers experienced. Even as Project Self-Sufficiency recognized the importance of interagency coordination and assisted housing, much of Project Self-Sufficiency's programmatic focus remained on character reform, not on structural challenges that resulted in limited family-wage work opportunities for low-income mothers (of color), expensive childcare, inadequate health care, or unemployment. Black and Latinx low-income mothers expressed frustration with the welfare reform program's inability to deal with these structural challenges (Arax 1985a, b). For example, in Pasadena, California's pilot PSS program, project administrators were discouraged that twenty-two of the thirty-three eligible single mothers dropped out due to "lack of interest or were rejected as unqualified" (Arax 1985b, p. SG-A1). Of the eleven who remained, six dropped out of the program but were still able to retain their housing assistance. To explain the program's 84% dropout rate, many administrators often relied on (Black) deviance narratives.

In Pasadena, CA Black single mothers were Project Self-Sufficiency's primary participants. According to the administrators, "these families often are caught in a cycle of poverty and survive on welfare and food stamps." One administrator added, "these are the babies who were running around when their mothers used to come each year to recertify their Section 8 housing" (Arax 1985b, p. SG-A1). Intergenerational poverty—a poverty culturally blamed on mothers—made some administrators question these mothers' motivation, since according to them, "some individuals will say and do anything to get on Section 8" (Arax 1985, p. B1). But again, the program's anti-Black mother bias eschewed the structural challenges low-income Black mothers wanted the program to better address. Take, for example, Sandra Edwards, a thirty year-old mother of two, who missed half of the vocational training classes because she did not have the disposable income needed to repair her car and

the city's underfunded public transportation system was unreliable and would not get her to destination in time. Edwards explained, "There's no way I can get my kids to daycare by 8:00 in the morning and get to classes by 9:00 if I take the bus. I don't have money to hire a baby sitter, so that means I have to stay home and watch them. It's like a Catch-22 situation. [...] If one thing goes wrong and the whole thing's affected. After a while, it takes a toll on you and your children" (Arax 1985b, p. SG-A1).⁴² Aside from rising childcare and transportation costs, low-income mothers spoke about the enduring housing discrimination assisted mothers of color faced. Program administrators for another Los Angeles suburb, Covina, said that out of the forty-five program participants (all of whom were either Black or Latinx), only thirteen were able to find landlords willing to rent to them (Arax 1985b).

Project Self-Sufficiency was just the beginning of several HUD programs that sought to infuse welfare reform's objectives of workfare into housing reform policy. But what Project Self-Sufficiency revealed was that welfare reform's political rhetoric directed attention away from structural challenges like housing discrimination, rising income inequality, and real estate speculation because its principal focus was on monitoring and changing individuals' personal choices and lifestyle practices. However, when the programmatic goal of character reform failed due to structural challenges, Black deviance narratives functioned as a cyclical and perpetual form of blame displacement because administrators and state officials could place programmatic failure on recipients' personal and individual inability to break their mental or behavioral 'dependency' on welfare. Housing vouchers, ironically, helped obscure anti-Black women bias because they had to navigate an increasingly profit-driven housing market where residents had to individually seek landlords who valued property upkeep and did not espouse anti-family and racial biases.

Even as HUD used housing vouchers to test conservative welfare reform efforts that held low-income Black and Brown mothers responsible for structural failings, OMB did not prefer—and actively resisted—HUD's version of welfare reform. For OMB, welfare reform's utility lay in its potential to cut funds and castigate specific welfare recipients. When HUD applied for renewed funding for its welfare reform program, OMB internally pushed to reject HUD's request because it worried that HUD was exercising a rogue political initiative that had unrealistic programmatic goals. OMB accused the program's creator and HUD Assistant Secretary of Policy Development and Research, June Koch, of having ulterior political motives by tying her version of welfare reform to housing vouchers.⁴³ OMB cited Koch's political ambitions as a critical reason for the program's inefficiencies by noting that 5,000 Section 8 certificates were given to seventy-eight cities in October 1984, but after six months only 931 individuals were selected to participate, and only 210 certificates were issued.⁴⁴ OMB then questioned the program's objectives by claiming, "there is little evidence that manpower training programs work. Can PSS really hope to succeed where many manpower training programs of the past have failed? Is it realistic for HUD to believe that it can train 3rd generation welfare mothers, lacking high school educations, to obtain upwardly mobile positions? Can PSS overcome the culture of dependency through its package of incentives?"⁴⁵ By questioning the Project Self-Sufficiency's character-based goal of challenging welfare-assisted mothers' "culture of dependency," OMB questioned the need for continued assistance by inquiring "are housing resources really a necessary component in what is essentially a job training effort? [...] how involved should HUD be on job training and child care issues?"⁴⁶ OMB's probing questions about the importance of coordinated wraparound services in housing delivery revealed that staffers preferred a version of welfare reform that would cut assistance for specific groups like "third generation

welfare mothers” who were assumed to be beyond rehabilitation and therefore deserving of exclusion.⁴⁷

Notwithstanding HUD and OMB’s competing versions of welfare reform, both agencies preferred conservative strategies that ignored structural problems like housing discrimination and elevated policy interventions that emphasized personal solutions or failings. This strategy ultimately ignored organized Black mothers and left-leaning groups like National Low-Income Housing Coalition which challenged Reagan’s attempt to reframe housing needs not as a problem of increased real estate speculation or persistent racial and familial discrimination (Arax 1985a; Malone 1981) but as a personal problem of affordability and income. Primarily to keep HUD’s budget limited and to look tough on poverty, Secretaries Jack Kemp, Henry Cisneros, and Andrew Cuomo shared Reagan’s argument of affordability and relied on the housing vouchers as the preferred policy instrument. More specifically, they continued the effort to tie welfare reform to housing vouchers (e.g., Operation Bootstrap, Family Self-Sufficiency, and Welfare-to-Work vouchers). These programmatic attempts, while slightly different, mostly shared and accepted the post-1970s federal position that the private rental market was the ideal form for housing delivery. And as such, HUD left structural questions about the housing market unaddressed in its post-1970s focus on measuring welfare-assisted mothers’ willingness to make any job to live in the private housing market.

CONCLUSION

When we ascribe too much explanatory value to race-absent narratives of fiscal austerity to explain housing vouchers’ expansion during the Reagan administration, we miss how racial and gender bias permeated not only the Reagan administration’s housing voucher debate but also the process of deploying housing vouchers. Welfare reform provided the ideological medium for OMB and HUD to articulate most of its racial and gender bias. But OMB obscured its racial and gender bias by introducing regulatory provisions that were encouraged in conservative sociological research that blamed low-income Blacks and Puerto Ricans for rental property decline. Indeed, housing vouchers have changed since Reagan’s alternative housing voucher program (Hays 2012; Orlebeke 2000). But, this paper also revealed that OMB and HUD saw a particular political benefit in reframing the problem of housing affordability as a personal problem of income. By diverting attention away from structural challenges like racial, gender, or familial discrimination in the labor and housing markets, austerity-minded bureaucrats repeatedly used welfare reform rhetoric to keep the judgmental gaze squarely on low-income mothers of color who could then be demonized or punished for not living in private housing financially unassisted.

This judgmental gaze has persisted even as many conservatives shifted to demonize Housing Choice Vouchers, the current and dominant form of HUD assistance to low-income renters. But even with this recent conservative backlash against Housing Choice Vouchers (Husock 2000, 2004; Lawson 2018), this judgmental gaze is enshrined in housing vouchers’ political deployment that emphasizes renters appeal to individual landlords for residency. Housing vouchers’ emphasis on private rental housing leaves untouched the private housing market’s structural bias towards real estate speculation which continues relatively unabated, particularly in urban centers (Kurwa 2015; Marcuse and Madden, 2016; Smith 1970). With many urban localities and landlords seeking the “highest and best use” for (rental) housing, housing voucher-assisted

families increasingly found themselves competing with global cash flows and higher incomes for a declining stock of family-friendly rental housing, which disproportionately impacts low-income Black and Latinx mothers and their children (Kurwa 2015; Marcuse and Madden, 2016; Smith 1970). And while there have been recent attempts by local and national administrations to reform Housing Choice Vouchers, namely to better link residents with jobs or to increase subsidy caps, what many of these programs fail to consider is the impact the hyper-commodification of housing through real estate speculation continues to have on housing markets and housing assistance. Without a low-income housing policy that redresses this structural bias, low-income Black and Brown mothers will continue to endure individual and group prejudice and discrimination in the United States' housing market.

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NOTES

1. Memo from Alan Rhinesmith and Housing Branch Staff to David Stockman, October 28, 1981 Record Group 51, (RG 51), Box 4, "Subsidized Housing: 1980-1981," National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.
2. Memo from Alan Rhinesmith to Annelise Anderson, August 14, 1981, RG 51, Box 4, "Subsidized Housing: 1980-1981," National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.
3. Memo from Alan Rhinesmith to Annelise Anderson, August 14, 1981.
4. Memo from Alan Rhinesmith and Housing Branch Staff to David Stockman, October 28, 1981.
5. Ibid.
6. Memo from Alan Rhinesmith to Annelise Anderson, August 14, 1981.
7. Memo from Alan Rhinesmith and Housing Branch Staff to David Stockman, October 28, 1981.
8. Memo from Ken Ryder to Annelise Anderson, September 15, 1981, RG 51, Box 4, "Subsidized Housing: 1981-1985," National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.
9. Memo from Alan Rhinesmith and Housing Branch Staff to David Stockman, October 28, 1981.
10. Memo from Alan Rhinesmith to Annelise Anderson, August 14, 1981.
11. Ibid.
12. Memo from Alan Rhinesmith and Housing Branch Staff to David Stockman, October 28, 1981.
13. Memo from Annelise Anderson to Alan Rhinesmith, August 16, 1981, RG 51, Box 4, "Subsidized Housing: 1980-1981," National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. Memo from Ken Ryder to Don Moran, September 21, 1981, RG 51, Box 4, "Subsidized Housing: 1981-1985," National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid. Emphasis in original.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. Memo from Alan Rhinesmith and Housing Branch Staff to David Stockman, October 28, 1981.
22. Ibid.
23. Memo from Mike Horowitz to Dave Stockman, Ed Harper, Glenn Schleede, Annelise Anderson, Don Moran, November 4, 1981, RG 51, Box 4, "Subsidized Housing: 1980-1981," National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.

24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. Ibid.
31. See Marissa Chappell (2010) to see conservative effort to use the once-liberal Family Plan policy as a medium to push cash-based welfare rollback.
32. Letter from David Stockman to Samuel Pierce, n.d., RG 51, Box 1, "Supporting Materials," National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.
33. Letter from Samuel Pierce to David Stockman, December 2, 1981, RG 51, Box 1, "Dec 2 Appeal," National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. Pierce's budgetary reduction strategy reflected his political blend of fiscal austerity and compassionate conservatism a political posture that no doubt evinced his ideological socialization as a Black and moderate Republican (Riguer 2016).
37. Community Development Block Grants and Urban Development Action Grants were the other disputed issues.
38. Presidential Budget Decision Paper, December 21, 1981, RG 51, Box 1, "Presidential Decisions," National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid.
42. To understand how race, gender, and income intersect to impact housing needs, see Jones-Deweer et al., 2009.
43. Memo from Constance Horner to Paul Weech, May 29, 1985, RG 51, Box 4, "Project Self-Sufficiency," National Archives at College Park, College Park, MD.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid.
47. OMB underestimated HUD's ability to mobilize its beneficiaries to protect its pet projects. Under political pressure from conservatives who supported HUD's efforts to bridge welfare reform's objectives of workfare with housing assistance, OMB extended funding for Project Self-Sufficiency.

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