



Shelter Poverty: New Ideas on Housing Affordability

Michael E. Stone

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In "Shelter Poverty", Michael E. Stone presents the definitive discussion of housing and social justice in the United States. Challenging the conventional definition of housing affordability, Stone offers original and powerful insights about the nature, causes, and consequences of the affordability problem and presents creative and detailed proposals for solving a problem that afflicts one-third of this nation. Setting the housing crisis into broad political, economic, and historical contexts, Stone asks: What is shelter poverty? Why does it exist and persist? and How can it be overcome? Describing shelter poverty as the denial of a universal human need, Stone offers a quantitative scale by which to measure it and reflects on the social and economic implications of housing affordability in this country. He argues for "the right to housing" and presents a program for transforming a large proportion of the housing in this country from an expensive commodity into an affordable social entitlement.

Employing new concepts of housing ownership, tenure, and finance, he favors social ownership in which market concepts have a useful but subordinate role in the identification of housing preferences and allocation. Stone concludes that political action around shelter poverty will further the goal of achieving a truly just and democratic society that is also equitably and responsibly productive and prosperous. Author note: Michael E. Stone is Professor of Community Planning at the University of Massachusetts at Boston.

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