

Housing and Society
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Review of:

HOUSING by Carol B. Meeks
Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1980

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Meeks has made a good addition to the collection of introductory texts now available in the field of housing. With a few exceptions, the topics discussed in the book are those expected for the undergraduate level: Housing Perspectives (four chapters), Housing Consumption and Production (six chapters), Housing Policies (three chapters). The writing style, illustrations, and concepts are appropriate for the undergraduate level.

The section on Housing Policy presents the various legislative acts and brings out issues at the local, state, and Federal level. This section is especially well done and gives the student a framework for judging future acts and policies. It shows the relationships of other government decisions to housing.

Although the general impression is positive, a few areas require closer scrutiny. Most lacking in this text is comprehensive information about the energy situation and its effect on housing. The only two pages on energy are in the chapter on housing characteristics.

For the student with little or no previous knowledge, the chapter on residential financing is likely to be confusing. More background information on the conventional mortgage is needed before the innovative instruments can be effectively compared. Both the financial and buying processes are discussed together requiring a very long and complex chapter. Few undergraduates will be able to follow and assimilate so much new information at once. The tables on financing are not up to date for the year the book was published.

Except for the housing policy material other texts provide greater depth in most of the topics presented in this book. The text includes author and subject indexes and the material presented is well documented. Each chapter contains a glossary and suggested readings, some of which are outdated. Rather than place the discussion questions at the end of the chapter, questions appear right after the heading. The student is able to identify important issues while reading. Headings and subheadings are used to form logical divisions in each chapter and aid the student in reading and taking notes. I would recommend this text for consideration for introductory level undergraduate courses.