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nations. The book then turns its attention to South Africa and the impact of neoliberal economic policies, supported (surprisingly) by the governing African National Congress (ANC), on the health and environmental safety of workers. It is not a pretty picture, to say the least. In the final chapter, Bullard and his coauthors pull the themes together and review some future developments. This last chapter, probably written long before August 2005, seems to predict the Katrina/Rita/Wilma disaster.

This is a well developed, interesting and important volume. While the integration between chapters isn’t flawless, it is better than one usually finds in edited books. The papers are of very good quality, are well written, scholarly and provocative. It would be very good for background reading on environmental justice, or as a course text for a community organization or social policy course. I strongly recommend it to anyone who is interested in the environment, social justice and racism or grassroots action. You may find yourself shaken, but you won’t be disappointed.

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What does the term “housing” mean? There are a variety of definitions incorporating physical, social, or psychological dimensions. More complex definitions include aspects of all three constructs. These rich definitions posit that a house is not always a home, and a home is not necessarily a house. Home is more than physical shelter—it is also a safe place, a place that provides identity and a sense of connection to the larger world. Likewise, one can feel at home without literally having one’s own discrete shelter.

This book does an excellent job of taking into account this broader notion of housing, while remaining focused on those in
poverty or with disabilities who are in dire need of affordable, safe housing. Particularly commendable is the overview of the various functions of housing. It is, at times, too easy to forget some of the key psychological elements that housing provides us: a sense of security, a sense of belonging, a sense of identity, and a sense of esteem as a housed member of the community. Those of us who are safely and adequately housed have a good base for all of our further explorations into the world, such as our jobs, our relationships, and our social connections. Those without housing are hampered at the beginning of this somewhat Maslowian chain of social achievement.

This volume is at once both grounded in current realities but also hopeful about what could be in the housing policy arena. For example, the editors idealistically state:

It is beyond question that as a society we have the resources to provide housing for all that is decent, truly affordable and in supportive communities. What is required is an activist government that has social justice as a prime goal (p. 13).

And yet, they also “recognize that in advocating a Right to Housing, there are a host of issues and concerns that need to be addressed and resolved” (p. 14). These two quotes illustrate the strength of this skillfully edited volume: It is at once idealistic but also pragmatic. It is hardheaded but openhearted.

The authors begin with a careful history of the notion of a “right to housing,” dating back to F.D.R.’s administration, then persuasively argue that a right to housing is at the heart of a civilized society. This much is relatively easy to accept. It is painless to say that everyone should have affordable and safe housing. However, the editors and chapter authors then go on to tackle the concrete issues associated with such a notion.

The book is staggeringly wide-ranging and yet never feels disjointed. The authors discuss housing affordability, segregation in housing, Federal housing subsidies, rural housing, privatization of affordable housing, the role of the courts related to housing, social ownership and social financing, and the notion of devolution in the housing arena. These are tough issues, and each could easily fill an entire volume. Not only do
these issues get fair time, but special populations in need of affordable housing are highlighted in several chapters. These populations include the elderly and the homeless. This reader would have appreciated more discussion of those with severe mental illnesses. It is mentioned in the chapter on homelessness, but not adequately addressed. However, this is nitpicking given the admirable scope of this volume.

Another asset to the book is the fair approach each chapter takes to the issue at hand. It would be easy for this type of book to devolve into a polemic or treatise. Instead, the chapters consistently seem balanced, well researched, and thoughtful. For an edited volume of this size, this is especially commendable. An example of this balanced tone is the chapter on homelessness—a vexing issue in the housing policy world. The authors do a good job of discussing the dynamics of homelessness (including disabilities) but never forget the structural factors that contribute to the problem. They nicely mix policy suggestions that incorporate the various causal factors of homelessness with realistic proposals to get the homeless housed.

Although heavily weighted toward housing policy issues, the volume is ideal reading for any advocate, researcher, or student interested in the notion of a right to housing, safe housing, or affordable housing. It is a treasure trove of statistics, policy history, and policy proposals for a more progressive housing model in America. This book is highly recommended!

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Evidence-based practice (EBP) is one of the defining themes of the current era for social work and the other helping professions. There are many barriers to evidence-based practice within social work. These barriers include the level of science