

Poverty

The reason for the disconnect between the actual housing nightmare of the poor and “poverty,” as officially defined, is simple: the official poverty level is still calculated by the archaic method of taking the bare-bones cost of food for a family of a given size and multiplying this number by three. Yet food is relatively inflation-proof, at least as compared with rent. In the 1960s ... food accounted for 24 percent of the average family budget ... housing 29 percent. In 1999, food ... 16 percent ... while housing ... soared to 37 percent.

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