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POLITICAL SCIENCE QUARTERLY

Volume 119 · Number 1 · Spring 2004

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Political Science Quarterly

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Reckoning With Homelessness by Kim Hopper. Ithaca, NY, Cornell University Press, 2003. 271 pp. Cloth, \$49.95; paper, \$19.95.

In the 1980s, New York City homelessness escalated to a level not seen since the Great Depression. With the authority and expertise that only a longtime advocate has, the anthropologist Kim Hopper traces the evolution of this crisis, portraying the particular experience of homeless men from the turn of the century to the present day. But not only does *Reckoning With Homelessness* give a detailed account of the history of homelessness and homeless advocacy, it also addresses theoretical issues surrounding the problem, exploring shifting public attitudes toward “vagrants” and analyzing how changing perceptions of the homeless have affected advocacy and the treatment of the issue in general. Indeed, the strength of Hopper’s text lies in its multidisciplinary approach to the topic: he seamlessly blends elements of history, theory, ethnographic fieldwork, and anecdotal stories to present a thorough picture of a century of American homelessness.

Hopper begins with a detailed account of the history of “visible poverty” in New York City, following with a careful exploration of the word “homeless” itself. Within a sociological framework, he examines how homelessness initially began to be viewed as a social problem. Beginning with the perception at the turn of the century that men without ties were thought to lack norms as well, Hopper traces a century of public attitudes toward homelessness, paying close attention to cultural representations of the homeless. He notes the “street style” fashion trend that came into vogue around the time that the crisis escalated in the 1980s and quotes directly from media sources such as the *New York Times*.

Hopper devotes the middle section of his work to an examination of fieldwork and framework. Through anecdotal stories and careful accounts of methodology, he describes several ethnographic studies of homeless men in the 1980s. Direct quotes from both homeless men and researchers provide a nice contrast to the ethnographic information and save the text from becoming too tedious for readers not involved in direct research. Readers may notice, however, that although the studies themselves are interesting, they are also out of date, and it may be difficult to recognize their relevance. For that reason, this book may be most suitable for those looking to embark on in-depth research on homelessness; although dated, these ethnographies are useful in that they describe both the pitfalls and the successes of conducting such research on the homeless population, information of value to anyone planning to do similar studies.

Part of the strength of Hopper’s text is that he approaches homelessness from a distinct, rare perspective, ultimately turning the tables and demanding that the reader, indeed the general public, examine his/her own perceptions of homelessness. Hopper encourages the reader to ask not what it is about these people that caused their homelessness, but what about us as a society leads us to ignore, then banish, such signs of visible poverty. Likewise, Hopper tracks how advocacy on behalf of the homeless has been shaped by public attitudes and prejudices toward entitlement and poverty.

In 2004, shelters are once again operating at capacity and New York City is again experiencing a resurgence of the homeless crisis. For this reason, *Reckoning With Homelessness* is timely, as advocates, researchers, and concerned citizens alike may glean lessons from one man's life's work. The reader will come away with the disturbing realization that our efforts today mirror efforts made at the turn of the century; rather than attacking the root causes of homelessness and addressing poverty in any meaningful way, we are instead more concerned with its visibility and with ensuring that the public does not see evidence of destitution. Ultimately, Hopper concludes that our efforts thus far have amounted to no more than the short-term gain of removing visible poverty from the streets. Such measures fall far short of addressing the actual roots of poverty, and this text challenges its readers to not only think harder about their own attitudes toward destitution, but to also come up with real, meaningful solutions to this pervasive issue.

RALPH NUNEZ
Homes for the Homeless

Entertainment and Politics: The Influence of Pop Culture on Young Adult Political Socialization by David J. Jackson. New York, Peter Lang Publishing, 2002. 167 pp. Paper, \$24.95.

Much has been written about the impact that entertainment television, packed with stories about crime and sexual misbehavior, may have on the behavior of young Americans. That makes David Jackson's focus on a different aspect—the influence of entertainment media on political beliefs—particularly welcome. Jackson, who teaches at Ohio's Bowling Green State University, surveyed 17- to 29-year-old first-year university students about their entertainment preferences in music, television, and movies. He also used open- and closed-ended questions to inquire about their own and their parents' political attitudes and their perceptions of the political attitudes of their favorite entertainers. Not surprisingly, the survey showed that popular culture interacts with parental and peer influence. It largely reinforces pre-existing values of either openness to or rejection of the nontraditional lifestyles that dominate entertainment offerings.

Nonetheless, young people raised either with little parental supervision or by strict parents may be converted to media values when children have moved beyond parental control. Youths raised by parents who encouraged them to make their own choices are least likely to be influenced. They are selective about accepting new values, making it difficult to predict their ultimate orientations. Jackson points out that the political issues that dominate entertainment media revolve largely around social issues such as disadvantaged minorities, the role of women, or changing sexual mores. Choices are framed in terms of instant versus delayed gratification, rather than a left/right political spectrum.