

Needed by Nobody: Homelessness and Humanness in Post-socialist Russia. By Tova Höjdestrand. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2009. Pp. ix+231. \$59.95 (cloth); \$22.95 (paper).

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Tova Höjdestrand's *Needed by Nobody* is an ethnography of the homeless (*bomzhi*) at Moscow Railway Station and the shelters and soup kitchens of St. Petersburg after the transition from socialism to capitalism. The book depicts the Russian homelessness using participant observation and intensive interviewing, following *Crossing the Line: Vagrancy, Homelessness, and Social Displacement in Russia* (Svetlana Stephenson [Burlington, Vt.: Ashgate Publishing, 2006]).

Russian homelessness in the 1990s can be traced to the Soviet era: the criminalization of vagrancy without address registration (*propiska*), poor housing policy, and inefficient administrative bureaucracy. Moreover, homelessness was affected by neoliberalism after the Soviet Union's collapse, which led to unemployment, the privatization of public housing, illegal real estate dealings, and Euroscaped gentrification. Thus, the Russian homeless carried the double load of the Soviet era and capitalism on their backs.

Højdestrand knows "something valuable about some two hundred persons" (p. 15). However, she does not present macrodata to show the whole backdrop beyond the informants: how St. Petersburg was redeveloped, how the labor market was operating, where the homeless came from, and how many homeless were in which locations and under what conditions. Perhaps these omissions are the result of the lack of information on homelessness, given that homelessness is not yet believed to be a serious social problem in Russia.

According to the author, the Moscow Railway Station was the most important homeless hangout, because it had various *refuse spaces* (waiting room, washroom, stairway, boiler room, etc.) where the homeless slept and worked and various *refuse jobs* (gathering empty bottles and cans; odd jobs at kiosks, cafés, and passenger cars; prostitution, etc.) for self-support (I cannot accept the negative nuance that these are jobs that "nobody wants to do" that the word "refuse" has). However, the number of refuse spaces was decreased because urban beautification intruded into the Moscow Railway Station, and this decrease was accelerated by security efforts against terrorism. Höjdestrand analyzes the differential function that each space had for the homeless and depicts how the lives of the homeless developed in each (including such aspects of daily existence as working, drinking, violence, criminality, etc). The homeless had survival strategies and constructed relationships with others: employers, police officers, relatives, other homeless persons (and maybe staffs of NGOs and orphanages). They formed contingent, vulnerable, and unpredictable

relationships. They were people who had no fixed and close social ties. Höjdestrand considered "Makeshift Humans in a Provisional Present" as the title for this book (p. 193). In addition, relationships among the homeless were ambiguous. On the one hand, homeless people lived with others, though on the basis of vulnerable relationships. They depended on and helped each other as friends. Some homeless even generously gave valuable things to their friends and their friends' children. On the other hand, sometimes the homeless people the author studied were selfish and mercilessly and indiscriminately used others for their own interests. They occasionally stole each others' belongings, and then became each other's foes.

Højdestrand analyzes the characteristics of the homeless's relationships in this way and discusses other interesting aspects of their lives as well. In Japan, many homeless never talk about their past lives with others; they think that homelessness is a shameful life, and they reject any form of relationship with other people, choose anonymous isolation, and even die quietly. Conversely, other Japanese homeless firmly believe in sharing their destiny with others and cohabit with their fellow homeless in villages. How were these kinds of relationships manifested in Russian homelessness? Nobody was born homeless. They all *became* homeless. The homeless world and the conventional one are both separate from and yet still connected to each other. Homelessness is ambiguous just in this sense. This should be the starting point in understanding homelessness.

Højdestrand analyzes the homeless's self-perception (their self-identity). This topic gave rise to the book's title. There was an influential discourse in Russia that the homeless are lazy, stupid drunkards—nothing but excrement and waste. Some homeless thought of themselves like that—being worthless and *needed by nobody*, letting themselves go and dying anonymously. In contrast, other homeless people wished to be needed by others, to live as decent humans and to die as somebody grieved for by others. Höjdestrand places the dividing line of these two self-perceptions according to whether the homeless minded how they were seen by others—dirty or clean. According to the author, homeless people who were falling into desperation would roam around, scratching their lice-infested heads, wearing clothes indiscernible as a man's or a woman's. They abandoned the will to *look human*. In contrast, homeless people wishing to be humans needed by others kept their bodies clean and wore neat manly or womanly clothes.

Højdestrand's contrasting of two self-perceptions is more real and persuasive than one that one-sidedly regards the homeless as pathological. With that in mind, more arguments may be developed, as Höjdestrand might notice. The homeless's self-perception is not defined only by how they are seen by others. Human self-perception requires some framework for analyzing its structure. In the case of the homeless, ties with family and the memories of past lives are important above all. Next, these self-perceptions do not only separate homeless figures, but coexist in many

individuals' psyches. I myself depicted this as the conflict of the *miserable* and the *prideful* (*Japan's Underclass: Day Laborers and the Homeless* [Trans Pacific Press, 2006]). I interpreted this conflict as a collision of an *actual* self-perception with an *ideal* one. Last, the homeless have ideas on death as well as on life. Many homeless waver on the brink of committing suicide, and some of them indeed die by their own hand. The bigger the gap between actual self-perception and ideal perception comes, the more likely the homeless person is to commit suicide. This could be another important topic for interpreting the self-perception of the homeless.

Höjdestrand analyzes the characteristics of Russian homelessness by comparing it with the European situation. The Russian homeless are people whose values are framed by three cultures: the original Russian, the socialistic, and the capitalistic. Therefore, their ideas on life and their attitudes toward others may be refracted threefold. Certainly, the homeless are an important group for social study. The model of the society can be depicted symbolically from the study of the homeless, as this book suggests.

Ethical Imperialism: Institutional Review Boards and the Social Sciences, 1965–2009. By Zachary M. Schrag. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010. Pp. xvi+245. \$45.00.

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Since the 1970s, most social scientists working at universities in the United States have had to get prior approval from human subjects review boards (also called institutional review boards) if they wanted to do research on people. Zachary M. Schrag's *Ethical Imperialism* describes how the work of researchers in several disciplines, including sociology, became subject to federal human subjects regulations and how these policies have shifted over the past 50 years. The author is a historian, blogger, and unhappy veteran of the review process at George Mason University. His book was born, first, of "outrage" with the current IRB review process and, second, out of "curiosity."

Schrag's concern is to justify the view that most social scientists' research should not be subject to the federal regulations. His historical interpretations tend to be character assessments of individuals rather than reflections on how IRBs connected to broader social processes or how IRB debates fit into a wider political context. Readers may turn to *Ethical Imperialism* for an explanation of why social scientists are regulated that extends beyond the heroes and villains. The most compelling explanation is tucked into a chapter where Schrag writes that, from the 1960s through the present day, "social scientists found themselves swept along, not be-