



Citizens without Shelter: Homelessness, Democracy, and Political Exclusion

Leonard C. Feldman

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One of the most troubling aspects of the politics of homelessness, Leonard C. Feldman contends, is the reduction of the homeless to what Hannah Arendt calls "the abstract nakedness of humanity" and what Giorgio Agamben terms "bare life." Feldman argues that the politics of alleged compassion and the politics of those interested in ridding public spaces of the homeless are linked fundamentally in their assumption that homeless people are something less than citizens. Feldman's book brings political theories together (including theories of sovereign power, justice, and pluralism) with discussions of real-world struggles and close analyses of legal cases concerning the rights of the homeless. In Feldman's view, the "bare life predicament" is a product not simply of poverty or inequality but of an inability to commit to democratic pluralism. Challenging this reduction of the homeless, *Citizens without Shelter* examines opportunities for contesting such a fundamental political exclusion, in the service of homeless citizenship and a more robust form of democratic pluralism. Feldman has in mind a truly democratic pluralism that would include a pluralization of the category of "home" to enable multiple forms of dwelling; a recognition of the common dwelling activities of homeless and non-homeless persons; and a resistance to laws that punish or confine the homeless.

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