

## ***Cast Out: Vagrancy and Homelessness in Global and Historical Perspective***

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This book is a collection of essays that discusses the topics of vagrancy, homelessness, poverty and its global history. It starts out with an introduction on what the homeless have been called over the years. The names that homeless have been called according to this book were “beggars, bums, mendicants, idlers, indigents, itinerants, the underclass, and the homeless” (intro).

Then it gives a nice introduction about vagrancy and the laws under it. It defines vagrancy laws as “unique; while most crimes are defined by actions, vagrancy laws make no specific action or inaction illegal” (intro). It then explains that over the course of many centuries and across many countries the response to helping poverty has changed over the course of time. Some of the chapters in the book discuss the power of these vagrancy laws “as coercive engines in punishment and exploration; others highlight the failure of vagrancy policies at the hands of human agency, state incapacity, and persistent persona charity” (intro).

A great deal of the history of vagrancy was setup in fourteenth century England during the Black Death, which killed a great number of people both rich and poor. In contrast, the Greek culture had a contrast between the poor population and its beggar population. The poor were normally small landowners with barely enough to get by and beggars were just landless people. During this time it was believed that it was the duty of the Church to take care of the poor and their needs. This is then contrasted with an example for before and during the medieval Islamic period when giving to the poor by the rich was a means of “poor relief and redistribution of the wealth” (5).

It then went into speaking about the twentieth century and how the two World Wars had a huge impact on the issues of vagrancy and homelessness. During this time Europe and the United States encouraged “the development of a sedentary and permanent workforce and a blending of state and no state welfare schemes. Also this time changed people’s perceptions of the poor and their personal freedoms. This presentation of ideas led into the social reforms of today and how the homeless have some social programs but more still needs to be done to completely rid the world of this global problem.

The book is broken down into chapters, which all start with a different country and its history on vagrancy and homelessness. Each gives a background on how the country progressed and the problems and improvements it had over the years. England is the first country that is discussed and then India, Brazil, Siberia, America, East Africa, China, New Guinea, and Japan. But England’s history is described much further back in time than the other countries. England is also described in more detail about its labor laws and its progression of right for its working population. The other countries explained are in more current times and deal with more current issues.

This book will open the eyes of its reader because it explains more in detail what issues different countries have had with vagrancy and homelessness and how they either helped or worsen the issues for their population over the years. It is very informative and will help many others understand the global history of vagrancy and homelessness.