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Paths to Homelessness: Extreme Poverty and the Urban Housing Crisis. Doug A. Timmer, D. Stanley Eitzen and Kathryn D. Talley.

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ogists and others interested in understanding the epistemological foundations of contemporary social science.

Doug A. Timmer, D. Stanley Eitzen and Kathryn D. Talley, *Paths to Homelessness: Extreme Poverty and the Urban Housing Crisis*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1994. \$55.00 hardcover, \$16.95 papercover.

Despite the widespread belief that homelessness occurs chiefly among alcoholics, the mentally ill and other special need groups, the authors of this informative book argue convincingly that it is ordinary working people who earn low incomes who are most of at risk of losing their homes. Their vulnerability is amply demonstrated in this book which traces the causes of homelessness to the profound economic and social changes taking place in American society.

While the authors recognize that personal factors do play a role in the complex etiology of homelessness, they show that homelessness is primarily a function of de-industrialization, changing labor market conditions, a lack of affordable low income housing, and a shrinking social service system that no longer cushions the impact of declining standards of living. To illustrate their arguments, the authors offer detailed ethnographies of nine homeless people and their families whose personal stories provide depressing support for the book's hypotheses. While statistical facts are also used to analyze homelessness, the narratives of the persons interviewed offer potent insights into the experiences of those who live on the margins of society.

Paths to Homelessness is based on extensive interviews undertaken in the late 1980s in different parts of the country. The interviews were conducted with people living in shelters, in streets and parks, and in abandoned houses in inner city slums. The author's 'unbounded' ethnographic approach facilitated the collection of firsthand information about what it is like to become homeless and to experience its effects. Each homeless person's story is related to wider sociological explanations and interpretations. As such, these accounts combine personal narrative and sociological analysis in ways that will be of interest to all social scientists working with deprived populations.

The authors are to be commended for producing an original and interesting book. While the section on the policy implications of their findings is sadly too brief, their analysis is incisive and compassionate. This book will make a major contribution to understanding both the causes and experience of homelessness in American today.

Rolf Wiggershaus, *The Frankfurt School: Its History, Theories and Political Significance*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1994. \$60.00 hardcover. (Translated by Michael Robertson).

The Frankfurt School has exerted a profound influence on sociology and the social sciences generally over the last fifty years. Its founders and their successors are today recognized for their diverse contributions to social thought and for injecting into mainstream Anglo-American sociology new perspectives that challenged conventional approaches.

This scholarly volume traces the origins and subsequent history of the Frankfurt Institute for Social Research. It focuses on the writings of its leading personalities whose collective work later became known as the Frankfurt School. It also examines their key theoretical contributions. The chapters dealing with the School's early history in Germany and subsequent move to the United States during the Nazi period make for fascinating reading. They demonstrate how like-minded individuals can collaborate to create a new and powerful intellectual perspective with profound implications for social science endeavor. They also show how major theoretical innovations in turn spawn new ideas which modify the original approach and take it into new and intellectually stimulating directions. The author's account of the later history of the Institute from the time of its return to Frankfurt and the reformulation of critical theory by Habermas and others is equally arresting. The use of narrative is particularly effective.

However, Wiggershaus is not only concerned with historiography but with the analysis of the major theoretical contributions of the Frankfurt School. He shows how the original Marxist proclivities of the School's founders were augmented by psychoanalytical thought, by anti-authoritarianism and a pessimistic assessment of the supposed achievements of modernity. The account of Adorno's extensive contributions in so many fields is