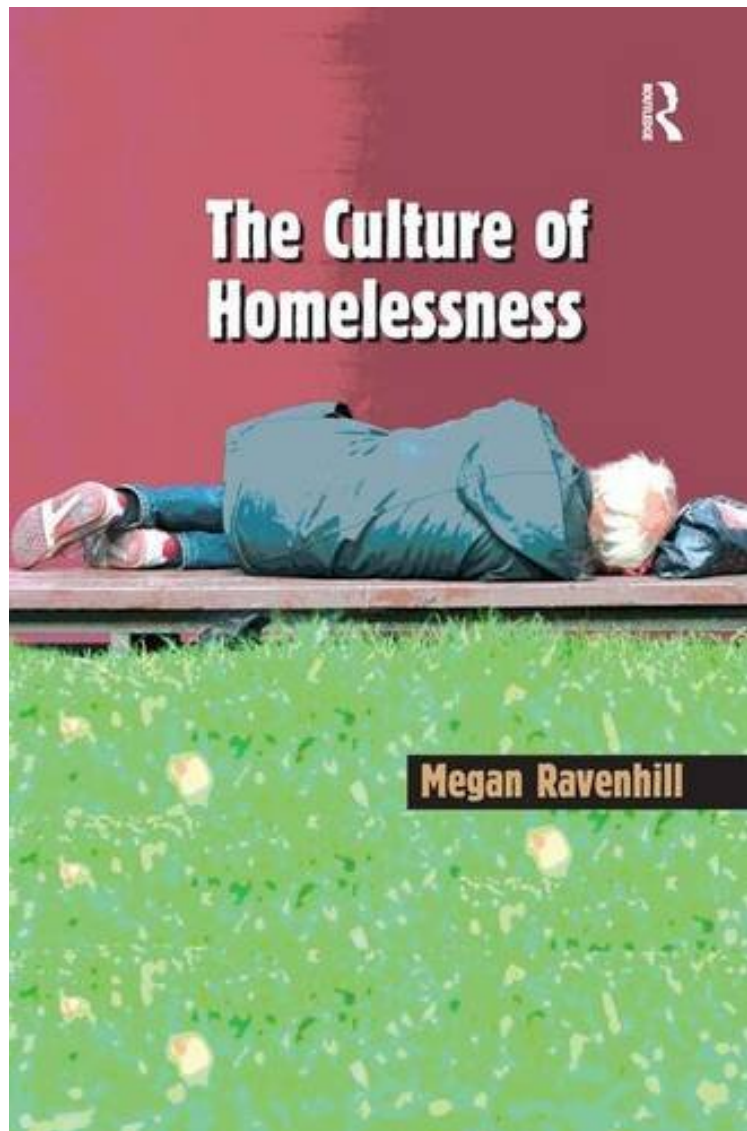


(Download pdf) The Culture of Homelessness

## The Culture of Homelessness

*Megan Ravenhill*

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**Megan Ravenhill : The Culture of Homelessness** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Culture of Homelessness:

Despite an extensive literature on homelessness there is surprisingly little work that investigates the roots of homelessness by tracking homeless people over time. In this fascinating and much-needed ethnographic study, Megan

Ravenhill presents the results of ten years' research on the streets and in the hostels and day-centres of the UK, incorporating intensive interviews with 150 homeless and formerly homeless people as well as policy makers and professionals working with homeless people. Ravenhill discusses the biographical, structural and behavioural factors that lead to homelessness. Amongst the important and unique features of the study are: the use of life-route maps showing the circumstances and decisions that lead to homelessness, a systematic study of the timescales involved, and a survey of people's exit routes from homelessness. Ravenhill also identifies factors that predict those most vulnerable to homelessness and factors that prevent or considerably delay the onset of homelessness.

'Homelessness is an acute and enduring problem in British society. This book provides us with an interesting and insightful account of the culture of homelessness and the barriers that make it difficult for roofless people to re-engage with mainstream society. It gives voice to the views of homeless people themselves.' David Clapham, Cardiff University, UK 'This book enables us to see homeless people in a fresh way. If, as the author shows, homelessness is often triggered by violence and trauma in childhood and if street life or "homeless culture" is so attractive in giving status and acceptance, sometimes for the first time - then present interventions and policies will fail to re-integrate roofless people into mainstream society. These insights have wide implications for policy and practice.' Susan Hutson, University of Glamorgan, UK 'The product of five years' research, Megan Ravenhill's book charts the experiences of individuals, the complex causes of homelessness and the routes by which people re-enter the housed world...It is an original and challenging contribution to our understanding of homelessness and anyone involved in the field would benefit from reading it.' Roof 'A valuable contribution to the debate as we all seek to end rough sleeping by 2012' Connect 'Ravenhill's book is an important contribution to the understanding of homelessness in Europe. Other than hers, I am not aware of any ethnographic study of homelessness outside the US.' Urban Studies Journal '... one of few detailed ethnographic studies of homelessness, it deserves its place in the literature... the author provides an extensive review of theories that may provide illuminating frameworks for the study of homelessness, including functionalism, structuralism and structuration... The research framework chapter highlighted the considerable fieldwork and analysis undertaken by the author over a ten-year period... the book did bring a number of new insights to the field and/or placed greater emphasis on areas of study which have been relatively underdeveloped to date.' International Journal of Housing Policy About the Author Megan Ravenhill is Honorary Visiting Lecturer at Kingston University, working on a pilot internet project on how to make accessible information on avoiding homelessness. Prior to this she worked on the 'What is Homelessness?' research project at the Centre for Housing and Community Research in the Cities Institute at London Metropolitan University and was a member of the Centre for Understanding Homeless Populations (CUHP), a European Commission-funded research network. Dr Ravenhill studied for her PhD at the Centre for the Analysis of Social Exclusion (CASE), London School of Economics. She has conducted research for organisations including The Community Fund, DTLR Supporting People Programme, London Borough of Camden, Centrepoint, the Gatsby foundation and Keychange.