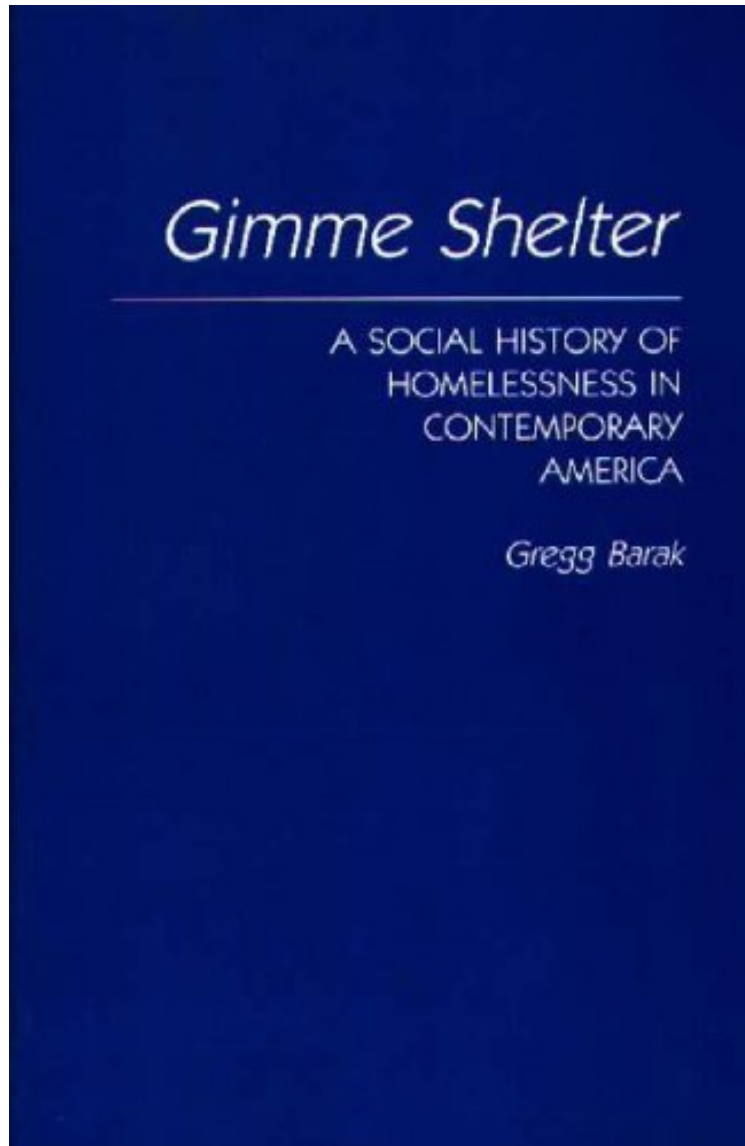


Gimme Shelter: A Social History of Homelessness in Contemporary America

Gregg Barak

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Gregg Barak : Gimme Shelter: A Social History of Homelessness in Contemporary America before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Gimme Shelter: A Social History of Homelessness in Contemporary America:

According to current projections, the number of homeless in the United States will continue to swell in the 1990s unless more aggressive efforts to combat the problem are initiated. Based upon a thorough analysis of the underlying social and political causes of homelessness in this country, this study takes a hard look at the realities and misconceptions that surround the victims. Gregg Barak demonstrates how current public service programs inadequately address the issue, and proposes governmental policy changes that could prove beneficial. In an effort to dispel the myths that stereotype the homeless, this study places their plight within the continuing domestic and worldwide economic emergency and defines their demographics according to such factors as age, sex, race, health, and education. Barak's subsequent focus on the violence and criminality associated with the condition and treatment of the homeless uncovers controversial issues of injustice and constitutionality, and aims the discussion toward possible solutions for this burgeoning problem.

From Library Journal
In this study of homelessness in the United States, Barak (criminology, Alabama State Univ.) defines the problem of homelessness--what it is, how it is changing, its economics, and crime and the homeless. He then covers "confronting the problem"--providing short term shelter, resisting homelessness, rights of the homeless, and needed social changes. Barak views homelessness as a product of global economic changes that have affected U.S. economic conditions; he believes domestic policy must be fundamentally transformed to deal with these conditions. A strength of this book is the way Barak draws on different theories from criminology/victimology, Marxism, political economy, etc. His statistics and references to current literature are excellent, but his wide-ranging conclusions aren't always fully supported. Academic language and daunting sentences will limit the audience to scholars and the well educated. Similar but more readable are Peter Rossi's *Down and Out in America* (LJ 11/1/89) and James D. Wright's *Address Unknown* (Aldine de Gruyter, 1989).- Mary Jane Brustman, SUNY at Albany Libs. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. "Gregg Barak's book is a highly readable and interesting account of homelessness in the 1980s in the United States. . . . In a world where scientific 'objective' accounts of the homeless and their pathologies prevail, Barak contributes a much-needed alternative voice. . . . [The book also contains an] informative and up-to-date treatment of current social policy and social action regarding homelessness, including an analysis of recent legislation, current services, nonprofit agency responses, ongoing legal battles, and the emerging 'homeless movement.' No other book that I am aware of has provided such a critical treatment of these important issues."-Leon Anderson Assistant Professor, Sociology Ohio University
About the Author
GREGG BARAK is Professor and Head of the Anthropology and Criminology Department at Eastern Michigan University. He is the author of *In Defense of Whom? A Critique of Criminal Justice Reform* (1980) and editor of *Crimes by the Capitalist State: An Introduction to State Criminality*, and numerous articles in related journals.