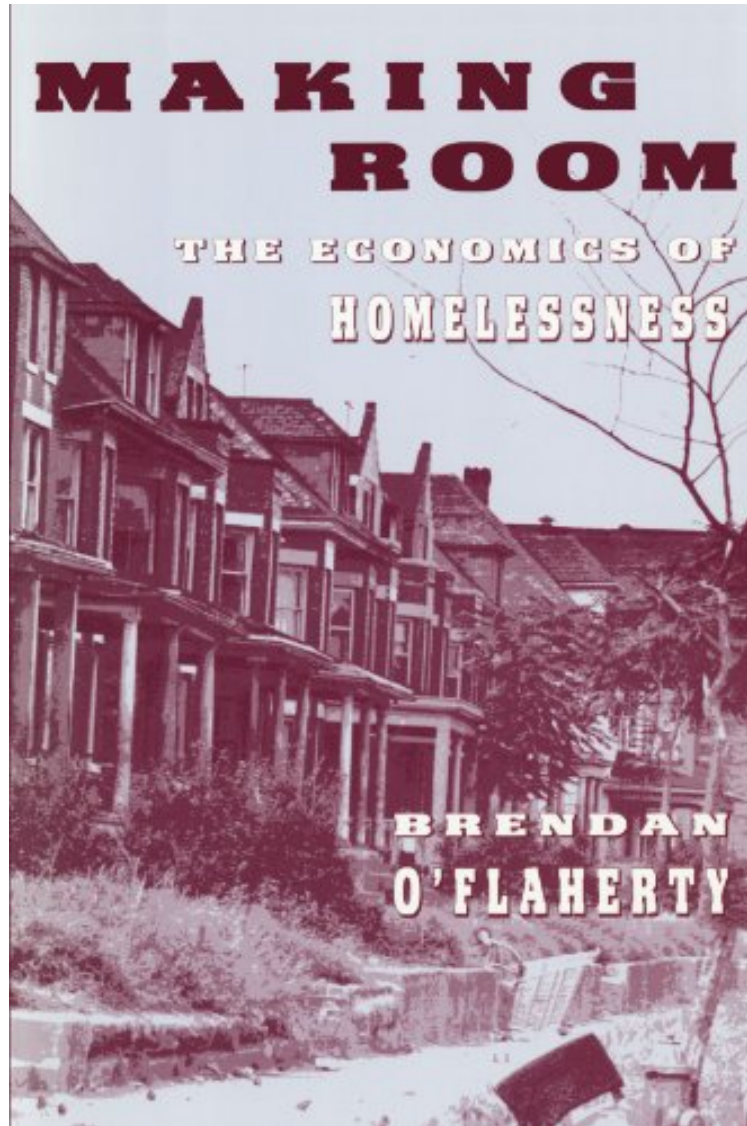


[Download ebook] Making Room: The Economics of Homelessness

## Making Room: The Economics of Homelessness

*Brendan O'Flaherty*

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**Brendan O'Flaherty : Making Room: The Economics of Homelessness** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Making Room: The Economics of Homelessness:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. A well-researched analysis of the economics of the homelessness situation. By MikeOn an economic and legal level this book on the economics of homelessness is fairly interesting. It's one of the few books on this sort of thing that's not heavily sociological in nature. O'Flaherty describes (in often

somewhat painful detail) the Economic and legal problems underlying homelessness. My favorite bit was learning that in NY, being without a home is not grounds for homelessness. You are only homeless once you, in a move that boggles the mind, stay in a shelter. The term itself is extraordinarily nebulous in legal terms, and O'Flaherty explores that and other details very logically and analytically. He also reviews previous voucher systems and other comparative economic solutions to current situations. Not exactly something you read at the beach. The writing itself, while grammatically correct, is not particularly good or interesting (at points it lapses into statistic after statistic). Still as far as academic specialist works go though, it's well researched and offers extremely novel solutions. There's also not much significant economic research on the subject matter in America, believe it or not. As far as I'm aware, this is the only book-length treatment of the matter. Recommend for specialists - or a more general lay or policy audience familiar with economics with a tolerance for this sort of writing.

Mentally ill people turned out of institutions, crack-cocaine use on the rise, more poverty, public housing a shambles: as attempts to explain homelessness multiply so do the homeless and we still don't know why. The first full-scale economic analysis of homelessness, *Making Room* provides answers quite unlike those offered so far by sociologists and pundits. It is a story about markets, not about the bad habits or pathology of individuals. One perplexing fact is that, though homelessness in the past occurred during economic depressions, the current wave started in the 1980s, a time of relative prosperity. As Brendan O'Flaherty points out, this trend has been accompanied by others just as unexpected: rising rents for poor people and continued housing abandonment. These are among the many disconcerting facts that O'Flaherty collected and analyzed in order to account for the new homelessness. Focused on six cities (New York, Newark, Chicago, Toronto, London, and Hamburg), his studies also document the differing rates of homelessness in North America and Europe, and from one city to the next, as well as interesting changes in the composition of homeless populations. For the first time, too, a scholarly observer makes a useful distinction between the homeless people we encounter on the streets every day and those officially counted as homeless. O'Flaherty shows that the conflicting observations begin to make sense when we see the new homelessness as a response to changes in the housing market, linked to a widening gap in the incomes of rich and poor. The resulting shrinkage in the size of the middle class has meant fewer hand-me-downs for the poor and higher rents for the low-quality housing that is available. O'Flaherty's tightly argued theory, along with the wealth of new data he introduces, will put the study of homelessness on an entirely new plane. No future student or policymaker will be able to ignore the economic factors presented so convincingly in this plainspoken book.

From Library Journal O'Flaherty (economics, Columbia Univ.) sees "the rise of homelessness [as] an economic phenomenon" and argues persuasively that "income inequality is behind the increased homelessness in North America" today. In his important new book, he carefully focuses on six cities—New York, Newark, Chicago, Toronto, London, and Hamburg—documenting the conditions in each and showing that homelessness has grown there. He compares how each locale has dealt with the problem, noting successes and failures. Building an extremely convincing case, he shows how prior attempts to address the problem have been misguided and have led to failure. Although none of his suggestions for solving homelessness is new (e.g., shelter allowances, regulation redrafting, homeless work programs, changes in welfare policy, target therapy for homeless people), taken together they offer a scenario for change and hope. O'Flaherty has written a sensible and sensitive work that is grounded in research. Highly recommended for all large public libraries and institutions where homelessness is a particular concern. —Richard S. Drezin, Washington Post News Research Ctr., Washington, D.C. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. A longtime political operative in the city of Newark who happens to be something of a technical ace in a university economics department as well, O'Flaherty adopted a well-understood model of housing markets and put it to work testing various hypotheses...Thanks to him, the diagnosis [of the causes of homelessness] is increasingly clear. (David Warsh Boston Globe) O'Flaherty has written an important book to explain the rise of the 'new homelessness'...An original and wide-ranging account, written with grace and subtlety. It should be read carefully by any social scientist interested in poverty, housing, or urban policy...A tour de force worthy of study by anyone with an interest in applied microeconomic theory. (John M. Quigley Journal of Economic Literature) [O'Flaherty's] questions are key to any basic analysis of the problem: What is homelessness? Why is it bad? What happened? Why did it happen? What can we do, and what should we do about it?...O'Flaherty's strength is documenting [the] daytime symbols of public poverty. He is mainly interested in the extent to which...single adults--whom he labels, for want of a better word, the colloquial homeless--are affected by housing market and shelter policies. Are they really homeless? Are they inherently lazy? His findings are surprising. (Elaine S. Abelson Journal of Urban History) The most original and wide-ranging book ever written on the homeless. [O'Flaherty] intrepidly challenges conventional theories of the rise of homelessness and offers fresh ones...Brash, iconoclastic, and down-to-earth, *Making Room* belongs in the library of anyone interested in extreme poverty. (Robert C. Ellickson, Yale Law School) From the Back Cover Mentally ill people turned out of institutions, crack-cocaine use on the rise, more poverty, public housing a shambles: as attempts to explain homelessness multiply so do the homeless - and we still don't know why. The first full-scale economic analysis of

homelessness, *Making Room* provides answers quite unlike those offered so far by sociologists and pundits. It is a story about markets, not about the bad habits or pathology of individuals. One perplexing fact is that, though homelessness in the past occurred during economic depressions, the current wave started in the 1980s, a time of relative prosperity. As Brendan O'Flaherty points out, this trend has been accompanied by others just as unexpected: rising rents for poor people and continued housing abandonment. These are among the many disconcerting facts that O'Flaherty collected and analyzed in order to account for the new homelessness. O'Flaherty shows that the conflicting observations begin to make sense when we see the new homelessness as a response to changes in the housing market, linked to a widening gap in the incomes of rich and poor. The resulting shrinkage in the size of the middle class has meant fewer hand-me-downs for the poor and higher rents for the low-quality housing that is available. O'Flaherty's tightly argued theory, along with the wealth of new data he introduces, will put the study of homelessness on a new plane. No future student or policymaker will be able to ignore the economic factor presented so convincingly in this plainspoken book.