

Anthropology book report

[Science](#), [Biology](#)



This is a book review of, *With No Direction Home: Homeless Youth on the Road and in the Streets* written by Marni Finkelstein. The writer gives a voice to the homeless youth and highlights on their everyday lives, the condition in which they live and the experience they go through in the streets.

Furthermore, the writer through her interviews obtained first hand experience and which she writes with logical honesty, the study which she took is ethnographic methodology for the reason that she combined qualitative interviews and direct observation. The writer defines who the streets kids are hence the reader get to know how they come to be streets kids.

She describes the different reasons why most of them leave their homes to end up being street youths. Their life in the streets is well tackled in the book on how they socialize in the streets and form peer networks. She explains on how peer groups formed makes them use and abuse substances. Their subsistence in the streets and their daily lives as it is explained in the book gives an insight to the readers to understand them even more.

Finkelstein discusses how the youths in the streets are prone to victimization by the society; they are ill treated, oppressed and discriminated the youths reiterate by being violent for them to survive the hostile environment in which they live. The book concludes with recommendations which would be adopted to ensure that the ever increasing numbers of youths in the streets would be reduced and eventually make them leave the streets.

This study falls under social anthropology as the study is done with evidence of how the streets youths, who form a group of the society currently behave

in social a group. Social anthropology investigation is an intensive field studies which include participant observation methods like the ones used in this book.

The study done was how social organization of the youths in the street socializes among them selves and the public. Social anthropology explores indistinctness and contradictions of social life, sociality patterns, conflicts and violence which forms social behavior of a group of the society. It also address diversity of positions and perspective found in a social group. This is what is addressed in Finkelstein book when discussing how the street youths socialize and form peer networks which abuse substance, being victimized and violent.

The research method used is ethnographic methodology, by combining direct observation and qualitative interviews to provide descriptive study of a group of human society. The study done is about street youths which are a group of human society.

The research has focused on sociology through close field observations of social cultural incidents. The research is focusing on a social group and is able to study their activities and how they affect them and the society at large. It is done by interviewing informants several times using information from previous informers to ensure that the information obtained is accurate and dependable to support the writers arguments.

The research is done by first selection of a culture and identifications of variables which are used to obtain information from informants and gather data inform of observation and interview recording. To be precise the research

method used is Micro-ethnography because it's the study of narrowly-defined cultural group which in this case it's the youths in the streets.

When the research was being done there was resistance by the street youths to willingly disseminate information which they were being interviewed. The street youths are victimized by the society and they felt that they are not worth hence they have a feeling that they are inferior and the research being done will not be of any use to them.

Trustworthy of the information obtained is one of the challenges encountered in qualitative research. For the writer to obtain a reliable source of information, interviews are done to several of the street children with the same question and compare their responses to ensure that the facts are accurate.

Obtaining a sample on which the research was to be done was a challenging, as none or very few who were willing to be interviewed. On such a social study one is not supposed to influence the informers either by giving them incentives to woo them to provide information because it will be biased and won't reflect the actual scenarios under study. The interviewees are supposed to be voluntary which in this study volunteering was a problem.

The youths in the streets are a subculture because they give a diversity of culture in the society. The group way of life and social phenomena is distinguishable with the normal cultural practices of a family setup where the youths are expected since they are kids to be brought up in a family setup where they are provided for until they are independent. Their social practices and ethics are far much below the set standards of a youth being brought up

in their homes where the environment is conducive. Their practice is referred to as social fall out from the cultural setup acceptable by the society.

The group is made up of diversified age ranges which include youth who are hard-core, refugees and immigrants, runaways, squatters, young single mothers and those who are homeless because the entire family is homeless. The group lacks shelter and has difficult to obtain adequate food and they are at risk of nutritional and health problems.

Even after being health wise challenged they don't have access to medication this result to ailment which some times is life threatening hence they experience high mortality rate. The difficulties which they go through coupled with the drugs which they take makes them to be depressed and have mental disorders which makes them committed suicide and die due to drug overdose which have been registered as the leading cause of deaths among the street children's.

I have realized that street homeless youths they are a nomadic group of youths who ends up in the streets. After reading the book I come to realize that they are in the street and who they are due to circumstances which are beyond their control. Such as, the whole family being homeless or they are refugees or even single mothers. I understand that they abuse substances and are drug peddlers because of peer pressure.

They are also discriminated by the society hence they are not employed to earn money this result them to be thugs, sex workers, drug dealers and participate in scams to earn so as they can sustain their livelihood. Most of them do not travel very far from their homes to the nearby cities. Travelling

of the kids is not an easy task because they have little or no money so their main mode of transport is hitchhiking and train jumping which both of them are very dangerous.

Most of them leave their households where there is an abusive environment or they are simply kicked out from their homes. Finkelstein stated in her book that most of them remain on the streets for a short period then they seek refuge in shelters and their underlying motives are substance abuse and sense of aimlessness.

According to Finkelstein, most of the abused substances in New York is beer and heroin most of them had experimented the drug before they got out of their homes but they become serious addict after they have prolonged their inhabitation in the streets. The excuse they give is that they abuse them because they want to forget their trouble such as helplessness and poverty.

This group of homeless youths exists in the society because they arose from disadvantaged families such as disrupted and dysfunctional families. Such families experienced divorce, poverty, parental drug abuse, domestic violence and poverty. There is also high rate of Sexual, emotional, and physical abuse which result the children to run away from such environment. There are also a substantial number of the streets youth who run away from children protection services such as children's homes or even run away to hide from the existing criminal justice systems.

After being in the streets for long this group of youths develop self-reliant skills and abilities through networks of mutual supports and spirituality.

Furthermore, most of them adapt to the hard environments they are exposed to enabling them to survive for years in dangerous circumstances.

I was surprised to know that the street youths are not there by choice. I thought they were in the street as their choice of life. I came to realize that they have been pushed to be at the streets by hardships / factors which they have no control on. These unfortunate youths are really discriminated by the society who does not respect them hence they do not consider them for any form of employment. I was surprised to know this discrimination makes them revolt by being drug dealers, thugs and sex workers as they strive to survive.

I thought that they are young youths who are in street as a choice they have made willingly as a way of life and they are thugs or prostitutes. I thought that they choose to be in the streets so as to pursue their interest of being drug users and dealers which they could only do it more conveniently at the streets.

Most of the homeless in the streets of New York are the minor who probably have suffered a lot of hardship which got them to the streets. These minors are not given money when they borrow because it's discouraged; donations are only given out to worthy charities.

This book has acted as a voice to the homeless youths by highlighting who they are, how they came to be whom they are and how they exist and coexist. It has formed a source of reliable information for the readers who would need to know about the street homeless youths.

Self-reliance which grew with time by the youths being in the streets for long makes it difficult to eliminate or reduce them. Once they have been in the

streets for long the form social groups and networks which enable them to have some sort of adaptation and building of skills which makes them survive for years in the hostile environment which they are exposed to.

References

Finkelstein, M. (2004) *With No Direction Home: Homeless Youth on the Road and in the Streets*, Belmont: Wadsworth