

Heavy: the obesity crisis in cultural context

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Abstrak

The current obesity epidemic has been at the top of the national and, increasingly, global public agenda for the last decade—the subject of extensive and intensive concern, scrutiny, and corrective efforts from various quarters. In the United States, much of this attention is predicated on the official account of obesity—that it is a matter of personal responsibility, specifically to the end of monitoring and ensuring appropriate caloric balance. However, even though it continues to have cultural presumption, that account does not resonate with the populace, which may explain why efforts of redress have been notoriously ineffective. In this book, the author places obesity in cultural, political, and economic context. She argues that the failure of the official story of obesity mirrors broader cultural tensions and anxieties that similarly have failed to account for lived experience. Alternative narratives of obesity have thus surfaced in an attempt to address that breach by invoking the concept of authenticity in various ways. The author chronicles the most prominent of those competing stories, examining and evaluating each in relation to the cultural backdrop against which they are drawn.