Cultural Capital: the general cultural background, knowledge, disposition, and skills that are passed on from one generation to another. Cultural capital represents ways of talking, acting, and socializing, as well as language practices, values, and types of dress and behavior.

Discrimination: Any action that involves treating various categories of people unequally.

Ethnicity: A shared cultural experience.

Food Deserts: Food deserts places, defined as urban neighborhoods and rural towns without ready access to fresh, healthy, and affordable food. Instead of supermarkets and grocery stores, these communities may have no food access or are served only by fast food restaurants and convenience stores that offer few healthy, affordable food options. The lack of access contributes to a poor diet and can lead to higher levels of obesity and other diet-related diseases, such as diabetes and heart disease. USDA's Economic Research Service estimates that 23.5 million people live in food deserts. More than half of those people (13.5 million) are low-income. Whether a person resides in a food desert is determined based on if the distance they live from a grocery store (for urban areas it is 1 mile or more; for rural residents it is 10 miles or more) 2.3 million people live in low-income rural areas that are more than 10 miles from a supermarket.

Food Security/Insecurity: These terms differ by researcher often but the USDA uses the following definitions. Recent changes to these definitions have been made which are reflected below.

Food Security

- **High food security** (*old label=Food security*): no reported indications of food-access problems or limitations.
- **Marginal food security** (*old label=Food security*): one or two reported indications—typically of anxiety over food sufficiency or shortage of food in the house. Little or no indication of changes in diets or food intake.

Food Insecurity

- **Low food security** (*old label=Food insecurity without hunger*): reports of reduced quality, variety, or desirability of diet. Little or no indication of reduced food intake.
- **Very low food security** (*old label=Food insecurity with hunger*): Reports of multiple indications of disrupted eating patterns and reduced food intake.

Gender: The personal traits and social positions that members of a society attach to being female and male.

Gender Stratification: Unequal distribution of wealth, power, and privilege between men and women.

Ideology: Cultural beliefs that justify social stratification.
**Income/Wealth:** Income is wages or salary from work and earnings from investments. Wealth is the total value of money and other assets, minus outstanding debts.

**Poverty:** (Absolute and Relative): Absolute poverty refers to a set standard (usually income) that can be used to measure poverty across countries and time. The World Bank (2005) defines absolute poverty as those living on less than $1.25 per day. There is, however, evidence to suggest that measuring poverty according to poverty lines underestimates the actual extent of poverty (United Nations 2009). In comparison, relative poverty is a standard that is used within countries and it is about a minimum standard that no one should fall beneath. Relative poverty is again usually represented by a figure.

**Poverty line:** An official government measure to define those living in poverty in the U.S.

**Power:** The ability of individuals or the members of a group to achieve aims or further the interests they hold.

**Race:** A socially constructed category composed of people who share biologically transmitted traits that members of a society consider important.

**Racism:** The belief that one racial category is innately superior or inferior to another.

**Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP,** formerly known as the Food Stamp Program): The U.S.’s primary governmental anti-hunger program. It provides economic benefits and education to help eligible low-income afford a nutritionally adequate diet.

**Social Class:** Defined variously as individuals or groups who: 1) occupy the same position on hierarchies of occupation, prestige, income, and education, or 2) are in the same relation to the system of production, or 3) are in the same relation to the system of production and are also class conscious.

**Social Exclusion:** Social exclusion is a shorthand label for what can happen when individuals or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health and family breakdown.’ (Social Exclusion Unit 1997)

**Social Inequality:** The existence of unequal opportunities and rewards for different social positions or statuses within a group or society.

**Social Institutions:** Basic modes of social activity followed by the majority of the members of a given society. Institutions have norms and values to which people conform.

**Social Mobility:** Change in one’s position in the social hierarchy (upward or downward).

**Social Stratification:** A system by which a society ranks categories of people in a hierarchy.

**Social Structure:** The underlying regularities or patterns in how people behave and in their relationships with one another.
**Status**: The ranking of individuals and groups on the basis of social and evaluated characteristics; also the social honor or prestige a group is accorded by other members of society; status contrasts with class which is largely an economic ranking.

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**Readings/Exercises:**


