Research Topics Guide
How the Other Half Eats:
The Untold Story of Food
and Inequality in America
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This guide will introduce you to a variety of resources related to “How the Other Half Eats” by Priya Fielding-Singh. The WSU Libraries have a five-simultaneous-users electronic copy of the book available for browser reading and download. There are also five print copies available on 3-day reserve at Holland and Terrell Libraries. Finally, there is one copy available for full six month check out.

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Chapter Summaries and Research Topic Ideas

Reviews / Acclaim
- Poor health, obesity, and bad food choices are more than a matter of personal responsibility
- In the U.S., 1 in 4 children are food insecure, yet we throw out 1/3 of our food
- The author shows that inequalities in families’ diets do not come from negligence from some and devotion of others, but all comes from a mother’s love

Preface
- Author writes about birth of daughter, Veda, and great feeling of responsibility for caring for and nurturing a child
- At all stages of children’s development there can be issues with food, from nursing a baby to keeping a teenager away from junk food
- Husband Ansu feels responsibility for offspring’s nutrition too, but because the child was once in the mother’s body, a special pressure to keep the child in good health
• Weighing Veda as a baby was a test of “how well Mom is doing?” – some measurements like Body Mass Index (BMI) are flawed
• Food environment is increasingly saturated with sugar, salt, and fat, causing rising rates of childhood obesity
• What we eat as kids affects what we consume now
• This book is an ethnographic study based on interviews and observations of U.S. families (conducted while a graduate student at Stanford)
• Two goals of the research: 1. Contribute to social science research, methodologically analyze 1000s of pages of interview transcripts, 2. Reach broader audiences with more public discourse
• Most texts about food are filled with insights or advice that make people feel bad about our eating habits
• Admission that scientists always, to some degree, bring personal beliefs into their research, author decides to use first person in book so reader knows what she thinks
• Author shares good/bad food memories from her youth; mother places few food restrictions, family ate from American, French, and Indian cuisines
• Author ate a hot dog for breakfast for a year
• Author, at one time, followed all of these diets: vegetarianism, pescatarianism, and veganism
• Author says she, like most American women, worries about her weight, often times not for health reasons, but because of beauty standards
• Again, description of Veda as a baby/toddler, and the nurse equating how good of job Mom is doing with BMI of child; pros and cons of BMI discussed
• All parents “undertake sacrificial, complicated, and frustrating work to feed their kids"
• Key question: “How can we, as a society, ensure that parents – all parents – have the means necessary to nourish their children?”

Part I: Divides

Chapter 1 – Diverging Destinies
• Story of Nyah spending last dollars on Starbucks drinks for she and her daughters (p.3-5)
• Between 2013 and 2016, author interviewed parents and children (mostly teenaged) from 75 families (three to six hours) and interviewed/observed four families for multiple months (all from the San Francisco area) (p.5)
• Why families let her spend so much time with them (p.6)
• Radical empathy (Isabel Wilkerson) (p.7)
• Standard American Diet (SAD) (p.8)
• Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA) (USDA, 1990) (p.8)
• Healthy Eating Index (HEI) (p.9)
• Statistics about poor American diet but how it has improved a bit since the start of the 21st Century (p.9)
• Race and income level are key factors affecting nutritional health (p,10)
• Rich in U.S. get richer, struggle for the “American Dream” (p.11)
• Civil Rights Act (1968) impacts minorities’ wealth (p.12)
• Why Covid 19 impacts minorities most (p.12-13)
• Author writes about her family’s experience with the foster care system (p.13,14)
• Story of foster child Josh and his mother Tracey (p.14-16)
• How foster children saw food differently (p.16)

Chapter 2 – Families in an Age of Inequality
• Reasons for diet disparities among the rich and poor (p.17)
• Author’s family and food memories from early life (p.18,19)
• Author wonders about the role of price and proximity to food play in dietary inequalities versus various means people place on food itself (p.20)
• San Francisco is a good place for this research, it is a microcosm of the wider U.S., with residential segregation, declining middle class, growing financial hardship among the poor (p.21)
• Mothers run the household and focus far more on food than the fathers (p.22)
• Nyah Baker family introduced (p.23-28)
• Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher Program (p. 24)
• Nyah’s difficulties growing up (p.25)
• Nyah’s daughters Mariah and Natasha introduced, along with Marcus, her boyfriend (p.26,27)
• Nyah’s health issues – Type 2 Diabetes, hypertension, back issues (p.27)
• Weathering Hypothesis (Arline Geronimus, 1992) (p.27)
• Governmental disability benefits (p.28)
• Supplemental Security Income (SSI) (p.28)
• Sex work among the poor (p.28)
• Dana William’s family introduced (p.28-32)
• Dana’s difficulties include father’s alcoholism, ex-husband’s drug addiction, emotional abuse, her battle with breast cancer (p.29)
• Dana takes medical assistant schooling, works in pediatric care (p.30)
• Dana’s daughters Madison and Paige introduced (p.31)
• Family helps Dana financially (p.32)
• Credit card debt an issue for both Nyah and Dana (p.32)
• Renata Ortega’s family introduced (p.32-35)
• Renata and Jose own home, Renata in banking, Jose musician and technology products salesman (p.33)
• Infant son dies from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS) (p.33)
• Renata’ children Amalia and Nico introduced (p.34,35)
• Julie Cain family introduced (p.35-39)
• Julie stay-at-home mom, no childhood traumas, husband Zach is corporate lawyer, not around much when author was doing her study (p.37)
• Julie’s kids Jane and Evan introduced (p.36-38)
• Loneliness an issue for all four women (p.38)
• Jane struggles with her weight, nutritionist and therapist involved (p.38)

Chapter 3 – Feeding Kids
• Nyah’s experience with spinach (p.40,41)
• All moms in the study cared deeply about their children’s nutrition and health (p.42)
• What constituted healthy eating points of agreement and small sources of disagreement (p.42)
• Ways groceries were bought and what was stocked in the refrigerators and cupboards was the same in all four families (p.43)
• Stats about advertising among Big Food and Beverage companies (p.43)
• The ways Big Food and Beverage advertise (p.44)
• Similarities between families concerning meals consumed and where (p.44,45)
• Ways food purchasing places, habits, and food restrictions differed among the families (p.45,46)
• Some say food access is central issue behind nutritional inequality (p.46)
• Food deserts (p.46)
• Michelle Obama’s Let’s Move campaign – Task Force on Childhood Obesity – Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (p.47)
• Five parts of the Let's Move campaign (p.47)
• National Food Desert Awareness Month (p.48)
• Healthy Food Financing Initiative – bring more health foods to food deserts in the U.S. (widely successful) (p.48)
• Studies show more supermarkets in food deserts does NOT result in overall better nutrition (p.48,49)
• Differences in families’ geographic access to healthy food did not explain their different diets (p.50)
• Having a car and its impact on grocery shopping (p.50)
• Poorer families spend less on food than the rich, but a larger percentage of their overall income (p.50,51)
• Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) – averages about $1.40 per person per meal (p.51)
• Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) benefits (p.51,52)
• Food insecurity facts (p.52,53)
• Why food insecurity is associated with less healthy diets (p.53)
• Role of local food pantries (p.53)
• Amount of money and types of food Nyah, Dana, Renata, and Julie buy (p.53-55)
• Nyah contends it is cheaper to buy healthier foods (p.56,57)

Chapter 4 – All That Matters
• Issues Miranda (mother) and Ebony (daughter) face given that Ebony is vegan living in a food insecure home (p.58-60)
• Free and Reduced-Price School Meals overview and issues for vegetarians (p.60,61)
• Statistics about the working poor (p.62,63)
• Ways Miranda supports Ebony’s vegan diet (p.63)
• How eating out is such a source of joy for Americans (p.64,65)
• Food access and price are important, but mothers also strongly consider their children’s desires, they want to secure food with the most symbolic value to their kids (p.65)

Part II: Nourishment
Chapter 5 – Scarcity, Abundance

- Gentrification (p.69)
- Losing utility services and phone/internet due to lack of money to pay (p.70)
- Family gatherings despite economic hardships (p.70)
- Poverty creates need anxiety and need for counseling/medication (Nyah) (p.71)
- Wealthy kids (Julie's) have lots of activities, special trips, clothes, phones are very important (p.74,75)
- Julie has money, time, security, stability, white privilege, abundance; Nyah parented in a world of scarcity (p.76,77)

Chapter 6 – Within Reach

- Phone scams targeting the poor (p.78,79)
- Nyah, typically summer day of watching TV and ice cream truck, poverty is tedious (p.80,81)
- Nyah always tells daughters things they should be thankful for (p.82)
- Nyah must say no to most of daughters' summer requests, but not junk food (p.82.83)
- Nyah lets kids eat junk food, but talks frequently about good nutrition (p.83)
- Culture-of-Poverty Argument (Oscar Lewis) – low income people are responsible for their own position below the poverty line (p.84)
- Moynihan Report (Daniel Patrick Moynihan) – blames Black poverty on “ghetto culture” (p.84)
- “Poverty and Culture” article (Lawrence Mead, 2020) – neither racism nor policy failures were responsible for poverty in the U.S. (p.85)
- Mario Small and Michele Lamont – systemic obstacles cement people in poverty (p.85)
- Examples of how expensive it is to be poor (James Baldwin) (p.86,87)
- Why the poor spend rather than save (p.87,88)
- Windfall Child Rearing (Allison Pugh) spend now because hard to know about the future (p.88)

Chapter 7 – Being “Good”

- Dana and kids grocery shop at Target with daughters begging for junk food (p.90,91)
- Food marketers create packaging that both appeals to kids, but also sends positive nutritional messages to parents (e.g., Kix’s “Kid-Tested, Parent Approved”) (p.92)
- Lower-income moms’ refuse kids when they don’t have money, but oblige when they do (p.93)
- Junk food selections is one of the few choices children in poverty can make (p.94)
- Julie/Renata (wealthier) moms can say no to junk food because they can say yes to other more expensive, non-food items (p.95)
- “Intensive Mothering” (Sharon Hays) – five characteristics of what good mothers do (p.96)
- Paid maternity leave and universal childcare (p.96)
- Why only wealthy moms can do “intensive mothering” (p.96,97)
• Moms are feeders because they start “feeding” in utero and often times through breastfeeding (p.97)
• Nyah and Dana let kids have junk food to show they are good mothers (p.98,99)
• Julie can say no to junk food, but often still has gnawing feeling of inadequacy as a mother (p.100)

Chapter 8 – Hunger and Pickiness
• Nyah’s story of the night Mariah went hungry as an infant (p.101)
• Delfina, super market cashier, single mom with 3 kids, buys junk food because cannot afford any food waste (kids reject healthy food) (p.102,103)
• CDC’s Smart Snacks in Schools – healthier versions of junk food (p.104)
• Delfina often does not eat so Luis can (p.105)
• U.S. food workers and restaurants employees experience food insecurity at higher rates than the rest of the workforce (p.105)
• Wealthier moms (Julie) worry about overeating – eating for comfort (p.106)
• Patricia, mom of medium income, turns her kids’ pickiness about food into “teachable moments” (p.106,107)
• The “organic child” (Kate Cairns, Josee Johnston, Norah MacKendrick) – Patricia works hard to keep her home in the organic bubble (p.108,109)
• Annie’s Cheese Squares v. Cheez Its (p.109)
• Patricia’s kids reject Taco Bell food (p.110)

Chapter 9 – Status Symbols
• Food as signifier of social position, brand recognition (p.111)
• Nutritional comparisons between regular and organic products (p.111)
• Common food choices based on status (p.112)
• Why wealthy don’t always eat healthy (p.113,114)
• Latisha goes up with few food options, wants kids to have more and healthier alternatives (p.115-117)
• Black family’s food stereotypes (p.116)

Chapter 10 – Kale Salad
• Soul food portrayed as unhealthy (p.118)
• Janae wants to show more sophisticated food repertoire than her mother and grandmother (p.119,120)
• Soul food examples (p.120,121)
• Janae feeds kids soul food to impart culture and heritage (p.122)
• Kale and racial stereotypes (p.122,123)
• Only salad for dinner? (p.124)
• How kale is like collard greens (p.124,125)
• Social scientists’ tendency to study poor, urban communities of color (p.125)
• Janae/Harmony (middle income) don’t want to be lumped in with stereotypical poor Blacks with bad diets (p.126)
• Let’s Move campaign (Michelle Obama) (p.127)
• Magazines show Whites as healthy, Blacks as unhealthy (p.127)
• U.S. culture deems people responsible for their own successes and failures; if their kids eat well, the parents are doing a good job (and vice versa) (p.128)
Part III: Compromises

Chapter 11 – Mom’s Job
- Every day in U.S., moms spend triple the time on meal preparation as dads (p.131)
- Dads add to mothers’ feeding stresses (p.132)
- Moms get help from live-in, female, extended family members, 20% of U.S. population reside in multigenerational homes (p.132)
- In 1 in 10 U.S. families, dad is in charge of grocery shopping and cooking (p.133)
- U.S. dads stereotypically cook at the grill and sometimes for weekend breakfasts (p.133)
- Most moms don’t question or mind being in charge of food for the family (p.134)
- U.S. dads today are more likely to be more involved in kids’ school or extracurricular activities, but not in food related matters (p.134)
- Dads (men) eat less healthy than moms (women) which contributes to idea that dads should not direct kids’ nutrition (p.135)
- Dads more likely to take kids through drive thrus, often undermine moms, do not monitor kids’ nutrition (p.136-138)
- Dads buy foods (at Costco, for example) that the family won’t eat and goes to waste (p.138)
- Julie, stay at home mother, is fine with solely being responsible for kids’ food health (p.139)
- Dads opt for fast food, moms give in, the moms end up feeling regretful, not dads (p.140,141)

Chapter 12 – Time and Money
- Delfina works 60 hours per week, physically demanding cashier work, too tired to cook when get home (p.142,143)
- Long work hours, commutes, and single parenting make food prep hard (p.144)
- Today’s cookbooks often center around quick and health recipes (p.144)
- The choice to cook a meal often means less time for recreational/educational time with kids (p.145)
- All moms are busy, but wealthier moms have more time for food preparation (p.146)
- The Kapoors outsource cooking to a traveling chef who comes on the weekends (p.147-149)
- Money buys quality time for moms to spend with their children (p.150,151)

Chapter 13 – Stuck
- Renata resorts to take out because exhausted from work and cannot afford cooking help (p152,153)
- Settling for Mac and Cheese – easy and crowd pleaser (p.154)
- Kids make own sack lunches for school (p.155)
- No every family member present dinners – okay or not? (p.155)
• Renata fantasizes about being able to hire a part-time cook, but too expensive (p.156,157)
• Good moms love to cook and nourish their families (p.158)
• Need to find meals that are nutritious, that kids will eat, and don't take much time to prepare (p.158)
• Other life needs cut into sitting down to eat (p.159)

Chapter 14 – Fluctuating Finances
• Defining “middle class” (p.160)
• High levels of household debt, including student loans (p. 160,161)
• Morales family – Alvaro loses job, need to give up purchasing clean food (p.162)
• Chastity’s husband James goes back to school, means he is gone more, she works more, need new food preparation habits, each kid has bin of approved snacks (p.164.165)
• Chastity makes more of what kids want for breakfast, less nutritious meals (p.166)

Chapter 15 – Becoming American
• Teresa, undocumented Mexican immigrant, and son Esteban, “dreamer,” struggle with poverty in the U.S., but have hope for the future (p.168)
• Teresa, when young in Mexico, had enough food, but little variety (p.169)
• Dietary acculturation for Esteban in the U.S., for nearly everyone almost always means a less healthy diet (p.170,171)
• Teresa feeds Esteban traditional Sinaloan food with some U.S. fast food too, kids covet newly available U.S. foods (p.172-174)
• Ways Esteban exposed Teresa to U.S. cooking/food (p.175)
• Teresa enjoys treating Esteban to U.S. food (p.175,176)

Part IV: Emotion

Chapter 16 – Downscaling
• Brenda Rojas, born in U.S., lived in Columbia where daughter Ava born, comes back to U.S. struggles with poverty and Type 2 Diabetes, works in video store, but it closes (p.179-181)
• Sociologist Matthew Desmond, unstable housing in U.S., 15% of children born in U.S. cities will be evicted at least once before age 15 (p.181)
• Brenda evicted many times, but keeps positive mindset (p.182)
• Emotion work – shaping your emotions, for example, being able to tolerate bad situations by feeling better about how things are (Arlie Hochschild, 1979) (p.183)
• Wealthier moms do more (actions) to manage kids diets, poorer moms downscale, lower the bar to maintain positivity (p.184,185)
• Downscaling – lower expectations to adapt to and survive a difficult life (Marianne Cooper) (p.185)
• Lorena Garcia, sales associate at Old Navy (makes just above minimum wage, a little over $9/hour around 2014), moved family six times in 3 years, evictions and poor conditions in the apartments (p.185-187)
• Lorena applies for Section 8 Housing, but does not get it, is on never-ending waiting list (p.187)
• Dana gives in to kids’ food desires to keep them happy, does emotion work to justify this as nutrition expectations are not met (p.188,189)
• Years of financial stress and food insecurity can lead to mental/physical problems (p.190)
• Chris, Dana’s ex-husband, is likely an alcoholic, does not help support with the girls (p.191)
• Dana uses downscaling and emotion work to keep moving forward (p.192)

Chapter 17 – Upscaling
• Harder for each generation to be as wealthy/successful as the last, so parents stress about all things including college admissions, they believe a nutritious diet will aid their kids in keeping up (p.193)
• Moms upscale, or constantly are raising the standards by which they evaluate their kids’ diets and themselves as moms (p.194)
• Differences between lower-income and upper-income moms and kids’ dietary expectations (p.194)
• Wealthy moms think they should home cook nutritious meals that kids will like better than fast food – unrealistic (p.195)
• Janae Lathrop ends up getting kids take out and feels guilty about it (p.196)
• “Have it all” – U.S. idea that moms can raise a family, work full-time, keep up hobbies, and feel a sense of balance (p.197)
• Lack of paid leave and flexible work hours make “having it all” even more difficult (p.197)
• Janae takes new job so can be home early enough to cook dinner, but then decides it also must be from scratch (p.197)
• Author’s presence likely elevated moms’ desires to upscale and to feel inadequate (p.198,199)
• Joaquin Vargas, stay-at-home father, only 7% of fathers in U.S. are full-time caregivers to their children (compared to 27% of mothers) (p.199)
• Joaquin is focused on cooking healthy meals, but has same doubts as moms (p.199,200)
• The media always wants to print new nutrition stories; dissent, not consensus sells (p.201)
• The food industry profits from keeping people confused about nutrition (p.201)
• Atkins, Paleo, Keto, and Mediterranean diets; always a new one (p.202)

Chapter 18 – Priorities
• Lorena Garcia is concerned her son might be harmed by gang violence, so food nutrition is a secondary concern (p.203)
• Common fears of low-income moms (p.204)
• Many parents are more concerned with kids’ mental health than nutritional intake (p.204)
• Moms focus on spending time with kids and making positive memories over the specifics diet (p.205,206)
• Unsafe neighborhoods prompt moms to take kids out for meals/treats and allow kids to cook at home what they want (even if not healthy) (p.206,207)
• Dana has all of child’s social media account credentials so she can monitor them (p.207)
• Ximena Gomez and son, Juan, live in car / on street after Juan is pursued by gang, resort to fast food because no kitchen/refrigerator and fast food restaurant has a bathroom to wash (p.207-209)
• Prioritize Juan’s life over his diet (p.210)

Chapter 19 – Control
• “Rug rat race” (Economists Garey and Valerie Ramey) – parents devote more time, money, effort to their kids, affluent parents do this to help kids land in good schools and get high paying jobs (p.212)
• Helicopter parenting – parental overinvolvement and overregulation of kids’ lives (p.212)
• Snowplow parenting – helicopter parenting plus parents work to preemptively remove any barriers / obstacles in their kid’s way (p.213)
• Concerted cultivation (richer parents) and the accomplishment of natural growth (poorer parents) reflect more hands on and off approach to parenting (Sociologist Annette Lareau, 1990s) (p.213)
• Physical cultivation – instilling in kids the knowledge, habits, and beliefs about food nutrition (p.213)
• How moms establish patterns of physical cultivation and why (p.214)
• In a child’s life, examples of the earliest manifestations of physical cultivation (p.215)
• As kids get older, controlling their food intake is harder, raising more mom anxiety (p.216)
• White affluent moms want kids, especially girls, to be thin; moms of color focus less on kids being thin (p.217)
• Julie takes Jane to a nutritionist, who puts her on Weight Watchers, unclear if she has an eating disorder (p.217,218)
• Virginia Bowen, personal trainer, struggles with son, Wells, who is overweight; he binges and hoards junk food (p.219)
• Attempts to overcontrol kids’ food intake may backfire (p.221,222)

Chapter 20 – Stacking Up
• Lower income moms say they are better than even poorer moms or “welfare queens,” a downscaling strategy (p.224)
• Extended family safety net = Kiara Bell’s money is pooled with brother’s and aunt’s, then given to grandmother who cooks dinner for the whole family each night; Kiara (elementary cafeteria worker) and four daughters could not live on SNAP alone (p.224-226)
• Common food related issues for single moms (p.226)
• Connections between family size and poverty (p.226,227)
• After water turned off at Nyah’s house, she uses “it could be worse” stories to help she and her daughters cope (p.228,229)
• At Halloween party with Julie/Jane, all wealthy moms talk to author about great food ideas, but all express self-doubt as well about their kids’ nutrition (p.229-233)
• Lori Galvez, 50-hour work week, long commute, says stay-at-home moms have time to cook meals and shop around for quality food (p.233-235)
• Emma Romero, stay-at-home mom, provides examples of moms who are doing better, she is worried she is failing too (p.236,237)
• Society is failing moms, not moms failing society (p.237)

Part V: Conclusion

Chapter 21 – Windfall
• Author pays study subjects $60 for interview participants, and $300 for observations – Nyah, Dana, Renata, and Julie (p.241)
• Nyah gives most of the money to daughters ($100 each), who buy clothes and junk food; Nyah uses $60 for utility bill, $20 for gas, $20 for her own junk food (p.242-244)
• Dana spends money in similar way to Nyah; daughters get clothes and junk food (p.245)
• Julie spends money on things for Jane’s birthday party (p.246)
• Renata spends puts money toward Nico’s summer trip (p.246,247)
• All four women spend most the money on their kids; Nyah and Dana treat it like a windfall to spend quickly, not the case for Renata and Julie (p.247)

Chapter 22 – Where We Go
• Author’s foster siblings, Carla and Rodrigo, were always munching on food and hiding food in their rooms; they had experienced harsh food scarcity and Child Protective Services had taken them from their prior home (p.248,249)
• Author compares her preparing for the pandemic shut down with the struggles poor people face with food issues every day (p.250)
• Seven food issues for people in the U.S. (p.250)
• In U.S., over ½ of produced food ends up in the landfill (p.251)
• Food deserts are only a small part of the problem (p.252,253)
• Seven reasons moms don’t get/ensure their children eat healthy food (p.253)
• Summary of book – it is one thing to find/afford healthy food; it is another to want to buy that healthy food and choose to spend one’s money on healthy food; another thing is to have the time and know how to cook the healthy food; and another to possess the patience to weather the storm of children’s complaints about the healthy food. Only a few parents do all things (p.253)
• Everyone deserves the means to have a healthy diet, but for too long we have operated under the idea that only the rich should/could have access (p.254)
• No reason why moms should be essentially solely responsible for everything related to food purchasing and preparation (p.254)
• In U.S. we adhere to the personal responsibility narrative for most aspects of life including our diets, which are up to individuals alone (p.254)
• People think federal nutritional-assistance programs and food banks are to provide food basics to people, but they are really only designed for emergency use (p.255)
• Immigrants are not eligible for, and language barriers also prevent them getting, help through assistance programs (p.255)
• Author says we need to get beyond just combatting hunger to supporting the whole population’s nutrition (p.255)
• Biden expands SNAP and WIC (p.256)
• Double Up Food Bucks and Healthy Incentives Pilot are two programs which incentivize the purchase of nutritious foods (p.256)
• National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program are free/reduced cost meal programs; every day 31 million children eat school meals, for some this is half of their calories for the day (p.256)
• Universal School Meal – all students can get meals regardless of income, used in many places during the Covid pandemic (p.256,257)
• Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (Obama) – works to improve the nutritional value of school food and updated the Dietary Guidelines for Americans; many of these improvements were rolled back under Trump (p.257)
• Five ways school lunches could become more international and nutritious (p.258)
• Author suggests banning food marketing to kids, which currently creates anxiety for moms and kids who eat too much junk food (p.258,259)
• U.S. poverty rate is high among industrialized nations because lack of policies to support the poor (p.260)
• U.S. needs to have universal living wages for people who work full-time (p.260)
• U.S. needs more affordable housing; ¾ of renters pay ½ or more of their income on housing (p.261)
• Six ways parents deal with high housing costs and while having a low income (p.261)
• Too many evictions and too much unsafe and run-down housing (p.262)
• Four national policy ideas to help the poor (p.262)
• American Families Plan (Biden) – a proposal that includes policies such as universal free preschool, national mandated paid parental leave, and personal illness leave (p.262,263)
• Most single, low income moms have no child support, no paid leave, few sick days, and no vacation days (p.263)
• Point of book: when parents are cared for by society, they can best care for their kids (p.264)
• Three parts of the impossible task of mothers (p.264,265)
• Even rich, well equipped moms feel inadequate when it comes to the food nutrition of their families (p.266)
• Are we willing to do what it takes to ensure all families have the means to eat nutritionally? (p.266)

About This Project
• Author works for Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) doing a check out aisle items purchasing habits analysis project (an inspiration for the project outlined in this book) (p.267,268)
• Study grows out of hypothesis that food’s price and proximity were not the sole, or even primary determinants of food choice (p.268)
• Study takes place between 2013 and 2015 in the Bay Area, while she is a graduate student at Stanford (p.268)
• Study focuses on families with teenagers (most difficult years for nutrition) and feature represents much racial/ethnic diversity (p.269)
• Many subjects for the study are affiliated with Hillview Central High School (Silicon Valley), but ultimately participants were recruited from across the entire Bay Area (p.269-271)
• Author always clear in declaring that she is a sociologist, not a nutritionist (p.272)
• Author sees her role as an observer and one who desires honest/full answers to her questions (p.272,273)
• Author’s racial identity and possible impacts on the study (p.274)
• Parameters for how interviews were conducted/recorded/transcribed and for the observations (p.274,275)
• People debate whether ethnographers should be as much as possible an unobtrusive observer or a full-fledged participant; author opts mostly for the former, but was always willing to accept hospitality from the families and let relationships naturally develop (p.276-278)
• Author believes key to success is withholding judgement, which is not the same as being objective (p.279)
• Two key realizations – one, the more families sensed author was not judging them, the more they were open, and two, the more the author refrained from judgement, the more she could see the fuller circumstances under which families made nutrition decisions, meaning a wide variety of choices were seen as reasonable and rational (p.279,280)
• Author thinks investigators should be human first and researchers second (p.280)
• How did the research affect/change the author? Ironically, she is less structured and demanding of what her daughter eats; she is also angry at society for making it so hard on moms (p.281)
• Four key issues facing moms (p.282)