

# UC Santa Barbara

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Tainted Tap: Flint's Journey from Crisis to Recovery

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advantaged and upwardly mobile millennial men and women are marriage-oriented and see marriage in their future. Their anxieties about marriage, however, are gendered, classed, and unique to heterosexual relationships. Men are quite worried about their ability to provide financially for their families, an important part of the performance of heterosexual masculinity. They strongly desire to be financially secure prior to being married. Straight, class-advantaged, and upwardly mobile women are anxious about balancing their self-development goals (self-exploration and financial security) with being of appropriate marriageable age (mid-to-late twenties). And no wonder: their straight male peers make it clear that they do not see older women as marriageable. LGBTQ+ millennials have a more complicated view of marriage and have mixed feelings about whether or not they want to participate in the institution. LGBTQ+ individuals open to marriage are also open to various forms of nonmonogamy and plan to make it a part of their married life. Although they desire marriage, they do not conform to the boundaries of monogamy that heterosexuals often do.

Dalessandro ultimately concludes that millennials navigate social differences in their romantic and sexual relationships in similar and different ways than the cohorts before them. In terms of gender, race, and class, they often reify and perpetuate inequalities. However, identifying as LGBTQ+ or a person of color increases millennials' ability to navigate gender and racial issues more progressively in romantic and sexual relationships. One weakness of this work is that some parts of the intersectional analysis are less developed than others. Nevertheless, Dalessandro's analyses are effective and rich, and they support her arguments. This book is ideal for teaching courses on methods, family, and sex and gender and serves as a model for researchers interested in doing intersectional research.

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*Tainted Tap: Flint's Journey from Crisis to Recovery*, by **Katrinell M. Davis**. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021. 280 pp. \$95.00 cloth. ISBN: 9781469662107.

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Much ink has been spilled over the Flint water crisis, even as residents continue to suffer its devastating consequences. In *Tainted Tap: Flint's Journey from Crisis to Recovery*, Katrinell Davis offers the perspective of a native "Flintonian" who found herself on the ground for research just as the crisis was unfolding. Davis's perspective and positionality bring a much-needed voice to scholarship about the crisis. Original data, many of which were obtained from creative sources after months of persistent Freedom of Information Act requests, shed light on how and why events unfolded as they did.

The book's arc usefully extends the timeline and scope of events that have been considered to be responsible for the 2014–2015 water crisis. These events made harms both more likely and more severe, as Davis explains: "Flint's water crisis was the logical result of years of service reductions, unchecked biases, and spatial inequalities" that "disproportionately affected poor and minority populations" (p. 6). In doing so, Davis widens the historical specificity of "crisis" by detailing its configuration through the actions and policy choices of political leaders. Over decades, Davis shows us, industry needs were prioritized over residents' well-being.

These compounding historical harms are the crux of the book's argument. Davis plots their trajectory through the idea of the "discarded city," which, she argues, replaced the experiences of the previous "minimal city" of Flint. As a discarded city, Davis elaborates, Flint is marked by uneven investment, neglected infrastructure, a silenced electorate, and poverty (p. 9). This is characteristic of the fiscal distress of discarded cities, which results from low property taxes, limited business investment, and reduced revenue support from the county or state

(p. 8). Linking the contemporary moment to earlier decades, when Flint experienced “benign neglect” and “planned shrinkage” (p. 7), underscores the deeper roots for the contemporary crisis and raises a shrill alert about what may yet come.

The book is organized into two parts. Part I (“Before Evidence of Lead Contamination Surfaced in Flint’s Water”) includes four chapters focusing on Model Cities policies in Flint (Chapter 1), Flint’s historical environmental justice movement (Chapter 2), the government’s initial responses to citizen complaints about water (Chapter 3), and contrasting resident perspectives after the switch to the Flint River (Chapter 4). Part II (“After Evidence of Lead Contamination Surfaced in Flint’s Water”) includes three chapters on the water crisis and its public health consequences (Chapter 5), conflict among Flint advocates and supporters (Chapter 6), and an analysis of Flint’s pipe replacement program.

Several of the chapters include original and important contributions. Of particular note is Chapter Two’s detailing of Flint’s historical environmental justice activism against toxic industrial wastes and dumping in Flint, which prefigured experiences during the water crisis. Davis shows us how these movements were repeatedly undermined by government bodies like Michigan’s Department of Environmental Quality. In Chapter Three, we learn that issues of waste pollution in Flint extend well before 2014, with officials consistently failing to document water quality issues or to alert the public to potential dangers. In Chapter Five, Davis makes crucial connections between the water crisis and historical environmental injustices, including brownfield sites, water main breaks, and blood lead levels. Chapter Seven crucially extends the water crisis to include the city’s pipe replacement efforts, which constitutes the heart of its response, demonstrating significant gaps in the program.

As a whole, the text takes a number of original angles and draws on new sources of data to demonstrate how harms have compounded—and continue to compound—in Flint. Instead of unwarranted optimism, Davis offers a series of warnings, concluding “Flint Ain’t Fixed” and “It Ain’t Just Flint.”

If these are unfortunately foreseeable, Davis’s analysis offers us original perspective on why that is the case.

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*How the Other Half Eats: The Untold Story of Food and Inequality in America*, by **Priya Fielding-Singh**. New York: Little, Brown Spark, 2021. 352 pp. \$28.00 cloth. ISBN: 9780316427265.

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Priya Fielding-Singh’s *How the Other Half Eats: The Untold Story of Food and Inequality in America* offers a much-needed reset to the national conversation about how people buy and consume food. Most importantly, this book provides a nicely nuanced counterpoint to the “food desert” concept that has dominated media coverage of food access debates during the past 15 years. Instead of assuming that price and proximity are the primary determinants of where people shop and what food they buy, Fielding-Singh’s thoughtful and detailed analysis helps explain what is really guiding people’s dietary decisions today.

Based on in-depth interviews with 160 parents and kids, as well as exhaustive in-person observations of four families who span ethno-racial and economic categories, *How the Other Half Eats* immerses the reader in the practical realities of what it means to put food on the table. Well written, the first-person perspective adopted throughout the book offers a refreshing alternative to most academic prose. Instead of being treated like a student attending a lecture, the reader feels more like a companion on a journey with Fielding-Singh as she questions her prior assumptions about why people eat what they do.

The strength of Fielding-Singh’s research lies in her empathetic and introspective approach. She never presents data automatically as fact; instead, she relays her observations cautiously with all the necessary caveats and context that depict people’s lives as they really are: complicated. Like all good sociologists, she engages with any