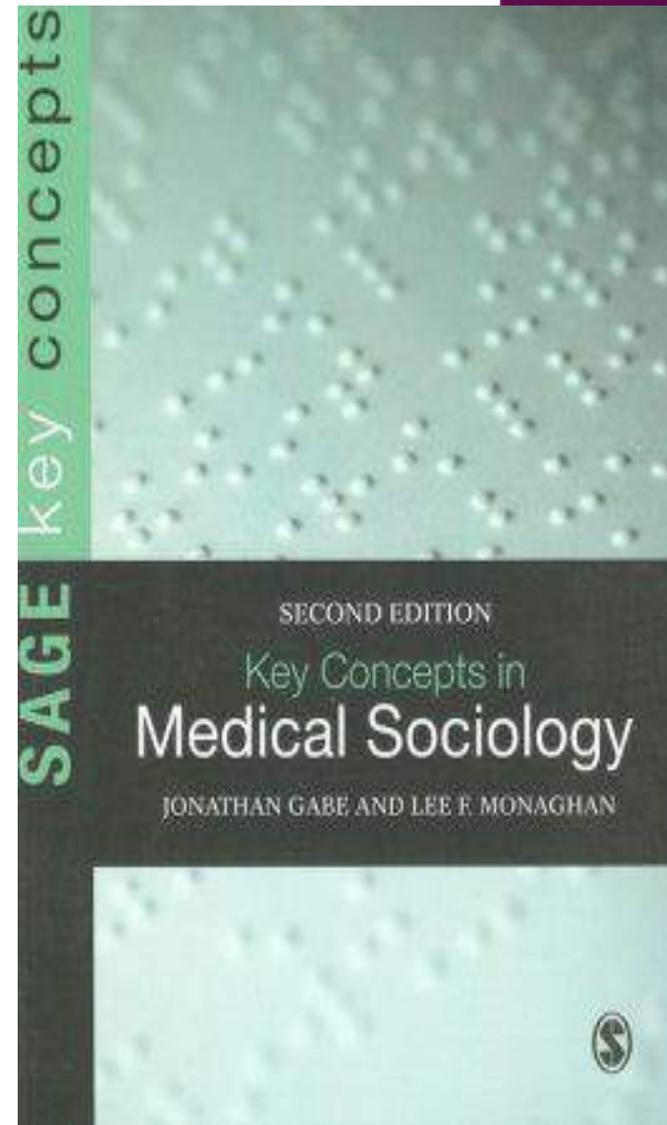


REFRAMING 'WEIGHT-RELATED' STIGMA: SOCIOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS ON FATNESS AS A PUTATIVE PROBLEM

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Definition: Stigma commonly refers to a negatively defined condition, attribute, trait or behaviour conferring ‘deviant’ status, which is socially, culturally and historically variable. It is a political process related to macro-social issues such as power, discrimination and the distribution of resources in society. (Monaghan and Williams, 2013)



Does my bum look big on this?



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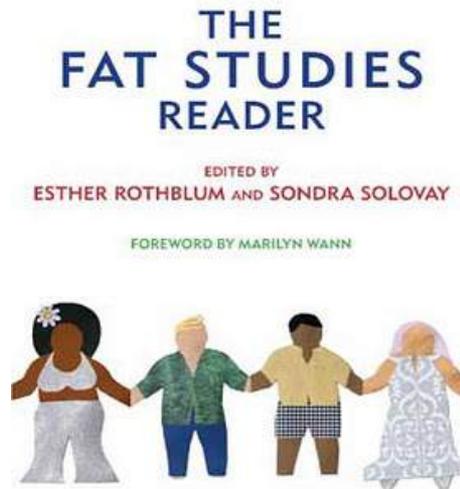
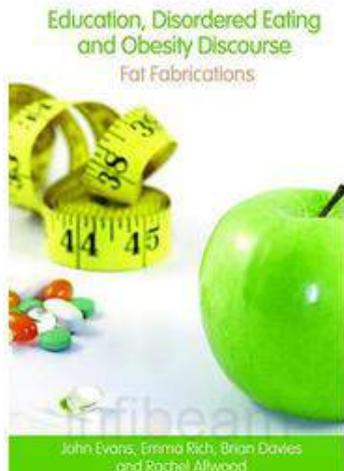
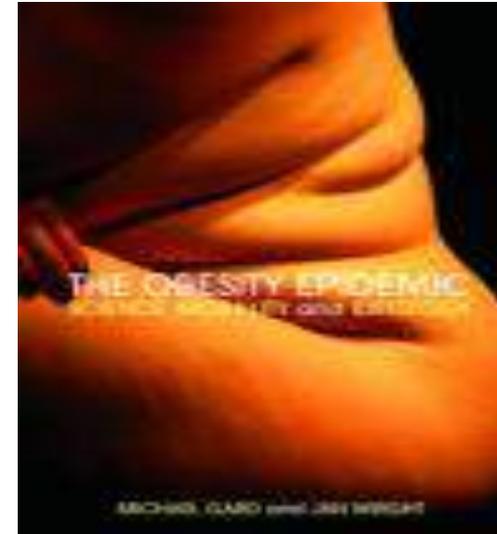
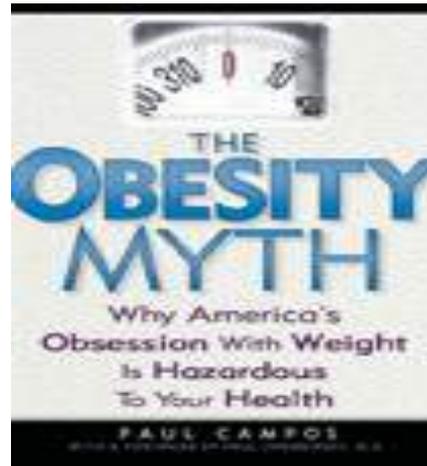
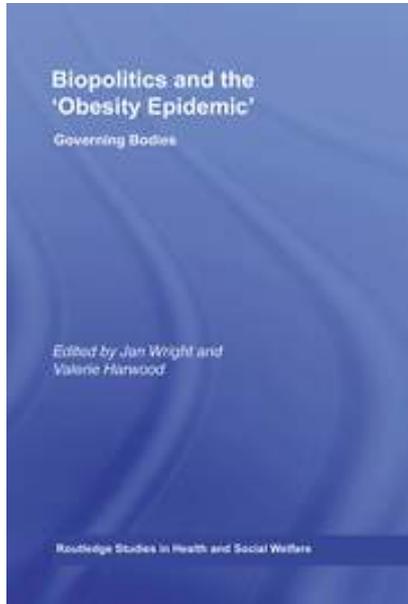




OUTLINE

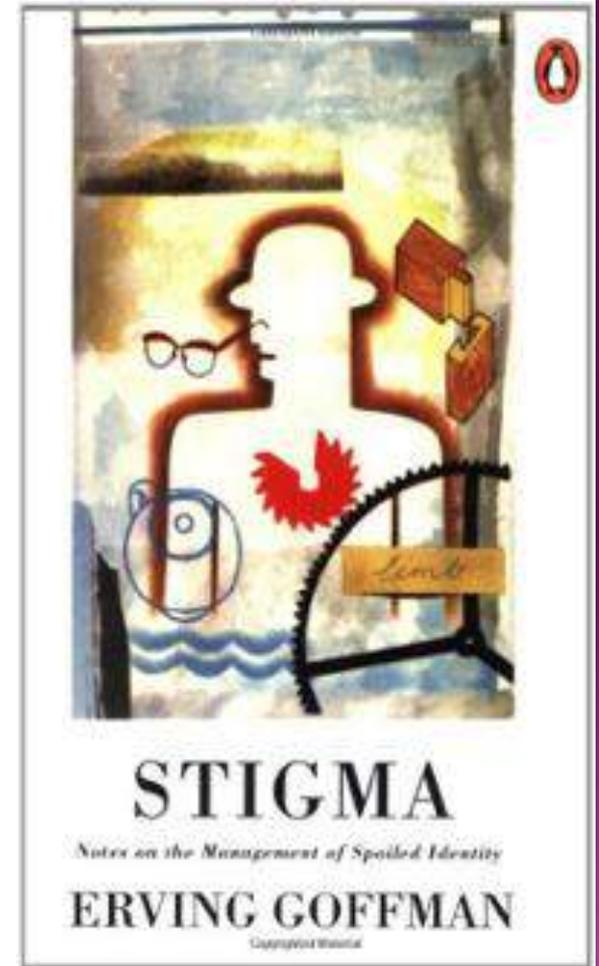
- ◉ Introduction: Exercising critical judgement
- ◉ Seminal sociological writing on stigma
- ◉ Men and the stigma of fatness
- ◉ Beyond the ‘tragedy’ of obesity/fatness: Politicising and seeking to reduce structured stigma relations

CRITICAL STUDIES OF WEIGHT/OBESITY/FATNESS



SEMINAL SOCIOLOGICAL WRITING ON STIGMA

- ◉ Micro-sociology - management of spoiled identity (Goffman 1963)
- ◉ Sociology of everyday life
- ◉ Seminal work, broad relevance
- ◉ Key propositions
 - Types of stigma
 - Virtual and actual identity
 - Discredited, discreditable
 - Master-status
 - Courtesy stigma
 - Normal deviant
 - Perspectives, rather than people



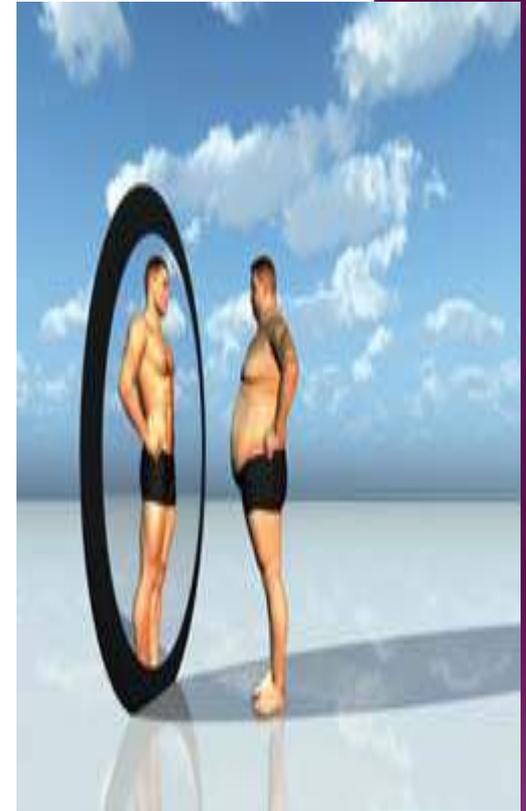
Virtual Identity

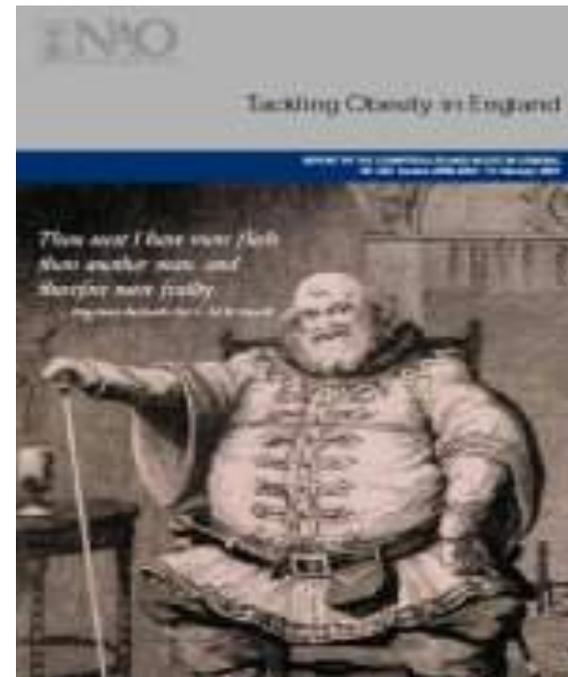
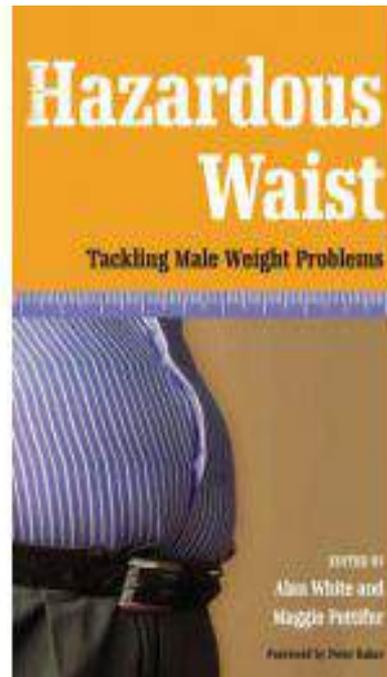
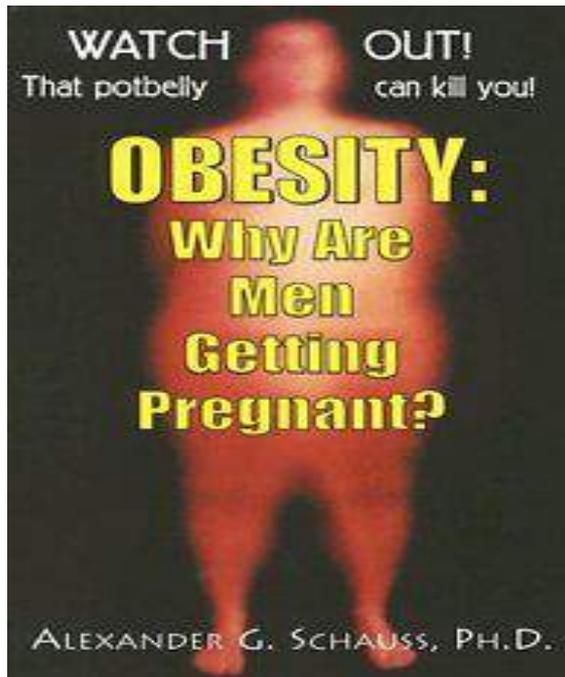
- ◉ Normative expectations or what a person 'ought' to be.

Actual Identity

- ◉ The category or attributes the individual actually possesses.

Stigma occurs when there is a discrepancy between virtual and actual identity.





Q:

Why do you run?



A:

My friends started
fixing me up with fat guys.

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“Ridicule and disparagement of obese individuals seems to remain a socially acceptable form of prejudice.”

‘And my mates [very quietly] call each other fat bastards’ (Interview with a young man who wanted to lose weight, cited in Monaghan and Hardey 2011: 69)

Table 1: A typology of fat bodily sensibility (Monaghan and Hardey 2011)

	Considered ‘fat’	Not considered ‘fat’
Resist the aesthetic	<p>‘The Proud’</p> <p>(e.g. fat activists engaging in identity politics, working class men in the pub)</p>	<p>‘The Wise’</p> <p>(e.g. the critical dietician promoting HAES)</p>
Reproduce the aesthetic	<p>‘The Stigmatised’</p> <p>(e.g. a young man ridiculed by his peers and decides to join a fitness gym)</p>	<p>‘The Prejudiced’</p> <p>(e.g. the anti-obesity researcher)</p>

Beyond the ‘tragedy’ of obesity/fatness: Politicising and seeking to reduce structured stigma relations

- ◉ E.g. Reidpath et al
- ◉ Power, exploitation, oppression, discrimination
- ◉ A post-individualistic account of stigma
- ◉ Jigsaw model (Scambler 2006): overall picture; logics, relations, figurations (GBH, financialised capitalism, the Madoffized society)
- ◉ Ascribed deviance, achieved deviance, logics of shame losing ground to logics of culpability - fatness as a moral or ontological deficit?
- ◉ Scapegoating whole populations? ‘Weight stigma’ part of a bigger process? (O’Flynn et al. 2014)
- ◉ Strategies: operational, political, structural

FROM MICRO TO MORE MACRO SOCIOLOGICAL CONCERNS

- ◉ Distribution of goods in society
- ◉ Regulating this through entitlement to community membership
- ◉ Related to perceived social value
- ◉ The stigmatized are marked as unworthy of investment: related to social exclusion

(Reidpath et al. 2005)