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**Review of *Pressure Cooker: Why Home Cooking Won't Solve Our Problems and What to do About It* by Sarah Bowen, Joslyn Brenton and Sinikka Elliott**

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early periods) is “largely a white history” (p. 126) but devotes little attention to rectifying that history or even drawing out the implications of this blind spot.

In summary, Popple has bound together a thorough and useful history of the U.S. welfare state and its profession, social work. He does so through compelling narrative and with tremendous skill for drawing out the theoretical and philosophical lines that have shaped this development. It could easily be placed on the list of required reading for current professionals.

Ethan J. Evans  
California State University Davis

Sarah Bowen, Joslyn Brenton and Sinikka Elliott, *Pressure Cooker: Why Home Cooking Won't Solve Our Problems and What to do About It*. Oxford University Press (2019), 337 pages, \$16.96 (paperback).

This is a wonderful book! It talks about food in America—its procurement, its preparation, its personnel, and its problems. The data on which the book draws is a pool of semi-structured interviews with 168 women, mostly mothers and primary-care-giving grandmothers. Of that number, 138 were from poor- or working-class families, with the remaining 30 from middle- and upper-class families. They all live in Raleigh, NC and in two nearby counties. Additional material (research methods are detailed in an appendix) came from some 250 hours of ethnographic observations of 12 families from the low-income group. Nine of these families are featured throughout the book in the book in observational narrative form. The book is organized around seven “foodie themes”—You Are What You Eat; Deep Roots; Make Time for Food; The Family that Eats Together Stays Together; Know What’s on Your Plate; Shop Smarter, Eat Better; Bring Good Food to Others; and Food Brings People Together.

The overarching theme of the book is that of food insecurity, which is driven by several factors. One of these factors is gender. Most of all food organization, from purchase through prep to cleanup, is done by women. Men are present, sometimes appreciative, but (grilling aside, I noticed, and I must confess

to having an array of grilling spatulas) men are rarely helping. Since many of these women are also working, this creates what in Arlie Hochschild's famous phrase is called "the time bind."

A second factor, somewhat related to the amount of time is how that time is scheduled. Family members have different schedules and activities in the evening. Some families do shift work and other activities in order regularly to have the traditional sit-down dinner, but for most families, this is just not possible. A third driver of insecurity is budget. Families with low incomes are frequently forced to purchase second quality ingredients because they are cheaper. Foods with a short shelf life, like fresh fruit, are often more of a delicacy than a staple. Home cooks are often driven to processed options or to whatever is currently available at the food pantry. As one reviewer, Anahad O'Conner, cogently noted, the book argues that for those with limited time and money, avoiding processed food is extremely difficult.

An excellent chapter looks at the bigger picture of social policy, arguing that we as a nation should develop universal social supports, such as child allowances, that would act as a springboard to security. Instead, we tend to let each family fend for themselves. As does my 1998 book, *Do Americans Hate the Poor?* unfortunately, this book provides plenty of evidence for what can only be considered an aversion to the poor themselves and for helping the poor.

The book is very well written. This is a difficult achievement for a single author, but an all but impossible achievement for three authors working together. It is a work of massive scholarship as well, with a full 33 pages of references and citations. It is truly a model of community-based research, scholarship, caring and application. Bravo!

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