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*Thinking Sociologically about Sources of Obesity in the United States**

As medicine increasingly targets and identifies obesity as a disease, it is important for social and behavioral scientists to participate in the identification of obesity origins which exist outside of the immediate individual in question. While scholars in the medical arena often focus on proximate factors contributing to ill-health, distal factors can be critical sources of public health problems such as obesity. This essay will highlight important

The social origins of obesity discussed in this piece will include an examina-

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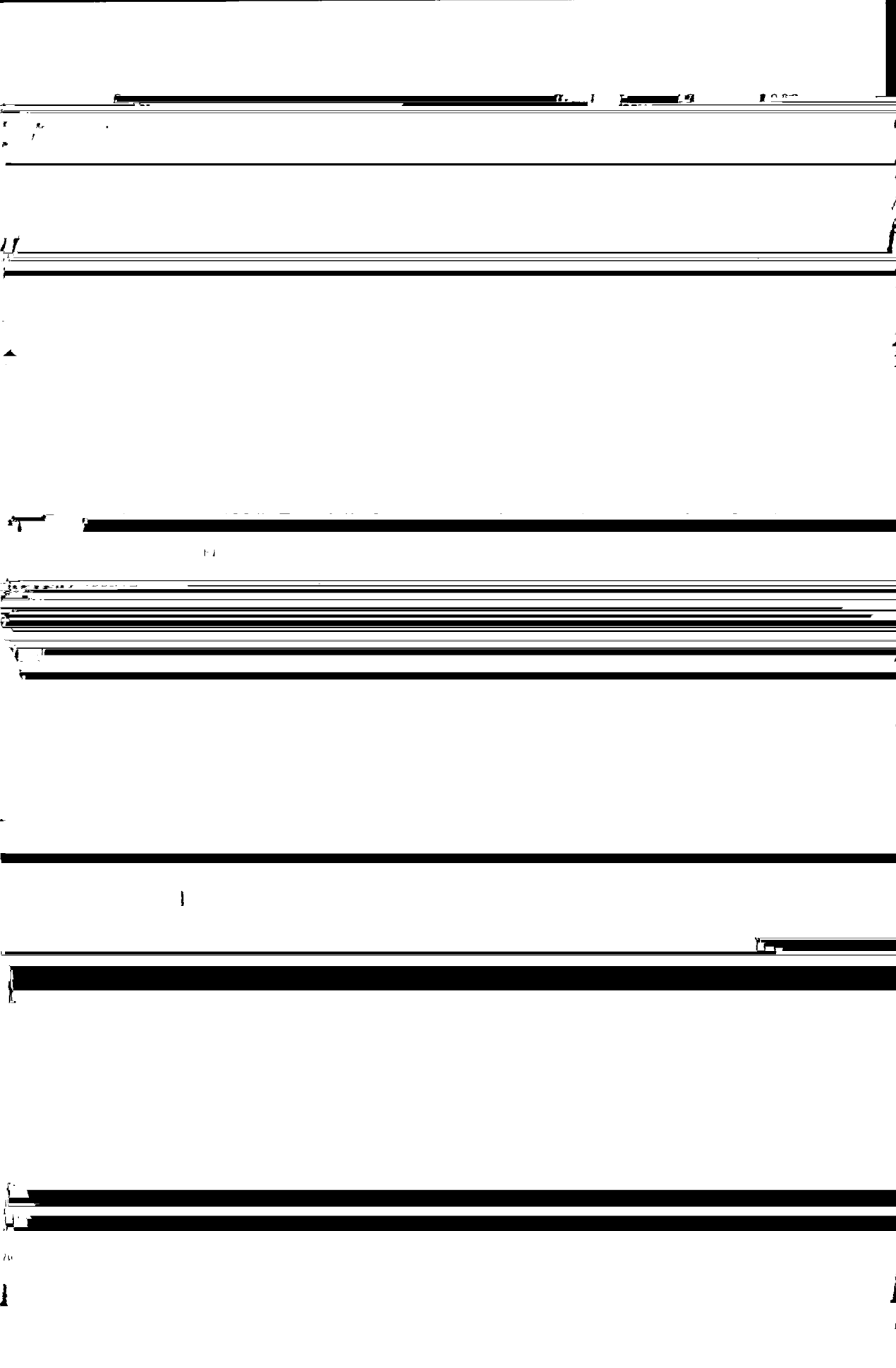
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TABLE 1
Overweight and Obesity among Persons 20–74 According to Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin:
United States, 1999–2000.*

	Percent of Population (standard error)	
	Overweight ¹	Obesity ²
Both Sexes ³	64.5 (1.5)	30.9 (1.6)
Male	67.0 (1.5)	27.7 (1.7)
Female	62.0 (2.0)	34.0 (2.0)
Mexican Male ⁴	74.4 (2.8)	29.4 (2.5)
Mexican Female	71.8 (2.5)	40.1 (3.8)
White Male	67.3 (2.0)	27.4 (1.9)
White Female	57.2 (2.7)	30.4 (2.3)
Black Male	60.3 (2.3)	28.9 (2.4)
Black Female	77.7 (1.9)	50.4 (2.8)

* Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics, National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, Hispanic Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 1999–2000.



mon mechanisms underlying some aspects of disease including obesity are social in origin.

Drewnowski (2003) has gone as far as to say “obesity in the U. S. and similar countries may be a socioeconomic, as opposed to a medical, problem that is related

and cannot easily be controlled, individuals are less likely to be held responsible

zine placed in the August 1983 issue, 75 percent said that they were “too fat,” even

stigma. Could this double burden increase or decrease the probability of improving health by reducing risky weight levels? To my knowledge, there is very little research on this question.

Where race is concerned, research suggests black self-acceptance among obese

Aljimo K, Olson C M, Frennilla Jr E A & Ronette P B. 2001. "Food Inefficiency Family

Parker, S. et al. 1995. "Body Image and Weight Concerns among African American and White Adolescent Females: Differences Make a Difference." *Human Organization*, 54: 103-14.

Ryan, C.F. 2004. "Overweight and Depression." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 25: 69-79.

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