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Review of *Seven Rules for Social Research*. Glenn Firebaugh. Reviewed by Yasuki Motoyoma.

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still feel uncertain about the future. One particular example highlights this point, Marglin's description of Dr. Cline, a surgeon making \$300,000 a year who continues to worry about retirement and college costs for his children despite being in the top two percent of US income earners.

The most significant weakness of Marglin's argument is that maybe community may not have disappeared, but simply morphed. In modern society we are parts of various overlapping communities of work, our children's schools, and our neighborhoods. Although these communities do not raise barns like the Amish, they tie our social and economic well-being together in ways that are not always easily recognized. Further, these communities are much more open than are communities defined by race, religion, or country of origin. This seems like an important feature of community functioning in the post-race ethos of the 21st century.

In general, *The Dismal Science* represents true outside the box thinking. The book is beautifully written, widely accessible and fun to read—it is highly recommended.

Christopher R. Larrison, *University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

Glenn Firebaugh, *Seven Rules for Social Research*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008. \$24.95 papercover.

Knowledge, science, construct, measurement, quasi-experiments, validity, and reliability...the list goes on. These are chapter titles in standard textbooks of research design. They are dry; they make sense to people who already know them, but hardly to those who study them for the first time. They function as references, by sections, but less as a book to read through to its end and a coherent guide to develop a research strategy.

In contrast, Firebaugh (2008) sends seven core messages about research design that academic researchers will remember. His easy prose draws on examples from a broad sampling of the social sciences: the 2000 Presidential election; foreign direct investment and economic growth; smoking and lung cancer; the happiness of working women vs. the happiness of

housewives. While most research design books introduce data lightly and leave the "Then, what?" questions hanging, Firebaugh's examples are interesting, substantial, and conclusive.

Unlike other highly positivistic textbooks, Firebaugh treats research as an organically evolving process and provides tips rather than standards. Each chapter is titled to deliver a message; for example, "Build Reality Checks into Your Research" (Chapter Three) and "Replicate Where Possible" (Chapter Four). He then describes common pitfalls in sampling or validity, and possible strategies to avoid them. The coverage, succinct explanation, and validity of those strategies demonstrate the author's breadth of knowledge.

Perhaps, the most important rule is the Chapter Seven, "Let the Method Be the Servant, Not the Master." Scholars often fall into the trap of learning a specific, sophisticated method, such as statistical estimation, and becoming overly enamored with it. Firebaugh underscores that methods can inadvertently and dangerously become the masters in practice when the "research is designed around the method rather than the method designed to fit the research (p. 207)." He introduces decomposition analysis and the incorporation of context effects in order to decrease dependence on regression and to highlight the cautious use of it.

While these strategic messages for research are helpful, some rules apply only to certain types of research. For example, Chapter One opens with the statement that "there should be the possibility of surprise in social research." While most will agree that research with surprising findings is a plus, some scholars seek to confirm arguments with evidence. For instance, the answer to the question of whether we have had more or less income inequality over the past 20 years can hardly yield a surprising finding because the answer will be 'more', 'less,' or on rare occasion, 'the same.' Nonetheless, this not-so-surprising finding will be important and have substantial policy implications.

Likewise, Chapter Two, "Look for Differences that Make a Difference," is a sound strategy for comparative research and regression analysis, which attempt to correlate the difference in the independent variable with the difference in the dependent

variable. However, such a rule does not apply to all types of research. For instance, in exploratory research the objective is to describe the structure of social phenomena. In other words, elaborations on good research are limited to specific types of research. Therefore, readers will be encouraged to let the seven rules be the servant, not the master of their research.

Firebaugh claims that the book is designed for upper-level undergraduates and graduates; however, many quantitative examples in the book require more than elementary statistical knowledge, of which undergraduates may have little familiarity. The book, and especially its chapter exercises, is most suitable for graduate students with an intermediate quantitative background.

The author states that the book is "to serve as a second methods textbook (p. xi)" in the social sciences. This is a modest statement. As long as students pursue the types of research that Firebaugh discusses, this should be among the first books introduced in the course of research design.

Yasuyuki Motoyama, University of California, Santa Barbara

Flavio Francisco Marsiglia and Stephen Kulis, *Diversity, Oppression and Change: Culturally Grounded Social Work*. Chicago, IL: Lyceum, 2008. \$49.95 paper cover.

Globalization is encouraging the proliferation of cultural diversity in the contemporary era. Culture has become a focus of the social work profession as diversity emerges as a key challenge for research, practice, and policy development. It necessitates a dramatic paradigm shift that calls for culturally grounded approaches. It is critical to understand how culturally grounded social work should be implemented in order to achieve positive outcomes for individuals, groups and communities with different culture heritages. In this book Marsiglia and Kulis explore the relationship between cultural diversity, oppression, and social change in the context of social work, and provide both a theoretical foundation and specific approaches for social work practice to take advantage of the strengths and resilience inherent in different cultures.

The book is organized into four parts. Part I provides an