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*On the Frontier of Adulthood: Theory, Research, and Public Policy.* Richard A. Settersten, Frank Furstenberg Jr. and Ruben G. Rumbaut. Reviewed by Sarah Taylor.

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Richard A Settersten, Frank F. Furstenberg Jr. and Ruben G. Rumbaut, *On the Frontier of Adulthood: Theory, Research, and Public Policy*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2008. \$29.00 papercover.

Early adulthood has been the subject of a body of rapidly developing research over the past decade. This period of life, broadly defined as the age of majority through the early thirties, has received increased interest in response to numerous social, economic, and demographic shifts that have altered the timing of marriage, childbearing, completion of education, and attainment of financial independence for many young people in post-industrial societies. Settersen, Furstenberg, and Rumbaut's edited volume on early adulthood is a significant contribution to this growing field.

Part One of the book provides an outline of the remaining chapters and an overview of key themes in early adulthood research, which would be helpful as an orientation to any beginning scholar in this area. Part Two features large national and international studies that present the experience of early adulthood across time and nations, as well as by sex, race, ethnicity, and immigration status. In Part Three, the chapters focus more specifically on early adulthood in the United States, exploring such themes as subjective feelings about when adulthood begins, substance abuse, social class, and education. Part Four consists of a chapter on three vulnerable populations of young adults (those leaving the child welfare, special education, and juvenile justice systems) and provides an in-depth discussion of policy implications drawing on the findings of the entire text.

The strengths of this text include its broad scope, use of rigorous, empirical research to explicate the themes, clear writing, and sophisticated grasp of the multiple perspectives necessary for understanding the changes in early adulthood over the past century. The numerous tables summarizing key study findings and index make the book a valuable resource for researchers experienced in this field, who can quickly locate the information needed for a literature review or lecture. The policy chapter that concludes the text is thorough and provides suggestions for strengthening institutions so that they

can better facilitate the transition to adulthood, particularly for those young people whose families lack the resources to support them through the lengthening transition. These suggestions include increasing the accessibility of the community college system, improving school-to-work transitions, creating family-friendly work environments, and developing better safety nets for young people at-risk of experiencing poor outcomes in the transition to adulthood.

As noted above, the text emphasizes large-scale studies, and though these are appropriate given the broad scope, more integration of young people's voices would be welcome for enriching the reader's understanding of the experience of early adulthood. A mixed methods study in the book that does this well is presented in Chapter 14, by Mollenkopft, Waters, Holdaway, and Kasinitz, which compares the educational trajectories of immigrant and native young adults in New York and New Jersey.

Despite this limitation, *On the Frontier of Adulthood* is highly recommended for students, researchers, and policymakers who are interested in the emerging field of early adulthood. It is comprehensive, yet readable, and would be an appropriate graduate course text, and a welcome addition to a more experienced scholar's library.

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Stephen A. Marglin, *The Dismal Science: How Thinking Like an Economist Undermines Community*. Cambridge, MA and London, England: Harvard University Press, 2008. \$35.00, hardcover.

Economists are the rock stars of the social sciences and appropriately, the opening supportive quote of Stephen Marglin's new book is provided by Bianca Jagger, the ex-wife of one of rock and rolls biggest stars. Marglin is best known for his 35 year old classic paper *What Do Bosses Do?*, which begins with the question: "Is it possible for work to contribute positively to individual development in a complex industrial society, or is alienating work the price that must be paid for material prosperity?" In similar vein, *The Dismal Science* broadly examines