2009


Qiaobing Wu
*University of Southern California*

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw

Part of the Social Work Commons

**Recommended Citation**

Available at: https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol36/iss3/18
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


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
introduction to the culturally grounded approach to social work. The concepts of cultural identity, race, ethnicity, and cultural diversity are carefully examined, followed by a discussion of culturally grounded knowledge, attitudes and behaviors in social work. Intersectionality, which refers to the multidimensionality and complexity of human cultural experiences resulting from the intersection of multiple identities, is introduced, with its implication for individual lives as well as social workers practice. Part II presents an overview of relevant theories and perspectives with an emphasis on diversity, inequality, and oppression. The review spans from classical theories of oppression, to theoretical perspectives that emphasize inclusiveness, and finally to contemporary applied social work perspectives that guide social work practice, research, and policy development. The authors end this part of the book by proposing a culturally grounded approach to social work which includes three key components: honoring narratives, integrating narratives in appropriate social and political contexts, and developing critical consciousness. Part III examines the racial, ethnic, gender and sexual orientation identities by placing the explanation of minority status and identity formation in social and historical contexts. It elaborates how these socially constructed identities intersect with each other and with other factors to influence the behavior of individuals as well as the way they are perceived and treated by others. Importantly, it discusses how social work practice can be informed by knowledge of the intersectionality of these identities. Part IV is the essence of this book: It first discusses various factors and aspects of clients’ cultures that should be considered as social workers develop culturally appropriate interventions. It then provides a comprehensive elaboration of the methods used in culturally grounded social work practice with individuals and their families, with groups, and with communities, followed by a discussion on how culturally grounded social work can be applied at the policy level and also in research and evaluation. Finally, this part addresses how globalization facilitates the development of a culturally grounded approach in social work.

Overall, the book provides a practical guide for both social work practitioners and educators to understand the culturally grounded approach and to apply this approach in their
practice. It conveys a strong message that culture, is essentially a source of strength and resilience. One of the salient strengths of the book is its efforts to place each concept in a real world context and to incorporate case studies throughout the text to illustrate these concepts. It presents a logical continuum from embracing diversity, to understanding the causes and mechanisms of oppression, and to proposing a culturally grounded social work approach that facilitates positive social change. Nevertheless, the case studies in the book are mostly characteristic of an American scenario. Considering that diversity and oppression are both global challenges, the book would have had broader relevance if the authors engaged readers in a discussion of how culturally grounded social work can be applied in different international contexts.

Qiaobing Wu, University of Southern California


Since the first surveys of poverty were undertaken in Europe at the end of the 19th-century, academic research into poverty has proliferated and a huge amount of information about its incidence, extent and effects has been accumulated. In addition, academics have devoted a good deal of attention to defining poverty and much of their research has been concerned with the development of poverty lines which purport to measure the proportion of the population experiencing material deprivation. Poverty line research has yielded a voluminous amount of quantitative data about poverty which has been amenable to statistical analysis and the formulation of hypotheses about the poverty’s correlates.

Although this research has been accompanied by in-depth qualitative studies based on interviews with poor people, these studies have not addressed what Stephen Pimpare believes to be a major drawback of academic investigation into poverty, namely the voice of poor people themselves. Even carefully designed ethnographic studies cannot provide an adequate vehicle for the expression of the authentic voice of poor people. Drawing on a wealth of documentary evidence, the author