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Discovering Successful Pathways in Children's Development: Mixed Methods in the Study of Childhood and Family Life. Thomas S. Weisner (Ed.).
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disorder (the chapter is built around whether one “has a mental disorder”), the chapter appeals to the fanatic in logic.

The call for a more critical perspective on mental disorders and mental health practice within social work has been appropriately loud and persistent for many years. The book continues that effort and often succeeds, as I have detailed above. It fails when criticisms of existing research read like methodological murder, with the ignorance of the continuum of research rigor and the fact that confidence in an intervention’s effectiveness is related to an analysis of plausible threats to internal and external validity as well as to logic and replication over time. It fails when a few underemphasize social work’s biopsychosocial lens and overstate its allegiance to a biological reductionism, now itself on the way out. It fails when a few convey an “us-them” mentality, when straw person arguments are set up, and when evidence of true change within the mental health and social work fields, are ignored. I look forward to the continuing conversation.

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Thomas S. Weisner (Ed.), *Discovering Successful Pathways in Children’s Development. Mixed Methods in the Study of Childhood and Family Life*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2005. \$35.00 hardcover.

Mixed methods, the use of both qualitative and quantitative techniques to answer research questions, has received greater discussions in academic and research circles. There is still a negotiation of how to be successful in using a mixed methods approach rather than using one methodology as an anchor and adding on the other methodology. Such a mixed approach can lead to better descriptions of pathways to successful child development. A pathway framework is organized around understanding everyday life for children and families within an ecological context—the individual subsystem in the context of the family system, the family subsystem within

the cultural system of values, beliefs and motives, and the community system that both affects and is affected by various subsystems. This volume brings the pathway framework and mixed methods approach together, providing examples from various scholars' research and evaluations of programs.

In the edited volume, studies designed to provide implications for creating services, policies and programs that will increase the likelihood of positive outcomes for children and families are presented. The book is divided into five sections. Section I focuses on classrooms, schools and neighborhoods. Section II examines ethnicity and ethnic development in childhood. Section III explores culture and development. Section IV examines mixed methods studies to better elucidate the effect of social programs on children. Section V looks at family intervention studies.

While each of the chapters in and of themselves are interesting, the commentaries in section II were thoughtful critiques and analysis of the chapters in that section. For example, William Cross, in his commentary of the studies presented by Deborah Johnson and Ruben Rumbaut, contrasts and scrutinizes their work in a manner that is fair, balanced but critical. Such a critical commentary in each section would have strengthened the book.

There are interesting and stimulating chapters found throughout the book. Until I read the first chapter in the section on culture by Tom Frickle, I didn't realize how much of my own international research and field work relied on mixed-methods survey-ethnographies. At the same time, the chapter was a general introduction to the issue and not specific to the issues of child development; the example used, while interesting, had little relevance to the topic. The commentary by Thomas Brock offers a concise guideline on the characteristics of successful mixed-methods projects; while not really a critique of chapters in this section, it was an insightful summary of issues in mixed-methods research.

The only caveat I have about the book was that I expected a full discussion of both the quantitative and qualitative data. Instead, the book emphasizes the qualitative component of mixed methods projects in most chapters. Two exceptions stood out. One was the chapter by Jeffrey King, Jeffrey

Liebman and Lawrence Katz that presents a nice integration of mixed methodologies in their study of fear in the "ghetto." The other was the chapter by Catherine Cooper, Jane Brown, Margarita Azmitia and Gabriela Chavira on Latino immigrant families.

I think the best way to make a summary about the book would be to see if I would have purchased it had it not been given to me to review. Since I lost the first complimentary book while traveling in Europe and used the library copy to conduct this review, I decided it was a book I would like on my shelf as a reference and purchased a copy. Any person interested in childhood studies and mixed methodologies could benefit from the book, the wisdom it has to offer, and the critical analysis that are found through out. It offers promise as a tool to stimulate cross-discipline discourse and research on the many policy, program, practice and research issues that affect the paths in navigating childhood successfully.

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