

unentbehrlich sind, und wichtige Werke über die Universalien werden nicht erwähnt, so z. B. pars pro toto die berühmten Forschungen von Françoise Héritier. Dem Anspruch auf Vollständigkeit steht entgegen, dass das Werk sich von vornherein auf den angloamerikanischen Raum und auf einen Teil des deutschsprachigen Raumes beschränkt. Auch besteht die Gefahr, dass der nicht in dieses Thema wissenschaftlich eingeführte Leser manches missversteht, denn viele der aufgeworfenen Fragen sind nicht nur im Hinblick auf die Erklärungen offen.

Dieses für Spezialisten wirklich sehr empfehlenswerte Buch ist allerdings auch – wie der Autor selbst meint – als “Vorarbeit” für eine größere theoretische Auseinandersetzung zur Universalienproblematik zu betrachten. Das Buch will Überblick und Richtung der Forschung zeigen: es liefert wertvolle Hinweise auf neuere Forschungen und einen Einblick in viele noch offene Fragen. Alles in allem ist es ein wichtiges und mutiges Buch.

Marie-France Chevron

**Axinn, William G., and Lisa D. Pearce:** *Mixed Method Data Collection Strategies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. 230 pp. ISBN 978-0-521-67171-2. Price: £ 15.99

Over the last decade, the field of anthropological demography has grown significantly. In the quest to overcome disciplinary boundaries the different methodological and theoretic perspectives of anthropology and demography have provided both challenges and opportunities. Sociologists William G. Axinn and Lisa D. Pearce’s book on “Mixed Method Data Collection Strategies” has to be situated within these recent interdisciplinary developments. The book is the fourth in a series on “New Perspectives on Anthropological and Social Demography,” edited by David I. Kertzer and Dennis P. Hogan. The book does not explicitly address readers with a background or interest in a specific discipline but rather aims at a general social science audience. However, since I am a social anthropologist by training I will review the book from an anthropological perspective.

The focus of the book is on data collection strategies. Issues of data coding and data analysis are purposefully left out. The authors expect the reader to be already familiar with the methods that are the building blocks of the different mixed approaches (xiii). The book’s eight chapters can be divided into three main parts: introduction (chapters one and two), examples (chapters three to seven), and conclusion (chapter eight). The first two chapters offer a general discussion on motivations for and design of mixed method data collection strategies. They are followed by five chapters that present various applications of method combinations. The examples in four of these five chapters are based on two long-term Nepalese research projects that have been conducted by one of the authors, William G. Axinn in cooperation with other researchers. The concluding chapter eight summarizes the advantages for using mixed method data collection strategies and briefly hints at new research

areas that would benefit from the application of this approach.

Although the authors expect readers to be familiar with individual research methods, they briefly review several methods in the first chapter, i.e., surveys, less structured interviews, focus groups, observation, and historical/archival methods, mainly using sociological literature. The authors encourage their audience to go beyond the qualitative/quantitative distinction by mixing methods. They point out that mixing methods, especially less structured and highly structured methods, offers opportunities to discover new causal linkages and hypotheses and then test these discoveries by looking at their distribution in a larger population. As the authors mention, this type of “method balance” is very similar to Denzin’s triangulation concept (25). Further, the authors discuss the many advantages of a researcher’s stronger personal and active involvement in the process of data collection. For social and cultural anthropologists Axinn and Pearce’s repeated emphasis on what they call “introspection” is nothing new. Anthropologists call it “participant observation,” a methodological framework which is central to almost all anthropological research. However, since everyday involvement is virtually absent in most demographic research significant parts of the book address and try to convince ethnographically noninvolved demographers and sociologists to acknowledge, combine, and use different types of methods and data collection strategies beyond the standard survey approach. In the second chapter key research design questions, e.g., which unit of analysis and what type of sampling universe to choose, are discussed in the light of the book’s general agenda to combine methods.

The following five chapters form the second part of the book. They offer detailed insights into possible method combinations and should be read as inspirations to further develop this important research agenda. The third chapter gives an example of the “micro-demographic community study approach” using data from the Nepalese Tamang Family Research Project. This project has compared two contrasting Nepalese communities. Highly structured survey methods, observations, and less structured interviews were combined. All methods were part of the same field research phase and were conducted by both leading field researchers and local field assistants. Although the team approach may be unusual for much anthropological research the overall research design and the results gained through a repeated, dialectic analysis of less and more structured methods are familiar to many anthropologists.

The fourth chapter offers a rather novel approach for anthropological research. This chapter’s method mix is labelled as “Systematic Anomalous Case Analysis” by the authors. The discussion is based on the Nepalese Chitwan Valley Family Study in which 5.271 persons were interviewed. Statistical analyses were used to discover deviant cases. Once these cases were identified, the actual providers of this data were revisited and reinterviewed with both less structured and highly structured methods. Although most anthropologists have in-depth

knowledge of “deviant” cases it is extremely rare that anthropologists discover these through statistical analysis and then go back to understand why the “cases” don’t follow a statistical norm. However, many anthropologists undertake long-term research and collect structured information, e.g., census data. This chapter might inspire some anthropologists to employ similar techniques.

The following chapters five and six exemplify two sides of one “method coin,” i.e., they present the same approach but vary the research phenomenon. The “Neighbourhood History Calendars” (chapter five) and the “Life History Calendars” (chapter six) are described as “new, single hybrid method[s]” (103). Both methods offer ways to capture past changes and innovations through retrospective interviews. Similar to chapter four, data from the Nepalese Chitwan Valley Family Study is used to illustrate the approach. People from 171 neighbourhoods were interviewed on the inauguration of different types of infrastructure, especially schools and health institutions. Data was elicited through a calendar which includes different categorizations of time (e.g., recorded in years, but also significant events like floods). This information was supplemented with expert interviews and archival records. At the end of the chapter the authors discuss how geographic information system technologies were used to analyse the spatial dimensions of change. This seems to be an especially interesting extension of mixed method data collection strategies that also many anthropologists might find promising. The “life history calendar” presented in chapter six follows the same logic as the “neighbourhood history calendars.” Here, the focus lies on capturing changes within individual life histories. This “hybrid method” works well to collect life history behavioural data, e.g., dates of births, marriages, and years in school. However, it is very problematic to elicit information on ideational phenomena, i.e., norms, attitudes, or beliefs (159).

According to the authors, research on such kinds of phenomena might be part of a “Longitudinal Data Collection” strategy, the last method mix of the book, discussed in chapter seven. In this chapter, the U.S. Intergenerational Panel Study is described. In this study a group of people born in 1961 and their mothers were “followed,” i.e., repeatedly interviewed, for 31 years. The main point of this chapter is that a long-term scope allows to include all of the other previously discussed method combinations into the research design.

Chapter eight concludes by repeating the many advantages of combining methods, especially less and more structured methods. In the brief discussion of “new frontiers in mixed method approaches” some further areas of application and innovation in mixed method research, e.g., the use of archival data and geographical information systems, are mentioned.

The book’s central message that combinations of methods lead to a much better understanding of social realities is laudable and important. Further, the five method combinations discussed in detail will certainly inspire future social research. Much more method mixing can be imagined! However, the book’s general

agenda would have been even more convincing with a closer look at anthropology’s many contributions to mixed method research. It is surprising that the work of anthropologist H. Russell Bernard is only mentioned in a brief footnote and that his book “Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches,” now in its fourth edition (Lanham 2006), is only mentioned in its first edition from 1988. Further, the journal *Field Methods* (Sage Publications; editor H. Russell Bernard), which offers a plethora of examples of mixed method combinations in each issue, is not mentioned at all. Maybe part of the academic energy invested into the emergence and establishment of a subdiscipline like anthropological demography has to be devoted into convincing the different fields of each others theoretical and methodological values. Axinn and Pearce have done this in an excellent and detailed fashion for demographers and sociologists who prefer to use large-scale surveys to collect data. However, an anthropologist’s account of the history and current applications of mixed method research within anthropological demography (and also beyond) still has to be written. For such an endeavour, Axinn and Pearce’s book will be a valuable inspiration.

Julia Pauli

**Bamford, Sandra** (ed.): *Embodying Modernity and Post-Modernity. Ritual, Praxis, and Social Change in Melanesia*. Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2007. 293 pp. ISBN 978-0-89089-476-7. Price: \$ 37.00

“This collection of essays considers the relationship between ritual, embodiment, and social change in the South Pacific,” according to its editor, addressing “two interrelated themes: (1) how has globalization and the rise of new social and economic forms influenced the way(s) in which Melanesians think about, experience, and act upon their bodies? and, (2) in what ways do these new forms of bodily experience contribute to the emergence of new social and cultural identities?” (3), themes echoed in an afterword to the book by Eric Hirsch (283–293).

Geographically, the book’s scope does not actually encompass “the South Pacific” and only just qualifies for the “Melanesia” of the book’s subtitle. Nine of the ten case studies included derive from fieldwork in Papua New Guinea, and the tenth – Lamont Lindstrom’s ruminations on a small personal collection of picture postcards which could have had almost any area of the world as their subject – only happens to concern Vanuatu. As for “ritual, embodiment, and social change,” most of the essays concern “rituals” to some degree, “embodiment” is a recurrent conceit if only in the sense that all human life involves the body in some way, and “social change” is a presumed driving force for the situations described by all of the authors.

Jerry Jacka and Thomas Strong explore the anguished reminiscences of Ipili and Upper Asaro men, respectively, about a past when initiation ceremonies ensured male growth and power, both now thought to be on the wane since the abandonment of such rites.