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Special examination bibliographies

Topic: Regional Systems

Area: North America

During the past four years my reading has been largely directed by my changing ideas about research interests, a current version of which is contained in my research proposal. This reading has been only sporadically systematic, jumping over the last two years from 'general systems' to 'ecology' to 'political economy' to 'geography', and lingering in each grove long enough to nibble at the boughs and make up a parcel to take along to the next. The bibliographies which follow represent a selection of the sources I have found most valuable in arriving at my present state, together with a number that I have looked at and put aside for future detailed study. Many of the sources are drawn from disciplines tangent to anthropology, but the whole bears upon the disciplinary concerns of anthropology, which I take fundamentally to be the understanding of the organization and operation of human populations. My approach to this general problem is 'social' rather than 'cultural' (a distinction I am hesitant to make on other than metaphysical grounds, but cf Barth 1966:12-21 and 1967), and is explicitly spatial, being concerned with ways of conceptualizing and comprehending patterns of the numbers and distribution of human populations (Andrewartha 1961:5).

Everything that anthropologists do may be seen to have a spatial aspect in that the population-units considered occupy and are distributed over space. Explicit concern with this distribution and its structure was central to the culture-area approach in American anthropology, which developed originally as a classificatory and mapping device, useable to 'explain' cultural differences and similarities. Emphasis was placed upon

accounting for the observed distribution of traits, both in terms of their origin (invention and diffusion) and in terms of factors which create boundaries between trait-areas (using primarily the notion of ecological limitation, eg Kroeber 1939). Human geography, which might have been an outgrowth of the culture-areas approach, did not develop as a scientific discipline within anthropology and (at least American) anthropologists have remained largely ignorant of theoretical developments within geography (which were, during the 1930s and 1940s, primarily European--eg, L6sch, Christaller, British geography): in 1956 Steward bemoaned "the absence of what might be called a basic 'area-study science'" while noting the "necessity...to conceptualize the total area and to devise methods for relating the subcultural group to it" (1956:27,26).

Cultural ecology, which may be identified historically as a significant outgrowth of the basic culture-area concern with "the economic and ecological factors that shape society" (Steward 1955:155), has remained until quite recently fundamentally a-spatial. Cross-fertilization with current work in plant and animal ecology (eg, Andrewartha 1961, Kormondy 1969, Levins 1968, Odum 1971, and E Mayr Animal species and evolution) and in archaeology has produced the notion that human populations may productively be viewed as adaptive units, arrayed over a landscape in hierarchically-related systems of interacting local populations, and collectively perduring (the notion of the niche) in an ecosystem which includes spatially-distributed natural resources and plant and animal populations. Exemplars of this general approach include Collier (forthcoming), Conklin (1963, 196), Geertz (1966) and Rapoport (Pigs for the ancestors, 1967).

If the insight of populations as adaptive units within natural, biotic, and social environments is to be extended to identification and mapping of levels of organization above that of the small community of peasants or shifting

cultivators, it is necessary to develop both theory and research methods to deal with the spatial organization and interrelation of human populations. Anthropology itself possesses no body of developed theory for the identification and analysis of levels of organization which integrate, eg, communities into such larger units as states and nations, or breeding populations into species, sub-species, etc. The need for such theory has frequently been stated (eg, Redfield 1955:28; Steward 1956:26-27), and one useful source --statistical geography and location theory-- has been identified by Skinner and applied to the analysis of marketing and urban systems (Skinner 1964-5); the current work of Carol Smith and Shel Anderson utilizes this explicitly regional and spatial approach, and it is toward the further development of this field that I am working. Specifically, my research is concerned with node-hinterland relationships (a somewhat understudied aspect of central-place theory) in the context of a rapidly-changing productive system. The unit of study is a region, tentatively delimited on the basis of physiographic characteristics, settlement pattern, and productive specialization (see my research proposal for details); the product is intended to include both description of the region as a significant unit of social organization and analysis of significant productive and demographic processes within the region.

A word is in order concerning the genesis of so disciplinarily omnivorous a beast as what follows: for the topic, new sources were drawn primarily from such excellent comprehensive bibliographies as Berry and Pred 1965, Chorley and Haggett 1967, Gregor 1970, Haggett 1965; bibliographic serendipity; haunting of sections of the library (primarily G*GF, H-HT, and the 330s); and following the Kent L Anderson Stochastic Method (which involves closing your eyes, turning around, and taking the first book touched from the stack shelves).

My approach to area reading has been primarily directed by topical concerns

and by the specific choice of Nova Scotia as a research site, and my area bibliography represents a selection of sources most relevant to these criteria. Unlike most areas in which anthropologists work, North America (and even Nova Scotia) has an almost sirful quantity of reliable data-sources, published and publically available: census data are excellent and highly detailed (though not without their problems); aerial photographic coverage, mapping, land records, and economic statistics are available as time-series (at least for the last 50 years); and scholarly work in a variety of disciplines has been both detailed and (if only because of the volume) of high quality.

In the table which follows I have attempted to specify the articulation of topical and areal interests, and so to provide a mapping of the bibliographies. Even given the proverbial difficulty of meaningful partition of bibliographies, my solution is not very satisfying. Categories tend to overlap conceptually in most unsightly fashion and the best items, those I have found most useful and payed the most attention to, often refuse to be confined to a single category; they accordingly may appear more than once. I have marked those on the topic bibliography key with an '*', more to indicate fondness than competence to discuss every aspect of each.