

# *The "Exotic" and the "Domestic": Regions and Representation in Cultural Anthropology*

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Regional scholarship is an enduring feature of cultural anthropology. But how does work from different regions compare in terms of published scholarship? This article offers some preliminary answers based on a longitudinal study of ethnographic articles in major English-language journals over the past seven decades. The dominance of North America in the early decades of the 20th century has given way to articles on more "exotic" areas, especially Oceania, Asia, and Africa. A preliminary explanation of this shift involves graduate programs and academic career paths that favor exotic and "pure" research in contrast to "domestic" and applied research.

**Key words:** regional scholarship, ethnographic representation, graduate programs, applied anthropology, North America

At the beginning of the 21st century, geographical regions—what used to be called culture areas—seem precariously wedged between the competing claims of the "local" and the "global." In a world of multisited ethnographies and global ethnoscares, regional expertise and even area studies programs seem somewhat anachronistic. After all, with Hindus in Houston, Tamils in Toronto, Samoans in the Rocky Mountains, and Japanese in São Paulo, of what relevance are traditional geographic regions? And yet for most of the last century, regional scholarship was an enduring feature of cultural anthropology. Most regions continue to have their own professional organizations and journals to promote scholarship. Indeed, employment opportunities for and the professional identities of almost all cultural anthropologists are closely linked to particular regions, probably to a greater extent than in any of the other social sciences.

Recently, several anthropologists have called attention to just how important regions have been in the development of cultural anthropology and how their influence has been largely unrecognized and understudied (Appadurai 1986; Thomas 1989; Fardon 1990; Gupta and Ferguson 1997). Regions have acted as boundary markers or "gatekeepers"

for the investigation of certain topics like exchange (Melanesia) or segmentary lineages (Africa). There is also a hierarchy of prestige in which fieldwork in some regions and cultures is more valued than in others. In their important edited volume, *Anthropological Locations*, Gupta and Ferguson (1997:12-15)<sup>1</sup> argue that the more foreign and exotic the location, the greater the prestige attached to the fieldwork. Conversely, the closer to home and the more domestic the field site, the less prestige.

If it is true that exotic, "grass hut" fieldwork abroad is viewed as more authentic than "subway" ethnography in North America, questions remain. Which regions are most significant? When did exotic fieldwork outside of North America become so important? And what has happened to those cultural anthropologists who work in North America? These were the questions that animated our research.

We found that in recent decades, Asia, Oceania, and Africa have become more visible than North America, the best represented region for the first seven decades of the 20th century. Institutional changes in graduate programs and employment opportunities favored this shift. But today, changes in graduate support and employment opportunities are leading to renewed interest in North America and applied work. Current graduate students may be caught between the academic prestige associated with exotic fieldwork and the professional reality of employment in applied anthropology at home or in nonacademic fields. Thus the study of anthropological locations has important implications for where and how fieldwork will be done, where it will be published, and where ethnographers will be employed. This article documents trends in regional scholarship and discusses some of their implications for exotic versus domestic research in cultural anthropology.

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## Method

Our inquiry began as the result of questions initially raised by one of the authors of the present study (Ehlers 1990), who examined the proportional representation of articles on Central America by cultural anthropologists in anthropology's general readership journals. As a result of that research, discussions with a number of ethnographers, and after reading the work of Appadurai (1986), Thomas (1989), and more recently Fardon (1990) and Gupta and Ferguson (1997), we decided to explore patterns of representation across regions. Because ethnographers tend to work with individual cultures in particular geographical regions, and because regional scholarship itself has become so specialized, we thought a comparative study of the representation of ethnographic articles over several decades might elucidate our broader questions about differences between regions. While some regions may be more valued than others in the abstract, when it comes to the concrete representation of fieldwork—that is, actual publications—the production of articles and monographs is critical because they are the final outcome of scholarly effort and editorial decisions. We chose to examine articles rather than monographs because, quite simply, ethnographers were more likely to publish them and because decisions by editors of journals often encourage trends in book publication.

This article is based on an analysis of articles by cultural anthropologists classified by regions of the world in major journals from 1930-1996. It is not a retrospective appreciation or assessment of the scholarly contributions of these articles, as important as they may be, but rather a comparison of regional representation to discern to what extent some areas are better represented than others and why. The article is a preliminary

inquiry that raises as many questions as it answers; it also provides some new data from which discussion can proceed.

We examined the regional representation of almost 4,000 major articles in cultural anthropology published in eight major English-language journals for seven time intervals: 1930-36, 1940-46, 1950-56, 1960-66, 1970-76, 1980-86, and 1990-96. The journals were: *American Anthropologist*, *Current Anthropology*, *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute/Man*, *American Ethnologist*, *Human Organization*, *Ethnology*, *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology/Journal of Anthropological Research*, and *Cultural Anthropology*. A study of citations of articles published in cultural anthropology indicates that these journals were among the most widely cited at the time we began gathering data (Rounds 1982), and it is for this reason that they were selected.<sup>2</sup> Although these journals are among the most widely read by anthropologists, they are English-language, primarily North American, publications and therefore represent only part of a wider universe of journals. We also did not use journals specializing in specific regions such as Oceania, Asia, Africa, or other areas because we were interested in journals where all areas could be represented.

The articles included in this study were major articles, not minor ones, comments, notes, or reviews. They were largely ethnographic in emphasis, involving the description, analysis, interpretation, explanation, and/or application of data from a single culture.<sup>3</sup> Typically, the authors of these major ethnographic articles had done fieldwork in the geographical region, although secondary analyses of ethnographic data were also included. Articles dealing primarily with linguistics, physical anthropology, and archaeology were not included nor were articles that were primarily theoretical or cross-cultural.

**Table 1. Major Geographic Regions Used to Classify Research**

|  |   |
|--|---|
| North America                              | United States and Canada  |
| Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean | Mexico, Central America above Colombia, and the West Indies   |
| South America                              | South America below Panama  |
| Oceania                                    | Australia, New Zealand, Polynesia, Micronesia, and Melanesia  |
| Africa                                     | All nations in sub-Saharan Africa south of Morocco, Algeria, Libya, and Egypt   |
| Asia                                       | All mainland nations from Afghanistan east to Korea, Indonesia, the Philippines, Taiwan, Japan, and the Asian cultures of the former Soviet Union (using the HRAF classification)       |
| Middle East                                | All nations of northern Africa bordering on the Mediterranean, extending from Gibraltar through Egypt, all predominantly Arab nations on the Mediterranean and Persian Gulf, and Israel |
| Europe                                     | Western and Eastern Europe including the non-Asian cultures of the former Soviet Union  |

The articles were grouped into eight major geographic regions using a classification similar to those employed by Chibnik and Moberg (1983:26) and Murdock (1983:ix), but with some minor differences (see Table 1). The coding of the articles for region and ethnographic content was cross-checked for accuracy, and there was a high degree of reliability.<sup>4</sup>

### The Expansion of Ethnography

The sheer number of ethnographic publications of all kinds, including articles, has expanded greatly over the last several decades, just as cultural anthropology itself has expanded (Rogge 1976). During the same period, regional productivity within this literature has changed. Both the expansion of the literature and its changing distribution are the result of several long-term trends. One important trend that helps explain the expansion of ethnography and changes in regional representation is that, from its inception in the 19th century, ethnography has responded to claims of territorial exclusivity or the "my people" syndrome (Stocking 1989). Ethnographers were not expected to replicate earlier studies of the same cultures as much as they were expected to produce *new* ethnographic work on different cultures (see also Harris 1968:285-289; Fried 1972:205). Stocking (1989:210-211) discusses this trend in his history of early professional anthropology:

Given the sense of urgency that has characterized ethnographic endeavor since the early nineteenth century, and the consequent commitment to the importance of "salvaging" the (presumed) pristine human variety facing obliteration by the march of European civilization (Gruber 1980), it is scarcely surprising that the ethnography of academic anthropologists tended to follow a "one eth-

nographer/one tribe" pattern. The number of aspiring anthropological professionals was far fewer than the number of unstudied tribes, and the methodological values of the new ethnography encouraged a "my people" syndrome.... But if the salvage imperative (and the ultimate vision of a comparative science of man) encouraged some academic ethnographers to work among more than one people, it did not encourage competition among academic ethnographers.

In the United States, ethnography moved from specialization in the salvage ethnography of North American Indians to the study of ongoing cultures across the globe. In Great Britain, early specialization in African tribal cultures under colonial rule also widened in geographical scope. Territorial exclusivity and the expansion that it spawned were coupled with other long-term trends, especially following World War II,<sup>5</sup> including: 1) the institutional expansion of higher education that increased employment opportunities for anthropologists; 2) improved overseas fieldwork opportunities and funding for cultural anthropologists; 3) long-term fieldwork as a major criterion for the Ph.D. in cultural anthropology; and 4) the expansion and intensification of the norm of publish or perish.

### Trends in Areal Representation (1930-1996)

Table 2 summarizes the regional representation of major ethnographic articles for six-year intervals over the past seven decades. Many of the trends in this table are readily apparent, especially those pertaining to the 1930s and 1940s. In those decades, there were fewer journals, fewer articles, and less regional diversity; North America easily dominated all regions with over half of all articles. World War II no doubt reduced ethnographic research and hence article

Table 2. Number of Major Ethnographic Articles by Region and Period

|                                    | 1930-36 <sup>a</sup> | 1940-46 <sup>b</sup> | 1950-56 <sup>c</sup> | 1960-66 <sup>d</sup> | 1970-76 <sup>e</sup> | 1980-86 <sup>f</sup> | 1990-96 <sup>g</sup> | Totals |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------|
| North America                      | 83                   | 119                  | 127                  | 161                  | 228                  | 157                  | 202                  | 1077   |
| South America                      | 6                    | 9                    | 14                   | 34                   | 85                   | 68                   | 84                   | 300    |
| Mexico, Central America, Caribbean | 8                    | 16                   | 21                   | 59                   | 96                   | 88                   | 107                  | 395    |
| Oceania                            | 38                   | 8                    | 43                   | 60                   | 82                   | 144                  | 140                  | 515    |
| Africa                             | 30                   | 18                   | 40                   | 103                  | 133                  | 131                  | 133                  | 588    |
| Asia                               | 15                   | 18                   | 50                   | 139                  | 126                  | 145                  | 191                  | 684    |
| Mideast                            | 1                    | 2                    | 6                    | 18                   | 26                   | 35                   | 43                   | 131    |
| Europe                             | 2                    | 5                    | 7                    | 31                   | 55                   | 77                   | 97                   | 274    |

<sup>a</sup> American Anthropologist and Journal of the Royal Anthropologist Institute only.

<sup>b</sup> AA, JRAI, Human Organization (1941-46) and Southwestern Journal of Anthropology (1945-46).

<sup>c</sup> AA, JRAI, SWJA.

<sup>d</sup> AA, JRAI (Man after 1965), HO, SWJA, Current Anthropology (1960-66), and Ethnology (1962-66).

<sup>e</sup> AA, Man, HO, SWJA, CA, Ethnology, and American Ethnologist (1974-76).

<sup>f</sup> AA, Man, HO, SWJA (now Journal of Anthropological Research), CA, Ethnology, and AE.

<sup>g</sup> AA, Man (and JRAI), HO, JAR, CA, Ethnology, AE, and Cultural Anthropology.

production for Africa and Oceania, which in the 1930s were already well represented. In the early postwar era, North America still held an edge, but other areas were increasing their scholarly contributions.

Then, in the 1950s, production of articles for all areas increased. The number of departments with Ph.D. programs in anthropology grew rapidly in the 1960s and 1970s, as did the number of Ph.D.s. There was also a corresponding rise in the production of journal articles in cultural anthropology as new journals such as *Current Anthropology*, *Ethnology*, *American Ethnologist*, and *Cultural Anthropology* appeared. In the 1960s and 1970s, North American scholarship continued to increase and diversify, including Native Americans and other American populations, while scholarship for all areas increased. In the 1970s, however, the dominance of North America in article representation peaked, and by the 1980s and 1990s, North America was contributing only about 20 percent of all articles. At the same time, Asia, Africa, and Oceania were reaching parity with North America articles published.

Findings from the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s are worth examining in more detail since they are the most recent and represent the full complement of journals. Table 3 presents the data for 1970-76.

Overall, there continue to be far more articles on North America than on any other area, and North America is the best represented area in four of the seven journals. Africa and Asia follow. But the area of Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean is not as well represented as might be expected given that it has been the location of much past fieldwork by American cultural anthropologists (Ehlers 1990).

A closer look at the distribution of articles by journal in Table 3 indicates the representation of North America is skewed by *Human Organization*—almost half of the articles on North America are found in this one journal, a trend that holds for the 1980s and 1990s as well. Since much applied anthropological work is by North Americanists, this is ex-

pectable, but one might argue that it reduces North America's broad scholarly impact. And this is not a minor point, since many applied anthropologists feel their subdiscipline is marginalized within the profession of anthropology (Hackenberg 1999:106). Indeed, Rounds's (1982) study noted that, of the major English-language journals publishing in cultural anthropology, *Human Organization* was less likely to be cited by others publishing in academic journals.<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless, when articles in *Human Organization* are omitted (see the far right column of Table 3), North America is still the best represented area, finishing first in three of the six remaining journals. But in total number of articles Africa and Asia now follow very closely.

For the interval 1980-86, the number of articles on North America declined both absolutely and relatively from the previous decade, as Table 4 demonstrates. North America still is the best-represented region overall, but it is now followed closely by Asia, Oceania, and Africa. The most notable change for this period is the dramatic rise of articles on Oceania, which ranks first in four of the seven journals for this interval.<sup>7</sup> If articles from *Human Organization* are not included (see far right column of Table 4), North America's position drops to fourth while Oceania, Asia, and Africa are at the top of the rankings, with Oceania ranking first in four of the six remaining journals.<sup>8</sup>

For the interval 1990-96, article productivity for North America increased, as Table 5 illustrates. And North America is first in four of the seven journals in number of articles published. Yet once again, if articles from *Human Organization* are not included, North America falls to fourth behind Asia, Africa, and Oceania.

### Regional Interest and Regional Representation

In the last two decades, Asia, Oceania, and Africa have surpassed North America in the number of articles in major

Table 3. Number of Major Ethnographic Articles by Journal, 1970-76

|                                    | AA  | AE | CA | JAR | Eth. | Man | HO  | Totals | Totals Without HO |
|------------------------------------|-----|----|----|-----|------|-----|-----|--------|-------------------|
| North America                      | 37  | 21 | 5  | 24  | 25   | 7   | 109 | 228    | 119               |
| South America                      | 10  | 11 | 2  | 19  | 22   | 6   | 15  | 85     | 70                |
| Mexico, Central America, Caribbean | 12  | 13 | 4  | 16  | 19   | 7   | 25  | 96     | 71                |
| Oceania                            | 9   | 6  | 3  | 8   | 25   | 26  | 5   | 82     | 77                |
| Africa                             | 24  | 12 | 6  | 19  | 16   | 41  | 15  | 133    | 118               |
| Asia                               | 14  | 19 | 7  | 15  | 28   | 27  | 16  | 126    | 110               |
| Mideast                            | 5   | 6  | 2  | 1   | 5    | 4   | 3   | 26     | 23                |
| Europe                             | 13  | 7  | 2  | 4   | 17   | 9   | 3   | 55     | 52                |
| Totals                             | 124 | 95 | 31 | 106 | 157  | 127 | 191 | 831    | 640               |

Table 4. Number of Major Ethnographic Articles by Journal, 1980-86

|                                    | AA | AE  | CA | JAR | Eth. | Man | HO  | Totals | Totals Without HO |
|------------------------------------|----|-----|----|-----|------|-----|-----|--------|-------------------|
| North America                      | 8  | 24  | 8  | 26  | 20   | 1   | 70  | 157    | 87                |
| South America                      | 5  | 23  | 7  | 9   | 10   | 7   | 7   | 68     | 61                |
| Mexico, Central America, Caribbean | 7  | 23  | 4  | 16  | 17   | 4   | 17  | 88     | 71                |
| Oceania                            | 12 | 42  | 3  | 11  | 30   | 41  | 5   | 144    | 139               |
| Africa                             | 4  | 33  | 5  | 19  | 25   | 33  | 12  | 131    | 119               |
| Asia                               | 8  | 39  | 5  | 23  | 19   | 41  | 10  | 145    | 135               |
| Mideast                            | 1  | 11  | 6  | 2   | 8    | 6   | 1   | 35     | 34                |
| Europe                             | 1  | 18  | 5  | 7   | 18   | 24  | 4   | 77     | 73                |
| Totals                             | 46 | 213 | 43 | 113 | 147  | 157 | 126 | 845    | 719               |

Table 5. Number of Major Ethnographic Articles by Journal, 1990-96

|                                    | AA | AE  | CA | JAR | Eth. | Man | Cult. Anth. | HO  | Totals | Totals Without HO |
|------------------------------------|----|-----|----|-----|------|-----|-------------|-----|--------|-------------------|
| North America                      | 20 | 28  | 5  | 21  | 6    | 6   | 16          | 100 | 202    | 102               |
| South America                      | 10 | 19  | 2  | 7   | 8    | 10  | 7           | 21  | 84     | 63                |
| Mexico, Central America, Caribbean | 9  | 19  | 0  | 6   | 20   | 6   | 6           | 41  | 107    | 66                |
| Oceania                            | 13 | 24  | 4  | 8   | 45   | 33  | 9           | 4   | 140    | 136               |
| Africa                             | 18 | 32  | 6  | 8   | 23   | 25  | 2           | 19  | 133    | 114               |
| Asia                               | 7  | 44  | 3  | 10  | 33   | 46  | 16          | 32  | 191    | 159               |
| Middle East                        | 4  | 10  | 0  | 2   | 4    | 7   | 5           | 11  | 43     | 32                |
| Europe                             | 13 | 33  | 3  | 3   | 8    | 21  | 6           | 10  | 97     | 87                |
| Totals                             | 94 | 209 | 23 | 65  | 147  | 154 | 67          | 238 | 997    | 759               |

journals if *Human Organization* is not included. Is this simply because the number of ethnographers in these regions has increased? What is the relationship between the number of cultural anthropologists working in a region and the number of ethnographic articles published in major journals for that region? Although we did not have a means of addressing these questions directly, two indirect measures were used.

One indirect measure examined the region of fieldwork for new Ph.D.s in cultural anthropology for the years 1970-1995 using every fifth year. The data on new Ph.D.s are drawn from *Dissertation Abstracts* and therefore do not usually include British, European, and other non-North American Ph.D.s, while the data on ethnographic journal articles do include non-North American authors. Since American-trained ethnographers dominate the article data set, cautious comparisons can be made. Table 6 presents some tentative but suggestive trends.

From this table it is clear that in the last 25 years, the percentage of new North Americanist Ph.D.s relative to other regional specialists has *increased* substantially; Asia is the only other region with a similar pattern. In absolute numbers, new North Americanist Ph.D.s more than tripled from 21 in 1970 to 76 in 1985 to 70 in 1995 (see Table 8). Yet, as noted above, the proportional North Americanist contribution in terms of major journal articles has *decreased* more than any other area (see Table 7). A pattern of greater-than-expected representation occurs for Africa, South America, and Europe, although to a lesser extent than Oceania, which is proportionally the most productive region in the 1980s and 1990s.

A second indirect measure of regional productivity reinforces these findings. We reasoned that the greater the percentage of self-expressed regional interest by faculty in academic departments, the more articles should be published on

Table 6. New Ph.D.s in Cultural Anthropology by Region of Specialization<sup>a</sup>

|                                       | 1970 | 1975 | Percent of New Ph.D.s |      |      | 1995 |
|---------------------------------------|------|------|-----------------------|------|------|------|
|                                       |      |      | 1980                  | 1985 | 1990 |      |
| North America                         | 20.8 | 30.8 | 37.5                  | 36.9 | 30.0 | 31.0 |
| South America                         | 9.9  | 9.4  | 7.3                   | 7.3  | 9.4  | 7.5  |
| Mexico, Central<br>America, Caribbean | 19.8 | 14.3 | 10.7                  | 11.0 | 10.7 | 11.0 |
| Oceania                               | 8.9  | 7.2  | 4.7                   | 6.8  | 5.0  | 2.6  |
| Africa                                | 13.9 | 11.7 | 9.5                   | 10.2 | 12.0 | 10.7 |
| Asia                                  | 16.8 | 15.7 | 16.4                  | 15.5 | 19.0 | 25.8 |
| Mideast                               | 4.0  | 3.6  | 3.9                   | 3.1  | 2.0  | 3.0  |
| Europe                                | 5.9  | 7.6  | 9.9                   | 3.6  | 10.7 | 7.5  |

Note: Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

<sup>a</sup> Source: *Dissertation Abstracts International. A, The Humanities and Social Sciences*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilm International. Volumes 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55.

Table 7. Regional Interests of Cultural Anthropology Faculty in Percentages<sup>a</sup> and Major Ethnographic Articles by Region

|                                       | Areal Interest (Percent) |         |         | Major Articles (Percent) |         |         |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------|---------|--------------------------|---------|---------|
|                                       | 1969-70                  | 1979-80 | 1989-90 | 1970-76                  | 1980-86 | 1990-96 |
| North America                         | 18.3                     | 24.7    | 26.1    | 27.5                     | 18.4    | 20.2    |
| South America                         | 11.7                     | 9.7     | 9.6     | 10.2                     | 11.4    | 8.4     |
| Mexico, Central<br>America, Caribbean | 11.4                     | 11.9    | 10.2    | 11.6                     | 10.3    | 10.7    |
| Oceania                               | 9.0                      | 7.3     | 9.2     | 9.9                      | 16.9    | 14.0    |
| Africa                                | 12.7                     | 14.2    | 12.7    | 15.9                     | 15.3    | 13.3    |
| Asia                                  | 24.4                     | 20.6    | 23.1    | 15.2                     | 14.6    | 19.1    |
| Mideast                               | 6.0                      | 4.2     | 3.2     | 3.1                      | 4.1     | 4.3     |
| Europe                                | 6.3                      | 7.1     | 5.8     | 6.6                      | 9.0     | 9.7     |

Note: Totals may not equal 100% due to rounding.

<sup>a</sup> Source: *American Anthropological Guide to Departments, 1969-70, 1979-80, 1989-90*.

those regions. Using faculty regional specialization as provided in the *American Anthropological Association Guide to Departments*, we took a sample of cultural anthropologists from one quarter of the programs listed for three time intervals and compared their self-defined regional interests with actual journal publications over the subsequent six years. The results are also presented in Table 7. Again, the same cautions that applied to data in Table 6 apply to Table 7.

Many of the trends in this table resemble those in Table 6. Interest by faculty members in North America has increased over the last two decades, but representation in major journal articles for this area has declined. Interest in Asia is also

higher than article representation. On the other hand, for the 1980s and 1990s, Oceania, Africa, and Europe have noticeably greater-than-expected representation in relation to faculty regional interest.

### New Ph.D.s Specializing in North America and Oceania

From the data just presented, we see that professional interest in North America has increased over the last three decades. Between 1965 and 1989, almost a quarter of the proposals funded by the National Science Foundation for

dissertation research in cultural anthropology went to North Americanists, more than any other region (Plattner and McIntyre 1991:207). The number of new cultural anthropology Ph.D.s studying North America increased substantially over the same interval, and the amount of fieldwork done in North America by professional anthropologists easily eclipses other regions (Howell 1990:52). A number of older cultural anthropologists, "having paid their dues elsewhere," are now conducting research in the United States (Trouillot 1991:19). Yet in terms of publication of major ethnographic articles in academic journals, North America is no longer the dominant region.

A closer look at Ph.D. trends for North America indicates an increasing proportion of ethnographic work on North American groups such as women, minorities, and other subcultures rather than traditional Native American groups. Table 8 presents data on new Ph.D.s in cultural anthropology studying indigenous North Americans in contrast to other North Americans for selected years during the past three decades; Oceania is used for comparison. From this table, it is clear the number of new Ph.D.s studying "other" North Americans grew very rapidly from the 1970s through the 1980s. Although proportionately fewer new Ph.D.s studied Native North Americans, those numbers also grew. Compared to new Ph.D.s studying Oceania, those studying indigenous North Americans *alone* outnumbered all Oceanist Ph.D.s; all North Americanist Ph.D.s generally outnumbered the Oceanists by a ratio of more than four to one since 1970. Yet, North Americanists are relatively underrepresented in academic journals while Oceanists are overrepresented. Why?

Perhaps the most obvious answer is the career paths of these new Ph.D.s. The career paths for many new North Americanist Ph.D.s are not in academia but rather in applied anthropology and/or in other nonacademic employment. While this may also be true to some extent for new Oceanist Ph.D.s., it is less so. They are more likely to enter academia where there will be pressure to publish in academic journals. For applied anthropologists and those working outside of academia, publication in academic journals is a lower priority. Thus one possible explanation for differential regional representation may lie in the structure of graduate training and employment opportunities following receipt of the Ph.D.

## Scholarly Productivity and Institutional Support

We thought ethnographers trained in more elite or established academic graduate programs by professors in their own exotic regions would be more likely to receive more academic support for research abroad, would be more likely to be subsequently employed in academic departments, and more likely to publish in academic journals. Conversely ethnographers trained in applied or less-established programs would receive less academic research support and would be more likely to do research at home; they would subsequently be employed outside academia in applied work or nonacademic careers. Although the changing nature of graduate programs and employment opportunities over the last three decades makes this hypothesis difficult to investigate, there is circumstantial evidence to support it.

Since about 1960, there have been major changes in graduate programs and employment opportunities for cultural anthropologists as applied anthropology has emerged as an important field in graduate education and in the job market. New Ph.D. programs and the changing nature of employment opportunities for cultural anthropologists have contributed to the development of a two-track system of training, employment, and publication. The academic track tends to be based in established and elite departments.<sup>9</sup> In training its graduate students, the academic track emphasizes field training abroad, employment in academia, and publication in academic journals. A less academically oriented track is often based in newer, less-established, less-elite schools. In training its graduate students, this track often leads to applied or nonacademic employment which has provided jobs for one-half or more of each new Ph.D. cohort since 1986 (Fluehr-Lobban 1991:5). Fieldwork for this less academically oriented track is more typically in the United States, with publication in applied outlets and/or contract reports. And as van Willigen (1986:17) notes, "applied anthropology tends not to be published in traditional formats and therefore exists primarily as a 'fugitive literature'."

While these tracks are not mutually exclusive and often exist within the same department, the different trajectories that graduate students take as a consequence of these different

Table 8. Number of New Ph.D.s in Cultural Anthropology Specializing in North America and Oceania

|                                  | 1960 | 1965 | 1970 | 1975 | 1980 | 1985 | 1990 | 1995 |
|----------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Ph.D.s on Native North Americans | 5    | 6    | 15   | 31   | 16   | 12   | 15   | 23   |
| Ph.D.s on Other North Americans  | 1    | 6    | 6    | 35   | 71   | 64   | 56   | 47   |
| Ph.D.s on Oceania                | 2    | 2    | 9    | 16   | 11   | 14   | 12   | 6    |

Source: *Dissertation Abstracts International. A, The Humanities and Social Sciences*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilm International. Volumes 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55.

emphases make it easier to understand what has happened to regional representation in published journal scholarship. After World War II, fieldwork opportunities increased overseas, and academic employment increased in the U.S. as colleges and universities expanded. Increased funding for anthropological research facilitated fieldwork abroad and led to a "golden age" of anthropology in the 1960s. Ethnographic experience outside North America became a major criterion in academic employment.

During the 20-year interval between 1955 and 1975, new Ph.D. programs developed rapidly, and many offered applied training. In 1955 there were only 20 universities in North America with Ph.D. programs in anthropology (Thomas 1955:700), and most of these programs were, and continue to be, primarily academic in orientation. By 1975 there were 87 Ph.D. programs—more than a four-fold increase in 20 years. Today there are 93. However, by the 1970s, demographic changes and tightening budgets reduced employment opportunities for anthropologists in academia (Fried 1972:209; D' Andrade et al. 1975; Fluehr-Lobban 1991:5-7), and overseas fieldwork opportunities in some regions were becoming restricted. The criteria for academic employment, promotion, and tenure tightened, with an emphasis on academic publications (Fried 1972:226) and research grants.

Although Ph.D.s from elite and established programs could be employed in either the academic job market or the emerging nonacademic job market, these Ph.D.s were not only more likely to be employed inside academia, but they were also more likely to be hired by elite departments. Hurlbert's study (1976) of hiring patterns by older (elite) departments and newer (nonelite) departments demonstrated the existence of a two-tiered system of employment within academic anthropology in which elite departments hired proportionally more Ph.D.s from other elite schools. Bair, Thompson, and Hickey (1986) confirmed this pattern for the 1980s, and more recently, Rabinow (1991:66) reported that: "A survey of the American Anthropological Association's *Guide* reveals that of the approximately 140 members of the Chicago, Berkeley, Harvard, Michigan, and Columbia departments, only two have degrees from universities below the top ten ranked departments (and their foreign equivalents)—one from Utah and one from Boston." This system also had implications for professional training, funding of fieldwork, the location of fieldwork, and journal publications.

Gupta and Ferguson (1997:14) report that: "A quick survey of ten top American departments of anthropology reveals that only 8 anthropologists (out of a total of 189) claim a primary specialization in the non-native United States." Elite and established schools may be less likely to train future North Americanists, because they have more, and more appropriate, personnel for training graduate students for fieldwork abroad. These Ph.D. programs are typically much larger in sheer numbers of faculty than newer Ph.D. programs.

We took a sample of 10 elite Ph.D. programs and 10 newer Ph.D. programs for comparison in the years 1979-80. The

elite programs had, on average, twice as many faculty members and therefore more Asianists, Africanists and Oceanists than the newer programs. For example, whereas a newer graduate program might have one Oceanist, elite schools like Michigan and Chicago had four and five each respectively, and the elite schools averaged more than one Oceanist per department. Thus, graduate students who chose to work abroad had more faculty resources to draw upon at elite and established schools.

In terms of publications, Ph.D.s from elite programs were more likely to publish in the top academic journals. For example, between 1980 and 1986, slightly over 50 percent of the major articles in cultural anthropology in the *American Anthropologist* were by anthropologists trained or employed at the 15 elite schools (as defined in Plattner, Madden, and Hamilton [1987]), although the numbers of cultural anthropologists trained and employed in these schools was at that time far lower than 50 percent of the profession. Conversely, Ph.D.s from newer programs and those specializing in applied anthropology were less likely to publish in the top journals because they were not going into academia, or if they were, they were teaching in smaller universities and colleges and/or community colleges where there was less pressure to publish in purely academic journals. Thus, since 1975, over 30 percent of new Ph.D.s in cultural anthropology have been North Americanists, but between 1980 and 1986 only 18.4 percent of ethnographic articles in the major journals we reviewed were by North Americanists and, for 1990-96, the percentage was only slightly higher at 20.2 percent.

The same pattern can be found to some extent in academic grants. Plattner, Hamilton, and Madden (1987) found that although a greater number of National Science Foundation grants in cultural anthropology went to North America than any other single region, the overall success ratio of proposals funded to proposals submitted was lower than expected compared to other regions (1987:859). They comment that:

North American proposals may have a lower success ratio because their geographical focus may tend to be less justified than others. Reviewers often criticize proposals for not saying explicitly *why* the research question is best advanced in the proposed field location (in North America, often the researcher's convenient home area). (1987:859)

A decade later Mastriani and Plattner found the same pattern of greater numbers of submissions but less funding success for North American proposals (1997:124). However, this study also found that there was no difference in the success rate for proposals from elite versus nonelite schools, although elite schools had more resources (including research release time) and research proposal support, and could put more pressure on individuals to be active in research. Nevertheless, institutions with faculties of 25 or more members did have a significantly higher rate of funding success than smaller departments, including funding for dissertation research (Mastriani and Plattner 1997:124).<sup>10</sup>



In summary, elite and larger, more-established schools were more likely to have more faculty, more faculty specializing in overseas regions, somewhat more success in obtaining research funding, and were more likely to hire new faculty from similar departments. Their faculties and graduate students were more likely to publish in academic journals on their fieldwork overseas, whether in Oceania, Asia, Africa, or elsewhere. Thus, institutional trends within graduate programs and employment opportunities outside of academia over the last several decades, as well as the status and size of graduate programs in anthropology, may have played an important role in determining where fieldwork was done, what people wrote, where they published, and where they were employed.

### Conclusion

Where ethnographers do fieldwork is important because membership in the professional subdiscipline of cultural anthropology is, to a large extent, fieldwork dependent. The principle of territorial exclusivity in fieldwork is still very much part of academic anthropology. Culturally unique ethnographic fieldwork continues to be rewarded. As Moffat (1989:1) has commented, in academia, "your professional prestige depends on how distant, exotic, and uncomfortable your fieldwork is."

In academic anthropology, ethnographic contributions do seem to be evaluated in terms of an amalgam of purity and danger—geographic distance, cultural difference, and physical suffering endured during fieldwork, or some combination of the three, as well as theoretical currency. This is not so much the case in applied anthropology. If this logic is correct, those areas more difficult to work in, and where ethnographers are more likely to work alone, may yield the greatest prestige and, in conjunction with the candidate's graduate department and theoretical orientation, perhaps a greater likelihood of being hired in academia where the individual will be under more pressure to publish in academic journals. According to Howell's detailed quantitative study of fieldwork, Africa, India, and the Pacific are the areas with the highest levels of field hazards (1990:183) and the areas where anthropologists are most likely to work alone (1990:53). In this context, perhaps it is not surprising that Oceania, Asia, and Africa have gained ground relative to North America in academic journal articles, confirming the conventional wisdom that has long held that applied work in North America is viewed less favorably than overseas ethnographic work by academic anthropologists (Foster 1969:131-152).

Our preliminary quantitative inquiry into which regions are better represented in academic journals and, by implication, most valued in academia has shown that exotic regions such as Asia, Oceania, and Africa have eclipsed North America, even though North America is the most common site of fieldwork for new Ph.D.s in cultural anthropology, and even though more cultural anthropologists list North

America as their geographical region of interest than any other. Moreover, even as interest in North America has increased, its proportional representation in academic journals has declined.

If there is greater academic value attached to exotic fieldwork, for new Ph.D.s the choice of region may pose a professional dilemma because, while academic prestige may accrue to exotic fieldwork, a primary job market for cultural anthropologists is outside of academia and inside North America. Since 1985, this trend has fluctuated. In 1995, 28 percent of all new Ph.D.'s in anthropology were finding employment in applied anthropology or in nonacademic careers (Givens, Evans, and Jablonski 1997:5). Those finding academic employment may not find job security, since 66 percent of the American Anthropological Placement Service's academic positions in 1995 were nontenure track (Givens, Evans, and Jablonski 1997:11). Given the job market, most graduate advisors seem to be recommending that new Ph.D.s prepare for both academic and applied markets, even if they prefer the academic market, and that they get some training in applied research in North America or applied work abroad.

The average new Ph.D. in anthropology is 39 years of age and, due to fewer fellowship opportunities, will have been fortunate to conduct fieldwork abroad (Givens, Evans, and Jablonski 1997:3). Should this student, whose resources may already be stretched, conduct additional applied work to be more marketable? Should there be more courses offered in graduate curricula to prepare new Ph.D.s for the employment realities that they face? Should elite and established departments provide more opportunities for applied training at home? Can they do so? These questions reflect a combination of demographics, limited resources, and changing employment opportunities that may alter peoples' lives as well as anthropology's future.

For applied Ph.D.s this is not a dilemma, but applied anthropologists comprised only 12 percent of all new Ph.D.s in 1996-97 (Givens, Evans, and Jablonski 1997:1). For those new Ph.D.s in cultural anthropology whose goal is academic employment, the potential conflict between the prestige of exotic fieldwork and academic journal publication, and the realities of a job market that may not value them, may take them to a professional crossroad for which they are not well prepared. This predicament, recognized since the 1980s, reinforces how important the choice of regions, as well as topics, may be for professional careers in cultural anthropology.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup>The use of the terms "exotic" and "domestic" is clarified by Gupta and Ferguson, who argue that gatekeepers continue to use exotic fieldwork as a standard for funding, jobs, and status in anthropology. They point to persistent fieldwork hierarchies that emphasize research in an "isolated area, with people who speak a non-European language, lived in 'a community,' preferably small, in authentic, local dwellings—while others have less pure field sites and thus are less fully anthropological" (1997:13).

<sup>2</sup>Garfield (1984) offers a somewhat different ranking.

<sup>3</sup>The renewal of interest in "ethnography" raises important questions about the nature of ethnography. However, the topics of writing ethnography, experimental ethnography, ethnographic method, and related matters are beyond the scope of this article. We are using the term "ethnography" in a broad, inclusive, and easily recognizable sense.

<sup>4</sup>We recognize the arbitrary nature of these classifications and the importance of questions raised about how "real" these regions are (Thomas 1989; Anderson 1998:8-12). For example, might the region of Asia be better viewed as three regions: East Asia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia? These questions are beyond the scope of our inquiry.

<sup>5</sup>For a discussion of the consequences of Cold War area studies on anthropology, see Wallerstein (1997).

<sup>6</sup>See Stoffle (1982, 1983) and Rounds (1983a, 1983b) for exchanges on this point. The diluting of *Human Organization's* impact on the field (as Rounds measures it) is, to some extent, understandable given the cross-disciplinary nature of its authors. A rough count of authors of major articles in this journal indicates a significant number of nonanthropologists. During the 1990s, for example, nonanthropologists accounted for up to half of total authors.

<sup>7</sup>One representational problem with articles from Oceania during this period was the Mead-Freeman controversy which generated a large number of articles about Samoa. For this study, none of these articles were included. Also not included were primarily theoretical articles such as Sahlins's "Other Times, Other Customs...." (1983) and Keesing's "Conventional Metaphors and Anthropological Metaphysics...." (1985), although they draw heavily on Oceanic material. The inclusion of such articles would have increased Oceania's representation during the 1980s, perhaps more so than other areas. Representation of Oceania is also interesting in the context of several additional publication outlets for cultural anthropologists working in the South Pacific, i.e., *Oceania*, *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, and *Pacific Studies*. Of course, other regions may also have equivalent outlets.

<sup>8</sup>The same finding holds when articles from *Man* (now *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*) are omitted. As a British journal with many articles on Oceania, Asia, and Africa, *Man* might be expected to bias the findings. However, for 1980-86, omission of articles from *Man* does not significantly change the rankings, although the magnitude of difference between areas is smaller. These patterns across different journals are significant precisely because each journal has its own identity and editorial policy.

<sup>9</sup>For listings of elite departments, see Hurlbert (1976); Bair, Thompson, and Hickey (1986); Plattner, Hamilton, and Madden (1987:864) and Goldberger, Maher, and Flattau (1995). For established departments, see Chibnik and Moberg (1983:28).

<sup>10</sup>Mastriani and Plattner (1997) suggest that the elite ranking of a program may not be as important an indicator of senior-level grant success as the size of program. This statistical correlation may be somewhat misleading. An examination of the elite programs on Plattner and McIntyre's list (1991) shows that most (12 of 15) are also large (more than 25 faculty). Thus, by either standard, these programs may have somewhat of an edge.

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