

Bohannon P. *Social anthropology.*

New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963. 421 p.

[Northwestern University, Evanston, IL]

This textbook of anthropology starts with the social dimension and covers the cultural dimension of societies, focusing primarily on family and kinship, government, and economics. [The *Social Sciences Citation Index*® (SSCI)® indicates that this book has been cited in over 110 publications since 1966.]

Paul Bohannon
Office of the Dean
Division of Social Sciences
and Communication
University of Southern California
Los Angeles, CA 90089-4012

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Just before and just after World War II, I got a thorough grounding in American anthropology from Emil Haury,¹ Edward Spicer,² and the rest of the department at the University of Arizona. I knew what a culture pattern is (an early anthropological term for "model"). I knew the distribution of the digging stick in South America, and I knew how far the lower left incisor of the female chimpanzee rises above the gum. Then, in 1947, I went to England for graduate work with E.E. Evans-Pritchard³ and Meyer Fortes.⁴ British anthropology, in those days, was the finest in the world. The British had discovered two important points: (1) that French sociology spoke directly to their endeavor and (2) that when a field worker learns a language, he must learn to speak it, not just to take some texts or to check an interpreter.

What with a lectureship at Oxford and 3 years in Africa, it was 10 years before I got back to the US. For the first time, I was in a context in which I had to see how it all hung together. The challenge was obvious.

During three years at Princeton, I wrote out two lectures a week (before the days of the computer—or even the Xerox machine). Obviously I didn't read them as I lectured, but my English habits said that one wrote out one's lectures to be used as a first draft.

By the time I got to Northwestern University and its Africa program, I had a wad of lecture materials. I had not set out to write a textbook—I had set out to get my head straight (which may be the best advice one could give anyone who sets out to write a textbook). But I needed a textbook. So for some three years, my students helped me get those lectures into readable shape. I never did a subsequent edition of this book. My excuse was—and is—that I was too busy with work I enjoyed to stop and make a career out of a textbook.

Parts of the book are badly dated today. The material on color words came before the major work on that topic and is simply wrong, the material on culture and personality is old-fashioned, and the section called "The Other Side of the Frontier" did not have the advantages of what we today know about economic development. Other parts of it were never much good (especially chapters 18 and 19, on religion, a topic that bores me).

But parts of it I still stick by. The material on kinship, family, household, divorce, contract, inequality, and institutions needs updating, but no great change, in my view.

If I were to write a book of this sort today, it would be about social process, not just about structure and culture as this book is. The time dimension is, I am convinced, the anthropological frontier. I am only just beginning to return to old ideas of culture pattern. Process models are the next phase.⁵

1. Haury E W. *Mogollon culture in the Forestdale Valley, east-central Arizona.*

Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1985. 454 p.

2. Spicer E H. *The Yaquis: a cultural history.* Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1980. 393 p.

3. Fortes M & Evans-Pritchard E E, eds. *African political systems.*

London: Oxford University Press for the International African Institute, 1948. 302 p.

4. Fortes M. *The dynamics of clanship among the Tallensi: being the first part of an analysis of the social structure of the Trans-Volta tribe.* London: Oxford University Press for the International African Institute, 1945. 270 p.

5. Bohannon P. Some models for planning the future. *J. Soc. Biol. Struct.* 7:37-59, 1984.