

and geographic phenomena of black return migration in human context.

Stack's humanistic approach is most effective where she considers the larger theoretical issues involved in return migration. Making creative use of Harvey's *Condition of Postmodernity* (1989), Stack speculates that black return migrants are reacting to postmodernity in their return to the rural South. The author notes that as urban postmodernity alters experiences of time and space, returnees may be searching for community and local attachment in their southern homeplaces. Stack deals with this issue in a brief segment of the book, and I believe that she could have expanded on it without taking away from her intimate personal portraits.

Although Stack might have given more attention to the theoretical underpinnings of ethnography and critical social theory, this work clearly shows that she is a first-rate anthropologist and ethnographer. In the course of her storytelling and narrative, the author reveals the smallest and most profound nuances that can only come from keen observation and close contact with her informants. Nevertheless, a work such as this would benefit from a short account of her ethnographic method and her views on its limitations. In her 1974 book, *All Our Kin*, Stack introduces the problems inherent in ethnographic research and her problems as a white woman studying the African-American community. She might have considered including in the present work her

insightful summary of the ethnographic dilemma in that book.

Call to Home is a success on two levels. First, Stack has considered the individual migrant as more than a census listing. Rather than discussing black return migration solely in the language of numbers, she places this spatial process in terms of human agency. She implies correctly that people move, not statistics; people decide, not long-wave economic cycles. Her second success is methodological. Stack shows that scholars can develop human studies that are valid both in historical perspective and in their evocation of human experience. Ultimately, *Call to Home* echoes the plea of Stack's fellow anthropologist Miles Richardson that someone in academia must witness to what he calls "the human myth" (Richardson 1974: 530).

Key Words: African-American, American South, return migration.

References

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Settlement Ecology: The Social and Spatial Organization of Kofyar Agriculture. Glenn Davis Stone. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1996. xv and 256 pp., maps, tables, photos., graphs, app., notes, refs., and index. \$47.50 cloth (ISBN 0-8165-1567-0).

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What makes a place? And, to paraphrase Anthony Giddens's adaptation of Karl Marx, how do farmers make their own geography? This cultural geographic question demands precision for a scientific understanding of the nature of settlement patterns and how they change. Seeking to establish a theoretical base drawn notably from work in geography, anthropology, archaeology, and agricultural economics, *Settlement Ecology*, by Glenn

Davis Stone, offers refreshingly new insights on frontier agrarian settlement dynamics. Under what conditions are farmers likely to live together in communities as opposed to being scattered over the rural landscape in farmsteads surrounded by fields? The questions require consideration of multiple factors. By recognizing the central role of agricultural production for rural communities, *Settlement Ecology* weighs the roles

of labor organization, access to natural resources, and farmers' soil-fertility management in the process of settlement formation.

The analysis draws from empirical data collected in the Benue River basin of central Nigeria. From the Jos Plateau, the Kofyar people have, in the last fifty years, colonized an agricultural frontier on plains to the south and established the settlement pattern meticulously measured and analyzed in *Settlement Ecology*. Stone's research builds on that of the late anthropologist Robert McC. Netting, his teacher and collaborator, who conducted extensive ethnographic work in Kofyar country. This is a case study that Stone likens to a laboratory of settlement development. The mid-twentieth-century Kofyar moved to an elephant-inhabited plain with few people and began to create settlement as they farmed.

The first three chapters raise questions linking where people settle with the way they manage land and organize labor for agriculture. Seeking a theoretical framework to understand causality in agrarian settlement, Stone begins with the notion of land-use rings around settlements, first described by von Thunen in 1826. From debate on von Thunen's rings, Stone defines the key concept of "proximity-access": "the greater one's need to access any landscape feature, the greater the premium on residing near that feature" (p. 14). Landscape features influence, but do not determine, settlement location. Farmers seek to enhance agricultural production at a given location. The social organization of this endeavor is thus essential to the spatial arrangement of settlements. Walter Christaller's (1966) Central Place Theory, concerned with the size, number, and distribution of settlements, neglects the social organization of agrarian settlements. Coining the term "settlement ecology" to build on Central Place Theory, so that social and economic processes such as labor recruitment can be linked with landscape features, Stone bridges gaps in the literature on agrarian change.

In chapter 3, Ester Boserup's (1965) theory of agricultural intensification resulting from population pressure is the subject of Stone's careful analysis. Crucial to Stone's examination of settlement causality is the identification of the circumstances under which farmers stay in one location and intensify production, as opposed to abandoning a site. Applying his proximity-access principle, residences may be drawn to fields by intensification, creating a dispersed settlement pattern. Conversely, the need to recruit agricultural labor,

central-place attractions (e.g., mosques, churches, or markets), or defense of fields or villages may lead to a nucleated settlement pattern.

From chapter 4 through chapter 11, the central Nigerian Kofyar case study provides the laboratory for analysis of a frontier settlement development. The rich ethnographic work of Netting and the Stones (Glenn Davis and Margaret Priscilla) describes the Kofyar homeland in the Jos Plateau and the move south to the plains beginning in the 1950s. To capture the continuity over space of the transfer of Kofyartown to a new physical environment, Stone invokes the frontier experiences of the U.S. Midwest. He introduces the necessary Kofyar terms for social organization as he seeks to understand the relationship between settlement pattern, social organization of production, and the patterns of group affiliation. Careful not to ascribe patterns to a vaguely defined "ethnicity," he employs a concept he calls "social propinquity" to explore the "shared values and expectations for agricultural collaboration" (p. 63) of those living near each other.

The land pressure and intensification of the period 1972–1985 brought about changes viewed through the Boserupian lens. Labor inputs increased with more dry-season work. Settlements are found to be related to strategies for mobilizing labor. Interhousehold neighborhood work groups account for nearly three-fourths of the labor input for grain storage. This pooling smooths out peak labor demands, as elsewhere in Africa, but Stone shows that in the Kofyar frontier communities, communal labor is drawn from a spatially as well as socially defined unit.

The settlement pattern on the plain changed over time from a more nucleated to a dispersed pattern as population grew. In the early years, farmers practiced an extensive swidden system demanding long fallows. Factors drawing their residences together were relatively weak, later overridden as farmers sought better soils where production was intensified. Stone shows that even their land clearings prove optimal spacing in his von Thunen-derived proximity-access principle. Time-management data suggest that there is a "threshold below which distance does not affect farmers' willingness to travel from their farmsteads" (p. 132) to their fields (700 m in this case). This is significant to understanding why the Kofyar live together. Their agricultural goals are met through the social process of mobilizing labor which is drawn not only from households but also from neighbors.

The social influences of the proximity-access principle are coupled with physical landscape characteristics. Over time with increasing population and more intensive land-use, location close to water becomes less important and attraction to sandy soil becomes more significant. He does this with a model of site abandonment due to declining yields. The discussion of water leaves open the role of power relations between men and women. While acknowledging that on the frontier, with rising land pressure, the Kofyar settlement “may be less attracted to water because it is women’s workloads that suffer” (p. 164), the book does not investigate the gendered landscape of the Kofyar as richly as it might.

Settlement Ecology contributes to our understanding of peasant farmers’ decision making. Settlements and agriculture are linked. Agricultural research that ignores social realities in its pursuit of high yields is flawed. As Stone observes, “The Kofyar pattern is not an optimal solution to the agroecology of the Namu Plains; it adapted to selective pressures but was not determined by them” (p. 186). Concluding with a comparison between the frontiers of mid-twentieth-century central Nigeria and seventeenth-century eastern North America, extensive and intensive agricultural systems appear to “make ecological sense, but only if we see the agrarian settlement system as embedded in social organization and labor

mobilization” (p. 193). Farmers on frontiers adjust to declining returns as resources degrade. The way they do that is not predicted in Boserup’s model alone.

Settlement Ecology’s strong fieldwork base and focus on conceptual understanding should inspire field application in different geographical settings. How well does it work across the West African agricultural frontier in the bimodal regions of Ghana and Côte d’Ivoire? Its strength in theory insures that it is not regionally restricted and brings to mind agrarian-change literature from around the world. With Stone’s work, Boserup has new meaning, which can be applied to interpreting the glue of “place” that holds together nascent communities.

Key Words: Agrarian settlement, agricultural intensification, cultural ecology, Kofyar, Nigeria, spatial organization.

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Gila Monsters and Red-Eyed Rattlesnakes: Don Maguire’s Arizona Trading Expeditions, 1876–1879. Gary Topping, ed. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1997. xvii and 245 pp., maps, refs., and index. \$34.95 cloth (ISBN 0-87480-536-6).

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This small book, which reads like a diary, covers three trips into the West, mostly in Arizona, by an itinerant trader. The author traveled through the area in the late 1870s and apparently wrote the account in 1883. The manuscript seems to have been typed by a secretary as the author read it in 1931, two years before his death. The author apparently did not edit or check the document, and it lay unpublished until the current editor reworked the extant edition, and brought it to print.

Don Maguire was born to Irish immigrants in the East and came to the West as an itinerant trader at age 24. To earn extra money on his trips,

he also wrote articles for a San Francisco newspaper and purchased interest in mines for Eastern investors. He was obviously a well-educated young man whose background included training in geology. The account of his expeditions is obviously colored by his interests and biases, but nevertheless it is a good first-hand presentation of a clear glimpse of the West in the late 1870s. He gives us good descriptions of early Mormon settlements, and on occasion, he took several days off to visit distant Indian groups or unusual sites. Maguire was a curious and intelligent person who took delight in meeting and talking to people, and must have been a great raconteur.