

Culture, Biology, and Anthropological Demography

Culture, Biology, and Anthropological Demography attempts a rapprochement of anthropological demography and human evolutionary ecology through recognition of common research topics and the construction of a broad theoretical framework incorporating both cultural and biological motivation. Two distinctive approaches to the study of human demography exist within anthropology today – anthropological demography and human evolutionary ecology. The first stresses the role of culture in determining population parameters, whereas the second posits that demographic rates reflect adaptive behaviors that are the products of natural selection. Both these approaches are utilized to search for demographic strategies in varied cultural and temporal contexts ranging from African pastoralists through North American postindustrial societies. Although both of these approaches have achieved notable successes, each has ignored or actively disparaged the other. In an attempt to initiate a discussion between the two fields, this book develops a framework recognizing cultural and biological demographic strategies.

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Demography deals with issues of great social importance, and demographic research fuels some of the central current policy debates of our time. Nevertheless, demographic theory has not changed much over the years, and old and sometimes inappropriate models are still being applied to new problems. Increasingly, however, demographers have become aware of the limitations of standard surveys and statistics, and they are moving to incorporate theoretical and methodological approaches from other disciplines, in particular anthropology. For their part, anthropologists have generally failed to take account of the advances in modern demography, but they are now beginning to take part in the central debates on questions of theory and policy in population research. A new wave of interdisciplinary research is emerging, combining the interests and approaches of demographers, anthropologists, and other social scientists. Some of the most interesting products of this new wave will be published in *New Perspectives on Anthropological and Social Demography*.

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