Census Project: Part #1: City Bibliographies / Bibliography Building

I. Your bibliography is the first stage of the major project of the semester. That project is in two stages, and several parts. This first stage requires:
   a) that you choose a city and a tentative topic, and turn in an index card with those choices next Wed. (2/28). You need an initial consultation with us about it (before the break - so sign up).
   b) Create a bibliography about your particular city. We recommend that your bibliography be in two versions: a standard format that you turn in, and a second one for your own particular use, (which retains the call numbers, urls/hyperlinks, that you find, annotations, etc., that you add for your own purposes). For your city, in addition to more general information and sources, you should also start thinking about a particular issue/topic that you wish to investigate, and look for sources specific to your topic interest. The bibliog. is due Mon. (3/5), and will (hopefully) serve as the base for your own city investigation.
   c) That city investigation is a data driven analysis of some aspect of your particular city’s development &/or its problems. That 6-8-page analysis is the last major piece of work that you turn in before the end of the semester. We hope to have people present their projects in class.

IIa. You must first choose a city (or cities) that you are interested in*. (If you can’t make up your mind, choose your own city/town, etc., or the one you intend to move to after you leave SU). We must approve your choice. We expect you to use a variety of resources in compiling your biblios. Start with Bird Library, and use it as a gateway to both SU and other resources. Bird’s home page is a portal to more than 500 databases and other info. resources that you can connect to through Bird. Remember, Bird’s front end is not the Internet/Web (e.g., Google, Yahoo, etc.) but a separate tool. Make use of both.

b. We expect (further) that you will use the Internet to check one or more additional libraries, especially ones, close to the city that you are interested in. E.g., Copley Sq. (Boston Public) and BU libraries will have many more catalog entries for Boston, than Bird would. There are a couple ways to get to other libraries from here: from Summit you can go directly to Cornell & other NY state libraries; to RLIN (another unified catalog for a number of major research libraries), to WorldCat (a similar unified catalog for yet other libraries), to LIBWEB (http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/Libweb/) a gateway to other online library catalogs though you will likely have to get to other online databases for articles, etc., e.g. Newspaper Abstracts, Social Science Index, et al., through Bird.

c. In addition to checking other Internet accessible libraries, check also the online databases that Bird has available. E.g., PAIS, Sociofile, Urban Affairs Abstracts, et al. These other sources are important because the local catalog (Summit) gives you only books and Gov. Docs., (held here), it will not identify journal articles about your city. However, other indexes (e.g., First Search, Proquest, et al.) will flag articles and resources that the local catalog does not. Moreover, these two should also indicate any sources held by SU. Do not be afraid to make phone calls to local agencies and newspapers to find additional info. Depending on what you are looking for, be prepared for this possibility.

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* I say ‘cities’ here in case some of you wish to look at a particular issue in two (or more) cities, e.g. crime, welfare reform, education, etc. In such a case, we still expect an initial city biblio and later emendations as your research grows.

** You should be aware that there are several major college library-cataloging systems. Getting the hang of other catalogs may take a bit longer. WorldCat is an online database of the holdings of public library and smaller systems. For other libraries, ask a librarian at Bird’s Reference desk for help in doing a subject search. Take a plug in drive and save your searches as files, this will save retyping.
Illa. In identifying resources for your city, look for information in the categories we gave you last week;\* and organize your bibliographies accordingly by category. You should also have a section on data sources, i.e. a listing of census and other numerical data resources re. your city. Consult the GovDoc. librarians for help. Your (own) bibliography should also identify the source of your information. E.g., if you find a report about Elmira’s redevelopment plan in the SUNY Binghamton Library, note the cit. appropriately, so that if you need that report you will know where to find it, and not waste time trying to remember where the reference came from.

b. Once you have collected your sources, organize the material into appropriate form. Use one of the standard disciplinary formats for bibliographies. (Read the chapter on Acknowledging Sources in A Guide to Writing Sociology Papers, also the (downloadable) ASA Writing Guide. We emphasize that you are not just doing an exercise, but compiling a tool for your own project (and future) use. If you collect your information in Word ‘doc.’ files, or using one of the bibliog. mgmt. tools I’ve mentioned (e.g., Endnote, ProCite, Citation et al.), you will have a much easier managing and corralling your entries into the desired format, than if you work with pen & index cards. Make sure, therefore, to save your search results to files.

c. The bibliography you turn in (Mon. 3/5) should be three (3) to five (5) pages. Highlight the section that identifies your particular concern, e.g., Housing in Scranton, Employment in Buffalo in the 1980s, etc. This section should include enough specific cits. so that the issue/topic that will likely be the subject of the research report can begin to be worked on.

The kinds of research reports you will be called upon to produce in the future, will likely be more contemporary in focus; e.g. changes in the educational system over the past 2-5 yrs.; changing housing patterns and new demographics, etc. College library catalogs are unlikely to give you all the resources that you will need. So, how do you get this level of information? Newspapers can be a key resource. Local agencies and the telephone are others. For major cities, Lexis/Nexis, Newspaper Abstracts are good sources for identifying articles. For non-major cities there are other newspaper resources, e.g. Newsbank, which tracks several hundred different US newspapers. The reference librarians will be able to help you to search these and produce e.g., a set of article cits. about e.g., Utica’s budget battles of the past 4 yrs., or Pittsburgh’s environmental struggles over the last three, etc. Don't forget the reference librarians in the central branches of city or county libraries. They are usually quite helpful, especially if you are calling long distance.

For some cities, you may also have to identify relevant local govt. agencies and/or newspaper reporters and call them to ask them about reports, or stories re. issues that you want to address in your bibliographies & research.

Names to know at Bird:

Bonnie Ryan - Sociology librarian
Elaine Coppola - Gov. Docs. Librarian
John Olson- Maps. Librarian
Paul Bern- Data Services

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We want you to identify articles: newspaper, scholarly, academic and govt. studies, etc., \* in five different areas (plus one more) re. developments in your target community. The 5 areas are: 1) the local/area economy, or econ. shifts; 2) jobs & occupation changes; 3) education issues; 4) developments re. crime; 5) data/quantitative resources; plus one more -an area/topic of your own choosing (for a total of 6).