

Alexander, Lewis M. *World Political Patterns*, Second edition. Chicago, Rand McNally and Co., 1963, xii and 628 pp., maps, index.

John M. Crowley

Volume 9, Number 17, 1964

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/020537ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/020537ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Département de géographie de l'Université Laval

ISSN

0007-9766 (print)

1708-8968 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Crowley, J. M. (1964). Review of [Alexander, Lewis M. *World Political Patterns*, Second edition. Chicago, Rand McNally and Co., 1963, xii and 628 pp., maps, index.] *Cahiers de géographie du Québec*, 9(17), 109–110.
<https://doi.org/10.7202/020537ar>

white pine and western larch). Donc, similitude très nette avec la forêt Columbia, compte tenu de l'absence de la pruche et du cèdre géant. Cette forêt sapin – sapin Douglas domine la zone montagneuse des Rocheuses au centre de l'Idaho et des Montagnes Bleues de l'Orégon. Nous soupçonnions depuis longtemps⁴ que le sapin grandissime joue un rôle important dans la végétation climacique de la forêt pacifique et de la forêt Columbia, mais c'est la première fois que l'on nous suggère qu'il pourrait dominer la forêt potentielle de ces montagnes assez sèches du centre de l'Idaho et du nord-est de l'Orégon. La forêt pacifique (*Coast Forest*) est divisée en plusieurs parties — beaucoup plus qu'auparavant — mais la question est trop complexe pour l'aborder ici.

Voilà seulement quelques-unes des nouveautés de la carte récente de Kùchler.

Conclusion

Afin que le lecteur ne prenne pas les petites critiques au long de ce compte rendu comme une condamnation de la spectaculaire carte de Kùchler, nous nous empressons de dire sans réserve que cette nouvelle carte de la végétation naturelle potentielle des États-Unis est une des plus importantes contributions à la botanique et à la biogéographie depuis plusieurs années. Chaque aspect inquiétant de cette carte nous encourage à entreprendre les recherches. Comme l'auteur l'a dit, « The new map will have fulfilled one of its major objectives if it stimulates research into the nature of the potential natural vegetation in regions of uncertainty » (p. 2). Nous félicitons chaleureusement le D^r Kùchler pour cet effort monumental.

John M. CROWLEY

UN MANUEL DE GÉOGRAPHIE POLITIQUE

ALEXANDER, Lewis M. **World Political Patterns**, Second edition. Chicago, Rand McNally and Co., 1963, xii and 628 pp., maps, index.

Lewis M. Alexander's fascinating book, *World Political Patterns*, has appeared in its second edition.

The amount of effort and financial outlay that goes into the publication of the second edition of a textbook no doubt indicates that both the author and the publisher have bright hopes for its future. The appearance of a second edition with, it is assumed, most of the obvious errors eliminated also gives us the occasion to take stock and to make observations.

The reviewer claims no special competence in political geography. He hopes that the following observations, both complimentary and critical, will be taken with appropriate good humor as a non-political geographer's view of a political text.

Our New England colleague wrote *World Political Patterns* with two main objectives in mind: (1) to instruct the beginning student about the nature of political geography and about the geographic basis of world political affairs and (2) to convince his professional colleagues that world political geography does not have to be indistinguishable from world regional geography. The author has admirably succeeded with regard to both objectives and has done a particularly good job of limiting his treatment to his self-imposed scope of study.

The book is a joy to read. It is one of those rare texts which can be read for pleasure as well as for instruction.

The best chapters are those on areas where the political question is one of the most distinctive or problematic features of the country involved. The chapter on southern Africa reads like an adventure novel with all the suspense, excitement, and uncertainty about the future that that implies. The chapter on Southeast Asia is also particularly good, and the significant but frequently overlooked role of Japanese conquest and occupation in later independence movements is skillfully woven into the discussion of the various countries. The treatment of Canada is much better than can usually be expected from American authors.

⁴ CROWLEY, John M., *The Northwestern Coniferous Forest Region of North America*, pp. 78-80. Manuscrit non-publié, 1959.

Unfortunately, the book exhibits a general preoccupation with centrifugal and centripetal forces, boundary problems and plebicides, and ethnic minorities. The political tendencies within a country are so frequently referred to as either centrifugal or centripetal that one wonders why these terms were not somehow incorporated into the title of the book! Boundary problems are given so much emphasis that they dominate the treatment of some countries, for example, that of Romania. And ethnic minorities receive so much attention that in the case of Poland, for example, the reader learns more about the pre-war minorities in Poland than about the political sentiment of the Poles themselves.

While those three themes receive great emphasis, many other politically important questions are scarcely mentioned. A good example is the political aspects of the geography of agriculture, such as the political geography of sugar beets in Europe and North America.

Almost every chapter begins, after a short introduction, with a section on physical features. This procedure leaves much to be desired. One can scarcely justify beginning a study of *political* geography with a consideration of *physical* geography. Rather physical elements should be brought in where they are pertinent to understanding the political phenomenon in question. Assuming that a physical section could be defended, those in the book under discussion are more similar to a description of the land by a layman than to that by a geographer. The section on the physical base of Western Europe is particularly weak.

World Political Patterns suffers from a striking, although perhaps intentional, lack of balance. Western Europe, whose importance and political complexity should merit for it about one fourth of the book, receives only one chapter. Since colonialism is discussed mainly in the sections on the former colonies involved, the dramatic political consequences to the mother countries of decolonization are almost entirely lost to the reader. Even within Europe the treatment is top-heavy. For example, the Macedonian question is admittedly complicated and important, but does it merit as much space as France receives?

The complete absence of photographs is unfortunate but perhaps less deplorable in a political text than in books on most other subjects within geography.

Despite the preceding remarks, which are in some cases rather harsh, the reviewer must frankly affirm that Alexander's *World Political Patterns* is one of the few recent textbooks which he has thoroughly enjoyed and by which he was soundly instructed.

John M. CROWLEY

UNE THÈSE SUR L'ENSEMBLE DU BAS-DAUPHINÉ (FRANCE)

BRAVARD, Yves. **Le Bas-Dauphiné. Recherches sur la morphologie d'un piedmont alpin.** Allier, Grenoble, 1963, 504 pages, 63 fig., XX planches photographiques, bibl.

Le Bas-Dauphiné est la zone située en contrebas des Alpes occidentales ; il est limité par les Préalpes du Nord, le Jura méridional et le cours moyen du Rhône jusqu'à la Drôme. Un petit pays dont la longueur (nord-sud) et la largeur maxima atteignent environ 100 km sur 60.

L'ouvrage se divise en deux parties :

1. La première, nourrie de préoccupations chronologiques, rappelle les « grandes étapes de l'élaboration du modelé » (p. 11). Même si l'essentiel des traits morphologiques du Bas-Dauphiné datent du Quaternaire, l'auteur consacre 100 pages à l'étude des périodes antérieures. Le soubassement « prétertiaire » est un « compartiment du socle ancien » qui se manifeste par une tectonique brisante. À la fin de l'ouvrage (p. 458), l'auteur écrit qu'à toutes les époques il a fallu compter avec les réactions de ce soubassement. Ces terrains, après avoir été aménagés en surface antétriasique ont, au Secondaire, fait partie d'une avant-fosse alpine de sédimentation avant de s'élever en « chaîne dauphinoise » plissée. À son tour, ce relief saillant, précurseur des Alpes, est usé par l'érosion.

Il se produit alors une inversion tectonique majeure. « Antérieurement domaine montagnard dominant la fosse alpine principale, l'avant-pays va se retrouver en contrebas de la nouvelle chaîne » (p. 52). Ainsi, à l'époque Oligocène, commence l'état de subsidence qui va