

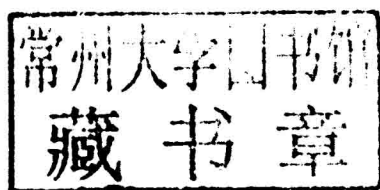
Biological Research Handbook

Suzy Hill



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Edited by Suzy Hill



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Preface

This book has been a concerted effort by a group of academicians, researchers and scientists, who have contributed their research works for the realization of the book. This book has materialized in the wake of emerging advancements and innovations in this field. Therefore, the need of the hour was to compile all the required researches and disseminate the knowledge to a broad spectrum of people comprising of students, researchers and specialists of the field.

This book presents some new ideas regarding key issues from various areas of biological sciences. Some issues discussed within the book are antibiotic susceptibility, genomic restructuring, historical biogeography, biogeographic patterns, endemism, and the utility of microorganisms for pest regulation. This book consists of original researches by prominent experts in their various fields. This book has been created with the idea of stimulating and challenging its readers regarding the field of biological research.

At the end of the preface, I would like to thank the authors for their brilliant chapters and the publisher for guiding us all-through the making of the book till its final stage. Also, I would like to thank my family for providing the support and encouragement throughout my academic career and research projects.

Editor

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List of Contributors

Biogeography, Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

Areas of Endemism: Methodological and Applied Biogeographic Contributions from South America

Dra Dolores Casagrande and
Dra Mercedes Lizarralde de Grosso

Additional information is available at the end of the chapter

1. Introduction

The geographic distribution of organisms is the subject of Biogeography, a field of biology that naturalists have carried out for over two centuries [1-6]. From the observation of animal and plant distribution, diverse questions emerge; the description of diversity gradients; delimitation of areas of endemism; identification of ancestral areas and search of relationships among areas, among others, have become major issues to be analyzed, worked out and solved. In this way, biogeography has turned into a multi-layered discipline with both theoretical and analytical frameworks and far-reaching objectives.

However, at the beginning it was closely related to systematics. Taxonomists were the ones who took a keen interest in the geographical distribution of taxa. In other words, because the connection is so close, several analytical tools applied to the treatment of biogeographical problems are adaptations or modifications from methods oriented to solve systematics questions. This apparent panacea may also represent one important analytical obstacle for biogeography. Although some biogeographical questions require systematic information to be solved, the object of study of biogeography, that is, spatial distribution of taxa, as well as its concepts and problems, are different from those of systematics. Hence, methods taken from systematics are not appropriate for the treatment of biogeographical problems. The need for its own methods and its own analytical framework have promoted prolific theoretical discussions and methodological developments throughout the last 20 years. In this context, the concept of areas of endemism is being widely debated and several methods have been proposed to attempt to identify these patterns. Areas of endemism have a central role in biogeography as they are the analytical units in historical biogeography, and are also considered quite relevant for biodiversity conservation [7]. It is the aim of this chapter to introduce

the major discussions around the concept of areas of endemism and focus on analytical problems associated with its identification. A brief revision of contributions on endemism in South America is presented and some limitations associated to empirical analysis are highlighted in order to give an overall picture on the current state of affairs on this controversial subject.

2. Areas of endemism, its importance

In biogeography, the term "area of endemism" is used to refer to a particular pattern of distribution delimited by the distribution congruence of, at least, two taxa [8]. Given that the range of distribution of a taxon is determined by historical, as well as current factors, it can be assumed that those taxa which show similar ranges have been affected by the same factors in a similar way [9]. The identification of areas of endemism is an essential first step to elaborate hypotheses that help to disclose the general history of biota and the places where they inhabit. Because of this, recognition of these patterns has been central to biogeography. Oddly enough, and despite its indisputable importance, endemism involves several problems which reach even its definition (semantic field), not to mention those resulting from the absence of a clear framework (conceptual problem) or those associated to the identification of areas of endemism (analytical issues) [9, 11-19]; While the first two problems are briefly dealt with in the present chapter, identifying and assessing the main areas of endemism will be the main focus.

2.1. Defining the term

The idea of endemism dates back to more than 200 years, and has been employed, as it is actually understood, by de Candolle [1]). Since then, the concepts of endemicity and areas of endemism have been widely discussed. Some problems around these concepts emerge from the diverse uses and interpretations given to them in literature (e.g. [16, 20-21], Harold and Moii [21]). Although differences between diverse uses as regards connotations could seem minor, the lack of precision in the definition of these concepts hinders an unambiguous interpretation and causes confusion. Additionally, numerous expressions, such as "generalized track", "track", "biotic element", "centers of endemicity", "units of co-occurrence", among others, are commonly used as synonyms of area of endemism, [16, 21-23]. Although basically related with the term "areas of endemism", these concepts refer to different patterns of distribution and are defined on different theoretical grounds.

3. A clear conceptual framework

As it usually happens in other fields such as morphology and embryology, in the field of biogeography, the identification and description of patterns precede the inference of the causes of its occurrence. However, some biogeographers assume that vicariance must be involved [12, 17]). According to this idea, a pattern of sympatry among species could be defined as area of

endemism only if it emerged from a vicariant event. This assumption entails new difficulties for the identification of areas of endemism: the causes which originate the patterns must be known a priori, or else, the identification of patterns and processes should be performed simultaneously. Fortunately, most biogeographers follow the generalized concept, which supposes that multiple factors affect and define current patterns.

4. Identifying areas of endemism

The identification of such areas has been a major challenge in biogeography and deals with several difficulties, some of them related with the two questions mentioned above. However, in the last decades, several methods for identification of these patterns have been proposed [9, 15-16, 18, 24-25] In general, current methods for recognizing areas of endemism can be classified on the basis of whether they aim to determine (i) species patterns, i.e. groups of species with overlapping distributions, or (ii) geographical patterns, i.e. groups of area units with similar species composition. These approaches assess closely related but slightly different aspects of biogeographical data. Methods dealing with species patterns group species with similar distributions and result in clusters -which may or may not define obvious spatial patterns-. Instead, methods oriented to define geographical patterns, are more related to the classical notion of area of endemism, resulting in geographical areas defined by species distributions.

The methods currently in use are many and heterogeneous. While reflecting the multiple conceptions of areas of endemism, these proposals differ in their theoretical bases as well in its mathematical formulations. Following are three of them: Parsimony Analysis of Endemicity (PAE [15]), Biotic Elements (BE; Hausdorf and Hennig, 2003[24]), and Endemicity Analysis (EA; Szumik et al., 2002[9]; Szumik and Goloboff, 2004[18]). Although several modifications of PAE, as well as other hierarchical methods have been proposed (see [16, 26]), this method has been selected as a representative of hierarchical methods because it remains the most widely used in empirical analyses ([27-33].

PAE. The Parsimony Analysis of Endemicity (PAE) was the first method proposed to formally identify areas of endemism[15]. The input data for PAE consist of a binary matrix in which the presence of a given species (rows) in an area unit (columns) is coded as 1 and its absence as 0. Analogous to a cladistic analysis, PAE hierarchically groups area units (analogous to taxa) based on their shared species (analogous to characters) according to the maximum-parsimony criterion. Therefore, PAE attempts to minimize both "dispersion events" (parallelisms) and "extinctions" (secondary reversions) of species within a given area. Areas of endemism are defined from the most-parsimonious tree (or strict consensus) as groups of area units supported by two or more "synapomorphic species" (i.e. endemic species [15]). In its most classical formulation, species that present reversions (i.e. are absent in any of the area units) and/or parallelisms (i.e. are present elsewhere) in their distributions are not considered endemic. Therefore, PAE is especially strict when penalizing the absence of a species within an area, which makes it more likely to fail to detect a relatively large number of areas of endemism.

Despite the well-known limitations of hierarchical classification models in the delimitation of areas of endemism [9, 33-34]), PAE remains the most widely used method for describing biogeographical patterns [31- 32, 35]).

BE. Hausdorf [17] considers areas of endemism in the context of the vicariance model, and argues for the use of “biotic elements” defined as “groups of taxa whose ranges are significantly more similar to each other than to those of taxa of other such groups” (p. 651[17]), rather than the more traditional areas of endemism [24]). This method is implemented in the R package *Prabclus* by Hennig [36], which calculates a Kulczynski dissimilarity matrix [37]) between pairs of species which is then reduced using a nonmetric multidimensional scaling (NMDS; [38]). A Model-Based Gaussian clustering (MBGC) is applied to this matrix to identify clusters of species with similar distributions, or biotic elements. In spatial terms, a biotic element is equivalent to the spatial extent of the distributions of all species included in the cluster.

EA. In 2002, Szumik and colleagues proposed an optimality criterion to identify areas of endemism by explicitly assessing the congruence among species distributions. This proposal, improved by Szumik & Goloboff [17]), is implemented in *NDM/VNDM* by Goloboff [39] and Szumik and Goloboff [9]). The congruence between a species distribution and a given area is measured by an Endemicity Index (EI) ranging from 0 to1. The EI is 1 for species that are uniformly distributed in the area under study, and only within that area (“perfect endemism”), and decreases for species that are present elsewhere, and /or poorly distributed within the area. In turn, the endemicity value of an area (EIA) is calculated as the sum of the EIs of the endemic species included in the area. Therefore, two factors contribute to the EIA: the number of species included in the area and the degree of congruence (measured by the EI) between the species distributions and the area itself (for details see [9]).

The emergency of quantitative methods that allow describing these patterns objectively has represented an important advance in the discussion of endemism. However, the contrast between different methodological proposals introduced new questions: are the hypothesis resulting from different analysis homologous? Is there a better method to identify areas of endemism? A few recent contributions attempt to elucidate these queries by testing and exploring the behaviour of some methods, e.g. [34, 40]. Several comparisons between methods have been performed by using real data [41-43]). However, real data provide only a limited assessment of the differences between the procedures. Some characteristics of the distribution of species, e.g. geographical shape or number of records, affect pattern recognition in uncertain ways. Furthermore, sampling bias, which often affects available distributional data, causes problems in the identification of biogeographical patterns [44]). As it is often difficult to distinguish whether the identified patterns result from singularities of the data or properties of the methods, an evaluation based on real datasets, or data simulated under realistic conditions, is not enough to establish general conclusions on the performance of the methods.

Recently, Casagrande et al.[19]) states a comparison by using controlled -hypothetical distributions, pointing differences, advantages and limitations of Endemicity Analysis (EA), Parsimony Analysis of Endemicity (PAE), and Biotic Elements Analysis (BE) In their study, these authors measured the efficiency of the methods according their ability to identify