

1960

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Recommended Citation

Tefft, S. K. (1960). Sociopolitical Changes in Two Migrant Tribes. *Journal of the Minnesota Academy of Science*, Vol. 28 No. 1, 103-111.

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SOCIOPOLITICAL CHANGES IN TWO
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The culture of a people who have moved into a habitat of another group is transformed partly as a result of changes in the subsistence pattern and partly as a consequence of contacts with the members of the new group (or groups). Kroeber (1948:388) and Goldenweiser (1946:454) contend that migration is a great liberating force which breaks up the old habits of a society and which stimulates profound changes within it. The degree to which the migrant population takes over the culture of the group (or groups) with which it is in contact depends upon the particular groups involved and the particular situation encountered after migration (Herskovits 1950:532-33). A group which migrates to a new habitat must crystallize its interest and knowledge around a new segment of the natural resources. Changes in the subsistence patterns bring about changes in the sociopolitical organization of the group. However, the direction of change in the sociopolitical organization is controlled just as much by the body of concepts held by the members of the migrant group as by the type of societies which the people encounter after migration. A study of the changes in the sociopolitical organization of the Wind River Shoshoni and the Comanche, both of which moved from the Basin to the Plains shortly before the eighteenth century, indicates that the value system of migrant groups as well as the manner in which they make adjustments to their new habitat determines the lines along which the sociopolitical changes run.

When the Comanche and the Wind River Shoshoni migrated to the Plains, they not only moved from one culture province to another, as may be seen below, but they also changed natural habitats. The Basin, in which they originally lived, was a land with limited water supply, little game, scattered and unreliable nut, seed, and insect resources, and variable temperatures throughout the year (Steward 1938:10-19). On their migration to the Plains the Comanche and Wind River Shoshoni found a grassland region filled with plentiful herds of buffalo and other game and containing many rivers along whose courses exploitable vegetation grew.

Before their migration to the Plains the Wind River Shoshoni and the Comanche shared many common cultural features with the Basin

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Shoshoni. Like the other Basin Shoshoni they were members of the Shoshonean-speaking branch of the Uto-Aztecan family. To support themselves they hunted rabbits, antelope, and deer and gathered roots, berries, nuts, and insects as well as fish. Their subsistence pattern precluded any large scale political organization. Several families might camp together in the winter or cooperate in antelope and rabbit drives but such communal organizations were temporary. Lack of adequate supplies of seeds, nuts, roots, and game forced individual families to go their separate ways. Within each camp the economic tasks were equally divided between the men and women (bicentered division of labor). Hunting, fishing, and seed areas were open to the exploitation of all the bands. The hard life and the small margin of safety fostered patterns of food sharing, infanticide, invalidicide, senicide, and, at times, even cannibalism.

The widely dispersed supplies of fish, game, and nut and seed patches as well as the scarcity of food resources forestalled the development of permanent social units larger than the small band. The bilateral family remained the basic social and economic unit and was autonomous in the direction of its activities. The nuclear family consisted of a man, his wife or wives, and his children. As bilocal residence was common the household might be enlarged through the inclusion of the spouses of the man's children. In households where individuals had unusual wealth, polygyny and polyandry might also increase their size. Related families, when possible, lived and traveled together. These units usually consisted of parents, their married children, brothers and sisters and their spouses, and other close relatives that might be related through cross-cousin or pseudo-cousin marriage. Nonetheless, uncertainties of food and, consequently, of residence made the association of persons other than those of the immediate household unstable.

When households travelled alone, the household head was its leader. Even in a small group of related families, which camped and journeyed together, the leader was the eldest and most influential man but was not formally elected. Larger winter camps, which were comprised of from fifteen to twenty related families, usually had only one headman. The headman or "talker" was the eldest and most influential and experienced member of the group. His task was to keep the village members informed about the location and size of the seed patches, nut groves, and antelope herds. The "talker" also gave talks to his kinsmen condemning prodigality and urging thriftiness. The leader, however, could not force his will upon any family. Each family could follow its own independent course if it so pleased. The headman had no interest in civil and criminal disputes. These were settled by relatives, usually close kin. In the smaller villages the headman also managed the communal drives for rabbit and antelope in his area as well as directed the festivals. In the larger villages the headman was assisted by a feast chief, who conducted the dances, a hunt chief, who directed the rabbit drives, and a shaman, who managed the antelope hunts. Intervillage organizations, such as those for the communal rabbit and antelope hunts and cooperative fishing en-

terprises, were never stabilized long enough to form permanent large band units. Thus, chiefs, councils, and more elaborate political structures did not develop.

It was not until the Wind River Shoshoni and the Comanche acquired the horse that they began to move onto the Plains. The horse gave the two groups an opportunity to exploit the vast herds of buffalo which previously had been unavailable to them. A few Spanish horses were used by the Basin-Plateau groups early in the seventeenth century (Teit 1930:351). By the end of the century many of the Northern Shoshoni groups, including the Wind River Shoshoni and the Comanche, had small herds of horses.

By the early part of the eighteenth century large bands of Comanche and Wind River Shoshoni had moved out onto the Plains. Shoshoni groups moved into the Bow River country of the Saskatchewan and pushed eastward along the Missouri River as far as the Black Hills of present-day South Dakota (Shimkin 1947:245). By 1701, Comanche bands were reported near the headwaters of the Arkansas and as early as 1744, the Comanche were assaulting Pueblo Indian settlements at Pecos and attacking Galisteo twenty miles south of Santa Fe (Hyde 1959:103). After 1789, the Comanche occupied the territory they were to keep until 1840. It consisted of a large triangle from central Oklahoma to central New Mexico and from the Arkansas to the Brazos. Yet while the Comanche were having their military successes in the south, the Wind River Shoshoni were suffering defeat in the north. The acquisition of guns and horses by the Northern Plains tribes forced the Shoshoni to retreat west once more. Around 1800, they resided largely west of the Rocky Mountains, daring destruction on the Plains only in seasonal bison hunts. With the military assistance of the white traders, however, the Wind River Shoshoni were able to reestablish their eastern territories after 1825. Over this whole period the Comanche and Wind River Shoshoni maintained friendly relations which were reinforced by trading contacts.

While both the Comanche and the Wind River Shoshoni shared the same pre-Plains culture traits, they none the less made different adaptations to the Plains habitat and accepted or rejected different aspects of Plains culture. The sociopolitical changes which took place within each group after their migration to the Plains were markedly different. While both tribes centered their economies around buffalo hunting, adopted hunting techniques, such as the buffalo surround, from the Plains tribes, reduced the time spent in gathering activities, gave more important economic and political roles to men, and clothed themselves like the Plains tribes, they organized their political, economic, and religious activities in a different fashion.

As the horse had provided the Wind River Shoshoni a means by which they could acquire larger supplies of food, families now could travel the year round in large composite bands composed of both related and unrelated kindred. Families no longer needed to scatter over a large area in search of food. Bands were the basic political units throughout most of the year except in the early spring and fall

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when they united under the direction of a tribal chief. Each household within the band was composed of a man, his wife or wives, several immature children, and one or more paternal grandparents. Matrilocal residence was only temporary and usually the wives went to live in the camps of their husbands (patrilocal residence) not long after the marriage. Since a man's economic, military, and political role in band life was now more important than that of a woman, the bands desired to retain their male members after marriage. Thus, patrilocal rather than matrilocal residence was the rule. The kindred, which consisted of several related households, set up their lodges close to one another. The settlement of kindred consisted of the lodge of a man and his wife or wives, the lodge of his sons and their wives, and the lodges of other relatives. For a year after her marriage the man's daughter and her husband pitched their tipi near that of her father. Later she went to live in her husband's camp. Each band was directed by a man who had proved himself a capable warrior and leader.

In the early fall, and again in the early spring, the individual Shoshoni bands united for communal buffalo hunts and the annual religious ceremonies, such as the Ghost Dance and the Sun Dance. Such tribal gatherings were led by an outstanding war chief. The most successful unifier seems to have been Washakie who in 1842 welded together four bands of Wind River Shoshoni into a stable union that lasted several decades (Shimkin 1947b:290). While both the band and tribal chiefs retained their positions on the basis of personal influence, of the two, the tribal chief gained more power. He, assisted by a council of band headmen, directed the movements of the tribe, chose camp sites, and managed the internal affairs of the tribe while it was together. It was he who tried to stop quarrels between the members of the different bands. The tribal organization of the Wind River Shoshoni is similar to that of the Blackfoot with whom they had numerous contacts.

The tribal chief was assisted by military societies who policed the hunts and served as regular front and rear guards on the tribal marches (Lowie 1915:813). The authority of the police societies lasted only as long as the tribe existed as a unit. Twenty to thirty men formed an organization known as the *Yellow Noses* (also called *Yellow Mouths* or *Yellow Foreheads*) so named for the color with which they decorated their faces. These men managed the front columns. The *Log Society*, which was also composed of civic-minded men, regulated the rear column. On buffalo hunts the *Yellow Noses* kept the hunters from attacking the herds prematurely while the *Logs* acted as scouts. If a man attacked the herd before the rest, the police destroyed his buffalo hides so that he reaped no benefit from his haste. On marches the *Yellow Noses* were always out in front so that they could repel enemy attacks. The *Logs* protected the women and children, showed the women where to put up the lodges, and saw to it that no one was left behind when the camp moved.

Entrance into these clubs was not on the basis of age or purchase. Any man might become a member of one of these two groups although men who joined the *Yellow Noses* had to be especially brave.

The headman of each society was older than the rest and was also a renowned warrior. He was distinguished from the regular members by a fringe at the bottom of his buffalo robe. While members of each society had distinctive regalia and decorations, the two societies did not perform separate dances but both conducted the Big Horse Dance. In their ungraded character and their lack of purchase requirements, the Wind River Shoshoni clubs resemble the military societies of the Dakota, Assiniboine, Cheyenne, Crow, Pawnee, and Arikara more closely than the graded societies of the Blackfoot and the Arapaho. As the Wind River Shoshoni saw warfare as a necessary means to defend the interests of the tribe rather than, as among many Plains tribes, a route to individual self-glorification, they organized clubs as a means to defend the tribe rather than to give recognition to outstanding warriors.

At the tribal meetings in the fall the Wind River Shoshoni conducted major religious ceremonies such as the Ghost Dance and the Sun Dance. As among the Plains tribes the Sun Dance was initiated by a man or woman in order to supplicate the supernatural forces in fulfillment of a vow or, more rarely, at the behest of a visionary power. The ceremony lasted eight days with four days allotted to preparatory rites and another four days to the dance proper. During part of the ritual, the person pledging cured the sick and gave power to the participants; later, people seeking pity from the guardian spirits tortured themselves by putting skewers through their back and breast, tethering themselves to a post, and pulling against the bonds until their skin gave away. The ceremony was climaxed when the pledger gained a supernatural vision (Shimkin 1939:64-65). The Wind River Shoshoni tribe also participated in the Ghost Dance movement, seeking the return of the dead (Shimkin 1942:456-7).

In contrast to the Wind River Shoshoni, the Comanche bands never united for seasonal tribal meetings. They had no permanent tribal chief or council. In fact the only time that the Comanche bands came together was at the Sun Dance of 1874. Communal hunts and dances were carried on by the larger bands rather than by the tribe as a whole. Public rituals were conducted by the bands rather than by interband groupings.

While the smaller Comanche bands were composed of persons bilaterally related by descent and marriage, the larger band units contained several groups of kindred. As among the Wind River Shoshoni permanent residence after marriage was usually patrilocal. Therefore, the settlements of kindred contained a father's lodge and the separate lodges of his wives, plus the lodges of his sons and their wives, and other relatives. The father's daughters and their husbands might temporarily join the settlement during the first year of their marriage. But, as in the Shoshoni case, the daughters usually went to live in their husbands' camps.

The Comanche divided the civil and military authority between "war" and "peace" chiefs. In the smaller bands the family headman functioned as a "peace" chief. On the other hand in the larger bands several "peace" chiefs selected one of their number as a head chief

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and the rest acted as an advisory council. The power of the band chief rested on his personal attributes. He was a mediator rather than a judge or dictator. He had no authority to take the life of a band member nor could he prevent war parties from going on raids. If he was incompetent or a coward, he was gradually replaced by another chief. Only if a chief's son had the qualities of a good leader, namely generosity, kindness, even temper, wisdom, and knowledge, could he hope to replace his father as chief of the band; thus there was no rigid rule of patrilineal inheritance of chieftainship. If a chief were absent from the camp, his duties were performed by his wife aided by his best friend. Heralds served as messengers for the chief. Two *aides de camp* protected the chief at all times and might even give their lives in attempting to rescue the chief's body from the enemy if he were killed. A special official known as a "whip-holder" also assisted the chief. This man was the master of ceremonies at the dances. It was he who forced reluctant members to join the festivities.

The "peace" chief presided over a band council in whose name most of the important decisions were made. The council considered such matters as moving camp, undertaking band war, making peace, setting alliances with other tribes, declaring the time and place of the summer hunts, inaugurating religious ceremonies, disposing of band spoils, allocating food to widows and needy people, and regulating trade. Arbitrary decisions by these chiefs were prevented by their fear that youthful warriors rising from lower rank might usurp their positions on the council if their rulings were unpopular.

War chiefs conducted the military affairs of the band. To rise to a position of war chief a young warrior had to perform deeds of valor while on the raids. After each successful raid or recognized coup, the young aspirant was entitled to a feather. After forty-eight such coups a war leader became a "true war chief" and made a bonnet from the feathers he had collected. Ideally a "peace" chief was superior to a "war" chief but if the civil chief grew weak and ineffectual, a popular war chief might obtain the real authority within the band (Wallace and Hoebel 1952:213). Separation of the offices of "war" and "peace" chiefs is reminiscent of the Cheyenne practice from whom the Comanche probably received the idea (Hoebel 1960:37-46).

Some of the northern Comanche bands had semi-military fraternities or dance groups but they never gave these organizations police functions as had the Wind River Shoshoni and other Plains tribes. The Southern Comanche bands lacked even these dance groups. Young warriors who had not as yet attained the rank of "war bonnet wearers" participated in the activities of these clubs. A youth might join the lodge of his father but he was not required to do so. There was keen rivalry between the various fraternities to obtain the most promising warriors as members. The members of a club treated each other as brothers and went on the warpath together. They helped bury and mourn for fellow members who had died. Each fraternity had its own insignia, songs, dances, and ritual paraphernalia which could not be used by a rival organization. The clubs put on gala ceremonies before the departure of a war party or following its return

or before band hunts. Both men and women could participate in the dances. The clubs competed in athletic events and military exercises (Wallace and Hoebel 1952:274). The Comanche thus retained the ceremonial functions of the Plains military clubs while doing away with their role as police agencies.

It is thus apparent that different sociopolitical adaptations were made by the Wind River Shoshoni and the Comanche after their migration to the Plains. The pre-Plains, pre-horse social and political structure of both the Comanche and the Wind River Shoshoni was similar. Both groups migrated to the Plains in the same historic period. Both the Comanche and the Wind River Shoshoni adopted the horse, made extensive use of bison, and made similar changes in their technology. In both groups, these changes in subsistence patterns brought about similar changes in the division of labor, which became patricentered rather than bicentered, and residence, which became patrilocal rather than bilocal. Nonetheless, while the Wind River Shoshoni formed seasonal tribal bodies headed by a war chief and organized police societies, the Comanche never united for seasonal tribal hunts or ceremonies nor gave their military clubs police powers.

The different sociopolitical adaptations of the Comanche and Shoshoni were not the result of contacts with Plains groups which had different types of sociopolitical structures. The Comanche were in close contact with the Kiowa and the Cheyenne. In both these groups the bands united during the spring and summer for tribal rituals, such as the Sun Dance and Ghost Dance, and for communal buffalo hunts. During the rest of the year the bands followed their independent courses. Both of these groups had centralized tribal leadership. Among the Kiowa the owner of a Sun Dance fetish, the *Taime* Keeper, assisted by the chiefs of the bands and the military societies managed the tribal affairs (Richardson 1940:62-3). The supreme authority of the Cheyenne tribe rested in the hands of the council of forty-four chiefs who were ritually inducted into the council for a term of ten years (Hoebel 1960:37-46). In both the Kiowa and Cheyenne tribes the councils were assisted by ungraded military clubs who helped them keep peace and order within the large tribal assemblies. Each society had its own paraphernalia, dress, dances, and songs. The Wind River Shoshoni were also in contact with Plains tribes which had tribal meetings and military clubs similar to those of the Cheyenne and the Kiowa.

How can one account for the differences in the level of political integration that existed between the Wind River Shoshoni and the Comanche as well as the different uses to which they put the military clubs and fraternities? Eisenstadt (1959:214-18) has suggested that societies emphasizing collective military and economic activities, solidarity values and integrative goals, and communal rituals which symbolize this collective unity will accentuate executive leadership and decision making and will develop special political structures to enable their leaders to organize the available resources for maximizing these collective goals. The Wind River Shoshoni bands gathered dur-

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ing certain seasons of the year to engage in common hunting and religious undertakings. The tribal religious ceremonies, such as the Sun Dance and the Ghost Dance, reinforced the collective values of the tribe and brought supernatural benefits to all its members. Tribal hunts provided the bands with large quantities of food and raw materials. The potential military power available when the bands were united for tribal meetings assured the Wind River Shoshoni protection against attacks by the other Plains tribes. It was thus during these communal military, economic, and religious activities that special executive and juridical structures emerged. They lasted as long as the tribe met.

In contrast to the Wind River Shoshoni the Comanche placed such a high value on individual freedom that government was held to a minimum (Hoebel 1954:131). The Comanche found that they could maximize their main goals and values as well as effectively utilize the resources available to them through the self-regulated interaction of the various band units. Plenty of buffalo were in reach of the band hunting parties. The various ceremonies and rituals could be conducted by the bands. The Comanche never adopted any communal ceremonies that necessitated tribal participation. As a tribal ceremony the Comanche performed the Sun Dance in 1874, but since this Sun Dance did not bring about the objectives for which it was given, the Comanche never again united to perform the ritual (Wallace and Hoebel 1952:319-326). The Ghost Dance never gained many converts among the Comanche. The whole tribe never united to perform the dance. Mooney (1896:901-2) reports that only one Comanche band, the Wasps, showed any interest in the ceremony. The Comanche conducted no tribal military undertakings. Thus, the Comanche emphasized no strong tribal values and goals. Unlike the Wind River Shoshoni, they were able to implement their major goals through the activities of their component groups, the bands, without recourse to any special political structure.

For similar reasons the Comanche never adopted a police force. They believed that an individual should regulate his own affairs with a minimum of external pressure. The adoption of a police group would have been incompatible with the value they placed on individual freedom. Since the Comanche had no tribal bodies, there was no need for police to direct the tribal hunts or to manage the communal ceremonies. Intra-band disputes were handled by the families involved. On the other hand, the Wind River Shoshoni, who emphasized tribal religious and economic activities, found more use for police societies. Such groups could manage the communal hunts and protect the bands when they were on the march.

A study of the sociopolitical changes which took place within the Wind River Shoshoni and Comanche groups after their adoption of the horse and their migration to the Plains suggests the important role which the different value orientations of the two societies played in regulating the ways in which changes in this aspect of their culture occurred as the two groups made their adaptations to the natural and cultural environment of the Plains. While changes in the division

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of labor and the residential patterns of both the Comanche and the Wind River Shoshoni were a direct consequence of changes in the subsistence pattern, changes in political organization were not. Nor can the differences in political organization between the two tribes be explained as a result of their contacts with different cultures.

This paper has shown that the Comanche, because of their emphasis on individual freedom and band autonomy, never developed centralized political structures, while the Wind River Shoshoni, by reason of their stress on tribal activities and goals, formed more centralized ruling bodies which lasted as long as the tribe met. The dissimilar value orientations of the two groups also explain why the Comanche never organized police societies while the Wind River Shoshoni did so.

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