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# Communities and Households in Southwestern Archaeology

*Historical and Theoretical Perspectives*

ROBERT J. STOKES

The study of human organization in the form of families, households, and communities has a long history in American archaeology, especially in the American Southwest where cultural anthropologists have been studying the lifeways of the descendants of ancient peoples since the late 1800s. Archaeologists used the insights from these ethnographic studies as a way to understand ancient societies, especially the Ancestral Puebloans (referred to as the Anasazi in historical literature and in some modern contexts) (Judd 1954:40; Kidder 1924:39–43). In the early days of Southwestern archaeology, the study of communities, primarily in terms of “big sites” and typically in normative approaches, was paramount, with research questions focused on chronology, typology, and cultural affiliation for cultural pattern and area definition (e.g., Gladwin and Gladwin 1929; Haury 1936; Kidder 1924; Nelson 1914; Roberts 1935; see Wills and Leonard 1994a:xiii). The study of households was left to cultural anthropologists; when brought into the archaeological realm, it was primarily reduced to speculations on basic gendered chores and functional division of domestic and work space, if mentioned at all—for example, speculations that women ground maize while socializing

because that is what many ethnographically studied Puebloan women did (Judd 1954:51; Kidder 1958:137–139; Roberts 1929:133). Wholesale, unquestioning application of ethnography to ancient societies is what eventually led to the “reaction against analogy” discussions of the 1980s (Wylie 1985).

With the advent of the New Archaeology and processualism in the 1960s and 1970s, the study of households and communities became more important as archaeologists tried to find correlates of socio-cultural-anthropological patterns and structures in their archaeological data, such as marriage residence patterns and division of labor, and how these patterns structured communities, typically viewed as the spatially defined single “residential village” (e.g., Binford 1962; Binford and Binford 1968; Longacre 1970; Martin 1975; see Wills and Leonard 1994a:xiii), but this often resulted in frustration because of a heavy emphasis on behavior reduced to broad patterns in the data in order to understand process (Preucel and Hodder 1996). That is, processualist archaeologists were attempting to understand human behavioral patterns by reducing the human element to data points, trend lines, and statistics (Watson, LeBlanc, and Redman 1971). The cognitive approach, or “getting into the mind” of an ancient person, was often viewed with skepticism by processualists (Flannery and Marcus 1996). Therefore, the study of households, communities, and societies followed a “macro” essentialist/positivist approach where social structures controlled actions and “communities” and “cultures” functioned as monolithic entities; there was little room for the individual actor, lower-level decision-making, or situational contexts and histories (Hodder 2003; Preucel and Hodder 1996; VanPool and VanPool 2003).

In the years since, the lessons learned from the successes and failures of processualism and the emergence of a host of post-processual, postmodern, agency, and related theories such as gender studies and cognitive studies have been brought to bear on understanding social process and the direct roles of people through their negotiation of the social and cultural structures in which they live, propagate, prosper (or not), and eventually enter the mortuary and archaeological record (Hegmon 2008; Preucel and Hodder 1996; VanPool and VanPool 2003). Important new insights into the behavior, motivations, decisions, and worldviews of ancient people *and* the communities in which they lived, experienced, and defined have come out of the post-processualism movement of the 1980s and 1990s and the blending of multiple approaches since then.

Often, however, the critical interactions between people, such as those making up families and households, and the larger communities in which they lived and negotiated are understudied in favor of focusing research and theory on either but not necessarily both with equal vigor. In many cases, this is a necessary approach, given the vastness of research avenues open to archaeologists and behavioral scientists and to create the necessary baseline studies required to

move toward the “big picture,” or “Grand Theory” as described by Preucel and Hodder (1996:11–14). One of the important concepts offered by the processualist movement, however, is middle-range theory; Binford (1980) notes that as anthropologically trained archaeologists, our best approach to understand prehistoric behavior and societies is to build bridges between grand theories and the data we gather from the field and from actualistic studies, including direct, problem-oriented ethnographic research (e.g., see Graham 1994; Seymour 2011 for recent examples). Preucel and Hodder (1996) recast the search for Grand Theory by focusing on various levels of archaeological inquiry (low-, middle-, and high-level theory) and the role the dialectic (hermeneutic epistemology) approach can play in eliciting meaning or interpretation from the individual’s point of view in our archaeological data. By focusing on “small” or directed research pulled from a host of archaeological and theoretical domains that take into account insights derived from ethnography, historical data, gender studies, dialectic approaches, and problem-oriented data-driven inferences, we can build a foundation of smaller successes that someday may be pulled together into the “big picture” (Preucel and Hodder 1996; VanPool and VanPool 2003). It is recognized that not all archaeologists would agree that a grand theory or a big picture is warranted or even feasible, but if our profession is to have meaning in the modern world, we need to be able to speak to both human behavior in general as well as specific historical trajectories of individuals and their families and communities.

Archaeologists today are living in an exciting time for our profession. We recognize that data collection is still the backbone of archaeology; it is what we do with the data that guides our research and interpretation. As the chapters in this book demonstrate, there is more than enough room in archaeology for multi-varied methodological and theoretical approaches used toward understanding the past and the people who lived that past (see VanPool and VanPool 2003). We see this occurring in Southwestern archaeology, both in the academic world and in the realm of cultural resource management (CRM); in fact, the use of smaller-scale methodological and theoretical approaches is critical to CRM work and reporting because compliance-driven projects and their often restricted parameters limit its practitioners to slices of sites and cultures where the “big picture” may not be an avenue open for pursuit. As academicians and CRM professionals continue to merge their respective research agendas, databases, and insights into a broader understanding of the past, we see again and again the value of multiple theoretical approaches, middle-range theory, multiple viewpoints—including indigenous viewpoints—and successful collaboration (e.g., see chapters in Roberts, Ahlstrom, and Roth 2004; Sebastian and Lipe 2009). The chapters in the current book are an excellent example of academic- and CRM-originated projects that ably demonstrate this point.

In the context of this book, several recent publications in Southwestern archaeology focus on the actions and motivations of people, households, communities, and related studies, such as gender and migration and the value of the viewpoints and social memories of indigenous communities (e.g., Ferguson and Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2006; Mills 2004; Roth 2010; Seymour 2011; Varien and Potter 2008a; Varien and Wilshusen 2002; chapters in Douglass and Gonlin 2012a). Many of the authors have called on researchers to refocus their efforts on understanding how households and communities are intricately and intrinsically linked together, the decision-making roles people in these societies played, and motivations that drove these decisions. The edited book here takes on that challenge and presents varied approaches in how we can merge—or at least pull various insights from—the studies of action, structuration, social memory, ethnography, households, and communities that build on previous and ongoing research through a mix of theoretical and methodological approaches. As the chapters in this book demonstrate, the results reveal both fascinating “historical” moments and longer-term trends in the archaeological data and the power of people to effect and affect change in their communities and their lives.

## **FAMILIES, HOUSEHOLDS, AND COMMUNITIES**

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### **Family and Household Concepts**

The study of decision-making units in ancient and modern societies has a long history in anthropological and archaeological research, although our approaches to the research and refinements in our understanding of social engagement and structure have in many ways evolved over the years (Blanton 1994; Netting, Wilk, and Arnould 1984; Varien and Potter 2008b; Wilk and Netting 1984; Wilk and Rathje 1982). Although disagreements arise over the definition of family, household, and community, researchers tend to agree that the family and the household are typically the basic decision-making units in most societies, especially in subsistence-level hunting-and-gathering and farming groups. The family—whether defined as the nuclear family or a larger blood-related, biologically reproductive grouping—is the most fundamental unit of human face-to-face interaction. Basic survival decision-making occurs at this level, often by the head of the family unit, whether male or female. The household can be a more inclusive, non-biologically reproducing unit and is often associated more with economic decision-making; the household can be composed of both blood-related family members and non-blood-related individuals who, for whatever reasons, have become associated with the economic decision-making and well-being of the household unit (Blanton 1994; Netting et al. 1984; Wilk and Netting 1984; Wilk and Rathje 1982). Some researchers have argued that both units require daily face-to-face contact and interaction between their members to be viable (e.g., Varien 1999), although others allow more flexibility in the timing, extent,

and purpose of contact (Mobley-Tanaka 2010; Seymour 2011). However, most researchers seem to agree that frequent and regular contact between non-related household units living within close proximity rises to another level of human interaction, which is the community (discussed in more detail in the next section).

Residential conditions and organization also do not necessarily correlate between the family and the household; for example, while we typically envision the family unit living “under one roof,” members of the household unit may or may not all live together and in fact may be spread out among various dwellings (Blanton 1994; Netting et al. 1984; Wilk and Netting 1984; Wilk and Rathje 1982). How we as archaeologists and social scientists understand and view the ways families and households organize themselves and their domestic space in turn influences interpretations of spatially derived archaeological data and what constitutes a site, village, or community. Questions such as “who lived in single-dwelling units and how were they related” and “how many single dwelling units does it take to make a village” are still not fully agreed upon by researchers. How do we compare the living space of pithouses versus pueblos, for example? The self-contained pithouse unit seems fairly straightforward as the domicile of a family, but could households also be present in these types of structures, and, if so, at what point do clusters of pithouses become a village or community (e.g., Rautman 2014:7–10; Roth, chapter 8, this volume)? Likewise, how do we view and categorize the varying sizes and layouts of surface structure sites (e.g., field houses, farmsteads, pueblos, and great house communities) and the way rooms are divided in a meaningful way related to the study of households and communities? We often attempt to find patterns and regularities in the data with regard to internal divisions of space, presence/absence of certain kinds of internal features, and contemporaneity; but then we find that replicating these patterns across the ancient cultures we study—and often within our own study area—is an elusive task, a problem many of the authors in this book grapple with (e.g., Rautman; Safi and Duff; Stokes; Whittlesey and Reid). As a result and as part of this book’s focus on engaging a multitude of approaches and theories to our research, each author must explicitly state how he or she views and understands families, households, domestic space and organization, and communities.

To assist with finding some regularity in how we view and understand households, Douglass and Gonlin (2012b:3–6) discuss how households have been conceptualized since the formative work presented by Netting (1984) and Wilk and Rathje (1982). They present five “widely recognized functions of the household: production, distribution, transmission, reproduction, and coresidence” (Douglass and Gonlin 2012b:3), which are adapted from Wilk and Netting (1984). Their review is worth presenting here; in all of the chapters in this book, elements of each are used to define how the authors are understanding households in their research, either explicitly or implicitly.

Taken from Douglass and Gonlin (2012b), *production* is human activity that procures or increases the value of resources, including basic tasks such as farming the land and grinding maize (and processing other collected resources) to improving the land and the family's or household's well-being, such as constructing houses. Tasks can be divided across many social strata, such as gendered chores, or broken down along corporate lines; failure to complete tasks can risk the survival of the household. They sum production as the "function of households, or what households do" (Douglass and Gonlin 2012:3). *Distribution* involves moving material from producers to consumers. This action involves negotiating transactions among households and can set up reciprocal relations among them. The demand and need for various kinds of material, such as food and finished products, sets in motion how households interact and often drives what they produce. *Transmission* of these products, in terms of "wealth," and non-material things (status, positions, access) often associated with social structures are part and parcel of sociopolitical systems, including inheritance of land, that are affected by or can affect other sociocultural and economic variables, such as agricultural intensification, population density, and family-household-community interactions and roles. *Reproduction* is typically the biological generation of new family members that resides more in the family than in the household realm, although the value of new offspring can have significant economic benefits to the household. Reproduction is also a form of "social reproduction" in that it socializes new family members into the worldviews of the community. Lastly, *coresidence* appears to pertain more to the definition and makeup of the family than the economic household, the latter of which retains a degree of fluidity among its members in terms of timing and duration of presence, position, membership, and influence. In other words, households are traditionally defined on behavioral terms (function = "what households do"), while families are more structural and biological based on traditional anthropological thinking.

These five criteria or "functions and processes" of households are accepted or challenged by modern researchers based on their particular methodological or theoretical positions, as described earlier in this chapter. They are basically behavioral/functional approaches to understanding the household but are also useful beginning points for studying how households (and families) negotiate the larger community around them; that is, how do households interact with other entities and organizations in their immediate sphere and those farther afield, and how are these interactions structured. Modern research approaches are asking, "what degree of household autonomy is involved and how is this negotiated, manipulated, and expressed (or repressed) in a particular society," and "what are the outcomes of decisions made at the household level that affect its well-being internally and within the larger society, typically the encompassing community?" Lastly, what are the archaeological signatures of these negotiations

and decisions that come to be preserved in the archaeological record and from which we attempt to re-create the actions, ramifications, and meanings relevant to that society? I think VanPool and VanPool (2003) are correct in that it takes a multitude of archaeological approaches to begin to understand ancient households and the world around them.

### **The Community Concept**

At its most basic level as used by archaeologists, Southwestern archaeologists in particular, the community is composed of at least two but typically many distinct family or household units residing in the same general geographic space at the same time, having regular face-to-face interaction, and sharing in the operation and maintenance of the larger composite group and its structures through their social, economic, and cultural commonalities and interests (Nelson 1994; Varien 1999:19–23; Varien and Potter 2008b). Rautman (2014:39) defines a “village community” that she views as a social group at a certain time and place that can extend beyond any one person’s lifetime and experience; it has a definite sense of location and place within a cultural and natural landscape. Kolb and Snead (1997:611) argue that at its most basic level, a community is a minimal, spatially defined locus of human activity that incorporates social reproduction, subsistence production, and self-identification. Their view of the basic function of a community is generally in line with aspects of the five functions of households presented above but at a larger scale that encompasses a larger group of people (e.g., multiple households).

Communities can be short or long term in duration, with most having some sort of temporal duration longer than temporary or situational face-to-face interactions (Varien 1999:19). However, communities may or may not be closely packed groupings of people who have regular face-to-face contact; what makes a “community” can transcend time, place, and proximity through other means of identity building and bonding agents, such as shared experiences, religion, and histories (Hegmon 2008; Varien and Potter 2008b:5–6; Yeager and Canuto 2000). In addition, what constitutes a community on the landscape is not a concept that is agreed upon by archaeologists. At its most basic level (several non-related families or households co-residing in a spatially defined space), the community concept can become so diluted because of the sheer number of such occurrences across the landscape that it loses its explanatory value. But at what point in size and scale does a cluster of domiciles and related infrastructure become a true village-community that satisfies the perceptions of most archaeologists?

Related to this discussion are disagreements among archaeologists on the use and meaning of three terms typically used in the literature: site, village, and community. What constitutes each? In most uses, a site is simply a location on the landscape with evidence of past human presence. It can encompass much

more than a single example of rock art, a small scatter of chipped stone, or a series of checkdams in a drainage channel, although a village is more often thought of as a “site” than are communities. The latter is often conceptualized as a larger accumulation of residences and infrastructure and can potentially include several villages, depending on one’s definition of community. Village and community are often used interchangeably in the literature, although community tends to be larger and more complex in scale and takes on an ideational element. Using this line of thinking, how do we define clusters of small habitation sites encircling a larger habitation site; is the true community the single large village, or does the entire constellation of sites surrounding it form the community (see Stokes, chapter 4, this volume)? Why can’t both be true? Likewise, at what outward scale of settlement occurrences on the landscape does the community concept again become diluted; that is, when so many habitation sites across the landscape are viewed as a community at a grand scale (e.g., Fish, Fish, and Madsen 1992), how can we be sure we have not created a community writ large that was not actually viewed that way by the residents? These are problems with scale, proximity, and boundaries that archaeologists struggle with on a regular basis, as pointed out by Varien and Potter (2008b).

Regardless of our conceptions of scale and proximity, a host of social ramifications are expected to occur when groups of people live together. A limited number of social units operating in a community may make it easier to dissolve the composite group or to live within a looser, more limited set of rules and expectations (social structures), while a larger number of social units often requires more rigidity in rules, behavioral expectations, social distinctions, and political elaboration as the complexity of the social group increases (Trinkhaus 1987). While basic decision-making still operates at the level of the family or household, these units relinquish a portion of their autonomy to live in a structured society (Giddens 1984). In other words, a higher level of authority and decision-making maintains the community system, although the location of that authority could reside in a multitude of persons and structures, from religious authority to status and rank among the heads of families and households to elected or inherited positions (Giddens 1984). The social units forming the community live their lives according to their traditions, expectations, and needs; but their actions may conflict at times with the expectations of the community, whether intentional or unintentional, which is the recursive nature of agency and structure described by Hegmon (2008) and Varien and Potter (2008b). These stresses and tensions are a part of life in any community, and under certain conditions they can either tear communities apart or bring them together to face challenges—whether those challenges are economic, environmental, religious, or stressful, such as real or perceived violence (e.g., see Gumerman and Gell-Mann 1994; Haas and Creamer 1993; Tainter and Tainter 1996).

Taking a broader view and reviewing the theoretical perspectives of the community concept, Yeager and Canuto (2000:2–3) present four evolving (in a sense) approaches archaeologists have taken to study and understand the community. The *structural-functionalist* approach is “focused primarily on the functions that a community serves within a social structure.” This perspective takes its cue from the writings of Murdock (1949) based on his cross-cultural approach to studying human societies and is heavily dependent on ethnographic research. As Yeager and Canuto (2000:2) state, “The community is a co-residential collection of individuals or households characterized by day-to-day interaction, shared experiences, and common culture,” and they go on to note that this perspective is based on the view that the community is a natural phenomenon that serves the society. Much of the structural-functionalist approach is still present in Southwestern archaeology, although refined and in some ways broadened to encompass individual experience and action as defined by Kolb and Snead (1997).

Yeager and Canuto’s (2000) second approach is the *historical-developmental* reaction against the structural-functionalist perspective. The historical-developmental approach stresses the external and historical roles and forces that affect communities, especially those coming into existence. These external forces would tend to shape the community being affected in many different ways, leading to specific historical trajectories that defy Murdock’s cross-cultural commonalities. This approach is a move away from monolithic notions of natural communities that have commonalities across most human societies. Yeager and Canuto (2000:2) note that this approach, however, de-emphasizes the role of local generative forces that shape specific communities and that the external forces described for this approach are inevitably transformed as they are internalized by the receiving community. That is, the local structures and social relationships that are fundamental to a specific community are not necessarily swept aside by the forces of world systems.

Their third defined approach is the *ideational* approach, which “focus[es] on how people perceive themselves and their place in a community” (Yeager and Canuto 2000:2). Within this approach, how a person views him- or herself is more fluid and plastic than monolithic models of community and those who reside in them allow. Perceptions of oneself and his or her role(s) in society can shift based on specific situations and what they are willing to share about themselves with others in the group or community and what they may expect from others in return. Therefore, social identity is negotiated, although not all members of the community may share in these perceptions of identity and how they relate to membership and other social issues. This approach seems to place emphasis on individuality while diminishing the role of social structures and the constraints they may place on their members.

The fourth approach defined by Yeager and Canuto (2000:3) is the *interactional* approach, which focuses more on relationships among community members. Here, it is the interaction among community members that is a necessary condition of a community's existence and of structuring the society. This approach is a practice- and agent-based perspective in which the community is socially constituted and individual practice is the nexus for patterned processes that create and re-create society, as defined by Bourdieu (1977) and refined by Giddens (1984) as structuration theory. This approach, however, allows for the incorporation of the spatial and material aspects of archaeology that form the core of our profession. The interactional approach has recently achieved prominence in Southwestern archaeological research and has produced exciting new insights into the ancient societies of this region (e.g., Mills 2004; Varien and Potter 2008a; Varien and Wilshusen 2002).

As part of the discussion of what "community" means and how it is best defined and studied, Isbell (2000) draws a distinction between the *natural community* and the *imagined community*. The natural community is a concept that is "a real and bounded entity, a static, natural unit of comparative social science," while the imagined community is defined "as process, an imagined community constructed in competing discourses, dynamic, contingent, and contradictory" (Isbell 2000:245). Within the natural community, there is a belief of a universal and natural unit of human social organization that archaeologists can define and study in the archaeological record, although the form a community takes is dependent on local historical contexts and histories. Isbell (2000) calls out specifically Kolb and Snead (1997) as researchers who employ the concept of natural community in their work. In their view, a community is defined in terms of several interlocking criteria, which consist of a population of individuals who interact regularly and whose repeated interactions economically and socially reproduce the group (Kolb and Snead 1997:611). They also suggest that the community controls land and organizes labor; in addition, residents share a common sense of membership based on common interests and create a territorially discrete community that can be expanded to include shared cultural landscapes (something shared in common that is larger than the physically defined "village").

Isbell (2000:248) critiques their understanding of community as a natural condition of human experience as a circular argument that first defines an ideal type and then uses the archaeological record to find that ideal type while ignoring human intentionality that shapes and defines the process of community construction. Kolb and Snead (1997:612) argue that they are not defining a "universal" type of community and reiterate that a community is the product of its particular local history and context. That is, there may be any number of types of communities, but for their study areas, the type they define appears to match well with the archaeological record.

In contrast to Kolb and Snead, Isbell (2000:249) argues that archaeologists should be focusing on the imagined community, which is the opposite of the stable natural community: the imagined community “is volatile, characterized by dynamism rather than permanence . . . is fluid and changing as actors select alternatives available, strive to create new ones, and pursue the goals they perceive.” Isbell (2000:249) notes other characteristics of the imagined community approach, including the creative power of self-awareness and reflexive monitoring of situations, the study of contingent change rather than universal cultural evolution, and the fact that it “populates the past with individuals who behave like interested agents and uncovers social factions that promote agendas opposed by others, who struggle to resist them.” His focus on individual intentionality and strategies and sometimes their unexpected outcomes is embraced by many Southwestern archaeologists (see Varien and Potter 2008a) and archaeologists in other regions (Pauketat 2000) as a way to break the hegemony of external factors alone driving decision-making in the bounded, homeostatic, functional stasis worldview many archaeologists have toward the prehistoric past (Isbell 2000:250).

The imagined community approach brings the individual to the forefront, but at the expense of the natural community and cross-cultural patterns and interpretations of community. In Isbell’s (2000:250) view, the study of the individual, factions, interest groups, alternative discourses, experiences, identities, and intended and unintended outcomes is of more value to understanding communities and the past in general in all its nuances and motivating factors than what he sees as the baggage associated with the natural community concept and approach. Several authors in this edited book embrace the imagined community fully or in some degree, either explicitly (Potter; Rodriguez and Seymour) or implicitly (Seymour; Whittlesey and Reid), while others tend to move back and forth between the two approaches (Roth; Safi and Duff; Wallace and Lindeman), which suggests that Isbell’s (2000:263) stand that archaeologists should embrace the imagined community and discard the natural community to move our profession forward may not be the prudent course of action after all. In fact, two authors in this edited volume, Rautman and Stokes, reinvigorate the use of cross-cultural insights derived from ethnographic examples to better understand the possible motivations behind the social use of round pueblos—a rare form of pueblo in the American Southwest—and the adoption of land-tenure rules and obligations to explain the formation of new communities in remote locations away from older, well-established communities in more agriculturally ideal locations. I think the takeaway from the preceding discussion on the various concepts of community used by archaeologists is that a multi-varied approach to its study produces more insights than any one approach alone.

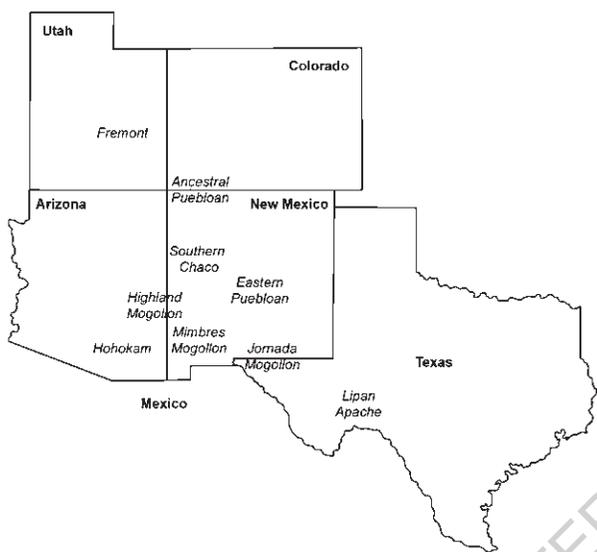
## **Families, Households, and Communities Redux**

To summarize the positions outlined above and the author's personal view of households and communities, there appears to always be dynamic interplay between the community and its constituent social units, and the coalescence and breakup of communities and societies we see over and over again in the American Southwest are testament to this dynamism (e.g., Nelson 1999; see Wills and Leonard 1994b). Therefore, it is important to study families, households, and communities not in isolation but as dynamic and fluid social units and structures that constantly influence, change, and reinforce each other (Douglass and Gonlin 2012a; Varien and Potter 2008b). For example, although we acknowledge that family and household units make decisions for the benefit of their specific members for their specific needs, they do so under the rules and structures of the community (Hegmon 2008); the community can censure or condone these decisions or enforce overriding decisions of its own through the mechanisms of its authority. As several authors in this book describe from their case studies, tensions and conflicting decisions made by some community members can lead to potential and actual problems and even violence that can tear the community apart (Potter; Whittlesey and Reid), or the community finds alternative solutions that, for a while at least, may forestall potential violence and community breakup (Rodriguez and Seymour; Safi and Duff; Stokes). The way people and communities work to avoid potentially destabilizing elements and situations that could disrupt the structure of society demonstrates the productiveness—or destructiveness—of groups trying to live together. This dynamic interplay between people and communities, and the outcomes of individual and group decision-making with intended and unintended outcomes, are the focus of the chapters in this book. Together, they reveal important insights toward understanding the people who made the American Southwest their home.

## **ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK**

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The book is divided into two general themes under the umbrella of household and community interaction based on the approaches taken by the various authors, whose only instruction from the book editor was to present new research that takes into account the roles both households and communities play; the emphasis could focus on one or the other in more detail, but an integration of the two was necessary. No predetermined theoretical perspective was required to participate in this book. As a result, the chapters fall neatly into the two general categories discussed here based on whether they focused more on households and decision-making strategies or on communities, their structures, and integration of households: (1) household action, decision-making, identity, and structural relations within communities; and (2) community organization and structures of integration, the role of households in the community, and change



**FIGURE 1.1.**  
*Southwestern United States regional map and culture areas discussed in this book*

through time. There is, of course, overlap between these two general themes in all of the chapters, demonstrating the broadly applicable research agenda and focus for this book. The chapters and the research presented in them also draw from all corners of the American Southwest, including the traditionally defined major culture areas (Ancestral Puebloan/Anasazi, Mogollon, and Hohokam) but also areas often viewed (unfortunately) as “peripheral” or “marginal” to the Southwestern cultural core (Fremont and Jornada Mogollon) and social groups closer to our own time (figure 1.1). As a result, the chapters as a whole also cover a long period of time, from early villages in the American Southwest to the “classic” periods of the great ancient cultures to the twenty-first century, demonstrating that the study of households and communities knows no time or ethnic boundaries for archaeological study and understanding human behavior and motivations.

The six chapters that fall into the first theme focus on the roles of individuals and subsets of the larger community and the outcomes and consequences of their negotiations with the larger society surrounding them. A common perspective is that individuals—acting on their own or for the benefit of their family, household, or subset of the larger group—often make decisions that they perceive to be beneficial for their own well-being despite often detrimental effects in the long term to them or to the larger group. Thus decision-making and intentional and unintentional outcomes play a central role in the study of agency and action (Hegmon 2008), with all of the chapters acknowledging that while individual action is the most basic level of decision-making, the actors rarely operate in a way that falls completely outside of the social structures, traditions,

and expectations within which they live (the community). That is, no one can be completely unpredictable in their behavior, beliefs, or decisions; if they were, the result would be social chaos (Hegmon 2008). Humans, perhaps paradoxically, are individual social actors who live in structured worlds, and the tendency seems to be for groups to find ways to cooperate, but it is just as instructive when non-cooperation is detected in the archaeological record.

James Potter's chapter is the most explicit agency and structuration approach to the study of households and communities. Potter focuses on stresses that arose in the Ridges Basin community in southwestern Colorado when several groups of unrelated Ancestral Puebloan villagers chose to—or were forced to—live together and form a new community. The friction that arose between the groups resulted in a decision-making process that led one group to attack the other. The initial result may have been satisfactory to a point for the attackers, but within a short period of time the entire community broke up and dispersed; the scene of the violence, the Ridges Basin community, was never reoccupied. Based on ethnographic Puebloan belief systems, Potter suggests that witchcraft may have been used by some as a rallying point to instigate the violence against those accused, leading to the disastrous results eventually suffered by the entire community. The perceived witchcraft may have been a “smoke screen” of sorts to cover underlying problems (social, ethnic, and environmental), but the individual actors chose to accept the proffered accusation and to act on it in a violent way. Potter weaves an intricate story that blends archaeology, ethnology, and human action into a theme that has universal implications, both past and present.

Stephanie Whittlesey and Jeff Reid's chapter follows in the same vein as Potter's; they focus on coresidence that occurred at a Mogollon pueblo in east-central Arizona and the eventual dissolution of the community that resulted. Their research at Chodistaas Pueblo documents the arrival of immigrants to the existing small pueblo, who initiate socio-cultural change in order to assimilate to a degree but that eventually fails. They document a rapid change in household structure, as manifested in the archaeological remains of rooms at the site, which they argue shows the lengths individuals were willing to go to attempt assimilation, followed by blatant demonstrations of their differences from the host group as tensions mounted. As the authors demonstrate and similar to Potter, the end results were deleterious to the community; evidence for violence was found at the site, which like Ridges Basin was abandoned by the surviving villagers.

Robert Stokes also focuses on the actions of individual families and households that are used to explain in detail how satellite villages are formed both around primary villages and in more distant areas and how these dispersed villages form a community system. The satellite villages he focuses on are not just those in close proximity to the primary village but also those in less desirable places on the landscape. Archaeologists have long studied the creation of new

communities but have typically viewed their development as a natural outcome of population increase and agricultural intensification; Stokes, however, finds that often there is more going on in the process than previously thought. He reviews ethnographic examples of farming communities and societies under stress and the conditions that led to individuals making the decision to leave their home village. Several commonalities arise in the literature that Stokes argues can be applicable to understanding this process in ancient Southwestern communities, including restricted resources, land tenure and ownership, and the development of a landless subclass within the society. He demonstrates how individuals and communities often work against each other but also how sometimes they work with each other to alleviate growing stresses in the community. He argues that unlike modern societies, ancient societies could not sustain these kinds of stresses for long, even with sanctioning of new satellite villages, before the society broke down and a period of change ensued.

Henry Wallace and Michael Lindeman examine community stresses at two major Hohokam villages in the Tucson Basin of Arizona, with relevant comparisons to well-known major villages in the Salt and Gila River Basins to the north to illustrate their village-specific and region-wide points. They use the concept of social distancing to illustrate the breakdown of centuries-old social practices and the slow breakup of communities during the late Pre-Classic period, culminating in the dramatic social, political, and economic changes documented for the Classic period. However, they argue that this was not the abrupt change to the Classic period that is so often argued for by other archaeologists; nor do they view the Sedentary period of the late Pre-Classic period as a time of expanding population taking advantage of generally good environmental conditions. Instead, they see the formation of new “villages” during the Sedentary period resulting from households, household grouping, and potentially lineages breaking away from the established villages over several generations in a process they describe as “de-aggregation.” Thus the new villages do not represent the outcome of population growth and concomitant stresses but rather population dispersal arising from the depopulation of the older villages as a result of the breakdown of centuries-old social and community structures. And yet, many of these new villages lie within a few minutes’ walking distance of the established villages, indicating to the authors that while some level of social fragmentation was occurring, it was not complete or abrupt; people were distancing themselves from the old regime in a sense, but in many cases only symbolically. Many of the households in the older communities were making a statement about the established order, culminating eventually with the major transformations associated with the Classic period Hohokam. Their chapter provides an insightful analysis of both why new villages and community systems form and how households affect and are affected by the larger community.

Deni Seymour's chapter takes the reader into the present to understand ancient communities who host short-term visitors. She creatively uses analogy involving modern "snowbirds" who migrate south for the winter and descend upon warm-weather towns and cities. She describes various scenarios involving the visitors and their host communities but focuses on the efforts of the visitors to maintain their separateness from their hosts. This includes forming their own enclaves, often along the margins of the host community, and proudly displaying emblems of their ethnic, national, or other unifying identities. As residents of Arizona and Florida well know, these snowbird communities are often easily identified based on the presence of recreational vehicles tightly clustered behind stone walls with the flags of Canada, Minnesota, or the Green Bay Packers flying on flagpoles. The snowbirds interact with locals, primarily through economic activities, but they generally keep to themselves as a distinct group until the weather warms up north and the reverse migration begins. The locals accept the presence of the outsiders, and many count on the income generated by snowbirds shopping at their stores and using their services, but in general there is little intermingling; often, the signatures of their short stay are muted compared to the local footprint of the host community. Seymour uses these insights to understand how the ancient Ancestral Puebloans living along the margins of the American Southwest/Great Plains viewed seasonal nomadic tribal visitors to their villages. We can see that at times the relations were not always easy and that the visitors usually encamped at a respectful distance, but for a short period of time they became an extension of the established village. Her insights help us to understand relations between groups following different economic patterns and to decipher the often enigmatic meaning of ephemeral camps around established villages.

Oscar Rodriguez and Deni Seymour's chapter takes a close look at the history of the "disappeared" Lipan Apache in Texas and adjoining areas and provides a strong argument that the Lipan are indeed still present in the modern world. Although the Lipan were never granted recognition by the federal government or provided with their own reservation in Texas or adjoining states (but were recognized by the state), they survived the tumultuous 1800s to mid-1900s by moving as smaller groups into neighboring communities and other Apache reservations (e.g., Mescalero Apache); the authors describe this process as "enclavement." They argue that because the Lipan were traditionally mobile and moved in smaller groups across the landscape of southwest Texas and northern Mexico, living in small enclaves was not necessarily foreign to their traditions; in fact, living as a large group on a reservation as a recognized "nation" would have been more foreign to them as a traditionally mobile group. In order to survive Mexican and Euro-American domination, they adopted outward signs of being "Mexican," for example, while maintaining their Lipan traditions in the enclaves. This

conscious choice made by small groups of Lipan enabled them to adapt—literally survive—within a changing world but also made them “disappear” to the outside world. Their chapter is a fascinating study of the adaptability of the human spirit during trying times and a cautionary tale to archaeologists who see ancient cultures “disappearing” because they no longer appear as they once did.

The five chapters that follow the book’s second main theme focus on studies of community organization and layout and the role individual households and community structures play in the development and maintenance of the community, which often changes over time. Three of the chapters (Barbara Roth; Katie Richards et al.; and Myles Miller) examine the roles played by communal and analogous structures as the focal point of community development and maintenance, focusing especially on the relationships between these structures and households. The communal structures are seen as integration facilities used by a still somewhat dispersed community, although the level and types of integration examined vary among the chapters. The other two chapters focus on the structural organization of the community and the use of “big” structures that transcend communal structures; it is the household acceptance of such structures and the social organization within them that intrigue Alison Rautman, and Kristin Safi and Andrew Duff in their chapters.

The three chapters by Roth, Richards and colleagues, and Miller are remarkably similar given their widely distant areas of study; in fact, the Mimbres and Jornada Mogollon sites that Roth and Miller investigate in southwestern and south-central New Mexico and the Fremont villages in south-central Utah investigated by Richards and coauthors are about as far apart as one can get in the greater American Southwest. Yet their studies reveal that the trajectories of community formation and integration are similar: households and household clusters form loosely aggregated villages and communities that coalesce around communal structures. The village layouts are similar, in that it appears households retain their separate dwellings but cluster themselves among other related households. These, in turn, are clustered around or adjacent to communal-type structures, and an “idea” of belonging to a “community” begins to form. The three chapters examine the history of the settlements by focusing on how households moved toward less autonomy and village life under higher, unifying levels of integration and its mechanisms/locations of authority, whether secular or sacred, but they also document that these households retained their separate identities over time.

Roth focuses on social memory to link descendants to their ancestors at a Mimbres Mogollon pithouse village, while Richards and coauthors and Miller document rebuilding episodes and the use of communal structures in close proximity to residential units in the Fremont and Jornada Mogollon. The Fremont example and the placement of communal structures set a little apart from the residences

is remarkably similar to Roth's Mimbres Mogollon example of how closely integrated the "villagers" may have been as they built their house clusters close to communal structures. Or stated another way, they illustrate how much autonomy individual households or household groupings retained during their experiments at forming a higher level of social integration and living arrangements. In contrast, Miller notes that in the Jornada Mogollon during the El Paso phase (a time of adobe pueblo construction), communal spaces—in this case, larger, more elaborate rooms—were physically built into the pueblo structures. He examines why the pueblo inhabitants chose to incorporate communal rooms into their dwelling units instead of building standalone units described by Roth and Richards and colleagues for their sites and what this may mean for the integration of households into the larger community. Interestingly, later period Mimbres Mogollon pueblo communities also appear to have incorporated communal rooms into some of the room blocks comprising their community (Shafer 2003), with plazas replacing the earlier standalone kivas as the focus of the village. Miller's insights may provide interesting parallels for Mimbres researchers and vice versa.

It appears from these studies that social integration was an experiment undertaken by the Mogollon and Fremont among groups of people more accustomed to individuality and autonomy, which, although successful for a period of time, eventually came apart. At that point the villages were either abandoned or replaced with pueblo-like structures and perhaps a different kind of social structure. Perhaps this resulted from households trying to be both autonomous and integrated, creating a tension that eventually caused social rifts that even ceremonialism focused on the communal structures could not undo. While the Mimbres Mogollon continued their experimentation toward full social integration, culminating in the Classic (Pueblo) period and its concomitant stresses documented in Stokes's chapter (chapter 4, this volume), the Fremont and to a degree the Jornada Mogollon seem to have never achieved the level of community integration seen among the Classic period Mimbres.

Alison Rautman's and Kristin Safi and Andrew Duff's chapters examine full-fledged and integrated communities in the eastern Ancestral Puebloan (Anasazi) and Chacoan areas of east-central and west-central New Mexico. Whereas Roth and Richards and coauthors focus on initial efforts at integration of households focusing on "standalone" communal structures, Rautman and Safi and Duff examine larger concentrations of people in what are often large massed structures.

Rautman looks at the development of round pueblos and the meaning behind what this unusual construction shape meant to the site's occupants. To do this, she examines the ethnographic record from various places across the globe where round structures were used to integrate large numbers of people. From the insights gained from anthropological research, she applies what she has

learned to the “round” pueblos in the American Southwest, which she documents are actually few in number. But several are quite famous (e.g., Tyuonyi and Gran Quivera), and most are large structures that likely housed more than 100 people each. She furthers her study by looking at how the pueblos were arranged internally and finds that they were likely divided into household clusters, although with everyone living, in a sense, under one roof. The “single large pueblo” housing of Puebloan groups was not the dominant arrangement over time, although several areas in the prehistoric American Southwest contained well-documented instances of large massed single-structure pueblos (e.g., Chaco Canyon, Mesa Verde/Crow Canyon, Salado of the Tonto Basin). A more typical arrangement was clustered room blocks, a trait that also characterizes most of the current Puebloan communities of northern New Mexico and northeastern Arizona. However, by using insights gained from ethnographic examples, Rautman sheds some light on why large-scale integration within single massed buildings occurs, why in some cases round pueblos are chosen over the more “typical” blocky style, and what we can learn about household integration into tightly packed communities.

Safi and Duff investigate Chacoan outlier settlements in the greater Quemado/Largo area of west-central New Mexico, which they term “great house communities” based on similarities to Chacoan communities to the north. These communities are based on the Chaco Canyon model of pueblo construction, although often at a smaller scale compared to such famous sites in Chaco Canyon as Pueblo Bonito and Pueblo Alto. However, the basic plan is similar, with a massed main pueblo (aka great house) enclosed by an encircling wall or bank of rooms, with open areas and often built-in and standalone kiva (communal) structures within the enclosure. That is, the village is massed and focused inward toward the “great house” and plaza kivas, with layers of social integration within the enclosure. They focus on households in the great house communities in their study area and attempt to demonstrate that they did not share in a common origin area or specific histories, although they operated within the overarching “Chacoan” structure. The authors examine pottery collections from the three great house sites examined in their chapter and conclude that the ceramic types point to multiple origin areas, perhaps reflecting some level of migration and subsequent integration into a dominant social pattern. This finding is similar to Whittlesey and Reid’s understanding, although in their case the integration seems to have been forced and strained at Chodistaas while the integration effort seems to have been more voluntary and successful at the great house communities. Perhaps a stronger ceremonial-religious system focused on the kivas or a willingness to intermarry played roles in this success, but Safi and Duff document a “success story” of sorts of household integration into a larger functioning community than many of the other authors find in their study areas.

## **MOVING TOWARD THE BIG PICTURE**

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As the chapters in this book demonstrate, by using multiple theoretical approaches and ethnographical examples in several cases to bridge the gap between theory and data, archaeologists can demonstrate useful insights into the ancient people of the greater American Southwest. The fluidity of households and communities is seen as a source of strength in our collective research and documents the willingness of these ancient people to experiment with the concept of living in larger physical and ideational communities. In most cases, these people were neither fully autonomous households acting completely independent of other groups nor fully realized communal villagers living in harmony with each other and the land. Neither were they strictly stuck in the middle of these two extremes; clearly, as the chapters demonstrate, people acted along a continuum between the two extremes, creating unique—yet often surprisingly similar—end results. Their success at creating stable communities of related, less related, and unrelated households varied across the greater American Southwest; sometimes the experiments failed quickly, often violently, while in other cases the communities remained relatively stable for hundreds of years.

In many of the case studies presented in this book, a focusing agent was used to assist with the integration process, whether communal structures/rooms, kivas, great houses, mounds, or other analogous structures. It seems that these people recognized that a larger sociopolitical entity was needed to provide a common point of reference that allowed people to live together in the absence of warlords, elite classes, or other similar social-class distinctions as seen elsewhere in the Americas. Without an overarching social structure, enacting rules and expectations in communities will ultimately fail as a result of rejection by, for example, households. There must be a mechanism that allows people to accept a loss of autonomy in favor of increased community participation and the “things” communities bring, such as stability, security, identity, and a sense of belonging. As editor of this book, I am extremely pleased that the authors were able to bring to fruition their various insights on households and communities as presented in their chapters, especially when the research focus and theoretical perspective followed are not uniform. The chapters blend the studies of households and communities into dynamic stories of past peoples, which is after all one of the important missions of archaeology.

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