On America

DUALITY IN MODERN CHIRICAHUA APACHE SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

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THE LOCATION AND EFFICIENCY OF SETTLEMENT PATTERNS ARE OFTEN THE RESULT OF CONFLICTS between political entities. Invading political powers have used relocation of population and destruction of first-world patterns of adaptation as methods to control geographic area. This paper interprets the changing settlement patterns of the Chiricahua Apache Indians of the American Southwest as indicative of a conflict in human territoriality. From the early nineteenth century the United States government sought to dominate the territoriality of the Chiricahua through historic policies aimed at assimilating American Indians into mainstream American culture. But human territoriality is based on mechanisms that can be enforced or withdrawn, and since 1950 a relaxation of U.S. territoriality in regard to the Chiricahua has occurred. In this context, modern Chiricahua settlement patterns now indicate a reassertion of traditional Chiricahua spatial patterns. This has, however, occurred in ways that are indicative of third-world spatial conditions and social relationships. The duality of Chiricahua settlement patterns over time allows a unique opportunity to investigate the difference between first- and third-world patterns for inhabiting the same area.

Modern settlement patterns of American Indians are the result of changes in the balance of power between indigenous North Americans, European colonists, and the descendants of both groups. Within this framework, historic changes in the settlement patterns of the Chiricahua Apache of the American Southwest can be seen as indicative of a changing political relationship between American Indians and the United States government. This paper geographically interprets Chiricahua settlement patterns by applying Robert Sack's theory of human territoriality.¹

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As defined by Sack, human territoriality is "the attempt by an individual or group to affect, influence, or control people, phenomena, and relationships, by limiting and asserting control over a geographic area." Beginning in the early nineteenth century, Indians in the American Southwest experienced a challenge to their territoriality by the United States government, as the new nation expanded its control of land and resources on the North American continent. Escalating U.S. territoriality had many effects on the Chiricahua Apache, including the disruption of traditional patterns of settlement. The effect of this conflict in territorialities has shaped the spatial conditions of Chiricahua settlement since 1800.

Prior to the extension of American territoriality into the Southwest, the Chiricahua occupied a mountainous area straddling what is now the international border between the United States and Mexico. Chiricahua settlement patterns were temporary, tied directly to the seasonal availability of resources, and social relations with other Apache were generally defined by area. Today, modern Chiricahua settlement patterns can be identified as the result of historic U.S. government policies that regulated Native American settlement patterns and social relations, with the goal of assimilating Indians into mainstream American society. Recent investigation, however, indicates that in the era of relaxed U.S. government territoriality since 1950, modern Chiricahua have been able to re-create settlement patterns similar to pre-contact culture (FIG. 1). Evidence of this trend can be seen both on the Mescalero Apache Reservation in New Mexico and on allotted lands in Oklahoma, the two areas where remaining members of the tribe now reside.

First-world, first-people's cultures have often been modified over time to their present condition of third-world spatial and social relationships. Critical examination of the duality of the Chiricahua Apache settlement experience provides descriptive evidence for testing theoretical relationships between first-world inhabitants of an area and third-world occupants of the same space.

SETTLEMENT PATTERNS AS SPATIAL AND SOCIAL ARTIFACTS

The study of settlement patterns is a dominant theme in the discipline of geography. Geography explores the relationships between humans and the land, including the location and function of places used for human habitation. American geographers began to evaluate settlement patterns in the 1920s by identifying physical and cultural components of unique areas. Carl Ortwin Sauer was instrumental in developing geographic knowledge with regard to settlement patterns. During his tenure at the University of California, Berkeley, he established the significance of settlement patterns as indicators of cultural landscapes.

According to Sauer, settlement location, arrangement, and function could be interpreted as indicators of culture and cultural adaptation to physical and social settings. He based his assertion on settlement and land-use data gathered by his students.

One of Sauer's students, Fred B. Kniffen, extended Sauer's focus on culturally defined landscapes. He established himself at Louisiana State University (LSU) in 1930 and began to pursue a study of the impact of material culture on landscape and systematic geography, relying on the spatial principle of diffusion and the cultural principle of adaptation. Kniffen is perhaps best known for his work on American folk housing, which he used to interpret culture regions.

Kniffen encouraged his students to make their own contributions to geographical knowledge of settlement patterns. A new generation of cultural geographers schooled in his work documented how the location and form of residences could be used as diagnostic indicators of social morphology within regional landscapes. One of Kniffen's students, Milton B. Newton, Jr., later Professor of Geography at LSU, identified settlement patterns as artifacts of social relations. In particular, he identified the spatial organization of social relations in the Upland South culture of eastern Louisiana on the basis of settlement patterns. His research led him to state that settlement patterns indicate a "tangible expression of the configuration of culture," and that they "reflect different social facts."

SETTLEMENT PATTERNS AS EXPRESSED HUMAN TERRITORIALITY

The Berkeley School, as defined by Sauer and extended by Kniffen and Newton, provided a considerable quantity of descriptive data but did not forward theoretical explanations for changes in settlement patterns over time. However, Sack's theory of human territoriality does offer such an explanation. Sack identified the control of geographical area and activities in an area as a function of human territoriality. His theory specifically addresses issues of land use, social and political organization in space, and the appearance of value-associated places over time. Human territoriality differs from biological territoriality in that it is based on forms of control that can be conceived and communicated. The mechanisms that allow this control can be intermittently enforced or withdrawn at the pleasure of the more powerful groups in an area. Control in this sense does not have to be aggressive, but it is the
Transition in both the location and character of Chiricahua Apache settlements is documented by historical records. The modern Chiricahua descend from three bands of Apache who shared similar culture traits and inhabited a common territory in the American Southwest. The process of subsequent relocation and resettlement can be traced on the American landscape, each relocation coming as the result of changes in U.S. Indian policy (FIG. 2).

The anthropologist Morris E. Opler conducted extensive ethnographic and ecological research among the Chiricahua.

His account of Chiricahua culture cited original Spanish and American sources. Spanish records describe spatial behavior among the three bands that included patterns of subsistence, settlement, and political interaction. According to Spanish military and missionary sources, the bands collectively occupied an area encompassing what is today southeastern Arizona, southwestern New Mexico, and northern Sonora and Chihuahua, Mexico. The culture area was recognizable as distinct from that of other Apache groups because of differences in linguistic, kinship, and subsistence patterns.

The bands were both politically and culturally distinct from other Apache tribes who occupied areas to the north and east. Tribal territory was mutually recognized by fluid, but defined, boundaries. In 1540 the Spanish explorer Coronado identified the Chiricahua bands as hunters and gatherers who resided in temporary rancherias. Coronado's report of rancheria settlements was confirmed by later Spanish military explorers and priests. The Spanish term rancheria, or rancho, was used to describe a rural cluster of huts or shanties.

In the case of the Chiricahua, research indicates that matrilocal bands moved from one location to another based on the availability of resources. Spatial movement was led by males, who successfully identified the location of new resource sites. Once at a site, women erected tepees or oak arbors in close proximity to one another. Residential proximity increased.
opportunities to share responsibilities for food-gathering and preparation, child-rearing, and preparation for ceremonial events. Pre-contact Chiricahua settlement patterns were dependent on access to an extensive area with a variety of topographical features and water sources. Specific settlements included the social dynamics of matrilocal customs.

THE CHIRICAHUA APACHE AND EXPANDING U.S. TERRITORIALITY

The United States government extended its territoriality into the American Southwest after 1800. The expansion included annexation of the Republic of Texas in 1845 and a military conflict with Mexico that resulted in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. In 1853 the Gadsden Purchase (southern Arizona and New Mexico) expanded the American territory to include nearly all of the three Chiricahua bands' territory and established some measure of authority over the activities of all three bands, including that located farthest south in Mexico. The Chiricahua, who had formerly resided on the northern fringe of Mexican control, now found themselves within the administrative control of the United States government.

The expansion of American territoriality into Chiricahua territory precipitated a conflict that eventually led to the resettlement of the Chiricahua Apache. The first sign of conflict occurred when U.S. General Stephen Watts Kearny offered protection to American settlers and miners attracted to the land and mineral resources of the Southwest. Kearny's promise amounted to a military attack on the Chiricahua, who depended on open lands for nomadic hunting and gathering and now found themselves in direct conflict with Americans seeking land and resources in the area.

Military conflict between American troops and Chiricahua bands escalated over a period of thirty years. Intermittent peacemaking attempts were dissolved before they could have much effect. Quick to anger, American military officers vowed to exterminate the bands, while the Chiricahua became ever more aggressive in their desire to defend their territory and cultural identity.

Chiricahua settlement patterns during this period were dramatically altered. The bands found themselves cut off from their traditional mountain territories, subsistence areas, and water sources, unable to hunt and gather according to social habits. The breakdown in social relations extended to disruptions of matrilocal customs, family ties, and traditional male hunting roles. Occasional periods of settlement on the reservations of other Apache groups also disrupted traditional relations between the Chiricahua and the other Apache tribes.

Between 1860 and 1883 the United States government proposed a number of reservation locations and rationing systems in order to limit the extent of Chiricahua location and activity. But negotiations between the Chiricahua and the federal government were never completed due to land claims by settlers, deceptive actions by military officers, interference from other southwestern Indians, and fears that the U.S. government would not honor treaties. The seventeen-year period was marked by military conflict, murder, and constant relocation of the bands. Each of the bands lost their primary leaders in violent encounters with U.S. military forces. The bands also experienced political and cultural fragmentation, loss of geographic area, and a general decline in population.

In 1884 a majority of Chiricahua Apache agreed to settle on the San Carlos Apache Reservation in eastern Arizona. The entire population was placed under the control of General George Crook. Crook's goal was to encourage the Chiricahua to adopt permanent residences and a new lifestyle based on farming. Progress toward cultural assimilation was supervised by military police who relied on informants to identify those who did not obey reservation rules and procedures.

Fear and distrust of the police culminated in desertion from the reservation by two Chiricahua family groups. The subsequent tale of insurrection, flight, and eventual capture of the group led by Geronimo by Crook in Mexico has been well documented. Perhaps the most significant result of this heroic attempt to escape U.S. territoriality was the enforced relocation of the entire remaining Chiricahua population, including those who had remained on the San Carlos Reservation.

In 1887, after a period of incarceration at Fort Marion in Florida and Mount Vernon Barracks in Alabama, the Chiricahua were assigned to Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Here, the Chiricahua adopted settlement patterns similar to the non-Indian population, although their standard of living fell below that of white homesteaders in the region. In return for establishing permanent settlements and becoming skilled blacksmiths, carpenters, and cattle ranchers, the U.S. government promised the Chiricahua land allotments when Fort Sill was disbanded as a military reservation.

In 1909, however, the War Department overturned the decision to disband the base, and chose instead to retain Fort Sill for military purposes. This decision set in motion a chaotic, and eventually historic, change in Chiricahua settlement patterns. The continuation of the military reserve disrupted the allotment process and required resettlement of the Indian population still on the fort. Release of the Chiricahua from prisoner-of-war status was further timed to the death of Geronimo in 1912 and the buildup of military land uses during World War I.
Relocation of the Chiricahua required open land and acceptable social conditions. Few options were available to the federal government, which was now responsible by the conditions of a trust relationship for protecting and providing for all Indians. The Chiricahua Apache had the right to claim individual tracts under the Allotment Act of 1887. The only other option was for the federal government to assign the tribe to an existing unallotted reservation. The government chose both options. Individual Chiricahua were offered the choice of remaining in Oklahoma on individual land allotments or moving to the communally managed Mescalero Apache Reservation in New Mexico.

SETTLEMENT ON THE MESCALERO APACHE RESERVATION

One hundred and seventy-one Chiricahuas chose to move to New Mexico. They arrived at Mescalero in the spring of 1913 and were placed under the administration of the Indian agent. But attempts to settle the Chiricahua on the reservation and provide funds for their needs were thwarted by economic and environmental conditions. Slow dispersal of funds from the sale of the group’s Oklahoma cattle herd resulted in inadequate housing and supplies. A disastrous situation ensued when the Indian agent, who was under orders to construct adequate housing and a hospital for the group, was not provided with adequate funds or materials for the job.\(^16\)

Environmental conditions also worked against successful settlement. The Chiricahua were given land assignments at Whitetail Canyon, an area approximately twenty miles northeast of Mescalero (FIG. 3). The area is a narrow valley eight miles long, located more than 7,000 feet above sea level. It suffered periodically from severe winter cold, heavy snowfalls, late and early frosts, and occasional spring and summer droughts. Between 1913 and 1915 crops raised at Whitetail were affected by drought and early frost, and in 1914 they were destroyed by a wildfire. The Chiricahua were forced to live in tents in the isolated canyon, dependent on monthly government rations. Social relations disintegrated within the group, and many of its members were forced to move into Mescalero or return to Oklahoma.\(^17\)

In 1934, with the passage of the Indian Reorganization Act, the United States government reversed its policy of cultural assimilation and affirmed its support for Indian cultures. The act provided funds for social and economic development for tribes that organized as political units with representative tribal governments. The Chiricahua, as members of the Mescalero Apache Tribe, became the recipients of new houses and outbuildings on individual land assignments. The land assignments and buildings were designed to stimulate family farming and diminish traditional dependence on hunting and gathering.

All houses and associated buildings were identical in floor plan, materials, and arrangement. Each family was provided with a four-room house, a two-story barn, and a chicken coop...
on a twenty-acre land assignment. Each such family unit was located separately from others, usually in the canyon bottom near a water source that could be used for both domestic and agricultural purposes (FIG. 4).

While the new houses did improve living standards, most of the Chiricahua, particularly the women, did not care for the situation of isolation from kin in which they were now placed. Distance between homes prevented women from sharing family responsibilities and maintaining cultural traditions such as child-rearing and preparation of household needs. Men of the tribe also resented the isolation as well as the government’s attempts to expand individual farming.  

By 1950 a slow withdrawal from the dispersed settlements had occurred. Women were inclined to move to more populated areas where they could live in family groups that were in close proximity to one another. Men returning from World War II also preferred urbanized settlement, primarily at Mescalero and along Tularosa Canyon. The original land assignments, however, were not abandoned. Tenure of the Whitetail Canyon assignments remained within the families to which they had originally been granted.  

Major changes in residence location and the quality of housing occurred in the mid-1950s and early 1960s and have been documented by two anthropologists. Both studies indicated the preference of the Chiricahua for matrilocal settlement, the organization of family residence and activities around female family members. On the reservation, matrilocal settlement preference was clearly demonstrated by the migration of nearly all Chiricahua households to Mescalero between 1955 and 1960. Household migration not only included the removal of people, but also of the houses constructed in the 1930s. All but a few of the four-room ship-lap structures were moved to Mescalero and were placed within a quarter mile of each other in a pattern similar to the clustered pattern of pre-reservation settlement described by Opler. Clustering helped reinforce matrilocal relationships.

In the mid-1960s new housing was constructed in established urban settlements, especially at Mescalero, but no new houses were constructed at White Tail. Nevertheless, the original land assignments at Whitetail have been retained by Chiricahua heirs and are symbolic of band history and identity. The assignments are commonly used for traditional purposes such as hunting and religious ceremonies.
assignments are precious to each family because of the links they provide to the past.\textsuperscript{21}

Nearly all of the remaining structures in the canyon were removed or torn down during the 1960s. By 1970 no one lived at Whiretail on a year-round basis. The Chiricahua population is now so blended with other groups on the reservation that it is distinguishable only through the retention of the land assignments. The only other remnant of Chiricahua lineage are family ties with the Fort Sill Apaches of Oklahoma.\textsuperscript{22}

**FORT SILL APACHE SETTLEMENT**

Historical events and social relations contributed to a much different settlement pattern for the eighty-seven Chiricahua who chose to remain in Oklahoma. Settlement location and social relations for the Oklahoma Chiricahua were prescribed by the federal Indian policy of 1887 known as the Allotment Act. Under this act, more than half the total American Indian population received 160-acre allotments between 1887 and 1900. While the purpose of the act was ostensibly to assimilate the Indian population by establishing individual farm units that would break traditional patterns of settlement and social relations, it also opened millions of acres for non-Indian settlement because it ceded unallotted reservation lands to the federal government.

The Chiricahua were nearly the last Indian group to be affected by the Allotment Act. In 1913, after being released from prisoner-of-war status, they were allowed to purchase individual tracts near Fort Sill, some of which included vacant houses and farming structures near streams (FIG. 5). The government assumed Chiricahua families would adopt a farming lifestyle similar to that of the other Apache Indians and homesteaders in the area.

The exact location of the Chiricahua allotments was dependent on the location of available Indian land (FIG. 6). The Fort Sill Military Reservation was surrounded by Kiowa and Comanche Apache allotments that had been distributed in 1901. A number of these had reverted to federal ownership, however, on the death of their original allottees, and the Fort Sill Apache — as the Oklahoma Chiricahua became known — were allowed to purchase them in 1913 with funds derived from the sale of the tribe’s cattle herd.\textsuperscript{23}

Although the Fort Sill Apache were allowed to choose from available allotments, few were contiguous, and families found it difficult to consolidate tracts for herding. The most common pattern involved the splitting of a one hundred and sixty-acre Kiowa or Comanche Apache allotment into two eighty-acre tracts. These would be purchased by siblings, even though they were typically located at some distance from parental allotments. The consequence of this settlement pattern was that the entire Chiricahua group found itself dispersed over three counties with no primary meeting place other than the post office at the town of Apache. The disbursement took its toll on social relations within the group. Young people gradually integrated into the general Indian population of south-central Oklahoma, while older people,
who did not have the economic ability to establish family farms, were forced to leave the area to look for work.

With social relations diffuse and economic opportunities limited, identity with the land allotments became primarily symbolic of the years spent as prisoners-of-war.24 A review of the frequency of Fort Sill allotment sales today brings to light the fact that the land allotments, while of little economic value to the heirs of the original allottees, are still valued as an affirmation of tribal identity and a link to the past.

The original eighty-eight allotments (expanded to include those of non-Indians who became associated with the tribe) are primarily located along stream courses in a square area (FIG. 7). Some land transactions since 1913 have removed allotments from Chiricahua ownership, but these have been sporadic and marked by few common variables. During the 1920s, six allotments, totaling 400 acres, were sold to non-Indians, presumably for cash. During the 1930s, only one allotment of 145 acres was sold, despite this being a period of drastic change for non-Indian homestead ownership in the area on account of the Dust Bowl phenomenon and the Great Depression. Four allotments were sold during the 1940s, reducing total Chiricahua ownership by 400 acres.

The largest number of allotment sales — seven, totalling 560 acres — came during the 1950s. These parcels bear a certain geographical similarity to one another, being located near a major stream course that was eventually flooded by the City of Lawton for a reservoir. Half of the allotments were eventually flooded, and the rest were purchased by land developers.

A relatively high number of allotments, six, were sold out of Indian ownership during the 1960s, a period during which U.S. Indian policy focused on urbanization. The Fort Sill Apache Tribe purchased one allotment in 1975 to retain acreage in tribal ownership. Two additional tracts were sold to a cattle company in 1979. Three congruent allotments were sold during the 1980s to a non-Indian rancher (FIG. 7). A total of 2,305 acres have now been sold out of the total original 8,280-acre Chiricahua allotment.

The descendants of the allottees prefer to hold on to the allotments for the purposes of maintaining tribal identity and passing on a resource to the next generation. Some of the land is used for permanent residences, but the majority is leased to non-Indian ranchers. The amount of income earned from the land is almost meaningless to individual Chiricahua because of the great number of heirs-per-allotment.25 The allotments are primarily valued for symbolic purposes and because they provide a sense of community among the modern Fort Sill Apache.

HUMAN TERRITORIALITY IN THE THIRD WORLD

The analysis of settlement patterns is occasionally used in the broader interpretation of a political theory, giving settlement patterns an importance beyond being mere artifacts of social relations. Sack's theory of human territoriality provides a framework for identifying causal relationships between changing political powers in an area. When it is applied to the first- and third-world settlement patterns of the Chiricahua described in this paper, it is possible to see how specific policies of expanding U.S. territoriality explain changes in spatial and social relations among the Chiricahua Apache.

Chiricahua Apache settlement patterns indicate the impact of fluctuating control of first-world territoriality by the U.S. government. Prior to 1887 the policy of reservation settlement of the Chiricahua produced direct military conflict between the federal government and the Apache. Then in 1913 the group was allowed to choose between two settlement policies: reservation settlement with land assignments or land allotment with specific boundaries. The dispersed nature of both options disrupted social relations and decreased the overall economic wealth of the tribe.

A relaxation of U.S. territoriality in 1950 allowed the Chiricahua in New Mexico to move family units and houses to a central location and reestablish matrilocall, clustered settlement patterns. But the Fort Sill Apache remain unable to rid themselves of the allotment system and are still forced to sacrifice traditional spatial and social relations. The limited number of land transactions made by the Oklahoma Chiricahua does indicate, however, a strong preference for maintaining the land allotments for symbolic reasons.

Settlement patterns indicate that both groups retain ownership of lands that were either assigned or allotted to them. This has occurred in the face of changing social conditions and attempts by the U.S. government to control Indian land areas. Current U.S. Indian policy affirms Indian identity, including the exercise of Indian-determined settlement patterns. The Fort Sill Apache have responded by repurchasing allotments that are placed on the level market. The New Mexico Chiricahua continue to hold ceremonial events and other traditional hunting and gathering activities on their historic land assignments.

Modern Chiricahua Apache, both in New Mexico and in Oklahoma, are in the process of reestablishing Apache territoriality within reservation boundaries and on land allotments. This is happening in a period when U.S. control of Indian populations is being reinterpreted. Sack's theory of human territoriality explains patterns of Chiricahua settlement in
ALLOTMENTS SOLD, 1913—1990

both their first- and third-world spatial organizations and social relationships. While the first-world territoriality of the Chiricahua has been radically changed, the third-world settlement patterns of the tribe today demonstrate increasing Indian identity. They also indicate the dual nature of American Indian culture within the overall framework of a dominant U.S. territoriality.

REFERENCE NOTES

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10. Ibid., p. 22.
12. Ibid., p. 401.
16. C.R. Jeffers, Letter to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, Record Group 75, Bureau of Indian Affairs, National Archives (Washington, D.C., 1914).
18. Interview with long-time area resident familiar with reservation social and spatial conditions (Informant A).
19. Interview with long-time area resident familiar with reservation social and spatial conditions (Informant B).
21. Interview with long-time area resident familiar with reservation social and spatial conditions (Informant C).
22. Interview with long-time area resident familiar with reservation social and economic conditions (Informant D).