

**COMMUNITIES
& HOUSEHOLDS
IN THE GREATER
AMERICAN
SOUTHWEST**

New Perspectives & Case Studies

edited by **ROBERT J. STOKES**

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Communities and Households in the Greater American Southwest presents new research on human organization in the American Southwest, examining families, households, and communities in the Ancestral Puebloan, Mogollon, and Hohokam major cultural areas, as well as the Fremont, Jornada Mogollon, and Lipan Apache areas, from the time of earliest habitation to the twenty-first century. Using historical data, dialectic approaches, problem-oriented and data-driven analysis, and ethnographic and gender studies methodologies, the contributors offer diverse interpretations of what constitutes a site, village, and community; how families and households organized their domestic space; and how this organization has influenced researchers' interpretations of spatially derived archaeological data.

Today's archaeologists and anthropologists understand that communities operate as a multi-level, -organizational, -contextual, and -referential human creation, which informs their understanding of how people actively negotiate their way through and around community constraints. The chapters in this book creatively examine these interactions, revealing the dynamic nature of ancient and modern groups in the American Southwest. The book has two broad complementary themes: one focusing on household decision-making, identity, and structural relations with the greater community; the other concerned with community organization and integration, household roles within the community, and changes in community organization—violence and destabilization, coalescence and cooperation—over time.

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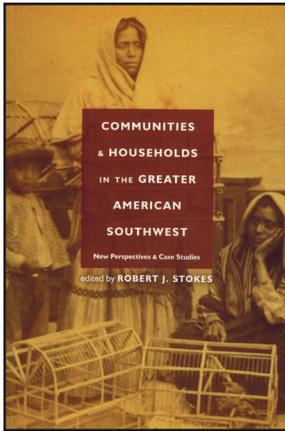
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Communities and Households in the Greater American Southwest

Robert J. Stokes, Ed. 2019. [University Press of Colorado](#). xvi+311 pp., 12 chapters, 76 figures, 14 tables, references. \$79.00 (Cloth), \$63.00 (Ebook).

Reviewed by Michael Aiwalasit, Illinois State Archaeological Survey, Prairie Research Institute, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Robert Stokes' edited volume, *Communities and Households in the Greater American Southwest: New Perspectives and Case Studies* consists of an introductory chapter written by Stokes and ten case studies, many of which are written by senior

scholars with long publication records on the archaeology of social organization. In this volume, the authors were challenged to present new research that examined the dynamics between households and communities. Stokes provides a strong argument for improving the integration of household and community-level archaeology in his introductory chapter, and the subsequent case studies provide examples from nearly all culture areas of the Southwest. The case studies benefit from excavation data with tight chronologies, regional-scale datasets, ethnographic analogies and oral histories, and incorporating indigenous scholarship. However, this volume is very much written by and for Southwestern archaeologists. Although the authors miss opportunities to consider the relevance of their findings to researchers working outside the Southwest, themes highlighted here demonstrate the value of this volume to researchers working in other regions.

Any researcher interested in the archaeological study of social organization will find something useful in Stokes' introductory chapter. He makes key distinctions between household and community-focused approaches in archaeology, and he makes a strong argument for accommodating multiple theoretical and methodological approaches to social archaeology. His ecumenical approach is rooted in the acknowledgement that all societies face inherent tensions in social relationships between families, households, and communities. As archaeologists, we are well positioned to identify the multi-scalar processes leading to community formation, as well as its disintegration or persistence, but only if we view societies as the sum of negotiations of identities, relationships, and power dynamics which cross-cut social boundaries. Stokes also raises the point that appreciating different theoretical approaches is important because the circumstances in which we work influences the questions we can ask. Seen this way, cultural resource management projects constrained to investigating only small components of a larger site, or studies in settings where new excavations are impossible can still contribute to our understanding of past social systems.

Knowing that researchers come to the study of social organization from different directions, Stokes organizes the rest of the book into two sections—case studies focusing on households, and those focusing on communities.

Chapters on households show that tensions in how individuals and families come to form communities are negotiated through the development of shared practices, the use of communal structures, and processes like *enclavement*, whereby networked families form communities

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that can persist for generations even when marginalized and forgotten by the greater society. James Potter in a study of an Ancestral Pueblo community in Southwestern Colorado, and Stephanie Whittlesey and Jefferson Reid working in highland Mogollon villages, use excavation data from households and communal architecture to contextualize how acts of violence can be traced to tensions between different factions within communities. Decision-making at the household level is also observable in studies looking regional scale data. Henry Wallace and Michel Lindeman trace the rapid “social distancing” of Hohokam villages into smaller communities as a mechanism for social transformation at the transition to the Classic Period in the Tucson Basin. Robert Stokes, working in the Mimbres region, recognizes multi-variate processes involved in the fissioning of households from villages and into new satellite communities—which interestingly are found both in close proximity to founding villages and further away in more marginal areas. Deni Seymour’s chapter uses studies of present day “Snowbirds” in Sunbelt communities to identify analogies with the way mobile societies formed interdependent communities among the eastern pueblos of the Southwest. Finally, Seymour joins Oscar Rodriguez as a second author in a comprehensive review of the historical persistence of off-reservation Lipan Apache communities in Texas and Northern Mexico. While not archaeological, this chapter shows just how important it is to understand community as an *idea* rooted in practice, rather than place, and the interpretive value of the concept of enclavement.

The five chapters focusing on community draw on data from village layouts, communal architecture, and inter-household variability in material culture. Chapters by Barbara Roth on the Mimbres Mogollon region, Katie Richards and four coauthors on Fremont communities, and Myles Miller on the Jornada Mogollon show how communal architecture serves as a focal point for the formation of a collective identity. Both ritual dedications and closures of communal features and rooms are seen across regions and time periods. These practices are observed in even small communities made up of only a few aggregated households, and can include objects and construction materials from widely dispersed procurement networks. Barbara Roth and Myles Miller extend the relevance of their findings by incorporating archaeological examples from other regions of North America and Neolithic Near East. Alison Rautman does this as well in her study of the social significance of circular pueblos, which are a rare architectural form in the Southwest and may signify attempts to integrate communities under unique circumstances. Kristin Safi and Andrew Duff, who study a complex of Great Houses on the southern margins of the Chaco Phenomenon, consider the meaning of community across multiple scales. Their analysis of household-scale ceramic assemblages identifies the persistence of household-level practices of migrant communities, while also seeing integration of households into larger ideas associated with Chaco. Their chapter best exemplifies Stokes’ call for multi-scalar analyses in social archaeology.

This book does not set out to identify universal themes or patterns in the archaeology of social organization, but findings such as the importance of communal architecture as loci for identity formation and conflict in even very small communities, or the

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dynamism inherent to community formation and disaggregation, are important. This volume should serve as a model for putting together case studies on households and communities in other regions, so long as efforts are made to consider the relevance of the examples to larger audiences.