

31. Boundaries: Encroachment, Competition, Cooperation, and Conflict in the Hunter-Gatherer Past

16030 - Crossing the Line: cultural accommodation in the archaeological record

Presentation type: Oral presentation

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Discussion about territories, boundaries, and unfamiliar or new group interactions are often framed in terms of conflict and/or defense. While conflict and defensive mechanisms can certainly occur this paper proposes other interpretations of living on these borders in order to consider a wider range of potential [inter]reactions. Considering bilingual studies, namely Sachdev and Giles (2004) and their view of understanding accommodative behaviors practiced in the course of language contact, we hypothesize regarding the psychological and physical processes that occur when unfamiliar/new peoples cross over physical and social territorial boundaries resulting in a complex set of interactive possibilities. Based on concepts from a research agenda in societal bilingualism that approaches variation in language as interactively conditioned, we propose to seek out a materialization of language, thus providing another framework for exploring and understanding potential outcomes of these merging or crossing of boundaries incorporating enculturation, assimilation, or a cooperative coexistence of cultures and peoples, as well as resilience, resistance, and defense or any combination of such in the archaeological past.

Initial challenges concern the establishment of terminology by which historical violence has occurred towards indigenous peoples, first requiring a deconstruction of language. A reestablishment of meaning and intent provides an opportunity to develop a framework for viewing these complex interactions. A case study will be provided by which to test this model seeking to transform the way we see territorial interactions in the past.

16027 - Interaction of hunters gatherers with their neighbors in central Chile: Continuities and changes.

Presentation type: Oral presentation

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In the cordillera of central Chile the presence of hunter-gatherer groups is well documented from the initial settlement (ca. 12.000 BP) until spanish colonial times, period involving at least 1500 years of coexistence with other groups, from the first semi sedentary horticulturists and pottery making societies (ca 300 BC) until the Inka State towards the 1400 dC. The interaction established between hunters gatherers and other groups involved the transfer of raw materials and objects (e.g. pottery, obsidian), as well as certain changes in the distribution and intensity of use of certain mountain spaces by the hunter-gatherers. Understanding that groups are located within a matrix of relationships and that the particular way of inhabiting a space for a group is in relation to "others", in this work we explore the changes that occurred along this sequence of interaction, taking into consideration the difference in the types of socio-political organization of the groups with which the hunter-gatherers established relations.

15970 - Boundary effects on cultural transmission and artifact variation in late prehistoric New Mexico, USA

Presentation type: Oral presentation

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Prehistoric “boundary dynamics” likely affected aspects of cultural transmission. Several lines of archaeological evidence indicate increased economic importance of bison and related inter-group tensions ca. AD 1300 in southeastern New Mexico, a boundary zone between the Pueblos to the west and cultures of the southern High Plains to the east. This paper presents preliminary results of a study centered on artifact variability and designed to test the hypotheses that model-based, biased cultural transmission or heightened incentive to “advertise” group membership influenced the fidelity of projectile point manufacture in this context.

15929 - Crossing Boundaries and Changing Identities in the Transition from Hunting and Gathering to Maize Horticulture on the North American Great Plains

Presentation type: Oral presentation

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The concept of a hunter-gatherer and the idea of a social boundary both depend on distinctions in identity, but identities are complex, multifaceted, and changeable, and boundaries can be porous and indistinct, when they exist at all. This paper focuses on changes in identity and subsistence over the course of the transition from hunting and gathering to maize horticulture on the Great Plains. This transition occurred over three or four human generations and was complex and geographically variable. Sedentism preceded food production in some areas and the change likely involved both the movement of horticultural households onto the Plains and the acceptance of horticultural ways of life by local hunter-gatherer communities, some of whom adopted some of the material trappings of their horticultural neighbors without growing crops. Interaction between hunter-gatherers and their horticultural neighbors over this transition is undoubted, and it is clear that this interaction involved movements of goods, people, and knowledge.

Human populations over much of the western Plains in Wyoming and Colorado appear to have dropped during this time without any obvious environmental or other material cause, suggesting that people in these regions may have moved elsewhere, perhaps towards developing horticultural communities to the east. The King Site, a late 12th century habitation site in the Pine Ridge in northwestern Nebraska, may document this movement. The site has produced small amounts of maize, along with wild plants and a wide array of fauna (including bison, antelope, fish, turtle, rabbits, and others), but the density and distribution of material in the site suggest a far more temporary occupation than at contemporary horticultural sites. Imported objects leave no doubt that the site's occupants knew people to the west, and styles of projectile points and pottery mix together characteristics of earlier hunter-gatherers and later farmers. Perhaps most suggestive, while settled farmers on the Plains built fairly substantial and standardized houses made from wood, daub, and thatch, residential structures at the King Site appear to be small, shallow pit structures identical to those built by hunter-gatherers on the Northwestern Plains. Fortifications and combat victims in horticultural and hunter-gatherer sites elsewhere on the Plains at this time imply sharp distinctions in identity and some kind of clear social boundaries in at least some settings. However, the King Site implies the existence of more fluid relations, more ambiguous and changeable identities, and more porous boundaries than we often assume, helping to paint a picture of variable and changeable relations between and among foragers and farmers on the grasslands.

15912 - Geopolitical Histories and Boundary Configurations of North America's Mobile Big Game Hunters

Presentation type: Oral presentation

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Anthropological understanding of aboriginal territories and boundary configurations among mobile big game hunters of North America's Plains region has been tainted by historical biases about the identity and geographical position of different groups at different times. From brief observations by European traders and explorers to legal boundary descriptions by government officials, historical documents are plagued by misunderstandings about who was where at critical points in time. Knowledge of the movement, advance, and retreat of competing tribes across vast expanses of land shortly before and after the arrival of European goods and people to the region is mired in conflicting accounts by Natives and Non-Natives alike. Until recently, archaeological theory and methods have not been systematically deployed to obtain an independent assessment of these geopolitical conflicts. Through a perspective that emphasizes political agency, wherein decision-making processes, actions, and solutions to problems of land and resource access are understood as having political consequences for humans as actors and transformers of the landscape, this presentation attempts to redress discussions of ethnic boundary formation among mobile big game hunters, and particularly bison hunters. The biographies of archaeological areas that may be "bounded" by their natural characteristics, by permanent human modifications of the landscape, or by differential distributions of archaeological artifacts are explored through time, compared to one another, and contextualized within the geopolitical histories of hunter groups that came to be associated with them. The resulting boundary configurations are then examined to identify indicators of exploration, colonization, entrenchment and encroachment, as well as cultural continuity (or lack thereof) and naturalization of territorial boundaries.

15883 - Macroecological exploration of variation in Kalahari site structure

Presentation type: Oral presentation

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In the 1980s, Lewis Binford (1931-2011) started an analysis of hunter-gatherer site structure. This analysis was later put on hold in order to organize ethnographic and environmental data to use as frames of reference for the analysis. Although the frames of reference were constructed by 2001, Binford never completed his analysis of site structure. This paper represents an initial attempt to realize Binford's vision of a controlled analysis of site structure at global and regional scales using a macroecological strategy to analyze both data Binford organized for this project and data organized more recently by Robert Hitchcock. Most of the site structure data comes from the Kalahari. Variables include site area, distances among huts in and between clusters, numbers of occupants, duration of occupation, seasonality, and presence of domesticated animals. Additional data will be used to provide a global perspective on the range of variation in the Kalahari.

15836 - Hunter-gatherer Ethnogeographic Mosaics in Short- and Long-term Perspective

Presentation type: Oral presentation

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With its rich ethnographic and archaeological records of hunter-gatherer sociopolitical life, California provides an excellent venue in which to consider the creation and maintenance of boundaries between small-scale, autonomous societies over both the short- and long-term. Whether such boundaries were on the ground—in terms of spatial demarcation and geographic referents—or embodied in individual habitus—in the case of communal identity and meaningful material signifiers—they were subject to internal and external negotiation, reflecting decisions about the quality of, or necessity for, distinction in contexts of perceived difference. Drawing on both ethnographic and archaeological data from California, this paper explores the mechanisms of hunter-gatherer boundary maintenance in contexts of persistent, regular, and intense inter-group interaction punctuated by episodes of substantial emigration.

15831 - A Frame of Reference for First Encounters between Paleolithic Foragers and Neolithic Farmers in Taiwan

Presentation type: Oral presentation

Author(s): *Yu, Pei-Lin (Boise State University, Boise, ID, USA)*

The Paleolithic-Neolithic transition in Taiwan occurred abruptly at c. 6000 BP, and archaeological evidence indicates that seed crop farmers immigrated across the strait from the Southeast China mainland. The transition to agriculture in Taiwan was varied but ultimately total. However, we know little about the transition due to scarcity of securely dated sites from that period. What happened when foragers met farmers? In this paper, I propose an evolutionary model of the transition based upon ethnoarchaeology of subsistence and mobility, query certain assumptions about Paleolithic foragers, and propose specific lines of evidence to assess the utility of the model.

Ethnoarchaeological data indicate that, where environmental conditions permit, foragers balance food security with mobility by practicing vegeticulture of hardy root and tree crops that are adapted to local ecosystems and may be resistant to predators due to breeding for toxic characteristics. Compared to native crops, imported seed crops require fertilization, pest control, and irrigation, which curtails foraging mobility. Thus, costs of seed crop farming include mobilization of available labor (if available) and loss of access to alternative resources as well as critical information about conditions in the foraging territory. Intensive seed crop agriculture is feasible only when populations reach a critical threshold of numbers and sedentization for an on-call labor force.

These data indicate that small scale gardening of native crop species (roots, trees, and weedy wild annuals) should regularly precede the adoption of non-native seed crops in sub-tropical sequences. In Taiwan, it is expected that archaeological evidence for taro (*Colocasia esculenta*) and possibly djulis (*Chenopodium* spp.) will precede millet (*Panicum* and *Setaria* spp.) and rice (*Oryza* spp.). Given that humans reached Taiwan by land bridge during the Pleistocene, and the strait has been flooded since the onset of the Holocene (c. 11 kya), it is highly likely that densely packed Paleolithic foragers were already practicing intensified foraging – and possibly, vegeticulture, by 6000 BP. Thus Neolithic farmers likely encountered foraging groups who were familiar with plant selection and cultivation. Adoption of seed crops by Paleolithic peoples would be variable, according to the degree of food stress and local population density. This model of Neolithic transition predicts that a) Late Paleolithic sites and tools will show evidence of vegeticulture prior to the Neolithic immigration; b) Rapid adoption of seed crops would occur in low-diversity settings (i.e., the coastal plain) with dense, semi-sedentized foraging populations (i.e., near estuaries and river deltas of high aquatic productivity); and c) seed crops were adopted last in areas of high wild species diversity, including Taiwan's mountains.