

## THE KATSINA CULT AND PUEBLO IV RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

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The Katsina Cult as well as religious and political organization has always been a fervently debated topic among archaeologists of the American Southwest. Some archaeologists argue that the Katsina Cult evolved solely as a cooperative social integrative system in response to mass migration during the fourteenth century. They also argue that the same ceremonies and rituals practiced in prehistoric Pueblo society are still evident among the contemporary Pueblos. Other archaeologists argue that the early Katsina Cult was associated with warfare because the social environment of the Pueblos was characterized not merely by cooperation, but conflict and violence as well. On religious and political organization there is a split debate with archaeologists arguing over whether or not pueblo social organization is defined by a hierarchical system or an egalitarian system. However, there is a more recent view point on Pueblo social organization that is attempting to abolish the traditional assumptions of societal organization. The archaeologists' viewpoints, dealing with the Katsina Cult and Pueblo social organization, attempt to give evidence for their explanation on how each appeared evolved and how each are still practiced in contemporary society.

In Stephen Plog's and Julie Solometo's article, "The Never-Changing and the Ever-Changing: The Evolution of Western Pueblo Ritual," they explain that the Katsina ritual did not remain the same over centuries while the social environment of the Pueblos was changing and evolving. The appearance of the Katsina Cult coincides with a cultural environment plagued with conflict and violence; therefore, connecting and associating the appearance of the Katsina Cult with warfare. They then propose that the communal aspect of the Katsina Cult came when the Spanish arrived and nearly wiped out the Pueblo population. The Pueblo, faced with this large population loss, had to start recruiting from other clans to increase participation. Both articles, "The Katsina Cult: A Western Pueblo Perspective" by E. Charles Adams, and "Evidence for the Origins of the Pueblo Katchina Cult as Suggested by Southwestern Rock Art" by Polly and Curtis Schaafsma, take on a different view point than Plog and Solometo by claiming that the Katsina Cult appeared as a social system mechanism for integrating new,

large and diverse populations into the already established Pueblo villages. In response to the other Katsina articles, I chose to read Edward P. Dozier's article, "The Pueblos of the South-West United States" because it gave a detailed overview of the contemporary Katsina Cult, which greatly helped in my understanding on how Katsina ceremony is practiced among contemporary Pueblo Indians. Dealing with Pueblo social organization (religious and political), the article, "Although They have Petty Captains, They Obey Them Badly: The Dialectics of Prehispanic Western Pueblo Social Organization" by Randall H. McGuire and Dean J. Saitta, attempts to take a dialectic approach to explain Pueblo organization. The authors stray away from the generalized categories of 'hierarchical' and 'egalitarian' and interpret Pueblo social organization as having both egalitarian and hierarchical characteristics. Through reading and analyzing all of the articles above I have come to agree with Plog and Solometo in regard to the Katsina Cult. I also have come to the conclusion that McGuire and Saitta's article have validity in its suggestions on how to understand Pueblo social organization.

First, with the Katsina Cult and Katsina ceremony Plog and Solometo propose that in its earlier phase, the cult was connected to warfare. Plog and Solometo give an abundant amount of evidence to support their proposal. First, they give an overview of what the social environment was like when the Katsina Cult first began to appear. During the years in association with the Katsina Cults appearance, there is wide spread evidence that warfare and the need for defense existed. This evidence includes villages located in inaccessible areas such as cliff dwellings and villages constructed atop unique land forms that allowed for signaling and visibility with other groups. Other evidence includes enclosed plazas that can easily be interpreted as defensive because of the high walls and few entrances or exits. However, Adams has a different opinion on the appearance of enclosed plazas. He proposes that these plazas appeared solely for Katsina ceremonial purposes. I disagree with Adams' proposal because if the enclosed plazas were for ritual usage only; there would be no point in enclosing them and making it difficult for the people of the village (who all participate in the Katsina ceremonies) to enter and exit due to a small number of openings. Militaristic images in occurrence with weather and fertility images found on Pueblo rock art, kiva murals and ceramics also give evidence that warfare was possibly a significant part of the Pueblo's religious ideology.

Schaafsma and Schaafsma and Adams apparently have chosen to ignore this aspect of warfare in pueblo art because neither one give any reference to evidence associated with warfare. All three authors also propose that the Katsina Cult appeared as a response to the large influx of immigration into Pueblo villages, but they claim this social environmental change was characterized by cooperation and not by conflict. However, with all of the evidence offered by Plog and Solometo,

it is difficult not to assume that there was violence and conflict and that the early Katsina Cult appeared as a reflection of this.

Schaafsma and Schaafsma also propose that the early Pueblo's integrative style of Katsina ceremonies is still evident amongst the contemporary Pueblo. However, I cannot agree with their proposal that the Katsina Cult has remained unchanged because there has been radical change both internally and externally (Spanish interference) that the Pueblo endured over the centuries. Taking Dozier's contemporary Katsina overview, and relating it to Plog's and Solometo's evidence, which connects warfare to early Katsina Cult, it is apparent to me that it has not remained stagnant, but has evolved over the centuries.

In their article, McGuire and Saitta attempt to address the hotly debated topic of Pueblo social organization. There is a heated debate over Pueblo social organization due to the split view point between archaeologist who categorize Pueblo organization as egalitarian and those who categorize Pueblo social organization as hierarchical. However, McGuire and Saitta propose that Pueblo societies were both egalitarian and hierarchical. They have chosen to take a 'dialectic' approach to interpreting and explaining Pueblo social organization in which it should be intellectually studied and observed instead of generalized and categorized. To shed light on the debate and their viewpoint, McGuire and Saitta give the example of the Grasshopper Pueblo and Chavez Pass Debate. The Grasshopper Pueblo site appeared to be characteristic of an egalitarian society while on the other hand the Chavez Pass site appeared to be a hierarchical administrative center. In McGuire's and Saitta's opinion, both sites are too similar to be interpreted so differently and they suggest that both sites show evidence of hierarchy and egalitarianism.

This is just one example of how archaeologists disagree on the categorization of Pueblo society. A critique on McGuire's and Saitta's article suggests a heterarchy approach, but the authors argue in their responsive article to the critique, "Dialectics, Heterarchy and Western Pueblo Organization" that this type of approach is too "static and silent." It would not allow them to really investigate the causal powers that created the different aspects and the complexity of Pueblo organization, McGuire, Saitta and their critic agree in the terms that Pueblo social organization is complex; however, their approaches to explaining it and categorizing it are very dissimilar. After reading McGuire and Saitta's article and the response to their critique, I have come to the conclusion that both opinions have their valid points and both could be useful in particular situations. For example, McGuire and Saitta's dialectic approach might yield to be a complicated feat because social organization within any culture is hard to dissect piece by piece while useful categories might help to better explain the general composition of Pueblo social organization. I agree with McGuire's and Saitta's statement that

social life should be viewed “in terms of bundles of processes that are locked in complex and contradictory interplay, rather than...a set of systemic ‘elements’ that can be ranked or unranked in different ways” (Dialectics 335). Social life and the manner in which it is organized should be vigorously scrutinized to extract the full meaning and understanding of why a certain culture is organized in a particular manner. However, when we are dealing with just a fraction of the past, it can be difficult to take on such a detailed approach to understanding social organization. This is when those “useful” categories can come into play, so as to allow for a general understanding of the culture’s social organization.

Reading all seven articles and taking into account every authors opinion on the Katsina Cult and Pueblo social organization, I have had the chance to form my own opinion on the subjects. I agree with Plog’s and Solometo’s argument that the Katsina Cult first appeared in association with warfare. I also agree that the cult has not remained unchanged, but has developed and evolved over the centuries. In terms of Pueblo social organization, I agree both with McGuire and Saitta and their critic on their suggested methods for understanding Pueblo organization. Truly grasping and understanding Pueblo social organization is important, but this dialectic approach might be more useful in understanding contemporary Pueblo organization. Moreover, when only bits and pieces of the past are left to observe, using a categorical approach to understand prehistoric Pueblo social organization may yield to be a more useful strategy.

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