

*Life beyond the Boundaries: Constructing Identity in Edge Regions of the North American Southwest.* Karen G. Harry and Sarah A. Herr, eds.

Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2018, 400 pp.

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Featuring how “edge-area” populations constructed and manipulated social identities in response to regional demographic and settlement dynamics across the Greater Southwest, this intellectually crisp volume differentiates itself from those that have concentrated on the roles of identity in core-area Puebloan communities. The editors’ overview chapter defines four types of edge areas and argues that identity-based “practices,” expressed archaeologically as distinctive constellations of material culture and architecture, enabled edge-area groups to manage the historical and situational contingencies of daily life.

Surprisingly, Matthew A. Peeples and Barbara J. Mills hardly mention identity, focusing instead on illustrating the usefulness of modeling social networks to identify frontier edge-areas. The authors’ thick descriptions of their sampling methods and interpretations of “weak” ceramic-ware similarity scores help the reader evaluate their claim that social networks provided buffering strategies for frontier-area populations in times of environmental stress.

Severin Fowles employs ceramic and architectural data for his case that migration to and rapid population growth in a thinly inhabited frontier edge-area, the Taos region of northern New Mexico, signify an “escape strategy.” Here, the author argues that the Taos area came to be occupied by refugees from the west who rejected whatever “doings” were afoot in Chaco Canyon. Fowles proposes that new arrivals fitted themselves to the Taos landscape—initially a dangerous and unstable place—and invented new social identities in the process.

Lewis Borck’s study of the Gallina region, another frontier edge-area in northern New Mexico, uses social network analysis to decipher spatial patterns of nonlocal ceramics. Serving as memory markers, these ceramics enabled people to renegotiate their connection with their past and, thereby, create a new social identity. This process, Borck argues, also is reflected in comingled sacred and secular architecture, indicative of an “atavistic movement,” that empowered Gallina groups to isolate themselves from political and religious developments in the Pueblo world that they disfavored.

Karen G. Harry and James T. Watson consider artifactual, architectural, and dental evidence from an uncontested edge-area, the Virgin Branch Anasazi region in southeastern Nevada. They contend that populations there reconfigured their social identity after adopting maize agriculture yet maintained ideological connections to their Archaic (non-farming) heritage. Hence, the area’s archaeology arose through a hybridization process involving selective engagement of new and old practice-based technologies, which provided a means for these groups to (re)constitute their identity without outside interference.

Kellam Throgmorton posits that the Puerco Valley of east-central Arizona, nestled among several core areas, transitioned from a joint-use/uncontested edge-area to a frontier. The author attributes formal variation among pit-structures to different building practices of long-term residents and recently arrived immigrants, concluding that as the social context of residential mobility changed, so did peoples' identity, and the nature of this edge area. Their subsequent adoption of "great-house" architecture indicates that Puerco Valley residents constructed an identity that aligned with whatever Chacoan ideology was being promoted at the time.

Sarah A. Herr and Jeffery J. Clark examine identity formation in two edge-areas adjacent to the Hohokam heartland—the San Pedro Valley (contact zone) and the sub-Mogollon Rim uplands (joint-use territory). By numerically scoring variation in bundles of practice-related traits (e.g., disposal of the dead) from Hohokam and non-Hohokam archaeological sites, they infer that the joint-use territory was inhabited by people of different ethnicities (who did not co-reside and were unaligned with the Hohokam core) who lived in short-duration settlements and required flexible economic networks to survive. In contrast, migrants and local populations in the contact zone often co-resided in self-sufficient, long-lived communities and maintained socioeconomic connections with the Hohokam core.

Myles R. Miller contends that the occupants of the challenging Jornada region of south-central New Mexico and north-central Chihuahua, Mexico, were able to survive in this uncontested edge-area because of ideological and cosmological relations that were legitimized in rock-art motifs, ceramic design-styles, ritual deposits, and communal feasting practices. One gets the impression that anything Jornada people did for millennia was intended to express their identity, which surprisingly was unaffected by developments from the nearby Casas Grandes heartland.

Patricia A. Gilman explores identity construction with ceramic and architectural data from the Mimbres Valley (a "core" area in southwestern New Mexico), the Upper Gila River drainage (an uncontested edge-area in west-central New Mexico and east-central Arizona), and the San Simon River drainage (an uncontested edge-area in southeastern Arizona). Analyzing variation among black-on-white pottery designs, roomblock sizes, and ritual-structure forms, Gilman infers that the residents of the Upper Gila and San Simon drainages did not share the same identity with their Mimbres Valley neighbors. Further, based on ceramic ware diversity, San Simon groups interacted more with the Mimbres and Hohokam core areas than Upper Gila residents did. Neither edge area, by intention or exclusion, participated in Mimbres Valley rituals involving exotic scarlet macaws. Nevertheless, all three locales shared long-term, stable social relations that involved fluid identity manipulation.

Lauren E. Jelinek and Dale E. Brenneman present a prodigious amount of ethnohistoric information to support their claim that colonial frontier edge-areas in the Southwest's southern borderlands provide unparalleled opportunities to appreciate identity negotiation in action. In fact, the interpretive potential of the region's mixed ceramic assemblages pales in comparison with the documentary evidence of shifting

social identities and political alliances that emerged in response to persistent conflicts among indigenous communities and Spanish colonizers.

This provocative volume is delightfully disruptive because it challenges archaeological investigations of identity epistemologically and methodologically (e.g., does variation in architecture and among artifact classes faithfully register identity construction to the same degree?). With these robust studies as a foundation, importantly, future inquiries are positioned to produce ever more surprising interpretations of the causes and consequences of identity formation across the Southwest's expansive hinterlands.

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*Situational Identities along the Raiding Frontier of Colonial New Mexico.*

Jun U. Sunseri. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2018,  
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Jun Sunseri's *Situational Identities* is a historical archaeological bite well chewed. The ruin of the colonial-era Casitas Viejas settlement in northern New Mexico's El Rito Valley, one of several settlements founded in the region by detribalized Indians known as *genízaros*, is the monograph's central focus. Sunseri brings remarkable capacity to the project, drawing diverse lines of evidence to bear in proposing that the site's inhabitants possessed a plurality of cross-cutting identities. The author develops two important theoretical constructs in the process, the lenses of homescape, those aspects of landscape and material culture that produced a sense of home at Casitas (p. 39), and hearthscape, the living conglomeration of day-to-day practices associated with the production and consumption of pottery and the procurement and use of animal products at Casitas (pp. 40–41). Those constructs are closely connected to themes already familiar to historical archaeologists of the American West, in particular Pierre Bordieu's theory of practice (pp. 34–36) and Richard White's notion of the middle-ground (p. 177), lending broad legibility to Sunseri's localized scheme. His first two chapters situate the reader historically and describe the theoretical framework that has shaped his interpretation of Casitas. The three chapters that follow discuss several classes of Casitas archaeological data alongside relevant measurable aspects of the surrounding landscape. He prepares the case for ethnic pluralism and situational identity at the settlement in those chapters, the theme to which he circles back in the monograph's final sections.

The book's midsection further elucidates and refines Sunseri's theoretical constructs, fleshing them out thoroughly via presentation of the results of relevant statistical tests and limited ethnographic and historical analyses. In his third chapter, Sunseri breaks the homescape construct into theoretical halves: that of the tactical