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ANTHROPOLOGY

A SYSTEM MODEL OF SHAWNEE INDIAN MIGRATION

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Existing theories or "laws" of migration prove to be inadequate for understanding and explaining the widespread migration of the Shawnee Indians. By viewing Shawnee migration as a system, their movement from place to place can be understood in terms of cultural, historical, and environmental variables. Migration to and from Alabama and eastern Pennsylvania indicates how these variables operated to make a particular location favorable or unfavorable for the Shawnee.

† † †

INTRODUCTION

At the time of white contact, migration was a way of life for the Shawnee. Shawnee migration can be classified into two basic forms: (1) widespread migration, and (2) what Amos Hawley calls functional migration. The second form involved regular patterns of movement called for by the Shawnee's mixed hunting, gathering, and horticultural subsistence economy. It is the first, or widespread, migration which is the concern of this study.

BACKGROUND OF MIGRATION THEORY

Despite an abundance of literature on migration, no useful general theory of migration exists. Most studies of the movement of people are descriptive or temporally limited and useful only for urbanization studies (Ravenstein, 1885; Stauffer, 1940). These tend to be predicated on industrialization and the concentration of a large labor force in urban areas. They do not deal with cultural factors other than dynamic economic change.

These earlier studies were of limited use in understanding Shawnee migration prior to their removal in the 1830's. Variables mentioned in the migration literature were examined, and those which appeared relevant for understanding Shawnee migrations were examined against the data derived from

Shawnee history. This resulted in a system model for explaining Shawnee migration.

DEFINITION

The definition of migration used for this study is: "The non-recurrent movement of groups of people from one locality to another." Non-recurrent movement distinguishes migration from recurrent movement, or what Amos Hawley (1950) calls functional movement. Functional movement is routine and repetitive, and is related to subsistence activities with no disruption of the established order. Locality refers to a geographic area in which the activities that make up the daily, weekly, and seasonal rounds of collective life occur. For a nomadic group, locality could comprise a sizable area of several hundreds of square miles. For a sedentary group, locality might be only a few acres. Therefore, the distance required to change locality depends on the kind of cultural group with which one is dealing.

VARIABLES

Four principal variables seem operative in Shawnee migrations. These include internal motivation, external motivations, environment, and facilitation. Space does not allow for a presentation of all the evidence, so the variables must be summarized.

Internal Motivation. These are factors existing in the culture of the Shawnee and are encompassed by two concepts: conservatism and dependence. A desired locale for the Shawnee would be one in which they could maintain their traditional culture and still obtain those material goods upon which they depended.

The migration of Shawnee bands was conservative in the sense that the Shawnee moved as a response to changing

conditions in order to preserve their accustomed cultural patterns and to preserve their identity. In the areas of subsistence, ideology, medicine, and language, the Shawnee showed a remarkable resistance to change and a continuation of traditional forms (Voegelin, 1940, 1944; Alford, 1930; Callender, 1962; Spencer, 1908).

Likewise, the political, social, and religious patterns connected with subsistence activities and basic organization remained conservative. Thus, what Julian Steward (1955) calls the "culture core" was conservative and resistant to change.

The material aspects not related to cultural organization were more likely to change, but even in this area the shift from the bow and arrow to the gun allowed the Shawnee to maintain their hunting subsistence in the face of rapidly dwindling supplies of game.

The vehicle to change in the material culture was trade. Although this trade produced a dependency upon the Europeans, the procurement of furs and skins for trade fit easily into traditional patterns of economic organization, preserving the emphasis on hunting. Through trade the Shawnee acquired a variety of items of European manufacture and in the process gave up many of the traditional crafts, such as making pottery, baskets, bows, and arrows. Still much of the traditional Shawnee technology was retained: building houses and animal traps, making sugar and salt, and dressing skins for clothing (Alford, 1936; Kerr, 1922; Loskiel, 1794; Voegelin, 1940).

Dependency of the Shawnee was realized in two significant areas. First, they were dependent upon other political or cultural groups for a place to settle; second, the Shawnee depended upon European trade, not only for material goods but also for cultural survival (Sosin, 1961).

The earliest historic references to the Shawnee place them in widely scattered locations which were already occupied, or at least claimed, by other political-cultural units. Only at the invitation of or by the permission of these other groups could the Shawnee establish settlements at such locations.

One of the practices of all European colonies was to make the Indians dependent upon them. This was accomplished through lavish presents and the establishment of a vast fur trading network (Prucha, 1962). By creating a demand for European manufactured goods, the colonists made the Indians dependent upon them and insured allies in the colonial struggle for the continent. This dependency could not be avoided. Guns, powder, and lead could be obtained only from the Europeans. Arms were required if a tribe was to successfully defend itself against other tribes who did have such weapons and who were encouraged by the Europeans to make war. Such wars of annihilation were new to the American Indians,

and in order to survive and to preserve their culture, guns came a necessity (Driver, 1969).

External Motivations. External motivations are the factors outside of Shawnee culture which influenced migration. However, these factors are not outside the system of migration. External factors include Shawnee relations with other political and social units.

Shawnee migration was apparently impelled rather than forced. There are two components that distinguish impelled migration from forced migration: (1) impelled migration is voluntary, and (2) the choice of locality when migration occurs is made by the migrants and not by some other political or cultural unit (Peterson, 1970).

From the historical data available it is difficult to prove that Shawnee migration was voluntary. In fact, some accounts indicate that they moved under extreme pressure. The combined strength of the Carolina government and the Catawba was given by some Shawnee as the reason for leaving South Carolina and moving to Pennsylvania (Miller, 1940). However, the precise events leading to the migration from most localities is not known. Since locations were seldom abandoned *en masse*, it might be assumed that the decision to migrate was a voluntary one. A decision to stay, however, might have meant that the Shawnee would have to abandon their conservative life. Some of the Shawnee chose to remain in Ohio rather than to migrate to Missouri prior to 1830 and were encouraged to adopt the life style of the Europeans.

It is apparent that, when migrating, the Shawnee chose their own location. But alternatives became increasingly limited as the British and Americans pushed west. The important point is that the Shawnee were not in the beginning forced to settle in areas which were not of their choice. It was not until 1832 that the Shawnee were forced onto reservations that were not of their choosing.

Environment. The environment is the setting in which the group exists. Variables include the economic, political, and physical environments and the influence of these environments on location and migration of the Shawnee.

The Shawnee migrated to areas where the physical environment was similar to that in the locality they left. Erminie Voegelin pointed out that "despite their many shifts in location during the historical period all of the Shawnee groups have kept within one ecological area, that of the deciduous forest belt of woodlands" (1944). Not only did the Shawnee remain in the woodland, but their villages were nearly always located in similar settings. The Shawnee preferred to settle on the ridges of long, narrow plains along navigable streams and avoided coastal, swampy, and mountainous regions (Donehop, 1924; Harmar, 1934; Galloway, 1934).

Trade relations were important and became the basis upon which European colonists gained military alliances or at least neutrality agreements with the Shawnee. If trade relations broke down, military alliances also suffered. The major causes for breaks in political relations, however, were the procurement and occupation of land by the whites. Land often was obtained by the Europeans from other Indian tribes, with no regard for Shawnee occupation or use (Walton, 1900; Volwiler, 1926). The Shawnee were not a party to these agreements and were not compensated for the loss of the land. This led to political splits that even trade relations could not mend.

Facilitation of Migration. Facilitation of migration includes activities and resources which make movement from place to place easier. Shawnee migration was facilitated by the existence of a transportation system. A transportation system in this sense means a pattern of activities and established means which are regularly followed when moving from place to place (Hawley, 1950).

Through experience the Shawnee developed regular procedures in migrating from one location to another. Established trails and paths led from Shawnee villages to various regions in the Eastern Woodlands. In preparation, organization, pace of travel, and satisfaction of basic needs, the Shawnee followed regular patterns in their travel (Edgar, 1890; Denny, 1859). These patterns were based on efficiency and optimum utilization of people and their environment. They carried only those things which were basic to survival (Alford, 1936). Houses, rafts, mortars, and other large items could be quickly and easily built as needed and were readily abandoned (Falckner, 1903).

CASES OF SHAWNEE MIGRATION

Two examples of Shawnee migration have been chosen to demonstrate the presence of the above variables: (1) a case from Alabama reflects optimum conditions for Shawnee settlement, and (2) a case from eastern Pennsylvania shows how changing conditions precipitated Shawnee migration.

With the Creek in Alabama. Shawnee settlements in Creek territory may have existed as early as 1685 (Witthoft and Hunter, 1955). It is almost certain that members of the Hathawekela division occupied portions of what is now Alabama continuously from 1707 to 1814 (Owen, 1921). The reason for this relatively long occupancy in Creek-controlled territory can be shown in terms of internal, external, and environmental variables.

Both Shawnee conservatism and dependency are seen by the example of the Shawnee in Alabama. The Shawnee resisted borrowing cultural innovations from the Creek and retained their language and cultural patterns in spite of prolonged contact (Swanton, 1925). The Shawnee were dependent on

the good will of the Creek, who claimed the Alabama land upon which the Shawnee built their villages. Their prolonged stay was fostered by the Carolina and French traders who encouraged Shawnee dependency upon European trade goods.

The Hathawekela migration to Alabama was impelled, not forced. That is, their emigration from South Carolina in 1715 was voluntary, and the choice of Alabama as a location was their own. Other Shawnee had moved to Alabama prior to this date, but the circumstances surrounding these earlier migrations are not known. The main move from South Carolina was precipitated by the Yamassee War in 1715, although other Hathawekela Shawnee remained in South Carolina until at least 1725. This indicates that those leaving for Alabama were not forced. In fact, the Carolina government attempted to stop Shawnee emigration from South Carolina (McDowell, 1955).

Alabama was selected, although it was not the only location open to the Shawnee. The Piqua division had been moving to Virginia and Pennsylvania from South Carolina for several years prior to 1712, and in 1731 a band of Hathawekela also settled for a time in Pennsylvania (Swanton, 1946). It is not known whether the Creek invited the Shawnee to Alabama, but the decision to go there was apparently made by the Shawnee themselves.

By moving to Alabama, the Shawnee remained in the familiar woodlands environment. As in other regions, Shawnee settlements were located along navigable rivers. Environmental conditions were much the same as in the other regions occupied by the Shawnee east of the Mississippi River.

The political and economic environment of Alabama was favorable for the Shawnee. The area was virtually free from white settlement until the early nineteenth century, yet British and French traders were active in Creek territory. Relations between the Shawnee and the Creek were mutually beneficial both economically and militarily (Milfort, 1802). However, even with these close ties the Shawnee retained their autonomy. The political and economic environment remained favorable for the Shawnee until the nineteenth century, when American settlers and speculators began to invade Alabama. Only after the Creek War of 1813-1814 did the Shawnee abandon the area.

Eastern Pennsylvania. Compared to the settlement in Alabama, Shawnee occupation of eastern Pennsylvania was relatively brief. The Shawnee first moved into eastern Pennsylvania and elsewhere (Hanna, 1911). Again the reasons for Shawnee migration to and from this area can be demonstrated by the internal, external, and environmental variables.

No direct examples of Shawnee conservatism exist for eastern Pennsylvania, but conservatism can be assumed and inferred from their reactions to the economic and political conditions confronted in this area.

With no claim to territory in Pennsylvania, the Shawnee depended on the Conestoga and Delaware Indians, who invited the Shawnee to the Delaware and Susquehanna rivers (Hanna, 1911). Shawnee dependency on Pennsylvania traders is indicated by the fact that trade continued in spite of the abuses of the traders.

Shawnee migration to western Pennsylvania and the eventual emigration from the area were voluntary. Although the Delaware invited them, there is no indication that the Shawnee were forced to leave the Illinois River, the Cumberland area, or South Carolina to settle in Pennsylvania. Nor were the Shawnee in eastern Pennsylvania made to move by force in 1731. In fact, efforts were made by the Pennsylvania government to entice those leaving to return (Wright, et al., 1852).

The physical environment of eastern Pennsylvania was ideal for the Shawnee. The beaches along the Conestoga and Delaware rivers, the flats at Wyoming and along Pequea Creek, both on the Susquehanna, were well suited for the settlement patterns of the Shawnee (Donehoo, 1924). Game, particularly deer, was abundant along the wooded streams (Young, 1965).

The key variables to Shawnee migration to and from eastern Pennsylvania were the political and economic environments. These environments remained reasonably favorable until the death of William Penn in 1718. Penn managed to keep white settlers out of territory occupied by the Indians or, if failing, to compensate the Indians for their loss of land. Though some abuses occurred, Penn also managed to maintain rigid controls on the fur trade.

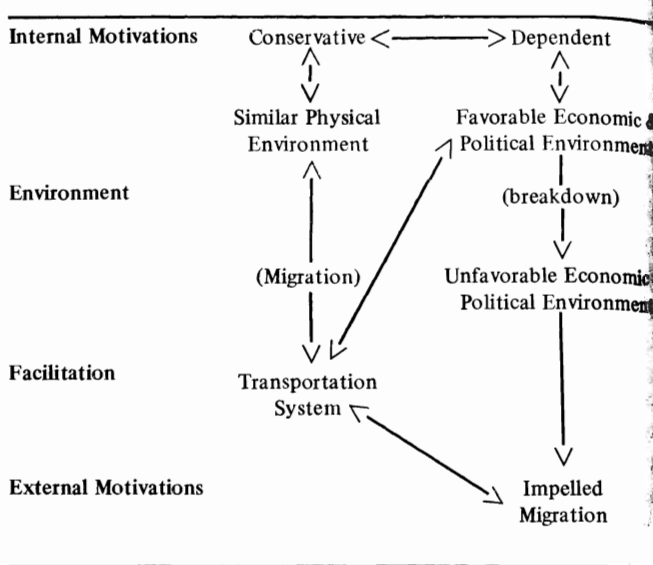
After his death, however, the political and economic environments deteriorated. The Iroquois, long enemies of the Shawnee, were recognized as the sole claimants of Pennsylvania land; the Delaware and Shawnee were no longer compensated for losses. Trade became important to the colony, and the rigid controls established by William Penn were abandoned. Perhaps the most crucial factor was that the Iroquois were given political control as protectors of the other Indians residing in eastern Pennsylvania (Phillips, 1961). By 1731 conditions were such that most of the Shawnee decided to leave, and they settled along the Allegheny in western Pennsylvania. A few remained along the Susquehanna until 1756, but efforts on the part of the Pennsylvania government and the Iroquois to encourage the migrants to return failed.

THE MODEL

The historical data on the Shawnee indicate that their migration was characterized by the variables presented above. The presence of these variables alone, however, is not sufficient to provide an explanation of migration. It is the relation-

ship between these variables that offers a satisfactory and predictable explanation as to why the Shawnee migrate. These variables and their relationships form a systemic migration. This system is presented in the following table.

TABLE I
Model of Shawnee Migration



Conservatism and dependency are the key variables in this systemic model of Shawnee migration. These variables determined the nature of the economic, political, and physical environments desired by the Shawnee. The environment had to offer the Shawnee a place where they could maintain traditional cultural patterns and yet supply those things upon which they were dependent.

The relationship between Shawnee conservatism and dependency is important. A part of the dependency was created by political units outside of Shawnee culture. But Shawnee conservatism added a further dimension to dependency, limiting just how far the Shawnee would go in their relationship with any outside group.

A favorable economic and political environment would not only have to include necessary trading ties and agreements to hunt and establish villages, but would also have to guarantee the Shawnee an autonomy to maintain their traditional cultural patterns. The breakdown in economic and political relations most often involved disputes over the control of land. Although these disputes were economic in nature, they were based in Shawnee conservatism. When the British or Americans gained control over the land, they also exercised control over the people on that land. The same was true of Iroquois control in Pennsylvania. To maintain favorable economic and

political relations in such situations the Shawnee would have had to give up their autonomy and their conservative life style.

Rather than submit to changes in their life style, the Shawnee either resisted or moved. In either case, the political and economic environment was no longer viewed by the Shawnee as favorable. Resistance only prolonged the inevitable. Shawnee prowess in war slowed but never stopped the settlers who transformed Shawnee hunting grounds into farms and villages. If the Shawnee were to maintain their culture, they were impelled to migrate.

The transportation system developed by the Shawnee indicates that they were prepared for and habituated to migration. Yet their migration was not random. The physical environment had to be one similar to the one they left. Adequate water, land upon which to plant the summer crops, and woods with ample game for the winter hunt had to be available. A favorable economic and political environment had to provide for trade and agreements to use the land and still guarantee cultural autonomy for the Shawnee.

Until 1832 migration was an integral part of Shawnee culture, and to European and American observers it was the most distinctive aspect of the Shawnee people. Their voluntary movements and widespread divisions, which perplexed historians, were readily understandable in the light of their cultural organization and ethos. Far from being random wanderlust, Shawnee migration was understandable and followed a pattern.

The model presented here offers an adequate and useful way of understanding Shawnee migration. This is not a general theory, and no useful general theory of migration exists. But it is a model for a particular kind of migration. It is more useful in dealing with the historic movements of conservative and dependent peoples than the contemporary "laws" of migration predicated on an urban civilization (Stauffer, 1940; Hawley, 1950).

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