"The Touch of Civilization"

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Throughout the nineteenth century, as expansion and colonization accelerated, Americans and Russians often resorted to stereotypes and perceptions of the Sioux and the Kazakhs to justify their objectives in the plains and steppe. They regarded nomadism as backward, but they were not the first people to confront intractable, hostile, barbaric nomads. The United States and Russia embraced an epistemological understanding of nomads built on both their own encounters and those they read about in the histories of the Greeks, Romans, and Chinese, and they applied that knowledge to their understanding of the Sioux and the Kazakhs, which led them to overgeneralize and underestimate the strength of the indigenous populations’ social, cultural, political, and economic structures. Moreover, Europeans—and, subsequently, Americans—dealt with Indians from the moment of first contact and developed relatively inflexible ideas and opinions about them over the course of three centuries. The Europeans and Russians knew Turks; they knew Muslims; they conquered other nomadic peoples (and were conquered by them); and they assembled very strong opinions and ideas about what should be done with them. The Americans and Russians adopted policies designed to supervise peoples that they deemed capable of change only when administered by force and coercion because the Sioux and the Kazakhs possessed inferior cultures, societies, and religions and failed to take full advantage of abundant land and possibilities offered by American and Russian civilization. The Americans and Russians failed to understand or appreciate that Sioux
Map 1.1. Sioux tribes of the American plains (courtesy of Department of Geography & Earth Sciences, UNC Charlotte).
and Kazakh society, culture, and economy were in constant flux, and that the Sioux and the Kazakhs adopted and adapted to suit their needs and their sensibilities, however alien that might seem to the colonizers.

In order to understand American and Russian perceptions and their partial justifications for conquest, it is also necessary to situate the Sioux and the Kazakhs in their world—in their social, cultural, and economic milieu—which requires a brief overview. There is no shortage of information or scholarship to draw on to examine and understand Sioux and Kazakh nomadic cultures, societies, political or economic structures, customs, myths, religion, and even games and amusements. Unfortunately, generalizations are unavoidable in a comparative study, particularly when treating subjects as complex as “societies” and “cultures” or “customs” and “traditions.”

One facet of the stereotypical image held by the Americans and the Russians was that the nomadic lifeways of Sioux and Kazakh societies made them and their economies clearly backward. But in a sense, neither the Sioux nor the Kazakhs were fully nomads; agriculture, hunting and gathering, and the trappings of sedentary life were not completely alien to them. The difference between nomadic or seminomadic peoples was that they did not live in fixed abodes or in a fixed place. Sioux and Kazakh economies were generally dependent upon mobility. The Sioux lived by the hunt; the Kazakhs raised large herds of sheep, goats, camels, and horses. The Sioux were migratory hunters and the Kazakhs were pastoral nomads.

MAP 1.2 Kazakhs of the steppe (courtesy of Department of Geography & Earth Sciences, UNC Charlotte).
Americans and Russians based their attitudes on superficial images and representations and somewhat subjective oversimplifications; they did not make a significant leap into some unknown universe that lacked awareness or experience with nomads. The image of nomadic culture and society was that they were static cultures and societies. American and Russian perceptions were grounded in the belief that nomads lived an ancient lifestyle. In the minds of Americans and Russians, nomadic culture and society were homogenized and easily deciphered because of universal conceptions about nomads and traits and characteristics that they believed were common to all equestrian, nomadic, warrior societies. Yet twentieth-century scholars (chiefly historians and anthropologists) demonstrated—in fact, marveled at—the global diversity of nomadic societies and cultures.

For centuries, the nomads’ sedentary neighbors observed and commented upon nomadism and nomadic peoples—especially the Eurasian nomads vilified in Chinese literature. The Greeks wrote about the Scythians inhabiting the steppe lands of southern Russia. With their nomadic mode of life and seemingly endless wanderings, the Chinese and Greeks provided the stereotypical representations of nomadic peoples living beyond the boundaries of civilization whose pastimes consist of “conquest and rapine in the fat lands and rich cities of the plain.” The life of the Eurasian nomad was “riding a horse[,] living in a tent[, and being] menaced by perennial uncertainty of supplies of grass and water. His temptation to maraud was strong and oft-repeated. The mobile existence of the grassland man made it easy for him to raid and pillage.”

Writers in sedentary societies depicted nomads as uncivilized, but they also generally perceived nomads to be very traditional, almost timeless societies that abhorred change and lacked a future: “nomads have no history; they only have geography.” Agrarian, non-nomadic societies relegated nomads to a peripheral social, cultural, and political status as barbarians—a “raw” people that lacked civilization and were pushed aside in “spatial terms, and to antiquity in temporal terms.” Geography and epoch, not society or culture, were all that seemed to distinguish between Scythians, Huns, Vandals, and other nomads such as Bedouins, Berbers, Sioux, or Kazakhs.

The quintessential nomadic tribes—certainly in popular imagination—were Chingis (Genghis) Khan and his Mongol hordes thundering out of the Eurasian steppe to terrorize the civilized world with plunder and rapine. Uttering the name of the Mongols was almost a metaphor for savagery, barbarism, wanton cruelty, death, and destruction. By the end of the thirteenth century, Europeans and Russians gradually transformed the Mongol appellation into Tartars (or Tatars), convinced that classical Tartarus was their place of origin. In time, as
Devin DeWeese noted, in European consciousness, Mongols, and thus Tartars, became demonic nomads from hell sent to purify European Christendom for its many sins.\(^5\) In a rhetorical sense, one might scratch a nomad to find a Mongol but dig deeper to find a Tartar.\(^6\)

The simple reference to Tartar evoked stereotypical images, no explanation needed.\(^7\) When Europeans encountered Indians, they invariably compared them—positively or negatively—to the ancient world cultures that they understood, such as Scythians and Tartars or the peoples of Atlantis or biblical Hebrews.\(^8\) Early explorers and settlers in the New World, in their effort to explain the origins of Indians, noted linguistic similarities. John Joselyn, in 1673, wrote that the “Mohawks speech is a dialect of the Tartars.” In 1753 Spanish Father Venegas thought Indians resembled “Moghul Tartars.”\(^9\) Similarly, the idea of the “red” Indian evoked a specific image based on race conceptions in the nineteenth century.\(^10\) John Foster Fraser simply described the Kazakhs as the “Red Indians of the West Siberian steppes,” an image that needed no explanation or elaboration to his audience.\(^11\) Americans employed both Tartar and red to describe Indians, such as referring to “northern plains Indians as ‘the American Tartars’” or the “ruthless red Tartars of the desert.”\(^12\) This simplistic type of linguistic reference point—equating Tartar to nomad—worked to give the nineteenth-century reader an immediate sense of understanding and imagery.

Interestingly, scholars provide as many portraits of nomadic societies as they do definitions of what exactly constituted a nomadic people. Elizabeth E. Bacon, analyzing nomads in central and southwestern Asia, argued that “true” nomads are people that “dwell the year round in portable dwellings and who practice no agriculture.”\(^13\) Paul Bohannan noted that nomadism is “movement in response to the demands of animals for pasture and water.”\(^14\) Raphael Patai defined nomads as the “mode of existence of peoples who derive their livelihood from tending herds of one or more species of domesticated quadrupeds and who wander to find grazing for their cattle.” Nomadism, as identified by these scholars, required a symbiotic relationship between man and domesticated animals. It required movement—either seasonally or annually—and no fixed abode. But Europeans and Russians easily applied these brief definitions of nomads not just to the peoples of the Middle East, central Asia, or Africa but to the Sioux, Cheyenne, Crow, or other plains’ nomads of the nineteenth century. The one major difference, of course, was between pastoral nomadism (livestock herders) and the equestrian buffalo hunters of the northern plains.

Douglas L. Johnson recognized four nomadic types based upon ecological considerations: full nomads living in steppe regions with definite changes in habitation; seminomads who bordered cultivated regions and engaged in
sporadic agriculture; desert nomads who migrated between fixed water sources; and mountain nomads who used vertical, seasonal variation to pasture their herds. The Sioux and the Kazakhs were a mix of the first two types. The nomadic society and economy was relatively self-sufficient; it produced almost all of the necessities to survive in the harsh plains or steppe environment, such as food, clothing, fuel, and shelter. Sioux and Kazakh nomadism provided access to resources possibly depleted in other regions, such as wood, water, and salt.

This should not suggest that nomads were completely self-sufficient or purely independent. Nomads both raided sedentary communities and traded with them, but that should not make nomads seem more violent or prone to war. History abounds with sedentary people who found time to set aside their hoe and plow to raid other settled people or go to war, and generally engage in plunder and rapine. Scholars long recognized that a symbiotic relationship existed between nomadic and sedentary peoples, and that nomads eagerly traded, attended markets, and coexisted with sedentary communities because, as Owen Lattimore noted, “it is the poor nomad who is the pure nomad.” Trade benefited both the nomad and the sedentary. To relieve the burden of transporting accumulated goods, nomads traded or jettisoned excess material not consumed or used, such as hides, wool, and livestock. Both the Sioux and the Kazakhs participated in trading networks; they understood that they existed within a larger, complex interacting system of exchange.

The Sioux and the Kazakhs are not exact replicas—not mirror images—of nomadic peoples found in other places or other times, such as in Asia, the Middle East, or Africa. Notions about nomadism, however, were widespread in the nineteenth century and often evoked rather negative images of a people that wandered the land aimlessly and without meaning or objective. They were backward, absent a significant history, and stuck in an economic model long abandoned by civilized people. They were backward because they were not sedentary and therefore, not consistent agriculturalists.

What is clear now to scholars is that Sioux and Kazakh societies were not stagnant; they were always in transition, adopting new technologies and strategies to cope with internal and external pressures to their way of life. Many early observers considered the Sioux and the Kazakhs to be extraordinarily fine horsemen and skilled archers, but that did not stop them from adopting guns or other technology to suit their needs. The Sioux and the Kazakhs were willing traders, often enthusiastically embracing new materials and technologies. But Sioux and Kazakh nomadism differed from each other, although they shared some common elements; their social, economic, and political structures were not identical simply because they were nomads.
In order to understand the perceptions held by Americans and Russians in the nineteenth century, it is necessary to examine the sociopolitical and economic structures of the Sioux and the Kazaks. American popular consciousness firmly affixed the image of the Sioux as the "Buffalo Nation," whether hunting throughout the plains or killing Custer. That evocative, enduring image of the mid-nineteenth-century Sioux conjured skilled horsemen and powerful warriors ready to plunder and kill white migrants along the western trails. If the Mongols—and, by later extension, the Kazaks—created the quintessential image of the marauding Eurasian nomadic horseman thundering out of the vast and barren steppe to plunder and destroy peaceful agrarian peoples, it was an image that the Russians and other visitors to the steppe attached to the Kazaks. But these powerful images reflected only the negative stereotypes. The reality was that the Sioux and the Kazaks were complex societies not easily categorized; but as Brian Spooner simply noted, there were no absolute "features of culture or social organization" that are customary to all nomads or that are found exclusively among any of them. Nomadic societies are as diverse as sedentary ones, perhaps even more so.

In the twentieth century, scholars also speculated about why a people might embrace nomadism, why they might abandon a semi-settled way of life and agriculture to engage in the persistent movement associated with a nomadic life, as the Sioux did in the mid-eighteenth century. Certainly, for many people in the nineteenth century, it seemed contrary to normal human progress. Most scholars agree that the adoption of equestrian hunting is what compelled the Sioux to begin their migrations, but the etiological debate about pastoral nomadism remains unresolved and likely will never be completely understood. In the simplest terms, Kazaks inherited some 2,500 years of Eurasian pastoral, equestrian nomadism; the Sioux were, in comparison, relative newcomers to equestrian nomadism.

SIOUX AND KAZAKH

The Sioux were hunting nomads whose social, economic, political, and cultural structures were in the process of changing in the eighteenth century as various bands moved west from the Minnesota and Wisconsin lakes and woodlands into the northern plains. Their language is a part of the Siouan family, which comprises fourteen "mutually unintelligible languages." For this study, it is important to consider only part of that larger family order, distinguished by three dialects but two groupings, Dakota and Lakota. The Santee and Yankton/Yanktonai called themselves Dakota and the Teton used the variant Lakota. The name "Sioux," a French and English name for the Lakota and Dakota, is not the
self-designation but the transliteration of an Ojibwa (Chippewa) word—*natowessivak*—which the French shortened to *Sioux*. Scholars still debate its meaning, most often translated as “snake” or “enemy.”²² What was more important was what they called themselves, which was Dakota or Lakota, meaning “leagued” or “allied,” according to nineteenth-century American missionary Stephen R. Riggs, but perhaps intended to mean someone in union or who shared the same language, maybe a friend.²³

Scholars are uncertain about the origins of the Sioux, based on somewhat inconclusive archaeological data, but Guy Gibbon suggests that their ancestors can be located in the northern woodland regions of Minnesota and Wisconsin around AD 800. There is no doubt that the Sioux were there by the mid-seventeenth century, so it is fair to assume that they had occupied the region for some time before the first encounter with French Jesuits in 1659 or 1660. Pierre-Esprit Radisson learned about a people that he transcribed as “Nadoueceronon,” who his hosts claimed were “very strong, with whome they weare in warres with, and another wandering nation, living only upon what they could come by.”²⁴ At the time of Radisson’s visit, however, the Sioux were clearly not the stereotypical people Americans think of whenever a popular image is conjured. The Sioux society, economy, and way of life were changing, but scholars identify elements that remain vitally important to understand American-Sioux relations and the development of the powerful “Sioux Nation” of the northern plains. The Sioux embraced their own magnificent origin stories that supplied the necessary elements for Sioux society, culture, and traditions.²⁵

On the other hand, the pastoral, nomadic Kazakhs remained deeply connected to centuries of central Asian nomadic social, economic, and cultural structures and heritage. Their origins are still somewhat uncertain, but most sources agree that the name “Kazakh” was in use by the sixteenth century.²⁶ Writing in the 1930s, Kazakh historian Sandzhar D. Asfendiarov concluded that the Kazakhs appeared as a distinct group in the steppe by the late fifteenth or early sixteenth centuries, after the Nogai-Uzbek-Kazak confederation collapsed.²⁷ Alfred E. Hudson suggested it designated nomadic groups in the steppe who independently established themselves or “transferred their allegiance from one to another of the numerous khans then reigning in the steppe.”²⁸ French historian René Grousset agreed with Asfendiarov and Hudson. He referred to the Kazakhs at this time as “dissident Uzbeks.”²⁹

The Kazakhs emerged, by most accounts, when the “dissident” Uzbeks-Kazakhs migrated north of the Syr Darya (*Darya* means “river”; the Amu and Syr are the Oxus and Jaxartes Rivers of ancient times) and followed two brothers named Kirei and Zhanibek (who identified themselves as the “rulers” of the
The Kazaeks to become the nomadic pastoralists. Others attached themselves to the Kazakhs in the steppe regions and, in time, the ethnonym “Kazakh” became the dominant identity for all of these peoples. Lawrence Krader described this process of early identity formation that went from being a sort of social estate—dissidents from a ruling class—to a rudimentary political confederation inhabiting the steppe, to a people who self-identified as “Kazakh.”

In both the Sioux and the Kazakh case, each migrated from one place of origin—the woodlands of Wisconsin and Minnesota for the Sioux and Turkestan for the Kazakhs—into the northern plains or the Eurasian steppe to become the dominant power, displacing others or defending the newly won region against the incursions of others. They were societies in transition that Americans and Russians failed to understand because they perceived them as ancient, even static. During those migrations, however, the identities of the Sioux and the Kazakhs emerged along with the social structures that later observers and scholars identified.

In order to understand the attitudes, perceptions, typologies, and imagery that permeated nineteenth-century American and Russian thinking about the Sioux and the Kazakhs, it is necessary to juxtapose those stereotypes and clichés against what scholars, then and later, identified as the social, political, cultural, and economic structures between the two nomadic peoples. This is not an exhaustive analysis but rather is designed to contextualize and identify some features and characteristics that shaped the Sioux and Kazakh world, at least to the extent possible to reconstruct it for a comparative analysis.

**OCETI SAKOWIN AND USH ZHUZ**

Kinship relations, consanguineal units, and adoption influenced and determined Sioux social structures. The Sioux also called themselves the Oceti Sakowin, the “Seven Council Fires,” which was a mechanism to unite through language, kinship, and culture. Scholars doubt that any sort of institution or confederacy based on the Oceti Sakowin materially existed or ever met in council or came together as the name suggests. Seventeenth- and eighteenth-century visitors to various Sioux camps do not mention it, but Raymond J. DeMallie believes that the first description of it was by William Keating in 1825. Nonetheless, that concept or bond held the Sioux together to reaffirm the shared language, history, culture, and traditions.

Among the Sioux, the Seven Council Fires provided that covenant to explain their commonalities, shared language and customs, history, and traditions that, according to James R. Walker, maintained peaceful relations and prevented
raids and reprisals against one another. Walker and other scholars were unable to find any legend or historical episode to explain the origins of the seven divisions. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, visitors to Sioux camps and other observers often divided the Sioux into three branches: Santee, Yankton/Yanktonai, and Teton—with the former often referred to as the eastern branch and the Teton as the western branch. Moreover, the Santee and Yankton/Yanktonai referred to themselves as Dakota and the Teton called themselves Lakota. After the Sioux western migrations began, sometime in the early to mid-eighteenth century, the Santee remained in Minnesota; the Yankton/Yanktonai occupied much of the Dakotas and northern Nebraska and Iowa; and the Teton situated in the western parts of the Dakotas, northern Nebraska, and eastern Montana and Wyoming. The Teton were the largest in population and ranged over the greater expanse of territory. The Teton also produced some of the staunchest resistance to American expansion in the nineteenth century.

The Sioux, however, existed within the oyate subdivision, often translated as “people,” but which also corresponds somewhat to tribe or nation. The names attached to the council fires and the various bands represented the links to one’s Sioux-ness—to the people’s history—and situated a person in the present. These oyate are grouped to make up the Santee division: Mdewakantonwan (Spirit Lake Village), Wahpekute (Shooters Among the Leaves), Sissetonwan or Sisseton (Fish Scale Village), and Wahpetonwan or Wahpeton (Dwellers Among the Leaves). Another name for the Yankton (End Village) and Yanktonai (Little End Village) was the Middle, or Wiciyela, division; and the Teton, or Titonwan (Dwellers on the Plains), were the western division. Among the Teton, there were seven sub-bands—Oglala, Brulé, Sans Arc, Hunkpapa, Miniconjou, Two Kettle, and Blackfeet. According to Anthony R. McGinnis, the Oglala and Brulé were larger in population, but all were noted for their “warlike behavior” and often camped together and migrated among the Moreau, Grand, Cannonball, and Heart Rivers. Geographer Joseph N. Nicollet gathered some valuable information about the various branches in 1838–1839, although he does not explain any connection to the Seven Council Fires or why the divisions occurred. There was frequent contact and interaction among the various Sioux bands—linked as they were by shared language, culture, traditions, history, and intermarriage—but there is little evidence to suggest that large multiband councils or gatherings occurred before the 1850s or that the Sioux ever amalgamated into something that might resemble a unified nation before internal colonization.

The division into branches existed among the Kazaks as well: the Ush Zhuz or “Three Hordes.” There is little debate among scholars that shortly after Kerei and
Zhanibek separated from the Uzbek confederation further fission occurred, so that by the late-sixteenth century, the Kazakhs divided into the Ush Zhuz. Each horde consisted of various clans. For the kinship relationship to operate in both social and political contexts, Kazakhs did not trace descent back to Kerai and Zhanibek but instead to the mythical Alash or Alash Khan. Scholars attempted to identify Alash to no avail. More important was that Kazakhs believed it and used it to reinforce kinship, which was a link or covenant to explain what united Kazakhs as a people. Kazakhs endowed social and political configurations with a patrilineal scheme underscored by belief in a common ancestry to create consanguineal nomadic units. Kinship idioms and genealogies supplied the necessary and common principles to affirm perceptions of shared cultural heritage, confirm common territory, and establish the mutual responsibilities and rights of each member. Kazakhs, according to Krader, applied the principle of patrilineal descent that possessed rather limited political authority and was quite fluid and adaptable.

The horde located geographically the furthest from the Russian line of advance was the Uly Zhuz, or “Great Horde.” It was situated in the southeastern part of the Kazakh Steppe, close to the Turkestan khanates of Bukhara and Kokand, bordering China to the east, and in the Semirechie (Seven Rivers, in Kazakh Zheti Su) region, north of the Tien Shan Mountains (home of the Kirghiz nomads) and west along the north banks of the Syr Darya. To the north and west of the Great Horde was the Orta Zhuz, or “Middle Horde,” which was the largest horde in population and considered by many to be the most powerful economically and militarily. It certainly had some of the most prominent leaders in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and resisted Russian expansion and colonization with a tenacity unrivaled by the other two hordes. Its territory contained some of the best pasturage and waterways in the steppe. The last horde, Kishi Zhuz, or “Little Horde,” was second to the Middle Horde in population and geography, but it was also the closest to Russia, located in the northwest steppe above the Aral and Caspian Seas. The territory of the Little Horde was the first annexed by the Russian Empire.

Among the Kazakhs, each of the three hordes had clans, but these divisions were extremely fluid. Each clan within the horde had what Nurbulat Masanov called “traditional genealogies,” from the Kazakh word shezhere (genealogy), used to group peoples; and each clan was apparently not rigidly bound to its own genealogy, history, or traditions. In the Great Horde, there were eleven shezhere; in the Middle Horde seven; and in the Little Horde, there were three large “unions” that formed differently than in the Middle or Great Hordes. The Alimuly union had six groups, the Baiuly union had fourteen, and the Zhetyru
The union had seven. Allegiance could and often did change. Krader cited an example that illustrates this fission: when some Kazakhs of the Kangly, Chaichkly, and Kereit clans separated from the Great Horde and affiliated with the Kongrad clan of the Middle Horde. In order to assert this new genealogical right, they adopted the lineage necessary to claim membership. According to Alikhan Bokeikhanov, Kazakhs rarely asserted the largest form of identity (i.e., Kazakh) unless asked by a stranger; in that case, they might also reply that they are the “children of Alash” or the “children of the three hordes.” When two Kazakhs met, however, they identified the clan rather than zhuz, which they employed as expressions of their mutual relatedness and potential kinship.

As with the Sioux, there is little evidence to show that the Kazakhs ever united to form a single unit, although various leaders attempted to unite all Kazakhs under a single khan. Rudi Paul Lindner argued that the distance and movement between nomadic units rendered a conical clan impossible and unable to maintain rigid, segmented lineage. It might be a useful concept to study, for example, “well-defined territorial groups,” but he noted that to study nomads “is to study flux and movement.” Consequently, there was simply no way that all Sioux or all Kazakhs could ever migrate together. Nonetheless, the Sioux and the Kazakhs affixed durable bonds to kinship, language, culture, social structure, beliefs, and traditions; but the Americans and Russians, to borrow Benedict Anderson’s phrase, “imagined communities” among the nomads as political entities that simply did not exist, which often complicated relations between the colonizers and the colonized.

**POULATION**

Throughout much of the nineteenth century, population estimates for the Sioux and the Kazakhs varied considerably and were largely based on lodge or yurt counts by visitors and some government officials. For example, according to Stephen Riggs, by the 1850s, the Dakotas numbered about 25,000. Riggs did not include the Lakota in his estimate. A later approximation based on some government information not available at midcentury that included the so-called western Dakota suggested that the population was closer to 40,000. In the 1830s, Aleksei Levshin published one of the first demographic estimates about the Kazakhs. Levshin believed there were roughly 190,000 yurts in the Little Horde, 500,000 in the Middle Horde, and 100,000 in the Great Horde. Using a figure of six people per yurt, he concluded that there were almost 4.7 million Kazakhs. This method to approximate population was similar to the lodge counting conducted by Americans to estimate the total number of Sioux. By
the latter part of the nineteenth century, official American government statistics shed only partial light on the Sioux population. By the 1870s, some Sioux lived on reservations; other Sioux refused to settle there. In the 1870 Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior, the Dakota Superintendency census calculated the total population at 27,921, but it likely included various Sioux bands and non-Sioux, such as Cheyenne or Ponca.50 By 1880, having finally forced all Sioux to live on various reservations, the report calculated that the Sioux population was 31,547.51 That number declined during the early reservation years—between 1880 and 1910—perhaps due to infant mortality or Sioux leaving the reservations following the 1887 Dawes Act. By 1910 the Sioux numbered only 27,588.52 The Russians, however, only conducted their first official census in 1897, and it concluded that there were 4.5 million Kazakhs in all territories of the empire, with an average of four people per yurt.53 According to the census, 3.4 million lived in the four steppe districts, and the others lived in Turkestan and Siberia.54 These midcentury estimates, and subsequent official American and Russian census data, demonstrate one of the major differences in this comparison: the number of Kazakhs far exceeded the number of Sioux.

Unquestionably, American Indian populations decreased significantly during American expansion and internal colonization and suffered immeasurable losses due to disease and military confrontations. This decline among American Indians, and to some extent the Sioux, fostered expectations by many contemporary observers, missionaries, government officials, and soldiers that the American Indian was on the verge of extinction. The American people readily accepted American Indian decline as the inevitable contraction of an ostensibly
backward, uncivilized people confronted by civilization. The Kazakhs, on the other hand, did not endure similar population declines in the nineteenth century. Levshin’s estimate appeared generally accurate based on Russian 1897 census data. Russians were much more inclined to believe that Kazakhs might integrate rather than succumb to extinction.

Although difficult to conclude with certainty, the demographics might also explain the extended period Russia required to conquer and subsequently colonize the Kazakh Steppe. From 1732, when some Kazakh khans first swore allegiance to the Russians, it took another 115 years for Russia to quell that last major Kazakh martial resistance to Russian colonization. In the United States, conquest occurred from roughly 1851 to 1890 (the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1851 to Wounded Knee, in 1891). Nonetheless, the Sioux represented the dominant force in the northern plains before 1850 and one of the largest demographically that the Americans encountered. The Kazakhs, as well, constituted a large population situated on the Russian frontier and represented a significant barrier to Russian expansion.

After the Second World War, however, Lemkin’s term—genocide—gradually provided scholars a new interpretative framework in which to examine American internal colonization and Native American population decline. Since the 1960s, many American scholars have suggested that the American government and people committed genocide against the indigenous population. Some even argued that this genocide started when the first Europeans landed in the Americas. Various American scholars equated expansion westward and the expulsion of natives as cultural genocide; others observed clear cases of physical genocide against, for example, California’s natives, certainly in the years following the 1848 California gold rush. By the 1970s, Dee Brown’s Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee thoroughly popularized the concept of genocide against American Indians, and it remains a topic of heated debate among scholars, journalists, and activists. Other scholars—most notably, historian Gary Clayton Anderson—argued that it was not genocide but “ethnic cleansing.”

In the Kazakh case, Soviet scholars, both Russian and Kazakh, did not typically apply the term genocide to reinterpret Russian internal colonization. Serious discussion, however, chiefly emerged during Mikhail Gorbachev’s perestroika and glasnost reforms of the 1980s and captured many Kazakh nationalists’ imaginations in the years immediately following the Soviet Union’s collapse in 1991. Since then, Kazakh and foreign scholars generally identified two distinct instances of possible genocide: the 1916 central Asia revolt and the Soviet collectivization famine in Kazakhstan in the 1930s and the subsequent Stalinist purges. The number of Kazakhs who died during these two tragic episodes
remains uncertain, and Soviet-era interpretations further shrouded historical examination. The first work to ignite the debate was a 1989 article published in the Soviet journal *Voprosy istorii*, coauthored by two leading Kazakh historians, Zhulduzbek B. Abylkhozhin and Manash Kozybaev, and highly regarded Kazakh demographer Makash Taimov. The article, “Kazakhstanskaiia tragediia,” spawned numerous scholarly articles and books in Kazakhstan that generated intense discussion in the press and popular media. Most frequently, scholars identify the Soviet collectivization and Stalinist purges among the Kazakhs, in which an estimated 25 to 30 percent of the Kazakh population died, as clear evidence of state-sanctioned genocide. Most Kazakh scholars believe that between 1.3 and 1.5 million Kazakhs died during the famine, which they frequently describe as genocide; but many western scholars disagree. Historian Sarah Isabel Cameron’s meticulous research led her to conclude, “there is no evidence to indicate that these plans for violent modernization [collectivization] ever became transformed into a desire to eliminate Kazakhs as a group.”

Neither Anderson nor Cameron ignore the violence or atrocities committed against the Sioux or the Kazakhs, but, as Anderson concluded, “many Indian tribes (indeed the vast majority) survived, along with their culture . . . This weakens and perhaps makes impossible the argument for calling what happened in North American genocide of any sort.” In the nineteenth century, Anderson claimed, “Genocide did not occur in America, primarily because moral restraints prevented it.” He argued, “For either genocide or ethnic cleansing to occur, a legitimate government must plan, organize, and implement the crime . . . But other actions such as removal or diminishment of ancestral lands require a different description because they are not genocide.” As with Anderson’s argument, the Russian government exhibited no intent to exterminate the Kazakh nation during either the 1916 central Asian revolt or Soviet collectivization. It was not the goal of the Russian government in 1916 or the 1930s to pursue ethnic cleansing either but to suppress a rebellion brought on by war and internal colonization in the former and forcefully implement Soviet modernization policies during the latter.

In the United States, Anderson noted that the absence of a clear state or government intent to eliminate indigenous peoples weakens the argument for genocide. This argument is applicable in both the Sioux and Kazakh cases. Historians and others continue to debate the meaning of genocide and ethnic cleansing and identify examples or situations; but American and Russian internal colonization was not genocide. During the nineteenth century, Americans and Russians altered Sioux and Kazakh cultures, conquered Sioux and Kazakh historical territories, and consumed Sioux and Kazakh political and economic
sovereignty; but the Sioux and the Kazaks survived internal colonization. In order to contextualize Sioux and Kazakh survival, it is necessary to understand, to the extent possible, Sioux and Kazakh social, political, economic, and cultural structures as they appeared in the nineteenth century.

**TIYOSPAYE AND AUL**

The Sioux called their small nomadic communities *tiyospaye*, consisting of several camps (called *wicotipi*, or households), which joined together and were often based on actual and fictive consanguinity. During the winter months, the tiyospaye camped together; during much of the year, these camps separated for hunts but often reunited for ceremonies such as the Sun Dance. Camps generally consisted of kin but were not solely restricted to direct blood or marriage. Other kin relations included ritual adoption. Outsiders—and this typically included fur traders or members of other tribes—could acquire fictive kinship. Fur traders developed reciprocity networks, which, according to Mary K. Whelan, was an exchange “between socially defined partners” that “symbolized family relations” among the Seven Council Fires. These social or even economic kinship relations were as legitimate as blood or marriage. In 1698 Father Louis Hennepin witnessed one such ritual adoption. The tribe also adopted Hennepin. He explained that after an exchange of “presents,” they “adopt those” and “publicly declare them Citizens, or Children of their country; and according to their Age . . . the Savages call the adopted Persons, Sons, Brothers, Cousins, according to the degree of Relations: And they cherish them whom they have adopted, as much as if they were their own natural Brothers or Children.”

Kinship was an essential factor in Sioux internal relationships at all levels. The codes of conduct and behavior were firmly established, which is not to suggest violations did not occur. For example, the avoidance taboo forbade a married man to look at his mother-in-law, and a similar rule existed between a father-in-law and his son’s wife. This structure created a means by which the change of camp or tiyospaye by an individual or family did not require a fundamental change in behavior. Each individual, young or old, understood and complied with this system, which preserved the essential “harmonious operation” of a tiyospaye. According to Ella Deloria, “kinship had everyone in a fast net of interpersonal responsibility . . . Only those who kept the rules consistently . . . thus honoring their fellows, were good Dakotas—meaning good citizens in society, meaning persons of integrity and reliability.” It was, she wrote, “what men lived by.”

Among the Kazakhs, the smallest nomadic unit—the *aul*—consisted of relatives, usually a father and sons. The next level of kinship was the *ru*, or *taipa*,
usually translated as “clan” or sometimes “tribe.” Members of the clan might be related, but not necessarily. Clans conjoined into a single zhuz, or horde. As the smallest economic and social unit in Kazakh society, the aul traditionally provided the strongest connection to genealogy and was the most tangible source of wealth and security, but it could also include unrelated members. Auls generally operated as semi-independent units, gathering only for special occasions and wintering together. The economic viability hinged on self-sufficient activities, and the political structures reflected that same degree of independence.

One yurt generally consisted of the nuclear family—parents and unmarried children. When a son married, he remained in the paternal aul, and the family provided him with a share of the familial property—chiefly a yurt—and some livestock. The woman’s family also provided property, household goods, and some livestock as part of a dowry. Rarely did a bride remain in her natal aul. The youngest son, if there was one, usually remained in his parents’ yurt after marriage, in order to care for his parents in old age. When they died, he inherited his parents’ remaining property, including the livestock. Both the Sioux and the Kazakhs practiced forms of exogamic marriage.

Sioux rules of exogamy required a degree of separation between potential marriage partners, discouraging marriage between a couple that shared a common grandparent. In general, it was best to marry outside the kinship group, tracing the lineage as far back as possible to ensure the appropriate separation. Arranged marriage was the norm; however, the young couple might have a say in the matter. Sioux practice also included a bride price, the hakatakus, which the woman’s male relatives received. According to Royal B. Hassrick, the higher social status, the higher the price, usually paid in horses after the Sioux acquired them in the late eighteenth century. The couple had the choice to live in the man’s camp with his relatives or in the woman’s camp alongside her relations. Polygamy was also an accepted practice in Sioux society, but it required a degree of wealth in order to support all of a man’s wives. Levirate occurred as well, but it was not obligatory nor, it seems, frequently applied. A nuclear family shared a tipi, but it was the woman’s property. If a man had multiple wives, each woman should occupy her own tipi.

Kazakh rules of exogamy dictated that marriage could only occur between unrelated partners, traditionally by seven generations of separation. Marriage was a contractual agreement between parents, kalym (bride price) being paid to the girl’s parents. A girl sang “weeping” or “lament” songs when departing her parents’ aul to live in the aul of her new husband because she was leaving all she knew and loved behind to live among strangers in a different aul. The Kazakhs practiced polygamy, but, generally, only the wealthy had up to four wives; the
practice was somewhat unusual. Kazakhs also practiced levirate. A woman with no sons passed to the younger brother, but she was exempt if she had a son and inherited the property until the son or sons reached maturity. Krader noted, perhaps with a little levity, that levirate was “not loved” by women because if they were compelled to marry a brother who already had one or more wives, the recently widowed woman immediately assumed a subordinate position to the others. She was, simply, no longer the doyenne of her own family. Women were important social and economic partners with their husbands in both Sioux and Kazakh society.

Perceptions by outsiders in the nineteenth century typically characterized women as subordinate in Sioux and Kazakh society; the women did all the work and the men were inherently lazy. For outside observers, gender roles were an important demarcation between American and Russian women, in comparison to Sioux and Kazakh women—a clear contrast between the relative freedom American and Russian women enjoyed and the “drudgery, subservience, and patriarchal oppression” exhibited in Sioux and Kazakh societies. These ideas reinforced one of the traits that colonizers detected in backward, nomadic societies: that a society’s treatment of its women revealed the level of its civilization. As Sherry L. Smith commented, Americans, undoubtedly a civilized people, “pampered women; savage people enslaved them.” Visitors to a Kazakh aul described the women as “active and energetic, and [they] perform nearly all the labor which should devolve jointly” to men and women; but the men are “distinguished for their indolence.” Another noted that the women cook and do most of the work, while the men are “too lazy to do more than look after the horses,” and “lead a lazy, shiftless life.” Women exercised some control, but only because the men were so lazy.

Among the Sioux, women served an essential role in tiyospaye functions. Childbearing, food preparation, and handicrafts were all critically important. Women made the tipis, an arduous undertaking. Women typically put up and took down the tipi, which varied in size. A larger tipi often reflected the husband’s ability to hunt to obtain skins. The expression “[t]he men with the fastest horses lived in the biggest tipis” revealed a husband’s ability to provide for his family. But, Whelan noted, the Sioux “women’s ownership of ‘family’ tipis and the onerous nature of many of their tasks puzzled Euro-Americans because it challenged their Western gender system.” Later, missionaries among the Sioux on the reservations nonetheless considered the status of women to be one of servitude, and only “[t]ime alone can change this prejudice and raise Sioux women from their low condition to that of high and noble position such as is attained and held by women of civilized nations.”
What outside observers either neglected or failed to acknowledge was that Sioux women could speak at camp councils.\textsuperscript{85} A Sioux woman could divorce, and she owned the major property, including furs, clothing, the cooking utensil, and other domestic implements. According to Walker, in family matters, a mother’s authority exceeded that of the father. And, like male societies (warrior, dance, etc.), women had societies as well.\textsuperscript{85}

Women in Kazakh society also played a critical role. They were never veiled or secluded. Ellsworth Huntington visited some Kazakh camps, and he remarked that women were “continually engaged in their household tasks. They converse freely with men, and make no attempt to keep themselves hidden.” This is something Huntington likely expected to see because Kazakhs were Muslims, and Muslim women, in his understanding of Islamic society, were secluded and veiled.\textsuperscript{87} Contrary to expectations, Kazakh women participated in councils and assemblies; they joined in songs and games and “respond readily to jests interchanged with men.”\textsuperscript{88}

Sioux and Kazakh women raised the children, engaged in domestic handicrafts, did the cooking and cleaning, and were fully involved in the day-to-day activities of the camp. Men guarded the herds, defended the camp, and made the political decisions; women did everything else. Despite American and Russian perceptions, Sioux and Kazakh women were not enslaved. Observations by Americans, Russians, or foreigners, however, rarely dismantled the power of nineteenth-century negative conceptions and perceptions about the Sioux and the Kazakhs, which more frequently, and typically, reinforced false beliefs.

**ECONOMY**

The foundation on which the Sioux way of life and economy existed was the buffalo. It played an extraordinarily important role in a culture and economy that depended on this one resource to supply almost all the material needs of the society. It constituted the principal food source, but not the only one. By the nineteenth century, the Sioux possessed large horse herds, which greatly improved their economic and material prosperity and made buffalo hunting a far more efficient undertaking. They used buffalo hides to make clothing, footwear, tipi covers, and small bullboats, and the animal later became a source of income as traders sought out the hide, meat, and fur. The Sioux used the horns and bones as cooking utensils, hide scrapers, and other functions that were both practical and ceremonial. In the arid, almost treeless plains, natives and, later, pioneers used buffalo dung as fuel. The only flaw in this structure might have been the absence of greater diversity. Certainly, the Sioux hunted other animals
and willingly traded and incorporated material goods from Europeans, but the reliance on the buffalo was susceptible to overhunting and exploitation. Horses and buffaloes were valuable but vulnerable assets in the Sioux economy.

The introduction of the horse was one of two innovations adopted from Europeans that every scholar acknowledges were critical to the Sioux during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; the other was firearms. The Sioux functioned fine without them, if they existed in a world in which their neighbors also did not have them—but that was not the case. Plains Indians adopting the horse epitomized the “quintessential American epic” that was a “sweeping story of cultural collision and fusion.” It was the story of some “obscure foot nomads . . . reinventing themselves as equestrian people [that] created one of history’s most renowned horse cultures.”89 Unlike the horse-cultured nomads in other parts of the world, or even among some Native American tribes, the Sioux horse-culture nomadic existence was only seminomadic and more hunting nomadic than pastoral nomadism. The horse provided a mobility inconceivable in the seventeenth century, but that became a reality by the late eighteenth century. The introduction of the horse made the Sioux far more efficient nomads and hunters and certainly more powerful militarily.90 The horse made hunting more individualistic and the family more independent, and acquiring horses intensified intertribal warfare to ensure unhindered access to the buffalo, which increasingly became a critical subsistence resource.91

As hunter-nomads, the Sioux depended on the vast buffalo herds of the Great Plains for their subsistence, but according to Robert H. Lowie and others, the horse gave the Sioux the ability to “specialize in bison subsistence.”92 The horse made the Great Plains a “place of residence rather than as a place of occasional resort” to hunt buffalo more efficiently.93 The horse revolutionized the Sioux economy and its culture, and it transformed warfare. The Sioux had relatively small horse herds. They acquired horses, by most accounts, in the late seventeenth century, but according to Richard White, “the Sioux were hardly noted for either the abundance or quality of their herds.”94 Other scholars noted that a wealthy Sioux family might have forty horses, but that one family could do quite well with twelve.95

Many scholars attribute the desperation to acquire more horses to the increased frequency of conflict, as wealth was measured in horses and, according to Colin G. Calloway, “horse-raiding and war were virtually synonymous.”96 Of course, scholars will never know the frequency of warfare between Plains’ Indians before the acquisition of the horse, but the animal likely improved the military capabilities of the Sioux and others who adopted it. By the nineteenth century, Sioux power on the northern plains rested on military efficiency and
mobility (which prevented the devastating spread of disease that greatly weakened other tribes). In addition, as Pekka Hämäläinen noted, the Sioux developed “a functional equilibrium among horse numbers, ecological constraints, and economic, cultural, and military imperatives.”

Popular imagination stereotypically and inextricably linked the Sioux with the horse and the buffalo. In comparison, economically, the most tangible asset the Kazakhs owned was livestock.

The typical measure of Kazakh wealth was the size of one’s herds. No other animal was more important than the horse; it fulfilled material, nutritional, and symbolic needs. Kazakhs ate horse meat, but more important was kumis, fermented mare’s milk. Every visitor, it seems, who ever visited a Kazakh aul commented about kumis. Jules Brocherel, for example, wrote, “Gulping down this liquid requires a strong digestion, for it contains a quantity of dirt and gives off such a smell that the mere sight of it arouses nausea.” Another visitor wrote that the taste is “what might be expected—rancid and sour to the last degree.” Kazakhs, however, loved it. During summer months, they made kurt, a sun-dried cheese ball, and many other foodstuffs that they preserved for the long winters. Next to the horse in importance was sheep, which provided meat and wool—both of which were critical to Kazakh life. At weddings and feasts, or if a guest arrived, it was customary to slaughter a sheep for the meal. Kazakhs also kept goats, camels, and, during the nineteenth century, cattle. Thomas Witlam Atkinson, an American who traveled throughout the Kazakh Steppe in the 1850s, visited one aul and described the enormous size of the herds as he counted “one hundred and six camels, including their young; there were more than two thousand horses, one thousand oxen and cows, and six thousand sheep and goats. Even these, large as the number may appear, were far short of the total number of animals belonging to the patriarch chief; he had two other aouls [sic], at each of which were one thousand horses and other cattle.”

For both the Sioux and the Kazakhs, maintaining the herds required sufficient pasture, water, and defense against raids. The “poverty in horses” seemed to generate “constant warfare” in the northern plains. According to Hämäläinen, the Sioux (he specifically refers to the “Lakota”) found the right balance of herds that encouraged them to keep their herds relatively small. Lowie made a relative comparison about the role of horses in Sioux and Kazakh society; noting that among the Sioux and other Plains Indians, the horse “lacked significant features associated with Mongol and Turkic horse breeders. The Asiatic nomads gained subsistence directly from their herds—by eating the flesh of their animals and milking their mares. Few of the Plains Indian tribes ate horse flesh except in times of famine, even the Comanche used it as a distinctly subsidiary food; and no American natives ever dreamed of milking mares.” Lowie’s statement makes
it seem that meat was the only food the Sioux and the Kazaks ate, but that was not the case.

The Sioux clearly depended on the buffalo as their principal food source, but many visitors and observers in the nineteenth century described the variety in the Sioux diet. Nonetheless, Edwin Thompson Denig stereotypically described the Sioux as “a people who depend entirely upon the chase for subsistence,” despite the fact that other observers witnessed the Sioux harvest prairie turnips, wild artichokes, wild peas, red plums, and chokecherries. Joseph M. Prince and Richard H. Steckel noted that the perceptions and generalizations about the Sioux ignored the reality of their food economy—particularly their use of wild plant resources such as onions, chokecherries, gooseberries, and wild rice. In addition, they noted that the Sioux “were known to use sap from the soft maple and box elder for sugar. Important cultigens such as maize, beans, squash, tobacco, and sunflowers were available to Plains nomads through a long-established intertribal trade with the more sedentary horticultural communities of Plains villagers.”

Among Kazakhs, meat—chiefly lamb, goat, and horse—supplied their principal diet, but they also traded for fruits and vegetables, grains, and other food with Russians and Turkestan khanates. Another industry among Kazakhs that supplied food and some income was fishing. Russian government records in the 1860s noted that in some regions—particularly those near large lakes (including the Aral Sea)—Kazakhs harvested thousands of pounds of fish and caviar annually.
Stephen Riggs also observed fishing among the Sioux, as did earlier visitors to Sioux camps, but it was for subsistence rather than industry and trade. Nineteenth-century observers generally characterized the nomadic life based almost exclusively on the chase or the livestock and often ignored the diversity of Sioux and Kazakh economies. These observers equally failed to appreciate the diversity also evident within their religious practices, their leadership structures, and their cultures.

**RELIGION**

Embedded in the general conceptions of the Sioux are what DeMallie identified as three elementary features of Lakota traditionalism that likely applied to all Sioux and symbolized their way of life, including “land and freedom” to migrate, male pursuits such as war and hunting, and the “special relationship mankind shared with all the rest of the universe and the forces of wakan.” According to Walker, wakan was the “animating force of the universe” and “anything that was hard to understand.” Sioux religion had rituals and basic concepts that Sioux understood and shared but that did not include a specific structured or consistent theology. Sioux religion was not dogmatic but a belief system that made Sioux “lives and the world in which they live intelligible and acceptable.” Rituals gave expression to their beliefs, including the “purification lodge,” also referred to as the “sweat lodge,” and ceremonies such as the Sun Dance. Early visitors and outside observers readily dismissed Sioux religious practices, usually decrying them as pagan and barbaric. George Catlin’s description is typical and prejudiced. He was repulsed by the Sun Dance—although he admitted that he never witnessed the ceremony—as the “most extraordinary and cruel custom” practiced, which he called “looking at the sun!” He described it as a “sort of worship, or penance, of great cruelty; disgusting and painful to behold, with only one palliating circumstance about it, which is, that it is a voluntary torture and of very rare occurrence.” According to Catlin, the “poor and ignorant, misguided and superstitious man who undertakes it, put his everlasting reputation at stake upon the issue,” and “if he faints and falls . . . he loses his reputation as a brave or mystery-man, and suffers a signal disgrace in the estimation of the tribe.” Catlin’s impression seems archetypal; Europeans and Americans misunderstood the purpose of the Sun Dance, but they also misunderstood Sioux religious belief and rituals. According to JoAllyn Archambault, the “Sun Dance was a focus of religious and social activities that confirmed tribal membership and helped secure a healthy, peaceful, and bountiful future for the tribe and its individual members.”
The Sun Dance was a ceremonial ritual rather than an artistic expression, but dance in Sioux culture was ritual rather than strictly art that Americans might recognize. According to DeMallie, “dance was a highly charged symbol . . . of religion, a ritual means to spiritual and physical betterment.” Samuel W. Pond described the connection between dance and religious ceremonies, such as the War Dance and the Scalp Dance, which he regarded with condescension and thought were a bit vulgar. Others thought Sioux dance was beautiful and meaningful. Outside observers contextualized Sioux dance—the custom and its practice—based on their own cultural and aesthetic understanding of dance and its place in a civilized society. In the minds of most outside observers, the Sioux and their dance were primitive; if primitive was appealing to the observer, likely too was Sioux dance.

The Kazakhs, on the other hand, were Sunni Muslims. Some scholars and observers dispute the depth of Kazakh adherence to Islam. That they were Muslims is unquestioned, but the extent is unclear. According to nineteenth-century Russianized Kazakh scholar Chokan Valihanov, “among the Kirgiz [Kazakhs] there are still many who do not know the name of Muhammed.” In his opinion, however, Islam was slowly replacing shamanism and pagan beliefs. L. F. Kostenko, following a journey among the Kazakhs, concluded, “Islam terrifies its people, so that not only are they incapable of development, but on the contrary they digress further still into a type of ignorance.” Levshin described asking two Kazakhs, “What do you believe?” They responded, perhaps somewhat confused by the question, “We don’t know.” Eugene Schuyler received similar responses; however, he noted, “it is only externally that they are Mussulmans. On being asked what religion they have, unaccustomed to such a form of the question, they will say they do not know, but at the same time they would repel with vigour any insinuation that they were not good Mussulmans.”

In addition, Schuyler mistakenly attributed the Kazakhs’ conversion to Islam to Russian religious policies. He claimed, “few of their sultans and chiefs had any idea of the doctrines of Islam, and there was not a mosque nor a mullah in the Steppe, but the Russians (just as they insisted on using the Tatar language in intercourse with them) insisted on treating them as though they were Mohammedans, built mosques and sent mullahs, until the whole people became outwardly Mussulman, although farther from the Russian lines, and nearer the settled populations of Central Asia, the weaker was the faith.” Despite what many outside observers considered a tepid embrace of Islam, most Kazakhs adhered to certain Islamic practices, such as circumcision, hygiene, and burial rituals.

Americans and Russians often misunderstood Sioux and Kazakh religious practices, which influenced policies designed to manage them or weaken the
nomads’ seemingly stubborn adherence to them. Visitors to the Sioux often completely misunderstood and misinterpreted their religion; it was pagan, animistic, absent order, and built exclusively on superstition. In the steppe, however, Russians perceived the Kazakhs differently precisely because of Islam, which they accepted as a monotheistic faith derived from a consecrated book with something that Russians recognized as canon law. Islam advanced Kazakhs from the primitive paganism evident among the other indigenous peoples the empire encountered. Nonetheless, Russians feared the growing influence that Islam seemingly had in the steppe (Tatarization) and by the 1880s abandoned the decades-long practice of non-interference with local religious orientations. The Russians started to fear “fanatical Islam” among the Kazakhs, and the government encouraged Orthodox proselytizing among them.\footnote{120}

**LEADERSHIP**

Another feature of this comparison to emphasize is the role that leadership played among the Sioux and the Kazakhs. Americans and Russians frequently misunderstood the sociopolitical structures among the Sioux and the Kazakhs. Given the significant diversity in Sioux and Kazakh society, especially the fact that both were divided into three principal groups—Santee, Yankton/Yanktonai, and Teton among the Sioux and Little, Middle, and Great Hordes among the Kazakhs—political leadership was more often exercised at the clan, band, tiyospaye, and aul levels rather than at a national level.

The Sioux did not develop a centralized system of governance. The process of fission simply did not allow one to function. The Dakota and Lakota maintained political structures that fluctuated depending on need, such as an external threat or group well-being during communal hunts. Coalitions of different tiyospaye formed and when different subgroups, such as the Hunkpapa and Oglala, camped together, a camp hierarchy followed an order of “camp circles.” When the Lakota and Dakota gathered together to celebrate an event, dance, hunt, or some other need, even if only in part, they maintained a specific camp order and ranking. According to Walker, the order was Teton, Santee, and Yankton/Yanktonai. Among the Teton, the order was Oglala, Miniconjou, Brulé, Two Kettle, Sans Arc, Blackfoot, and Hunkpapa.\footnote{121} American representatives were often confused and frustrated by this hierarchy because it often played out during negotiations with bands and subgroups.

Bands had chiefs, or headmen, but their political authority was limited; and a chief’s principal responsibility was to carry out the will of the band. Authoritarian rule did not exist, nor did simple majority. Governance occurred through
negotiation and consensus. There are some examples of leadership through
descent; although hereditary right to leadership, or some form of aristocracy,
was absent in Sioux society, a son could succeed a father if he had proven him-
self a capable warrior and exhibited wisdom and generosity. Primarily, a leader
needed supporters willing to follow him. The general mechanism by which the
Sioux governed themselves was through the tiyospaye councils. These councils
appointed important positions, such as the *wakiconza* (camp administrator) and
the *akicita* (enforcers). The council included *itanican* (elders, or, as Catherine
Price translates it, “father of the band”);\(^{122}\) *wakicun*, which Alanson Skinner
translates as “councilors”;\(^ {123}\) and the *blotahunka*, meaning war leaders.\(^ {124}\)
Councils permitted everyone to speak and to express an opinion. Councils did
not meet regularly—generally only when an important decision confronted the
band or tiyospaye, such as war or negotiations. It was a slow, deliberate process
that required unanimity. If the council failed to reach consensus, it typically
adjourned and, perhaps more importantly, maintained camp or band social
harmony. This meant that authority or political power was never concentrated
into a single individual but extended to each member of the tiyospaye. But it
also meant that dissent and disagreement often resulted in splintering and fission.
One disgruntled member could break away, perhaps taking allies with him
to create a new tiyospaye or attract new followers.\(^ {125}\) The akicita enforced the
council’s decisions and carried out the disciplinary functions when someone
disobeyed; usually akicita were noted warriors and members of warrior soci-
eties. The key to leadership was seemingly personal prestige, accumulated by
age; demonstrated acts of courage; and the willingness of other Sioux to follow.
There were no laws in Sioux society but rather rules that the people understood
and collectively enforced. The Kazakhs differed to some extent from the Sioux
in their means of governance and enforcement.

The Kazakhs had khans and others who served as leaders at all levels of society.
Members of an aul or the clan followed those leaders who best protected and
represented aul or clan interests. Leaders who served the welfare and survival
of the group in the search for pasture or protected them against hostile neigh-
bors attracted followers and support.\(^ {126}\) Political organization at the aul level was
extremely fluid but usually was based on genealogical structures. The Kazakhs
invested leadership in the *aksakal*, literally meaning “white beard.” Because an
aul usually consisted of many agnatic families, fathers, brothers, uncles, etc., the
aksakal was not always the oldest male. Moreover, an aksakal was someone who
inspired confidence, rendered justice, and resolved disputes. An aksakal was
brave and intelligent, but wealth and social standing also attracted followers,
even though they had no tangible kinship. An aksakal’s authority was, according
to Bacon, “directly proportionate to the willingness of the followers to accept the leader.” Success in war and peace perpetuated one’s rule, but failure meant replacement or abandonment.\textsuperscript{127} The aul was an agnatic and politically organic structure that, according to Lindner, was open to all “who were willing to subordinate themselves” to an aksakal.\textsuperscript{128} The aksakal typically decided when to move from one pasture to another, often after council with the other males in the aul. In principle, an aksakal could rule in an authoritarian manner, but that might lead to discord and fission. Another leader in Kazakh society was the bii (often translated as judge), who was also easily deposed or discarded by followers if he exhibited poor leadership. The next level of leadership was “sultan,” probably used to identify Kazakhs claiming “white bone” descent and loosely applied to anyone who commanded respect and was considered a strong leader.\textsuperscript{129} The khan was the leader of a horde, with an occasional hereditary structure that supported a khan’s selection from father to son. But, again, a khan could both attract and lose supporters easily. Through marriage or some other relationship, it was possible that one khan might rule two different or even all three hordes, but that rarely, if ever, happened. In fact, during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when Kazakhs most strongly resisted Russian expansion into the steppe, no individual khan united all three hordes to oppose Russian imperialism.

In comparison, Sioux and Kazakh leaders generally assumed their roles due to personal merits, abilities, and political skills as opposed to a hereditary ascension to power—although that was possible. Leadership was fluid, not fixed in a structure that allowed a single individual to speak on behalf of all members of the band, clan, or horde. Therefore, in later negotiations with the Sioux and the Kazakhs, Americans and Russians demanded that agreements reached with a chief or khan be binding on all under their “authority,” as understood by Americans and Russians. When the Americans and Russians expanded into the northern plains and Kazakh Steppe, the progression was clearly more than simple conquest.

The Sioux and the Kazakhs developed political structures that suited the nomadic life and shared some similarities. Americans and Russians generally misunderstood Sioux and Kazakh political structures during the nineteenth-century colonization of the northern plains and Kazakh Steppe. American and Russian expansion and internal colonization in some cases destroyed Sioux and Kazakh sovereignty and institutions, but Sioux and Kazakh social, cultural, and spiritual vestiges adapted and survived in various ways. In order to understand the process of internal colonization in the nineteenth century, however, it is important to understand the historical foundations for American and Russian expansion before 1800.
NOTES


4. See chapter 4 for a brief discussion of nineteenth-century so-called scientific interpretations of primitive peoples.


6. Napoleon was not being complementary when he reportedly remarked, “Scratch a Russian, find a Tartar.”

7. One example of the literary link between Tartar and nomad appeared in Anne Bowman’s 1861 novel, *Among the Tartar Tents; or, the Lost Father*. The author used Tartar, nomad, and Kirghis as synonyms. No explanation was necessary; the reader understood the context. At one point in the novel, Bowman described the Kirghis as “robbers.” One character, an Afghan, was a Kirghis captive who “abhored their life of rapine and blood.” *Among the Tartar Tents; or, the Lost Father* (London: Frederick Warne, 1875), 155.


No. 118 (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1969), 16. The fourth type corresponds to European transhumance and is noted among the Kirghiz of the Tien Shan region in central Asia.


26. Prior to that time, Vasilii Radlov, a nineteenth-century Turkologist and noted linguist who spent a lot of time among the Kazakh, claimed the word Kazak is of Turkish origin and means “wanderer, freeman, vagabond, and tramp.” Major-General S. B. Bronevskii thought the word meant “one who is cautious.” Well-known Russian Orientalist Vasilii Bartold traced the word’s origin to the late fourteenth century Timurid (Tamerlane) period and used to contrast pretenders, called “Kazak,” from legitimate rulers. Sometime later, Uzbeks who abandoned their loyalty to their one ruler were designated “Uzbek-Kazak,” or simply “Kazak.” See V. V. Radlov, Opis’ slovariia tiurkskikh narodov (St. Petersburg: Akademii nauk, 1899), 2:364; S. B. Bronevskii, “O Kirgiz’-Kaisakh’i Srednei Ordy,” Otechestvennyi zapiski (1830), 400; V. V. Bartold, “Kazak,” Sochinenia (Moscow: Vostoknoi literature, 1968), 5:535.


35. Ibid., 10.

36. Ibid., 15.


38. According to Ostler, Feraca and Howard, and other sources, the names for these seven Teton divisions are translated as follows: Ogilas (scatter one’s own), Sicangus (burned thighs, thus the French term Brulés), Minneconjous (plant by water), Itazipcos (without bows, thus the French term Sans Arès), Oohenumpas (two boilings, thus Two Kettles), Sihasapas (black-feet), and Hunkpapas (head of camp circle entrance). See Ostler, *Plains Sioux and U.S. Colonialism*, 23; Feraca and Howard, “Identity and Demography,” 83.


42. M. Tynyshtpaev, *Materiały k istorii kirgiz-kazakskogo naroda. (Chitany v Turkestanskom Otdole Russkogo Geograficheskogo Obshchestva v 1924 i 1925 gg.)* (Tashkent: Vost. Otd. Kirgizsk. Gos. Izd., 1925), 28; Elias, *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, 121. Elias speculated that Alash might have been the Moghal Ahmad Khan, called Ilacha by the Kalmuks and others, but there is no tangible evidence linking Kazakh Alash to Ahmad Khan.


49. Aleksei Levshin, *Opisanie Kirgiz-kazach’ikh, ili Kirgiz-kaisatskikh, ord i stepei* (1832; Almaty: Sanat, 1996), 288. A yurt was the nomads’ abode, a felt tent similar to the Sioux tipi or lodge.


55. In his seminal work, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, Lemkin defined genocide to have two phases, the first destroyed the ‘national pattern of the oppressed group’ and the second, the ‘imposition of the national pattern of the oppressor.’ The second phase is what many American scholars suggest happened in the United States because, as Lemkin argued, that ‘imposition’ forced ‘upon the oppressed population which is allowed to remain, or upon the territory alone, after removal of the population and the colonization of the area by the oppressor’s own nationals.” See Raphael Lemkin, *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Council, 1944), 79.


59. See, for example, Larisa Zh. Kuderina, *Genotsid v Kazakhstane* (Moscow: Skorpian, 1994); Kushbek Usenbaev, 1916: *Geroicheskie i tragicheskie stranitsy* (Bishkek: Sham, 1997). Generally, most Western scholars examined the famine in Ukraine, but Kazakhstan


62. Ibid.

63. Ibid.

64. For a reasoned argument on this very subject, see Guenter Lewy, "Can There Be Genocide Without the Intent to Commit Genocide?," Journal of Genocide Research 9, no. 4 (2007): 661–74. According to Lewy, "The perpetrator must have had special or specific intent, he must have desired and specifically intended the result of genocide" (661).


69. Deloria, Speaking of Indians, 31–32.

70. The yurt consisted of a circular, lattice-worked frame covered in thick felt. A hole in the top allowed smoke to escape. In summer the felt walls were pulled back to let air flow through. One door, usually made of wood (or, sometimes, just a felt flap), was small and required a person to bend over to walk through. In the center of the yurt was the fire pit. Honored guests sat opposite, facing the door.


72. Hassrick, Sioux, 117.

73. Walker, Lakota Society, 53.


80. According to Mrs. E. B. Duffy, the men “assume to treat them [women] as servants, but are so indolent themselves that an energetic Kirghiz wife easily assumes the reins of the household and her husband soon learns to make no protest as long as he is allowed to recline idly on his silken cushion.” See Mrs. E. B. Duffy, “The Women of all Nations: The Women of Western Asia,” Arthur’s Illustrated Home Magazine, February 1874, 88–92.

81. See, for example, Patricia Albers and Beatrice Medicine, eds., The Hidden Half: Studies of Plains Indian Women (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1983).

82. Quoted in Hassrick, Sioux, 187.


89. Hääläinen, “Plains Indian Horse Cultures,” 833.

90. See Clark Wissler, “The Influence of the Horse in the Development of Plains Culture,” American Anthropologist 16, no. 1 (January/March 1914): 1–25. On page 17, Wissler wrote, “Hence, we may formulate for further consideration the proposition that while no important Plains traits except those directly associated with the horse seem to have come into existence, the horse is largely responsible for such modification and realignments as give us the typical Plains culture of the nineteenth century, or which differentiate it from the subtypes in the same area.”

91. According to sources cited by the authors, the Great Plains tribes were “85 percent dependent on hunting as their primary subsistence mode.” Joseph M. Prince and Richard H. Steckel, “Nutritional Success on the Great Plains: Nineteenth-Century Equestrian Nomads,” Journal of Interdisciplinary History 33, no. 3 (Winter 2003): 365.


94. According to White, “the Sioux had to replenish them by raiding or trading farther to the south. In this sense the economy of the Sioux depended on warfare to secure horses needed for the hunt.” White, “Winning of the West,” 331.
95. According to Prince and Steckel, the horses were assigned specific tasks: “one to carry the lodge and accessories; two to drag lodge poles; two to carry meat and miscellaneous food; three to carry the women and children; two for the men to ride; and two specially trained to hunt bison.” Prince and Steckel, “Nutritional Success,” 366.


97. Hämäläinen, “Plains Indian Horse Cultures,” 859.

98. Jules Brocherel, “The Kirghiz,” Scottish Geographical Magazine 18, no. 8 (1902): 399. The visitor to the sultan’s aul compared drinking kumis in terms that an American understood: “Koumis is to the Kirghis what lager beer is to the German, ale to the Englishman, and cider to the ‘down-east’ Yankee.” “Incidents of a Journey in Middle Asia: The Aoul of a Kirghis Sultan,” Youth’s Companion (June 24, 1875), 197.

99. Thomas Witlam Atkinson, Oriental and Western Siberia: A Narrative of Seven Years Explorations and Adventures in Siberia, Mongolia, the Kirghis Steppes, Chinese Tartary, and a Part of Central Asia (New York: Harper & Bros., 1858), 245, emphasis in original.

100. Hämäläinen, “Plains Indian Horse Cultures,” 851, 861.


109. See, for example, Raymond A. Bucko, The Lakota Ritual of the Sweat Lodge: History and Contemporary Practice (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998).


115. L. F. Kostenko, Sredniia Aziiia i vodvorenie v nei russkoi grazhdanstvennosti (St. Petersburg: Tip V. Bezobrazova, 1871), 85.

116. Levshin, Opisanie Kirgiz-kazach’ikh, 313.
The Sioux and the Kazakhs


118. Schuyler, Turkistan, 1:38. Steppe tribes embraced Islam by the twelfth century, if not earlier; however, it remains difficult to say with any precision how influential Islam was among Kazakhs prior to and during Russian colonization. Interestingly, Schuyler also claims that Russian policies fostered Buddhism among the Buriats in Siberia.

119. Typically, only rich Kazakhs had more than one wife. Each woman occupied her own yurt and managed her own children. Because the man had to provide a dowry, the cost usually excluded the average Kazakh from such luxuries. Kazakh marriage rituals often entailed qalym (qalym in Kazakh), a bride price. See, for example, Kh. Argynbaev, "Marriage and Marriage Rites Among the Kazakhs in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," in The Nomadic Alternative: Modes and Models of Interaction in the African-Asian Deserts and Steppes, ed. Wolfgang Weissleder (The Hague: Mouton, 1978): 331–41; N. A. Kislakov, Ocherki po istorii sem’i i braka u narodov Srednei Azii i Kazakhstana (Leningrad: Nauka, 1969): 65–98; Levshin, Opisanie Kirgiz-kazach’ikh, 334–39.


121. Walker, Lakota Society, 18–19.


127. Levshin, Opisanie Kirgiz-kazach’ikh, 364–65; Bacon, OBOK, 71.


129. Kazakhs who could trace descent from some illustrious progenitor, usually directly to Chingis Khan, were called aq suiek, or "white bone." Kazakhs unable to trace descent from Chingis Khan were designated as kara suiek, or "black bone." Some outside observers conceived of these two "bone" as some sort of aristocratic distinctions, but they were not. Wealth, age, wisdom, and courage were stronger markers of social distinction than bone, although bone could conceivably reinforce someone’s natal status. Primogeniture or white bone lineage did not guarantee leadership in Kazakh society.