A Social System Analysis of the Changing Food Practices of the Teton Dakota Indians, 1800-1900

Norma R. Seerley

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A SOCIAL SYSTEM ANALYSIS OF THE CHANGING FOOD
PRACTICES OF THE TETON DAKOTA
INDIANS, 1800-1900

BY

NORMA R. SEERLEY

A thesis submitted
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree Master of Science, Major in
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A SOCIAL SYSTEM ANALYSIS OF THE CHANGING FOOD
PRACTICES OF THE TETON DAKOTA
INDIANS, 1800-1900

This thesis is approved as a creditable, independent
investigation by a candidate for the degree, Master
of Science, and is acceptable as meeting the thesis
requirements for this degree, but without implying
that the conclusions reached by the candidate are
necessarily the conclusions of the major department.

Thesis Advisor

Head of the Major Department
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Food is a necessary element for satisfying a basic need of man. Without it, man could not exist. What man chooses to use as food and how he acquires, prepares and consumes it can vary considerably from one society to another. Roasted ant larvae, insect grubs and locusts are regarded as a delicacy in some societies, yet we in United States never eat them; a young pig may be a source of succulent meat for the English, but the Mohammedans are forbidden to partake of such meat; in the past, puppy stew was regarded as a special ceremonial dish for the Dakota Indians, yet few other societies even regarded dogs as a food source.

All of these foods have caloric values and vitamin content, and all are available to the various societies. Yet a society's members are so conditioned that they select particular foods, prepare the foods in a certain way, and consume the foods at specific

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times in a determined manner. When these food practices are not carried out in accordance with the society's accepted ways, the non-conformist may actually experience physiological reactions such as vomiting or illness.

A society also defines the purpose and emphasis to be given food. It may be a means for stilling hunger or getting nutrition; it may regard eating as a duty or virtue, or as a gustatory pleasure, or even as a social or religious communion.

Changes in food practices can have not only psychological effects as mentioned, but social consequences as well. For the Dakotas, as with many aboriginal peoples, the food practices adopted by their society played an important role in their whole way of life, regulating many of the actions

1"Food practice" as used throughout this study refers to any behavior related to the procurement, preparation or consumption of food.

2Herskovits, loc. cit.

3Dorothy Lee, Freedom and Culture, p. 155.

4The term "Dakota" is used in this study; however, it refers to the Teton Division of the Dakota Indians.
among the society's members. The move of the Dakotas from plains to reservation living furnishes a classic illustration of the difficulties that can occur when a change in the food habits is forced.

The Dakotas' choice of foods was originally fashioned by the kinds of foods available. Through recordings in history, the Dakotas may be traced back to the time they lived in the woodlands around the Mille Lacs area of Minnesota. This region abounded with wild rice, and formed the staple of their diet. By the beginning of the 18th century the Dakotas had moved onto the plains. This move was reflected in their diet and way of life, yet it was not a rapid, sudden change, or one which had serious repercussions throughout their entire social system. They continued to rely heavily on a modified forestlike environment. Their settlements were located in wooded bottom lands cradled by bluffs or ridges, and near a water source, whenever possible. The forested Black Hills were ideal for their winter camping. They used wood for such items as tipi poles, bowls for dishes,

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1Ralph Linton, The Science of Man in the World Crisis, p. 196.
arrow shafts, bows, digging tools and fuel for fires. Many woodland animals were still used for food. Their family organization did not have to change. Thus, they were able to take many of their woodland ways onto the plains with them.

While on the plains, a nomadic existence was necessary for hunting buffalo. With the acquisition of horses, the Dakotas were able to hunt a larger territory and move from one camp site to another much easier. Their economy flourished. The buffalo became their "staff of life" and exerted a considerable influence on their food practices as well as their whole way of life. The buffalo furnished not only flesh for food, but also material for food containers, tents, clothing, household articles, tools for handicraft and fuel for fires. Many beliefs, values, feelings and actions were centered around the food practices which accompanied the nomadic life of the Dakotas as a hunting people.

When the Dakotas were placed on reservations in 1876 and the buffalo were becoming rapidly near


2Frances Densmore, Teton Sioux Music, p. 436.
extinction, important changes were forced in Dakota food practices and way of life. Their nomadic way of life was ended. The meat, clothing, lodging and utensils furnished by the buffalo were disappearing. The extended family organization was broken down to conjugal families. The male occupation of hunting and war activities, and the prestige gained from them, were no longer possible. As Sudder Mekeel described the situation:

The influence on Teton Dakota culture of the extinction of the buffalo cannot be overestimated. This, with the accompanying loss of a means for the individual within the culture to gain recognition through the cessation of the hunt and of intertribal wars, meant that the bottom of the culture practically dropped out. A change to a Western way of life, including foods, housing, employment, and education was being forced upon the Dakotas.

This study is concerned with the Dakota food practices between 1800 and 1900, and the effect forced changes in food practices had on the Dakotas' way of life when they were put on reservations. Specifical-

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ly, the problem of this study shall be to make a descriptive analysis of the role which food practices played in the traditional Dakota Indian social system; to describe the changes in food practices which accompanied the transition of the Dakotas from nomadism to reservation living; and to discover the part which these changes had in altering their social system.

Importance of the Study

In 1959 Bosley reported the death rate of Indian infants is approximately three times that of infants in the rest of the United States, and the life expectancy for Indians is approximately ten years less than for non-Indians. Such health related statistics have created an interest to discover what the Dakotas' contemporary food practices are; and if, or how, these practices may be related to their contemporary conception of health and their present economic and social status in the community. The Rural Sociology Department at the South Dakota

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Experiment Station is undertaking such a study. This study is to serve as a baseline from which the contemporary study may be made. It is hoped that a better understanding of the traditional food practices and the changes in food practices which accompanied the move to reservations can shed some light on the contemporary food practices and health problems facing the Dakotas today.

To this author's knowledge, the application of a social system analysis to historical data in such a limited area of social interaction, as food practices, has not been attempted previously. Perhaps some contribution may be made to the field of sociological analysis through this unique approach.

**Limitations of the Study**

As with all historical studies, the major limitation of this study is the necessity of relying on reference materials which may not be reliable or unbiased. Historical accounts are not generally recorded in an entirely objective manner—an author's viewpoint is injected. In a study of the Dakotas, most of the material from which information must be drawn has been written from the Western point of
view, giving an external evaluation of Dakota life. There are only a few sources written by the Dakotas themselves, and those are by persons who have been exposed to Western ways. Consequently, the resource material may not be completely unbiased.

There is a great deal of material written about the Dakotas, so this author was somewhat selective in choosing sources upon which to rely. However, an attempt was made to compare the various historical accounts, and to use the sources that showed a consistency in text with data fairly well established as reliable regarding the Dakotas.

A further limitation may be the method of analysis used. While the method is regarded as a possible contribution to sociological analysis, it may also be a limitation in that there is possibly some other method of analysis which could have been better utilized.
CHAPTER II

METHOD OF STUDY

Theoretical Definitions and Explanations

As has been indicated, this study is concerned with food practice changes and the effect these changes had on the Dakota way of life. An analytical scheme was necessary which offered tools for analyzing food practices from all perspectives in a society. A slightly modified version of Dr. Charles P. Loomis' Processually Articulated Structural Model (PASM) for analyzing a social system seemed to best fit this requirement.

Before elaborating on Loomis' model, it is necessary to establish the relationship of the PASM to sociological theory. In constructing his model, Loomis borrowed from the theories of Talcott Parsons, Howard Becker, Kingsley Davis, George C. Homans, Pitirim A. Sorokin and Robin M. Williams, Jr. However, his most important reference was Talcott

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2Ibid., p. vi.
Parsons' *The Social Systems*, in which Parsons presents his social systems theory. Thus, this study relates back to Parsons' social systems theory. In his theory Parsons sets forth a structural-functional equilibrium model for analyzing a social system. The question may arise, "Why use Loomis' scheme rather than Parsons' scheme?" The reason is twofold: (1) Parsons' structural-functional equilibrium model has been criticized as tending to focus attention upon structural relations at a given moment of time and ignoring the trends and dynamic aspects of these relations. While Loomis' scheme relates back to Parsons' theory, Loomis makes an attempt, and this author feels a successful one, to obviate this difficulty by "linking the important elements of social structure to the processes crucial for the articulation of structure through time...," thereby breaking through some of the difficulties imposed by the static aspects of the equilibrium model. Loomis accomplished this in a great part by incorporating ideas from the theories of the other

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sociologists mentioned. (2) Loomis spells out more specifically all parts of the social system to be analyzed, giving more precise conceptual tools with which to work.

Loomis defines and explains a social system as being composed of the patterned interaction of actors. Its members are mutually oriented through the definition and mediation of a pattern of structured and shared symbols and expectations. To understand or analyze a society or any of the systems that exist in a society, attention must be focused on the uniformities of interaction. To analyze the social interaction of a social system, an examination of its elements (parts) must be done. At any given moment in time the structure of any social system may be described and analyzed in terms of its elemental parts. However, these elements do not remain in the same relation for any length of time, except by abstraction. Processes mesh, stabilize and alter the relations between the elements through time. The processes are tools through which the social system is seen as a "going concern" and social change can be described and analyzed. Two kinds of processes are distinguishable for analysis: (1) the specialized elemental processes which articulate the
separate elements, and (2) the comprehensive or master processes which involve several or all of the elements. Structural-functional analysis of a social system is accomplished by combining each structural element along with its particular elemental functional process. In addition to the core components and the master processes there are conditions—conditions of action—within which a system operates and over which a social system has little or no control.  

A Dakota Indian society can be viewed as an independent social system because there are definite patterns of behavior by its members which distinguish it from the surrounding non-Indian society.

The modified conditions for action, structural functional categories, and comprehensive processes used in this study are defined below, based upon Loomis' definitions:

1Ibid., pp. 4-8.


3Loomis, loc. cit., pp. 11-40.
1. Conditions of action
   a. Territory - the setting of the social system in space.
   b. Size - a condition of action which tells the number of actors in the social system, and what, if any, bearing numbers may have on the system.
   c. Time - a period or duration between two periods.

2. Elements and elemental processes. The elements and their articulating processes are combined into structural-functional categories to better present the Dakota social system as an ongoing concern with its changes and alterations.
   a. Beliefs and knowledge - what is known and believed to be true about the universe, its objects and its relationships; and how knowledge is utilized, developed and changed.
   b. Values - embracive, permeating and global attributes which designate preferred behavior; tell "what ought to be." This category is an addition
to Loomis' scheme. Loomis states it is not included in his scheme because it is so permeating and not precise enough. However, in an analysis of the Dakota social system, four values are recognized as basic to their behavior patterns; thus, it is felt a category of values should be included in this analysis.

c. Sentiment - the feelings held regarding the universe; how motivation is accomplished to achieve the ends or goals of the social system.

d. Norms - the specific patterned rules or regulations for behavior which tell what is right and what is wrong.

e. Sanctions - the rewards and penalties meted out by members of the social system as a device for inducing conformity to norms.

f. Status-roles - the social positions in a social system and the roles expected

\[1\text{Malan, loc. cit., p. 11.}\]
to be acted out by the occupants of the positions.

g. Power - the capacity to control others, including authority which is accorded by the system to certain status-roles, and the influence which may be exerted by a popular leader.

h. Rank - the standing a social system gives specific actors and the allocation of status-roles to actors on the basis of their standing.

i. Facilities - the objects used in attaining the goals of the system. This is an important category in this study since food practices directly involve the use of material goods.

j. Goal achieving - the ends which the social system expects to accomplish through interaction, and the activities involved in achieving these ends.

3. Comprehensive processes. The processes have been modified to better suit this study of food practices.

a. Socialization and communication - the transmission of the social and cultural
heritages; the formation of personalities.

b. Systemic linkage - the linking of one or more social system with another, and the results from the linkage.

In addition to Loomis' social system model, this study borrows from Robert K. Merton. During the time which this study covers, the Dakota social system was overpowered by the U. S. Government, and Western ideas were beginning to be imposed upon the Dakotas. To analyze this forced assimilation and its effects upon the Dakota social system from a broader perspective, the concept anomie is incorporated in this study.

Anomie, as described by Robert K. Merton, is used in the summary and conclusion of this study for analyzing the disorganizational effects food practice changes had in the Dakota social system, and the adjustments made to disorganization by the system. Anomie is a term used to denote a state of normlessness, which results in symptoms of disorganization. The dissociation of a system's goals and the socially structured means for their attainment result in anomie. Modes of adjustment to the condition of anomie as suggested by Merton which are pertinent to this study are: (1) conformity, the acceptance of the systemic goal and means to achieve the goal; (2) innovation,
the acceptance of the systemic goal, but rejection of the means to attain the goal; and (3) rebellion, the attempt to eliminate the reigning goals and means of attainment by the introduction of a new social order.

Theoretical Frame of Reference

Using the defined concepts given in the preceding section, a model for analyzing the changing food practices in the Dakota social system has been constructed.

There are three conditions of action within which interaction of its members is directed. This study focuses on the interaction which takes place in the Dakota social system for the purpose of obtaining, preparing and consuming food for sustenance of the system's members. Actions specifically related to food practices for achieving this goal include their nomadic way of life, hunting, gathering, trading and plundering for foods, and preparing and consuming foods.

To meet its goal, a social system maintains knowledge and beliefs, values and sentiments. These three elements form the "basic building blocks" of a social system. They are oriented toward the goal, and also furnish the basic guides for interaction of the system's members. The Dakotas' ecological knowledge and their belief in the balance of nature, values of generosity and bravery, and their feeling that all animals are sacred are examples of knowledge and beliefs, values and sentiments, respectively. These directed the interaction of the Dakotas to the achievement of their goal of obtaining food.

A social system is composed of individual actors. Through socialization the beliefs and knowledge, values and sentiments maintained by the social system are transmitted to each actor. From this interaction process of socialization, individual actors formulate attitudes which are reflected in their social actions.

Attitudes are composed of three parts: (1) cognitions, what the individual believes about an object and how he should respond to it; (2) feelings, which refer to the emotions connected with an object that give one motivation to act; and (3) action tendencies, the dispositions to take action toward an object. Attitudes are reflected in an individual's social actions. From David Krech, Richard S. Crutchfield and Egerton L. Ballachey, Individual in Society, pp. 140-177.
Communication is a master process which is essential for socialization to take place. It provides the means for the transmission of all the information, decisions, directives, knowledge, opinions and attitudes; it is the distinguishing factor between humans and animals. When behavior of the individuals in a social system is socialized so that their actions are patterned and predictable in accordance with the system's "basic building blocks," internal systemic stability is evident. Socialization of Dakota children was done by the extended family grouping, communicating such information and attitudes as how to hunt buffalo, that certain rituals must be performed to insure a good hunt, and sharing food was an expected action.

From the "basic building blocks" the system's norms are extracted. These rules and standards are the behavioral guides of action for the system's members. Coordinating the actions of individuals within a system is achieved through allocating actors to status-roles. Allocation may be done on the basis of rank. Power to control is accorded some actors. Each individual performs his status-role in conformity with the system's norms in order to achieve the desired goal. Sanctions, both positive and negative, enforce
conformity to the norms. A status-role in the Dakota social system is the male hunter. A hunter who does not follow the prescribed norms of a buffalo hunt may have his tipi burned. If he is ranked by the system as an excellent hunter, he is recognized for his success; he may be given the status-role of buffalo search party leader, a high honor in Dakota society. This position gives him power—the other members of the search party are under his command.

To meet a systemic goal, the utilization of facilities may be necessary. Facilities used by the Dakotas to achieve their goal of obtaining food for sustenance included the horse and dog with which to hunt buffalo, and the use of other animals and plants as food for the system's members.

Thus, through the patterned interaction of the actors in a social system, a goal shared by the system's members may be achieved. This model is diagrammatically presented in Figure 1.

Once a social system is in existence, it cannot help but change. "Social change may start in any part of the system, through changes in the external pattern of the group, alterations in its physical environment, technical organization, or even in its
internal pattern..."\(^1\) Changes in Dakota food practices resulted from the Dakotas' systemic linkage with Western civilization.

When the U. S. Government became dominant over the Dakotas, the government's goal was to "civilize" the Dakotas, or more precisely, to force the Dakotas to assimilate Western goals and its acceptable actions for meeting goals. In food practices, the Dakotas still had the systemic goal of providing food for its system's members after being put on reservations, but the actions directed to the attainment of the goal were forced to be altered from the old traditional ways. This reverberated through the whole Dakota social system, creating conflicting food practice norms. Symptoms of anomie became apparent in the Dakota social system with the move to the reservation, but modes of adjustment to the condition were evident—conformity, innovation and rebellion. Some Dakotas accepted farming as the means for meeting the food need, thus conforming with the means prescribed by the government to achieve the goal of obtaining food for sustenance. Innovation was evident in those who

\(^1\) Loomis, *loc. cit.*, pp. 9-10.
This theoretical model was developed as an attempt to diagram the relationships as given by Charles P. Loomis in Social Systems: Essays on Their Persistence and Change, and has been modified to meet the purpose of this study. Some of the ideas of modification were suggested by Dr. Vernon Malan.
refused to accept the government's prescribed means for obtaining food, preferring to carry out food practices in the traditional ways as far as was possible and accepting rations from the government. Rebellion took place, in the Messiah Craze, with the hopes of restoring the old Dakota way of life.
CHAPTER III

CONDITIONS OF ACTION FOR THE DAKOTA FOOD QUEST

Time, territory and size are components utilized for outlining the conditions within which the Dakota social system operated in their quest for food, and over which the system had little control. These conditions are valuable in providing the necessary background information for a meaningful analysis of the interactions related to food practices.

Time

Defining time is important in a social system analysis to tell (1) where in the flow of time the analysis of interaction takes place, and (2) how the social system views the concept of time.

The focus of this study is on the Dakota food practices during the 19th century. This time is divided into two general periods: (1) traditional and (2) early reservation. The traditional period refers to the buffalo hunting era and the nomadic way of life which accompanied hunting (1800-1876). While the Great Sioux Reservation was formed by treaty in 1868, the Dakotas were not yet reservation-bound. The reservation era begins when the Dakotas were supposedly reservation-bound,
and were subsisting primarily on U. S. Government rations (1876-1900).

How man conceived of time may have some bearing on his actions. The way the Dakotas conceived of time as summarized by McCone from their concepts of time is that of a continuance of self identity in a permanently patterned environment of natural and social events. It is subjective. It is unmeasured or eternal time. To hurry, there is no object, so long as one is keeping in step with the permanent order of things: to move faster would only be to get out of step with the pattern of reality.¹

In making a study of food practices, the Dakotas' concept of time has bearing in recognizing that there was reckoning of time in relation to seasonal food availability and procurement. The recurring, patterned events of nature, such as buffalo calving time, chokecherry ripening time, and wild strawberry season, were recognised as special times of the year, and the Dakotas generally synchronized their life in accordance with such knowledge of time.² Special times recognized with

²Ibid., p. 23.
regard to food in the Dakota language included: Moon of the Birth of Calves (April); Moon of Strawberries (May); Moon of Ripe Juneberries (June); Cherry Ripening Moon (July); Moon of Ripe Plums (August); and Moon of Hairless Calves (November) when buffalo fetuses were found in butchered cows. Also, fall was a time for nut and vegetable gathering and intensive hunting to supply extra foods to be dried and stored for the winter months.

When the Dakotas were placed on the reservation, these time concepts came to have little meaning in relation to their activities since they no longer were a nomadic people in search of such foods on a seasonal basis; and, too, the foods previously sought were either not available, or if so, in such small quantities that only a very few could utilize them. The time that became important with regard to foods was ration day. Rations were supposed to last from seven to ten days, but feasting with family and friends took place for three or four days after receiving rations, just as was done after a big buffalo kill, then they would go hungry, looking to the time of the next ration day.

1Hassrick, loc. cit., p. 154.
2George E. Hyde, A Sioux Chronical, p. 179.
Thus, food procurement patterned by natural events, in accordance with the traditional idea of time, changed to procurement of food on a Western basis, when the U. S. Government provided it.

**Territoriality**

A description of the various locations of the Dakotas in space illustrates their geographical movements. This is particularly important in viewing the food practices, since various areas provided different foods. In addition, it gives a general view of the space within which the chain of events occurred in the Dakota system, and sets the framework for analyzing systemic linkage. Three major territorial changes occurred with the Dakotas which are of particular interest to this study: (1) the change from the woodlands area, (2) to the plains, and (3) to the reservations.

Historical accounts of the Dakotas locate them in the Mille Lacs area of Minnesota around 1640, and consider them as woodland Indians. This territory abounded with wild rice, and constituted the main food
in their diet. However, other vegetal foods and animals supplemented the rice, including the buffalo which were not strangers to the Dakotas during their woodlands existence. At times, temporary encampments were made on the eastern edge of the plains for buffalo hunting.

During this same period, the Ojibwa Indians acquired firearms from the French, and gradually began pressing the Dakotas further west, moving them out of their woodland territory. Since horses were not known to the Dakotas yet, the migrations were made on foot, using dogs to drag a travois loaded with the essentials for setting up residence in a new area. The farther west they moved, the more the wild rice quantity diminished, and the lack of it had to be supplied by substituting something which the prairie offered. By approximately 1700, the Dakotas had become permanent occupants of the plains area, and were dependent upon the buffalo as their main food source. Buffalo were

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2Edwin R. Embree, Indians of the Americas, p. 128.

3Gilmore, loc. cit., p. 56.
plentiful in the plains territory. It is estimated that there were some 60 million buffalo roaming the area at this time.

The advent of the horse into Dakota life around 1800 revolutionized their life. The horse gave not only greater security in assurance of a bountiful supply of buffalo, but an actual overabundance was possible for the first time to these previously impoverished nomads—a larger hunting territory could be covered. However, as former woodland people, the Dakotas realized the buffalo alone could not support them. Other animals as well as wild fruits and vegetables found on the plains supplemented their diet. Ways brought from their former woodland habitat were utilized. Hassrick says there is every reason to believe that the Sioux, or any hunting people, could not have survived the rigors of the plains without the buffalo, and there is good reason to believe that...hunting groups could not have existed without the horse. These factors, however, do not suggest that the horse and the buffalo together were sufficient to support a large-scale hunting economy—the retention of a woodland way of life was equally important.

1Robert Hofsinde, The Indian and the Buffalo, p. 11.
2Hassrick, loc. cit., p. 159.
3Ibid., pp. 151-56.
While the Dakotas were living on the plains as hunters, nomadism was essential since the buffalo moved and the food supply in an area would be depleted. The location of their settlement was almost solely determined by the proximity of sizable buffalo herds. Even though their movements seemed erratic, there was some patterning in their movement. There were certain favorite camping spots to which they returned periodically. During the winter they generally camped in the Black Hills region. This gave them some protection against the harsh winters, and provided such foods as deer and other small animals, and wood for fires.

The Dakotas moved about the plains territory in relative freedom, but an increasing number of white traders, settlers and travelers were flowing into the area. With this increasing traffic of white men, the buffalo numbers decreased, and more and more demands were made on Dakota territory by the white men. By 1850, the era of abundance with which their territory had provided them was giving way to an era of diminishing returns. By 1859, more than a million buffalo were being

1Ibid., pp. 151-56.
killed annually. Finally, Hofsine estimates that by 1880 only 256 buffalo remained in the United States. This slaughter of the buffalo was a threat to the Dakota economy. They met this threat with resistance by fighting for their territory.

The demands by the white men for Dakota territory were met through treaties in 1868, 1876 and 1889. On April 29, 1868, the Dakotas agreed with the U. S. Government in the Laramie Treaty to accept a reservation area west of the Missouri River in South Dakota to be known as the Great Sioux Reservation. During the autumn of 1876, a treaty negotiated released to the U. S. Government all the lands between the forks of the Cheyenne River, including the Black Hills, and all lands west of the 103rd meridian. Also, Dakota hunting privileges outside their reservation were ceded, necessitating a change in food practices. In


2Hofsine, loc. cit., p. 74.

3Goldfrank, loc. cit., p. 74.

addition, they were allotted plots of land, and the families were encouraged to the point of insistence to disperse to live on their allotted plots. This is significant, in that such a territorial assignment of conjugal families was made in conformity to white man's ways, and was in conflict with the traditional Dakota extended family patterned of living.

In 1889, the year South Dakota became a state, 11 million acres were relinquished by the Dakotas to the U. S. Government. The remaining reservation land was divided into five reservations: Standing Rock, Cheyenne, Lower Brule, Pine Ridge, and Rosebud.

Thus, the Dakota territory was reduced from what is presently the state of South Dakota and parts of the surrounding states to the Western half of South Dakota; finally, two treaties ceded nearly half as much land again, and conjugal families were allotted plots of land upon which they were to live.

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1 Hassrick, loc. cit., p. 301.
2 Herbert Welsh, Civilization Among the Sioux Indians, p. 21.
Accurate figures as to the number of the Dakota Indians prior to the reservation era are not available. Various authors have estimated their number, but the figures vary so extremely that it is obvious they are unreliable. However, a rapid population increase seems to have occurred between 1800 and 1850. Their number as well as territory had increased to the point that the several divisions were no longer able to meet as a single body for their annual summer camp as had been done in the past.

Of particular importance for this study in regard to size is the fact that during their hunting era, the Dakotas were divided into small, extended kinship groupings. The size of the grouping, known as a tivospaye, varied from ten to 20-odd families. Small groupings were important under a hunting economy because any one location could support a group only for a short period of time. The larger the group, the

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2 Hassrick, loc. cit., p. 30.

3 Margaret Mead (ed.), Cooperation and Competition Among Primitive Peoples, p. 392.
quicker the supply of available foods would be consumed. This was especially the case where vegetal foods were being utilized. It appears that the size of the camps was kept down by families and groups of families constantly separating from parent groups to establish independent camps.

With the end of the hunting era, and beginning of the reservation period, the number in a conjugal family rather than an extended kinship grouping became important so far as food was concerned. Each household was issued a ration ticket specifying the names and number of individuals in the family. Rations were issued to the heads of each separate family, a specified quantity for each family member.

In summary, this chapter has outlined the conditions of action for an analysis of food practices in the Dakota social system. This study covers food practices during the traditional (1800-1876) and early reservation (1876-1900) periods.

1Hassrick, loc. cit., p. 31.

Within 200 years the territory of the Dakotas changed from the woodlands of Minnesota with its wild rice; to the great plains and its abundance of buffalo; to the five reservations in South Dakota with their allotted land plots, and food provided mainly by the U. S. Government. It was within these changing spatial conditions that food practices in the Dakota social system functioned and changed through time.

Size is pertinent for this study in that the traditional Dakota extended family was a small grouping which facilitated the hunting economy. With reservation living, the size of the conjugal family became the important factor in determining the quantity of food issued to the family by the government.
CHAPTER IV

DAKOTA FOOD PRACTICES, 1800-1900

An analysis of the elemental parts and elemental processes of a social system provide an understanding of interactions occurring within the system. For an understanding of the role which food practices played in the Dakota social system, attention is focused on the interactions within the system pertaining specifically to their quest for food. By combining the elements with their articulating processes, the changing food practices of the Dakota social system are analyzed.

Beliefs and Knowledge

Beliefs and knowledge form the cognitive foundation for social actions. What the Dakotas believed as being true about their universe, whether or not in reality it was true or false, served as the basis for their feelings about their universe and how they thought their social relationships with one another and their relationships with their universe should be. Thus, beliefs and knowledge of foods held by the Dakotas

1Loomis, loc. cit., p. 5.
were basic to their food quest, permeating all the other elements, and serving as a foundation for actions related to food practices.

The fundamental belief that there must be harmony with nature was basic to the Dakota food practices. Around this belief others revolved. Plants and animals were believed to have spirits, as did the humans, and were held as sacred. Hunting and gathering were the means believed to be best to supply the system with the needed foods. They were serious businesses because of the supernatural affiliation plants and animals had, and it was believed that hunting and gathering activities must be carried out in particular ways so that complete harmony in nature be maintained. When an animal was killed for food, it was believed that only the outward form of the immortal spirit was consumed. By disposing of the remains in the proper manner, the spirit would then return in a new dress and serve them again.

To keep harmony, it was believed that animals and plants should not be permitted to become extinct.

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1Hassrick, loc. cit., p. 170.

They should never be destroyed needlessly—wanton destruction was held as wicked. Such a belief helped insure the Dakotas of a continuing food supply which was important for the maintenance of a nomadic, non-agricultural society.

A keen knowledge of their natural environment was demanded for the traditional Dakotas' survival on the plains. They were generally shrewd and discerning observers of the life and habits of plants and animals. They had knowledge of plant and animal ecology, when and where to obtain these foods, and how to preserve them for future use. The knowledge of their environment is exemplified by the techniques used in hunting and gathering their foods, and their seasonal movements made. They knew that an off-wind approach was necessary to hunt deer; a sharp blade concealed in a piece of meat could catch a mink or fox who would unknowingly cut its tongue and thereby bleed to death; traps set on an animal trail yielded success; birds could be

1Melvin R. Gilmore, Prairie Smoke, p. 34-35.
2Ibid., p. 33.
caught by approaching slowly with outstretched arms; and a discovered mouse's cache would contain dried beans.

There were specific beliefs held regarding the use of foods which affected Dakota food practices:

1. Consumption of marrow fat was believed to be good for the hair.

2. Badger was a source of meat that was refused because it ate human flesh. Whenever a badger hole was found, it was believed to be a human grave. However, in times of starvation the badger was consumed.

3. The goose egg was considered by some to cause carbuncles, so was generally shunned.

4. Maintaining good physical and mental health was believed to be of utmost importance, especially for the young braves. One means

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1Hassrick, loc. cit., p. 167.
2Ibid., p. 179.
3Richard Ewing Dodge, Our Wild Indians, p. 274.
4Robert H. Ruby, The Oglala Sioux, p. 81.
5Hassrick, loc. cit., p. 169.
of keeping healthy was by not eating excessively.

5. Food was put into a category different from all other forms of wealth. It was something that could not be owned by anyone.

6. Bittersweet was called snake food, and considered as poisonous.

7. When sunflowers were tall and in full bloom, the buffalo were believed to be fat and the meat good.

8. A person gathering cherries must move in the direction contrary to the wind for the cherries to be good and sweet. If the gatherer moved with the wind, the cherries were believed to be bitter and astringent.

9. Dog flesh was believed to be the most sacred

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5Ibid., p. 87.
10. Colostrum was believed to be a possible cause of diarrhea in a new born child.

11. Turkey was tabooed because of the belief it would make one cowardly and run from enemies, as the turkey runs from pursuers.

12. Consumption of certain foods was believed to be important for curing illnesses. Gilmore lists the following plants which were believed to aid in sickness when consumed:

a. Calamus (sweet flag) was held in high esteem, and mystic powers were ascribed to it.

b. Hops fruits were steeped to make a drink believed to allay fevers and intestinal pains.

c. The pasque flower was eaten as a counter irritant for the use in rheumatism and similar diseases.

1Dodge, loc. cit., p. 277.

2Hassrick, loc. cit., p. 273.

3Dodge, loc. cit., p. 278.

d. Wild licorice root was chewed and held in the mouth for toothaches. A decoction of the root served as a remedy for fever in children.

e. Wild verbena leaves were boiled to make a drink for stomach aches.

f. Rough pennyroyal leaves were used as a cold remedy.

g. Wild gourd was believed to possess special mystic properties, and people were afraid to dig or handle it unauthorized. The root was used for headaches or other head troubles; the top of the plant was used for abdominal troubles.

h. Sunflowers served as a pulmonary remedy.

i. A decoction of little wild sage was taken internally by women when menstruation was irregular.

j. A wild sage decoction was consumed for stomach troubles. Ruby adds that a small piece of sage wrapped in the bark of a tree was taken to relieve constipation.

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1Ruby, loc. cit., p. 10.
With the prominent role buffalo had in their life, it is not surprising the Dakotas had myths and legends regarding the buffalo. According to one legend, the first buffalo came out of a cave from the north, and had a thick robe, black horns and hoofs. He spoke to an Indian and said the buffalo would come in great numbers. The buffalo warned, "use us well, for the day will come when we will go back into the ground again. And when we are no more, the Indians will have gone too." 

The buffalo were a puzzling phenomena to the Indians. Often there were many around, then none. A myth was told that the supernatural was behind this. A Grand Buffalo rules over all the unseen, and could take pity or retaliate. If the Indians killed too many buffalo and were wasteful, the Great Unseen Buffalo would become angry and quickly bring starvation.

The importance of the proper use of their natural resources and keeping in harmony with nature is emphasized through such myths and legends. Another story told which is related to food gathering and which illustrates the respect and place accorded animals in the Dakotas.

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1Hofsinde, loc. cit., pp. 11-12.
2Clark Wissler, The American Indian, p. 140.
World is the myth concerning the "mouse people" who store beans for winter use. The Dakotas searched for mice caches, and gathered the stored beans for food. It was essential that the beans be replaced with some other food, so their brother, the mouse, would not starve.

The myth tells what happens when this procedure is not followed:

A certain woman plundered the storehouse of some Hunka people (bean mice). She robbed them of their entire food supply without giving anything in return. The next night this woman heard a woman in the woods crying and saying, "Oh, what will my poor children do now?" It was the voice of the Hunka woman crying over her hungry children.

The same night the unjust woman who had done the wrong had a dream. In her dream, Hunka, the spirit of kinship of all life, appeared to her and said: "You should not have taken the food from the Hunka people. Take back the food to them, or some other in its place, or else your own children shall cry from hunger."

Next morning the woman told her husband of this vision, and he said, "You would better do as Hunka tells you to do."

But the woman was hard-hearted and perverse, and would not make restitution for the wrong she had done. A short time afterward a great prairie fire came, driven by a strong wind, and swept over the place where the unjust woman and her family were camping. The fire consumed her tipi and everything it contained, and the people barely escaped with their lives. They had no food nor shelter; they wandered destitute on the prairie, and the children cried from hunger.†

†Gilmore, Prairie Smoke, pp. 127-129.
Seeing the whites push through their territory with no concern as to the nature of plants and animals or concern of the possible extinction of plants and animals was not only contrary to a basic belief held by the Dakotas, but was creating a crises in their society. Their food supply and way of life was being threatened. Reports in the literature of the Indians being wasteful and merciless in their killing of the buffalo and other animals seem to have occurred shortly before the reservation period when rifles were used; and under the fear that their food sources were becoming extinct, the Indians began overkilling. This seems to imply a beginning of the breakdown in the basic traditional belief of keeping harmony with nature. The effects of this breakdown in the cognitive foundation of the social system were eventually reflected in all the other systemic elements. As the other elements are discussed in this chapter, it becomes evident that this shift in basic cognitions is felt throughout the system.

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1George E. Hyde, Red Cloud's Folk, p. 62.

Values

The traditional values of the Dakotas were basic to their actions, permeating their entire social system. Macgregor condensed their values into the four essential virtues of bravery, fortitude, generosity and wisdom. It was understood no one could achieve excellence in all of these qualities, but everyone was expected to try to attain something of each. These values were relevant to actions in food practices in a few ways.

Bravery was the foremost desired trait by the Dakotas. Prestige was given as the reward for performing feats of bravery. Bravery for the men was shown mostly in warfare, and for women in their chastity. The powerful drive for the recognition of courageous acts occasionally caused overly-brave Dakotas to disrupt carefully planned ambushes or buffalo hunts. Recognition of bravery in warfare often led to being selected as leader of a search party for buffalo—a great honor.

Fortitude was a quality that could be demonstrated on hunting expeditions when long periods of hunger and exposure might be experienced unflinchingly. The Dakota warriors were accustomed to subsist on very little food.

for days at a time. The warrior usually ate only once a day when fighting, and during actual battle might eat or drink nothing. Times when the whole system experienced a food shortage, this value was called upon to sustain them through the hard times. Roe noted that fortitude appeared to be inculcated to the point that
"Indians seem to have a capacity for starvation." By placing fasting in a light so that through it one could gain prestige or could appeal to the supernatural, the value of fortitude was encouraged to be internalized by the Dakotas. Fasting and thirsting were done while one participated in the Sun Dance, where the individual stood motionless as he gazed at the sun, tearing his chest and back muscles out to obtain pity from the supernatural, or to obtain by a vision the sign that would aid the individual in all his undertakings. Having the fortitude to fast was used at times as a means to thank the supernatural, and to fulfill a vow. "If anything threatened to harm an individual or someone dear to him, a man in a moment of extremity might call upon the

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1Ruby, loc. cit., p. 38.
2Macgregor, loc. cit., p. 106.
3Roe, loc. cit., p. 660.
supernatural to aid him, promising to fast and torture himself at a later date."

Wisdom was important to food practices in that persons (especially the older men) with good insight and judgement were often relied upon for advice on obtaining food. In the family, the wisdom held by the grandfathers was expected to be passed on to their grandsons—including their wisdom regarding hunting.

Generosity is probably the most applicable of the four values to food practices. It was such an important value that the most despised was the one that deviated even slightly from the ideal sharing pattern. The people were dependent upon the generosity of the luckiest and most able buffalo hunter. To maintain or achieve prestige, sharing was necessary. The hunters not only shared their kill with the aged and sick and anyone requesting a portion of the kill, but the family pot of soup was available for anyone who wished to share in its contents.

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1Mead, loc. cit., p. 407.

2Hassrick, loc. cit., p. 36.

These values were not just a list of ideals that were supposed to guide the behavior of the individual in traditional Dakota society; they were values which were woven into their existence. The values were like mortar which held the structure of their universe together. With the move to reservations, the values were retained in part, but they began to conflict with the values being imposed upon them by the white man. The ingrained traditional value of generosity made it impossible for one to "get ahead." A good income from farming or working invited a deluge of needy relatives expecting a share in the individual's good fortune. Consequently, an individual attempting to live by the values being imposed upon him by the government was in conflict with his traditional value system. In the same manner, an individual attempting to live in accordance with his traditional values found himself in jeopardy with Western values. Thus, the Dakotas were living in an environment of shifting ideals, which led to a state of confusion in their basic values.

Feelings about the universe with respect to food practices among the traditional Dakotas centered mainly within their extended family grouping, the tiyospaye. The related members of a tiyospaye lived and worked together under an elaborate system of rules and regulations governing their behavior. Their direct concern was to provide the members with subsistence as well as care for the sick and dying, protection during infancy and childhood, and transmission of Dakota beliefs, values and feelings to the younger generation.

Within the tiyospaye feelings existed regarding food practices. Providing food for the young children was done with affective expressions. An especially close association between child and mother began shortly after birth and lasted until he stopped nursing, usually around three years, although it varied either way as much as a year. Grown persons boasted of the fact that they nursed until three or four years of age as a sign of how much their parents loved them.

Further discussion is made of child feeding in the section

1Ibid., p. 8.
2Mead, loc. cit., p. 418.
on goal achieving in the latter part of this chapter.

Feelings of respect were held for the good
hunters who provided plenty of meat, for the women who
gathered large quantities of plant food and prepared
the foods well, and for the older men who advised on
such matters as when a hunt should be held. Concern
for the aged, sick, poor and incapacitated were ex-
pressed through the sharing of foods.

A general feeling of reverence and affection was
also held for all living creatures—the birds and beasts,
trees, shrubs and flowering plants, their food sources.
Gilmore expresses the place of living things in Dakota
life:

A people living under natural conditions,
in communion with nature, will carefully note the
appearance of natural objects in their environment.
They become acquainted with the various aspects of
the landscape and of the living things—plants
and animals—in their changes through the seasons,
in storm and calm, in activity and in repose.
Becoming thus intimately acquainted with the life
about them, the people will come to regard some of
the more notable forms with a feeling akin to that
which they have towards persons, and hence animals
and plants come to have place in folk stories, in
reasoned discourse, and in ceremonies of religion. 2

1 Hassrick, loc. cit., pp. 36-39.
2 Gilmore, Prairie Smoke, pp. 179-80.
Special feelings were held about the buffalo, the backbone of their economy. He contained within himself materials for food, clothing, and even houses; consequently, he was a natural symbol of the universe for the Dakotas, and was held in special regard. "Everything is symbolically contained within this animal: the earth and all that grows from her, all animals, and even the two-legged peoples; and each specific part of the beast represents for the Indian, one of these 'parts' of creation."

Some rituals and ceremonies were held with special regard to the procurement of food, while other rituals and ceremonies merely utilized foods. Through such events, encouragement and motivation were given the members for meeting the goal of obtaining food in the system's prescribed manner, and sanctioned means for releasing tensions were provided.

When buffalo were scarce, rituals of singing and praying were intensified. Apologies were made to the believed Great Unseen Buffalo for killing the real animals in hopes that he would send buffalo to relieve

1Black Elk, The Sacred Pipe, p. 6.
their need for food.¹

Selection of a buffalo searching party, its departure and return, were important events which involved certain rituals. The selection of a man to be a searcher was such a great honor it called for his relatives to give away many presents as the party started out. The attachment of prestige to being a searcher aided in creating a desire to help in food procurement for the system. People on horseback escorted the search party from the camp while others followed along with a dance step. No drums or rattles were carried. When the search party returned, pipes were smoked, then the one sighting a buffalo herd had the privilege of making his report to the tribal council. The master of the ceremony then declared there would be a hunt.²

Religious rights were an accepted prelude to hunting because of the sacred character of the animals. A pipe was smoked prior to the hunt, and an offering of thanks offered at the kill and also later at the meal where the animal was eaten. Before eating, one was supposed to put a piece of meat aside for the spirit,

²Hassrick, *loc. cit.*, p. 175.
holding it up, then throwing it away.¹

A shaman was often required to alleviate the problem of a threatened food shortage. He might be urged to assist actively through ceremonial intervention or to instill security by predicting good fortune. Also, a man desiring success in hunting might call upon the services of a shaman to outline ways for a successful hunt.

The dog was an important source of food used in ceremonies and rituals. After a good hunt, or on special occasions, a dog feast was often held. This was considered a true religious ceremony, and a favored dog provided the most sacred dish.³ After the return of victorious warriors, a day of feasting on jerked tongue, pemmican and young dog would be given in honor of the warriors.⁴ The buffalo berry was used in ceremonial feasts given in honor of a girl reaching puberty.⁵

¹Ibid., p. 170.
²Ibid., pp. 252–53.
³Catlin, loc. cit., p. 230.
⁴Hassrick, loc. cit., p. 83.
Food was also used in entertainment. Two paunch kettles of butchered puppy were served at the Night Dance, a formal party which featured a courting dance.

With the move to the reservation, land allotments were made to conjugal families by the U. S. Government. By attaching a nuclear family unit to a parcel of land, the bonds within the traditional tiyospaye were weakened. While some related families were able to obtain land allotments in contiguous areas, the traditional camp life and family groups of tipis became a thing of the past. With the ceasing of the communal buffalo hunts, the cooperating unit of tribal organization for procurement of food no longer existed, nor was it needed since the buffalo were gone. Likewise, the ceremonies and rituals related to hunting were needless. This loss of the old way of life with no anticipation of a new way which would fit the traditional beliefs, values and sentiments, culminated into feelings of frustration and resentment. A means for compensating these feelings of discontent was found in the religious-like Messiah Craze and Ghost Dance. The belief was held that a

1 Hassrick, loc. cit., pp. 140-43.
2 Macgregor, loc. cit., pp. 32-33.
Messiah would come and restore the buffalo and the good hunting days.\textsuperscript{1} This Ghost Dance phase, which lasted approximately two years (1889-91), was squelched by the government, further weakening the sentiment aspect of the Dakota social system.\textsuperscript{2}

Thus, the traditional food practice sentiments were closely related to and actually combined with the beliefs and knowledge and values in the social system. The sentiments were articulated primarily through patterned interaction within the tiyospaye. With the change to reservation living, the traditional sentiments related to the food quest were found to be of little use in their adjustment.

**Norms**

Food practice norms, as with other norms, were extracted from the basic building blocks—beliefs and knowledge, values and sentiments—of the Dakota social system, and served as the guides for the members' actions. Several norms related directly to traditional food practices are, not surprisingly, rules for proper


\textsuperscript{2}Mekoel, *loc. cit.*, pp. 139-40.
behavior during the buffalo hunt and the distribution of the kill. These norms were essential in assuring the system of an efficient and satisfactory hunt for the welfare of the whole system.

Traditional food practice norms applicable prior to a hunt included: (1) individual hunting and family hunts were permissible except during the designated time of a communal hunt. No hunting whatsoever was allowed prior to the communal hunt;\(^1\) (2) no one was to leave camp, lest the buffalo herd be disturbed; and (3) hunters were required to follow directions given by the leader, an experienced huntsman. They were not to charge the herd until the given signal, "hoka he," by the leader.\(^2\) During the hunt young game were not to be killed, and more than was needed or could be used was never to be killed.\(^3\) After the hunt the buffalo were dressed and prepared for transport to camp. The hide was to be removed first, then the tongue taken out. Beyond this, there were no established rules.\(^4\) A hunter had first choice of the meat from his kill, but was not

\(^{1}\text{Mead, loc. cit., pp. 382-83.}\)

\(^{2}\text{Hassrick, loc. cit., pp. 175-76.}\)

\(^{3}\text{Ruby, loc. cit., p. 79.}\)

\(^{4}\text{Densmore, loc. cit., p. 437.}\)
to deny meat to the less fortunate. Generosity was expected—division of the kill was a legal obligation. ¹

There were no established hours for eating. One was to eat whenever hungry, if food were available.²

Men and women ate separately. Generally, the men ate first, followed by women, children and dogs altogether.³

Other norms which had a bearing on their food practices included: (1) any part of the natural world was not to be exploited, assuring the system of a continuing food supply;⁴ (2) cooperation, assistance to other members, and placing group interests above own were important standards to maintain harmony within the camp for a most efficient operation in provision of foods;⁵ and (3) bravery shown during the hunt, fortitude during times of hunger, and wisdom before and during the hunts were important norms related to food practices.

Some attempts were made to hunt and consume the issued beef cattle in the old traditional manner;

¹Beas, loc. cit., p. 495.
²Dodge, loc. cit., p. 237.
⁴Gilmore, Prairie Smoke, pp. 34-35.
⁵Hassrick, loc. cit., pp. 36-37.
however, the specific actions for which these traditional food quest norms guided, no longer were possible with reservation living—buffalo hunting days and the old way of life were over. As indicated previously, the knowledge and beliefs, values and sentiments from which the norms were extracted, were conflicting with Western ways, and were of little use in reservation living. With the resultant state of confusion, the Dakotas were left in a state of relative normlessness, or anomie.

Sanctions

Traditional food practice sanctions centered around the communal buffalo hunt, as did the norms. Sanctions effectively kept order prior to the hunt, preventing an actor from dispersing the pursued herd. The policing force, the Akicita, was responsible for enforcing the norms of the hunt and administering punishment to any violator.

If a man were found with a supply of fresh meat during the time when it was not permissible for a man to hunt independently, the Akicita had the duty to confiscate it, and possibly beat the man with clubs and tear down his tipi. \(^1\) If the rules were not

\(^1\)Densmore, *loc. cit.*, p. 437.
observed during the hunt, the violators were punished by having to forfeit a personal possession, usually a horse.

Gossip and ridicule sufficed as punishment for those not following norms, such as those prescribing the way to cut up the meat, procedure for eating, and lack of bravery and fortitude. For those not showing generosity and sharing, there was no honor—the miser was disgraced.

On the otherhand, positive sanctions included conspicuous sharing of foods and the opportunity for public boasting about one’s skill in hunting. Gift giving took place in honor of a family member being chosen as a searcher in the buffalo search party.

Reservation life rendered the traditional food practice sanctions unusable. The sanctions that became important to the Dakotas on the reservations were the ones established by the U.S. Government which were instituted so the government could meet its goals and enforce its norms. Rations were withheld as a means

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1Ruby, *loc. cit.* p. 79.
to enforce conformity to reservation policies. There was nearly complete dependence upon the government for food, which gave the government the opportunity to force the Dakotas to accept the reservation policies. An incident illustrating this occurred with Agent McGillycuddy when the Cheyennes moved a portion of their band into Red Cloud's village against orders, and was stirring up trouble in the camp. McGillycuddy warned Red Cloud and Little Chief, Chief of the Cheyennes, that unless Little Chief moved his group back to his own camp, rations would be cut off—sugar the first week and flour the second. If no action were still taken, beef would be withheld the third week. When the third week rolled around, and the beef was withheld, Little Chief relented, and went back to his camp. Thus, through the complete dependence of the Indians on the government for sustenance, rations were an ideal way to force conformity to Western ways.

**Status-roles**

Status-roles in the traditional Dakota social system were based mainly on either the sex dichotomy or

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on differentiation between age groups. Applying the sex dichotomy to traditional food practices, the acceptable male role for providing food was through hunting. They were responsible for the hunting and killing, and bringing their kill partially butchered to the camp. Men were also responsible for making wooden bowls and spoons from horns with which to eat foods. The females were expected to prepare, preserve and serve the foods. There were times when there were exceptions to this dichotomy. Berry picking was generally the female's work, but it might also be a family affair when an abundant supply was found. Also, there were times when females who were good riders aided in the buffalo hunts by going with a hunting party. While the men hunted, they herded the pack horses needed for bringing the kill back to camp. And, if there were no women around to cook, as on a hunt or war party, the men did their own cooking.

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2 Hassrick, loc. cit., p. 196.
3 Hassrick, loc. cit., p. 178.
4 Densmore, loc. cit., p. 444.
5 Dodge, loc. cit., p. 272.
The principle distinction between the age roles was between children and adults. Traditionally, young children were expected to learn the role which they were to follow from the older members of the same sex. Young boys were occupied learning to make bows and arrows, how to hunt and shoot, and playing hunting and riding games with older boys. By the time boys were teenagers, they were supposed to be able to shoot their bows and arrows fairly well. Hunting practice was first done with small animals, such as birds and rabbits. Later, the young boys would get together and plan deer hunts. Finally, when they were old enough and had shown competence, they were allowed to join in the family and communal hunts. The young braves were expected to be generous with their kill to the old, poor and needy folks. Older men had the responsibility of deciding when a communal buffalo hunt was needed, and who should go in search of the buffalo.

Young girls worked alongside their mothers and the older women in the camp, learning their expected role for later life. They participated first in the

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2 Densmore, loc. cit., p. 439.
berry picking, and later in the preparation and preservation of foods. Generosity was an important and honored role for females, also. They took food to the council tipi, and gave foods to the old and needy. Both the young boys and girls were encouraged to share by being instructed to take foods and other gifts to those in need. Thus, the hunting was done by men, the food prepared, served and preserved by the women, and all ages assured of food through the generosity of those having it.

There were several special status-roles related to food practices. The tribal leaders were responsible for maintaining an adequate food supply, and frequently met to discuss the need for a hunt. The policemen, Akicita, were important in maintaining order prior to a communal hunt to see that no one caused the buffalo herd to disperse before the hunt began. The leader of the buffalo search party was a much desired status-role. It was he who had the responsibility of the search party, determining where the searchers were to look, and to whom

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1Hassrick, loc. cit., p. 175.
2Densmore, loc. cit., p. 437.
the searchers were expected to report their findings.

The occupant of the position of master of ceremony, the itzancan, of the tribal council was expected to declare when the communal hunt would be held after the council had heard the report from the search party. The leader of the hunt was also a social position. He gave the shout "hoka he" to signify the hunt was to begin. ²

The shaman also held an important status-role in maintaining the food supply for the camp. He gave warning of times of scarcity and advised the procuring of a liberal supply of food. His advice was heeded, and a special hunt was made. ³

When buffalo were killed by running them over a cliff's edge, a Buffalo Caller, dressed as a buffalo, was called upon to aid in the kill. The status-role of the Caller was important for this type of hunt, since through his antics and mimicry he gently urged, cajoled, and enticed the leader of the herd toward him and the

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¹Ibid., p. 439.

²Hassrick, loc. cit., p. 176.

³Densmore, loc. cit., p. 437.
The role the U. S. Government played in the Dakota social system when the Dakotas were put on reservations cannot be underestimated. The Indian Agent, the government's primary representative, actually became a part of the Dakota reservation system. The agents were responsible for running the affairs of the reservation, keeping order, distributing rations, and carrying out government policies. He was the link between the Dakotas and the U. S. Government.

Forced changes in the status-roles of the Dakota social system were numerous with the reservation era. The men found themselves without a role with the loss of the buffalo and the denial of the warpath by the U. S. Government. The suggestion that men become farmers was an insult to their ego. Hunting was the accepted way for acquiring food, and there was no motivation for wanting to farm and raise cattle. Red Cloud expressed his view of the idea of the former great warriors and hunters having to work instead of hunt when he told Agent McGillycuddy:

1Hassrick, loc. cit., pp. 176-77.
2Wissler, Indians of the United States, p. 284.
Father, the Great Spirit did not make us to work. He made us to hunt and fish. He gave us the great prairies and hills and covered them with buffalo, deer, and antelope. He filled the rivers and streams with fish. The white man can work if he wants to, but the Great Spirit did not make us to work. The white man owes us a living for the lands he had taken from us.¹

It is not surprising under such conditions that the cattle issued for raising during the early reservation days were killed for food, just as the buffalo were killed during the traditional days, and no sincere effort put forth to become agriculturalists. Yet, according to historical records, some of the men gradually accepted the status-role of farmer and rancher. Also, other status-roles were opened for the men, such as laborers and reservation policemen.

With the change to reservation living, the women's role insofar as food practices are concerned, was not altered as drastically as that of the male. They retained the job of preparing and preserving foods. Instead of gathering foods on the plains, the women collected rations at the agency. In addition to these responsi-

¹McGillycuddy, loc. cit., p. 103.
³McGillycuddy, loc. cit., p. 182.
bilities, others were added to their social position on the reservation. Where gardening or small livestock enterprises were undertaken, much of the responsibility for them fell on the women's shoulders.

The children were no longer expected to learn skills pertaining to hunting, but were expected to attend school. Thus, the schools took over much of the education done traditionally by the extended family members. Further elaboration is made of the impact of formal education on the Dakota social system in Chapter V in the socialization section.

In summary, the traditional status-roles related to food practices were structured for the acquisition, preparation and consumption of foods needed by the system. Each actor had specific obligations and rights in his status-role. Reservation living brought the Indian Agent into the Dakota social system, who exerted great influence throughout the system. The status-roles of the men and children were greatly affected since their previous social positions were almost completely altered. The status-role of the women was also affected; however,

1Vernon D. Malan, "The Dakota Indian Family, Bulletin 470, South Dakota Experiment Station, May, 1958, pp. 32-33.
her responsibilities related to the food quest were affected less than men or children since her general position of preparing and preserving foods was the same.

**Rank**

Traditionally, ranking in the Dakota social system was based on activities other than food practices. However, there was some evaluation of actions and allocating of status-roles related to the acquisition of foods. The man who possessed great skill and ability in hunting, and was able to supply his family with the most necessities, was held in high esteem as long as he was also generous and showed bravery, fortitude and wisdom in his activities. The woman who was able to gather great quantities of seeds, fruits, roots and vegetables, and skillfully prepare them was also respected and received high approval from the people. Generosity shown by giving and sharing foods was an important key to obtaining rank and prestige.

Young men known to be truthful and faithful to duty and who possessed the necessary physical ability

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and general equipment for hunting were the ones called upon to search for buffalo. The first one appointed for the search served also as the leader of the search party. Being called upon to serve the system as a searcher was one of the greatest honors that could be conferred upon a man since it indicated the tribe depended upon him for help in supplying food.

Leaders of the hunts were chosen on the basis of their previous successes. A good hunter enjoyed a good life; a poor hunter not only suffered want, discomfort and deprivation, but endured ridicule and pity for his poverty. Individuals unsuccessful or who lacked skill in killing animals during a communal hunt contented themselves with the smaller animals, or merely tied the tail of some swifter hunter's kill, which indicated a claim to some of the meat. These individuals were ranked as "tail tiers," a position not to be envied.

The Buffalo Caller, who dressed as a buffalo and enticed the buffalo to the cliff's edge, was a social position of importance when the buffalo were run over the edge of a cliff. To be allocated to this status-role, a man had to show great skill and endurance, and

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1Densmore, loc. cit., p. 439.
2Hasseick, loc. cit., p. 176.
possess thorough understanding and knowledge of buffalo habits.

Members of the Akicita, the policing organization, held a desirous rank in the Dakota social system. It was an organization that was open to all able young men; however, to be considered for membership, a boy usually had to have been on at least one war party, even if in no greater capacity than that of a water boy. He would be considered an even more desirable candidate if he were from an outstanding family, had killed an enemy or had sought a vision. In addition, one must be a good hunter to be asked to join.

Individuals who had obtained certain ranks became prospective members for the tribal council. A leading shaman of proven integrity and magnetism, a hunter or warrior whose outstanding career brought him renown, and the elders who were recognized for their qualities of bravery, fortitude, wisdom and generosity were likely candidates for the council.

The above described traditional patterns for ranking which had a relation to the food quest were not

1Ibid., pp. 176-77.
2Ibid., p. 17.
3Ibid., p. 25.
adaptable to reservation living with hunting gone. It is not surprising that ranking had to be done on a basis other than food practices since traditional ranking was generally accorded by activities other than food practices.

Power

The traditional Dakota kinship group was organized so that the older generation was the primary controlling power with the authority to make major decisions. Yet this power was used sparingly, because great respect was held for the autonomous responsibility of each individual.

Power in the traditional era which was related to food practices included that of the old men or tribal council in deciding when a buffalo hunt should be held. Also, the shaman held power by determining when a hunt was needed. Power was vested in the leader of a buffalo searching party who had the authority to control the other members of the party during the search, telling them where to search, and when and where to report. Proceeding communal hunts, the Akicita were delegated

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2 Densmore, loc. cit., p. 439.
supreme authority; in fact, literally dictatorial powers.\(^1\) Finally, the leader of the hunt had power in determining when the hunt should begin.

The relation of power to food practices became especially important when the Dakotas were put on the reservation. The power the U. S. Government exerted over the Dakotas, using food as the means of enforcing their power, was so influential that the government was able to force the Dakotas to succumb to them—at least for the Dakotas to make a passive acceptance of reservation policies.

The all-powerful chief with authority over the whole Dakota nation was an arbitrary invention of the governmental representatives for facilitating negotiations with the Indian tribes. The idea of an all-powerful chief was in conflict with the traditional respect for individuality. However, the chiefs did maintain power over the system's members on the reservations, at least for a time; yet the chief was, in reality, under the power of the agent. The example cited earlier in the status-roles section of Agent McGillycuddy

\(^{1}\)Boas, loc. cit., p. 289.

withholding rations to obtain conformity to reservation policies, and how he dealt through the chiefs to obtain results, illustrates the power which the agent had over the chiefs, and in turn the power the chiefs had over their people. Eventually, the power of the chiefs over the system's members was replaced by tribal councils, yet the government maintained the prime powers. It took the massacre at Wounded Knee to make the Dakotas completely submissive to the government. After that event, the power of the U. S. Government was not disputed.

Facilities

Facilities, as used in this study, include an analysis of the materials the Dakotas utilized from their natural environment in their food quest.

Traditionally, the Dakotas lived in the bison area, and the buffalo were the desired and most used source of food. Yet buffalo were not always readily available, so other animals and plants had to be sought and utilized as food.

No part of the buffalo was overlooked. Everything edible was consumed, the other parts used for

1Wissler, Indians of the United States, p. 1.
cooking utensils, clothing, housing, tools and fuel. The buffalo tongue was a special delicacy, and the heart and liver were much desired cuts. The brains, gristle around the nostrils, and roasted hump were favorites, while soup from the hoofs or tail were thoroughly enjoyed. Boiled unborn calves, lungs, and pancreas were also considered especially good. Meat pounded and pulverized, called pemmican, was eaten and especially useful for storage. The blood from the buffalo was even used as a drink at times.

Animals hunted by the males and used in addition to the buffalo included deer, elk, antelope, porcupines, beavers, otters, raccoon, bear, bobcats, coyotes, big-horn sheep, squirrels, badgers, muskrats, fox, prairie chickens, prairie dogs, birds (including ducks and geese), rabbits, fish, turtles and tortoises, wolves, and skunks. Dogs were not hunted, but used as a food source. Horses were not eaten by the Dakotas.

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1Hofsinde, loc. cit., p. 44.
2Hassrick, loc. cit., p. 190.
3Luther Standing Bear, My People the Sioux, p. 11.
4Hassrick, loc. cit., pp. 164-78.
5Dodge, loc. cit., pp. 276-77.
except in times of emergency.¹

Obviously, nearly any animal available on the plains was used to supplement the staple diet of buffalo when necessary. In like manner, the Dakota women thoroughly surveyed the potentials of native plant life so that practically no source of food was overlooked. Plant foods used included the timpsila or prairie turnip, wild onions, gooseberries, buffalo berries, wild strawberries, Juneberries, artichokes, cherries, plums, fungi, wild rose berries (mainly only in times of food scarcity), nuts of all sorts, and cactus fruits.

Also taken from the vegetable kingdom were hackberries, the inner bark of young cottonwood sprouts, wild raspberries, sandcherries, Indian potatoes, sap from soft maple trees for sugar, wild grapes, elderberries, and nannyberries. In addition, many plants were used for treatment of ills as described in the section on knowledge and beliefs.³

¹Frank Gilbert Roe, The Indian and His Horse, p. 276.


A favorite food of the Dakotas was wasna, a mixture of pounded, pulverized meat and chokecherries that had been pounded into a pulp (pits and all), and combined with animal fat. When stored over a period of time, the wasna hardened similar to head-cheese, and was used for traveling, feasting and periods when other foods were not available. When no food at all was available, a hide was scraped, and the scrapings boiled to make a soup.

According to Eastman, the original North American Indians knew of no fermented or spiritous drink. As a semi-religious ceremony, a mild narcotic (tobacco mixed with aromatic leaves or bark) was served, and the Indians smoked in moderation. Even with an abundance of wild grapes, wine was never made. Beverages were made from wild mint, purple prairie clover and elderberry, but none were alcoholic. It was only after the

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1Ibid., p. 87.
2Standing Bear, loc. cit., p. 22.
4Charles A. Eastman, The Indian Today, p. 11.
coming of the white men that liquor of any type was consumed by the Dakotas.

Food seasonings were rarely used except for wild mint leaves which were sometimes added to meat as it was cooking, in the drinking water, or with pemmican as a flavoring. Salt was scraped from the edges of dried buffalo wallows and stored in deerskin paunches, but was so scarce that most women did not consider it a condiment and was therefore not in general use.

The use of dogs and horses was essential to traditional food practices. Before the horse was introduced to the Dakotas, the dog was the beast of burden, aiding the Dakotas in their move from one hunting area to another. However, this study is centered almost entirely during the period in which the Dakotas had horses. Even with horses, the dog continued to be of importance in the Dakota food quest. It was still harnessed to a travois loaded with packing bags and equipment during moving; and was also used during the

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1 Eastman, loc. cit., p. 11.

2 Hassrick, loc. cit., p. 190.

3 According to winter counts, the first horses acquired by the Dakotas were in 1802-1803, according to Jenks, loc. cit., p. 1043.
berry season to drag home the harvest. Most important, dog flesh was regarded as a delicacy and a sacred dish. Some dogs were kept mainly to produce puppies which were eaten when about three months old. The horse played a key role in allowing the Dakotas to expand, in fact create a surplus, in their economy through better hunting methods. The horse made moving from one hunting area to another simpler, and made possible a greater quantity of food. The Dakotas became as dependent upon the horse as the buffalo.

With the traditional Dakotas' nomadic way of life, accumulation of great quantities of artifacts for living was impossible. Their material culture had to be portable and easy to transport. They had nothing which could not be carried by a person, dog or horse. Food not stored in leather bags was tied into bundles for transport. There were occasions that surplus food, properly prepared, would be left hidden in the old camp area when a move was made. When the hidden food was needed, it would be retrieved. This lightened the burden for moving and also was an assurance of food in

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1Hassrick, loc. cit., pp. 157-58.

2Ibid., 159.
a time in need.  

For food preparation, the Dakotas had no pottery, but boiled their food by dropping hot stones into a buffalo paunch or bladder filled with water and supported by four sticks. For grinding fruits and dried vegetables, grains and meats, the women used a small quartzite pestle and granite mortar or a stone-headed maul—all weighing not more than ten pounds, so easy to transport. Plates were made from hollowed out sections cut from tree trunks, or the backs of turtles were used. Spoons were made from buffalo horns by boiling the horns until soft, then fashioning them into spoons. Large horns were used for making dippers. Ribs were used for making serviceable knives. The buffalo shoulder blade or sometimes just a stick served as a digging tool for digging roots.

Containers for storing buffalo were made from skins, often from the visceral parts of the animal, such as the hide of a calf’s head, an entire buffalo fetus,

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1Ibid., pp. 151-52.
2Standing Bear, loc. cit., p. 21.
3Hassrick, loc. cit., p. 151.
4Standing Bear, loc. cit., pp. 21-22.
5Wissler, Indians of the United States, p. 159.
buffalo bladder, or heart skin. Water was also kept in a skin bag, and was suspended from a stout pole. To prepare a skin for food or water storage, the skin was soaked in water which had wood ashes or some natural alkali added. Then it was cut into desired shapes, stretched to the desired shape and allowed to dry. It would retain its shape and become almost as hard as iron. Such an item made from skins was called a parfleche.

Fires for cooking were started by striking a piece of flint on something to produce sparks which ignited fuzz of dried clover plants. Clover was gathered, dried and stored in bags for this purpose. Buffalo chips were used as fuel, especially when wood was not available. Chips were difficult to get to start burning, but once they were started, they produced a hot bed of coals and little smoke.

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2Standing Bear, loc. cit., p. 21.
4Ruby, loc. cit., p. 35.
5Hofsinda, loc. cit., p. 45.
In addition to using horses and dogs for hunting and gathering, bows, arrows and clubs were utilized. Arrow making was an art every man was expected to know. Gooseberry wood was preferred for making the shafts, but cherry and Juneberry woods were alternates. Turkey buzzard and wild turkey feathers were most frequently used to feather arrows. Arrow points were made from chipped stone until white men came along and skillets were secured and used instead of stone. Ash was considered the finest bow wood. Bowstrings were made from sinew found below the buffalo's shoulder. Gradually, the bows and arrows were replaced with firearms acquired from the white men. For fishing, a bone hook tied to a long line of sinew attached to the end of a willow pole was employed. Grasshoppers were considered good bait. Sometimes spears made from forked poles with four barbed-like notches on the inside of each prong were used in fishing. Also used was a seine made from a large piece of hide, through which many small holes were punched.

1Hasarick, loc. cit., pp. 197-98.
2Ibid., pp. 172-73.
Thus, with the facilities the traditional Dakotas had acquired and were using, they enjoyed life better during the years between 1830 and 1876 than at any time in their existence. Superb in health and physical strength, owing to their outdoor life; equipped by the traders with the best of firearms; mounted upon the fleetest of ponies, they roamed through the west, preying upon the foolish explorer and emigrant, and hunting down the cunning bison as he despoited upon the boundless prairie.

But then the buffalo numbers rapidly decreased, and the final big hunt was held in 1882, followed by a smaller hunt in 1883. The traditional Dakota "staff of life," the buffalo, was gone. Foods could no longer be secured in the traditional manner. The ration system became a necessity—without it, the Dakotas would have starved.

By treaty, the U. S. Government agreed on February 28, 1877, to provide each individual a ration of "a pound and half of beef (or in lieu thereof one-half pound of bacon), one-half pound of flour, and one-half pound of sugar, and three pounds of beans, or in lieu of said articles the equivalent thereof." According to

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1 Frank Fiske, The Taming of the Sioux, p. 30.
2 Moorehead, loc. cit., p. 310.
3 The Executive Documents of the House of Representa-
the agreement, the rations were to be issued until the Indians were able to support themselves. Also, rations were not to be issued for children between the ages of six and fourteen (unless sick or infirm) unless the children attended school. Obviously, loopholes were left in the agreement, permitting the government to regulate and restrict the issuance of rations. The agents were allowed "not only to encourage but also to enforce, regular labor among Indians, require that sugar, coffee, and tea, except in cases of old age or infirmity, shall be issued by them to Indians in payment for labor performed." The government reports claim that almost without exception, the full amount of rations named in the agreement were issued to the Indians. The exceptions were caused by delayed or reduced appropriations by Congress. In reality, the "delays and reductions in appropriations" amounted to a great deal (a reduction in beef from 6,250,000 to 4,000,000 pounds for the fiscal

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1Ibid.

2Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1900, 1900, p. 8.

year ending June 30, 1890) and are claimed as being one of the principal causes of dissatisfactions and frustrations that led to the Ghost Dance and finally the Battle at Wounded Knee.

Eastman contends that many times foods provided by the government were not suitable for human consumption. There were occasions when the cattle were diseased, flour mouldy, and bacon rancid. Water was hauled in buckets and barrels, then left to stand open several days. This was too great a contrast from the traditional days when fresh, wholesome wild meat, fish, fruit and berries were eaten. The dysentery problem was great as a result of the ill-prepared, poor quality foods.

Metal skillets, pots and other utensils were acquired gradually for cooking purposes to replace the paunch pots, wooden bowls, and horn spoons. Land was allotted for farming and some cattle issued for raising, but neither the necessary training, agricultural credit nor capital goods were given that were necessary for a successful shift-over to farming. With proper

1 McGillycuddy, loc. cit., p. 258.
2 Eastman, loc. cit., pp. 136-139.
guidance cattle raising was possible, but geographical conditions were not suitable for farming the land.

In summary, the white man introduced changes in the Dakotas' facilities such as the horse, steel knives, guns and kettles, which were readily accepted and did not conflict with their former habits. Instead, comfort and convenience were added. However, when the Dakota territory and the wild game, particularly the buffalo, were disturbed, trouble arose since their livelihood was threatened. When their subsistence was finally gone, through the near extermination of the buffalo, the Dakotas had no choice but to surrender and become dependent upon the U. S. Government for food facilities. The government issued rations and instituted a farming and ranching program. Some success was reached through cattle raising, but farming was largely unsuccessful.

**Goal Achieving**

The goal of providing food for its members was reached through the patterned interaction of the actors in the Dakotas' social system, their actions being based upon the system's beliefs, values and sentiments. Actions during the traditional period specifically related to food practices for achieving the goal of food provision
included the nomadic way of life, hunting, gathering, trading and plundering for foods, the preparing and consuming foods.

When buffalo became the chief source of food for the Dakotas, nomadism was found to be the best way of life. Location of their camps was almost solely determined by the proximity of sizable buffalo herds. As long as supplies of meat were plentiful, a camp might remain at the same site for many weeks, but permanence was not important in itself. Their economic wealth depended upon temporary residence, and to that end their way of life was directed—a nomadic existence.

Hunting to the Dakota was not a sport, but work and a real business. A good hunter enjoyed a good life, and a poor hunter suffered want, discomfort and deprivation. Hunting was divided into two categories: (1) the family hunt (tate) and (2) the communal buffalo hunt (wani-sana). These were supplemented by the individual's daily hunting. Great skill and keen knowledge of animal habits were necessary for hunting success. Individual or family hunting, especially, demanded these qualities.

1Hassrick, loc. cit., p. 151.
Quietly slipping upon a deer, putting oneself into a wolf or deerskin disguise to gain a better shot, clubbing a bird, smoking a beaver from his hole, spearing, clubbing, seining or hooking a fish, setting traps of various types, and waylaying an animal along its trail were hunting techniques used by the individual or family hunters. Horses were generally tied at a distance and used as a pack bearer, and the actual hunting done on foot, except for buffalo hunting.

There were three types of communal hunts used after the Dakotas acquired horses: (1) the two-group surround; (2) driving the game over a cliff; and (3) running the game into a snow bank. The most common of the three was the two-group surround. The hunters divided into two sections, and on a given signal from the chosen leader, each hunter charged on horseback, the two groups converging on the herd. From the time of the signal each man was on his own, racing to kill as many buffalo as possible.

Running buffalo, and occasionally antelope, over a cliff's edge was also effective. From the head of a

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1Ibid., pp. 156-170.
2Ibid., p. 176.
cliff, extended on the plain like the arms of a great V for possibly a mile or more in distance, men, women and children were stationed at intervals. A Buffalo Caller (a man dressed as a buffalo) was used to urge and entice the leader of the buffalo herd toward the cliff's edge. Through the antics and mimicry of the Caller, the herd would move toward the apex of the V. When the herd was well within the arms of the V, the people at the most distant stations arose and waved robes to frighten the buffalo forward. The buffalo became alarmed, and would stampede. The leading buffalo, increasingly confined toward the apex of the V by the stationed people, eventually came to the cliff and with his followers was hurled to death by the stampeding animals behind.  

During the winter, there were occasions when the third type of communal hunt, running game into a snow bank, was used. Herds of animals were surrounded and driven into deep, drifted snow. Bows, arrows and spears were then used to kill the animals.

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1Ibid., pp. 176-77.
2Ibid., pp. 177-78.
Gathering plant foods was generally the job of young, unmarried girls and old women, but was a family affair when an abundance was discovered. Picking aprons were worn by some, while others picked into their upheld skirts. For berries or cherries which grew on bushes, the picker placed a small hide beneath the bush and dropped the harvest into it. The supply was then transferred to skin bags. A dog and travois generally transported the harvest back to camp. Root vegetables like wild potatoes and turnips were dug with a stick of buffalo shoulder blade. New campsites were probed in search of a mouse's cache of dried beans.

Food products which the Dakotas did not provide for themselves were obtained from other Indians, either through plundering or trading. There were Indians in the area who engaged in crop farming, so farm products were obtainable. The Arikara Indians were victims of Dakota raids, especially during the early part of the 19th century.

1 Ibid., pp. 178-79.
3 Ibid., p. 2.
Preparation of their food staple, the buffalo, began shortly after it was killed. The men dressed and prepared the carcass for transportation to camp. This involved removing the hide and the tongue first, followed generally by dividing the carcass into eight portions: (1) the outer "blanket of flesh;" (2) the hump, brains and liver; (3) the intestines and small splitbones; (4) the inner "blanket of flesh;" (5) the slabs of ribs; (6) the front quarters; (7) the hind quarters; and (8) the hip bones and backbone. The buffalo parts were transported to camp where the women finished the butchering. Long strips were cut with the grain of the meat and hung in the open to dry thoroughly. 1

When dried, the meat strips, called papapuzu, were folded and thoroughly compressed into a parfleche (leather bag). Pieces were cut off and cooked as needed, generally broiled over coals or boiled in a paunch kettle filled with water. 2

Pemmican was made from papapuze by thoroughly pounding it into a powder. The powdered meat was placed in the bottom of a parfleche, and melted fat poured over

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1 Densmore, Teton Sioux Music, p. 444.
2 Hassrick, loc. cit., pp. 188-89.
it. Another layer of meat was added, then fat, and so on until the parleche was filled. The mixture was kept hot until the whole mass was thoroughly saturated. When cold, the parleche was closed and tightly tied. Pemmican could be kept for several years when prepared this way. Also, this treatment made the flesh of older animals as soft as that of younger animals, so no meat was lost. Pemmican was true Indian bread, and used as bread when fresh meat was available. Boiled, it made a soup. So long as there was a supply of pemmican, the Dakotas were assured of food and could live without any other food. Wanka, a modification of pemmican, was a favored preparation.

Boiling was the most popular cooking method. Nearly all of the animals were boiled and eaten in the form of a soup; however, liver and kidneys of all game were considered delectable uncooked. There was no designated point when the meat or soup was considered

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1Dodge, loc. cit., pp. 254-55.


3Hassrick, loc. cit., p. 190.
"done." 1 When hungry, the Dakotas began eating as soon as the food was warm. 2

Boys generally ate what they killed, but would sometimes take their kill back to camp and let their mothers eat it. To prepare the birds and small animals which the boys killed, a hole was raked in the ashes, and the kill buried in the hole under the ashes and cooked one-half hour or less. It was then taken out, and beaten a few times to knock off the ashes. The feathers and skin were pulled off, and the bird or small animal devoured entrails and all. 3

Fish, when cooked by the men who had no women around to prepare it, was baked by burying it in a deep pit, and building a fire over the pit. When fish were cooked by women, it was generally boiled. 4

All of the plants used for food were consumed raw; however, some of the more abundant and favored were dried, boiled, roasted or made into sauces. Plants dried were chokecherries, prairie turnips, wild grapes,

1Dodge, loc. cit., p. 254.
2Ibid., p. 272.
3Ibid., p. 278.
4Hassrick, loc. cit., p. 173.
cactus fruits, buffalo berries and mint. Boiled were
wild onions, nuts, prairie turnips, cactus fruits and
artichokes. The artichokes, nuts, and cactus fruits
were also roasted at times. Wild plums and choke-
cherries were used in sauces.

Consumption of food among the Dakotas was like
most other hunting people. They had a feast when food
was plentiful, and went hungry when food was scarce.
There were times when the Indians reportedly ate ten to
15 pounds of meat, and some 20 pounds at a meal without
indigestion.

Catlin gave a detailed account of the way food
was consumed by the traditional Dakotas. He described
them as having no regular meal hours, but eating about
twice in 24 hours. The pot was always boiling, and
when one was hungry, he could help himself. Men ate
first, followed by women, children and dogs altogether.
The men sat at meals cross-legged (with ankles crossed
in front of them), both feet drawn close under their
bodies; or they ate in a reclining posture with their
legs thrown out, their body rested on one elbow and

1Hyde, A Sioux Chronicle, pp. 178-79.
2Dodge, loc. cit., 274.
forearm, which were under them. The women were said to have a graceful way of eating. They bent their knees together, inclining their body back and head and shoulders forward, then squatting to the ground, inclining both feet to either side. When finished eating, they stood without the use of their hands.¹

Food consumption by the Dakota babies was cared for by allowing a child to nurse until the age of three or four years. However, after birth, the colostrum was not fed the child, but a "suckling woman" or young girl about ten years old was employed to remove the initial milk during the first three or four days. Berry juices and soups were fed the baby during this time. A baby's feeding schedule was essentially conditioned by hunger. Great freedom was permitted so the child might nurse and fondle the breast at will. Either breast was offered, and both, if the baby was not satisfied after one was emptied. Supplementary feeding might begin as early as one year. Meat, pre-masticated by the mother or older sisters and dipped into soup, was given the

child to suck. Before a child was two, it was fed from a spoon.

With the treaty in 1868, the Dakotas were given a large territory within which they were to be allowed to live and hunt, and white men were not to trespass. Food practices continued about the same, except there was a continual decline in available foods with the Indians overhunting the area and the white man trespassing upon the territory and also hunting. It was after the Battle of Little Big Horn in 1876 that food practices were forced to change radically. The Dakotas were then confined to the reservations and were encouraged to the point of insistence to settle on a plot of land. Anyhow, hunting and gathering and the nomadic way of life became relatively useless with the buffalo and other plants and animals nearly gone in the confined reservation areas. The Dakotas became almost entirely dependent upon the U. S. Government for subsistence. Thus, obtaining food was accomplished mainly by going to the commissary on designated days and receiving foods furnished by the government.

Some hunting and gathering did continue for a while, however. Gathering plant foods for consumption was done whenever they were available, but the quantity was limited. The final buffalo hunt is described by Hyde:

Late in the fall, part of the Oglalas and Brules had gone hunting on the Republican. The hunting rights had been sold, but all of the Indians had stipulated that they be permitted to make one more hunt, and despite warnings that the herds south of the Platte were nearing extinction...(they)... started on the hunt. There were several thousand people in this camp and by the time they had traveled as far as the Platte they were very hungry and took some cattle from along the river. There was no serious trouble, however, and they spent the winter quietly on the Republican. One hundred buffalo were all that this great camp of Indians killed during the entire winter, and they came back to the agencies in the spring with the sad realization that they had been on their last buffalo hunt.2

Attempts were made to make farmers out of the Dakotas. Millions of dollars were spent by the government on the farm experiment which failed, was later revived, and failed again.3 Cattle were issued, but many of the Dakotas reportedly turned them loose and hunted them on horseback as they did the buffalo, shooting the cattle with rifles.4 There was a resistance

1"Oglalas" and "Brules" are names of sub-bands of the Teton Dakota Indians.

2Hyde, Red Cloud's Folk, p. 229.

3Hyde, A Sioux Chronicle, p. xi.

4Hyde, Red Cloud's Folk, p. 194.
to cultivating the soil for crops because farming was considered "woman's work." The venture in farming was further weakened by land and weather conditions of their reservation area. Consequently, those who did attempt farming became discouraged with their poor crops and sickly animals; further, their standard of living was not much, if any, better than those not farming. Obtaining rations was by far easier than farming. By 1900, rations were still issued, although in lesser quantities since some Dakotas were gradually able to support themselves, in part at least, through ranching or some occupation available on the reservation.

Food preparation methods were carried into reservation living from the traditional era as far as they were usable. Beef was still cut into strips and dried in the sun, then boiled in a big pot. Wild cherries, grapes, nuts, berries and other plants still available were gathered and made into a sauce, stored for later use, or eaten fresh. Wasna was still made, only beef became the meat instead of buffalo. Most of the foods issued by the government were new to the Dakotas, and they did

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1Goldfrank, loc. cit., pp. 80-82.
2McGillycuddy, loc. cit., p. 188.
not know how to prepare them. Standing Bear wrote that after the women received their rations, they took home only what they liked, dumping what did not suit them over the nearest bank. The Dakotas had never seen flour and did not understand its use, so the 100 pound sacks issued were dumped, and the sacks used for clothing. Bacon was new also, and could be found dumped over a bank. The green coffee issued had to be roasted and ground, but no one instructed the Indians how to do this. Standing Bear related an incident which occurred while visiting his mother. She served coffee and added a lot of pepper, thinking the more pepper added, the better the coffee would be. Coffee was called, and still carries the name, "pejuta sapa" or "black medicine." ¹

Finally, the Dakotas learned to make a pan bread by mixing together flour, baking powder, salt and water. The mixture was then rolled out and fried in grease. This fried bread, served with syrup, was considered a treat.²

¹Standing Bear, loc. cit., pp. 71-73.
²Ibid., p. 73.
The traditional cyclical nature of food consumption was continued on the reservations. Upon receiving rations, the Dakotas hurriedly consumed the food that had been allotted for a week or ten days, then went hungry until the next ration day.\(^1\) This led to complaints that insufficient quantities of food were issued by the government, and the government was thereby not living up to its treaty.

In reviewing the changes which occurred in Dakota food practices as described in this chapter, it is evident that the external influence of white man’s society played a dominant role as an agent of these changes. The white men gave the Dakotas horses, guns, metal kettles and whiskey; he actively altered the Dakotas’ natural environment by killing buffalo and other small game and negotiating to obtain lands, then restricting Dakota territorial movements to reservations. Finally, the Dakota social system was unable to meet its need of food for sustenance in the traditional manner; the traditional facilities were exhausted. The

\(^1\)Hyde, *A Sioux Chronicle*, pp. 178-79.
Dakotas' way of life had to change. The U. S. Government became dominant over the Dakotas, and began a forced assimilation program. Food was provided by the government in the form of rations, and occupations were encouraged for obtaining food (farming and ranching); however, these changes, along with many others required in the Dakota social system, were too great. Conflicts between the Western and Dakota systems were evident in all elements.
CHAPTER V

COMPREHENSIVE PROCESSES RELATIVE TO FOOD PRACTICES

The comprehensive or master processes are those processes which activate many or all the elements of the social system. They are of utility in broadening the perspective and furnishing additional tools for the analysis of change in a social system. The master processes of systemic linkage, socialization and communication are used in this study of Dakota food practices.

In addition to these master processes, Loomis includes boundary maintenance, social control and institutionalization in his social systems model; however, it was decided that these tools for analysis would not be used in a study of this sort which is limited to one aspect, food practices, of social actions within a social system. Boundary maintenance is defined as "the processes whereby the identity of the social system is preserved and the characteristic interaction pattern maintained." In a study of food practices, an analysis

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1Loomis, loc. cit., p. 8.

2Ibid., p. 31.
of Dakota boundary maintenance seemed superfluous. Social control is the process where devi
ancy is either eliminated or somehow made compatible with the functioning of the social system. It articulates the elements of 1
norms, power and sanctions. Since these elements were given detailed analysis in Chapter IV, it would have been repetitious to use social control as a tool for analysis in a study of this nature. Institutionalization is a global process through which organizations are given structure, and social action and interactions are made predictable. It patterns all the elements, except facilities. 2 Here again, in a study of food practices, an analysis of institutionalization would not offer additional information to that already obtained in the preceding chapter.

**Systemic Linkage**

The early linkage of the Dakota and Ojibwa social systems are the first of significance for this study. The Ojibwas are recorded as being responsible for driving the Dakotas out of their woodland existence where rice

1 ibid., p. 35.
2 ibid., p. 36.
was the diet staple, onto the plains where buffalo became the diet staple.¹

The next important systemic linkage was with fur traders. While the Dakotas had been seen by white men as early as 1640, the influence of the white man's world was not felt until the fur traders began to penetrate the general Dakota territory around 1700. At first an indirect linkage was made with the traders. The traders dealt with the Fox Indians, who traded with the Eastern Dakotas, and the Eastern Dakotas in turn traded with the Dakotas. By 1802, more direct contacts were made by traders, through whom the Dakotas acquired horses, and then gradually guns, cooking utensils, knives, alcohol and even white man's diseases.²

In 1825, formal relations with the U. S. Government began with a treaty of friendship signed at Portage des Sioux.³ An increasing number of contacts with the Western world followed. Up until approximately 1850, the linkage seemingly did not have any dysfunctional consequences on the social system. No major modifications

¹Jenks, loc. cit., p. 1044.
²Mekeel, loc. cit., p. 154.
³Doane Robinson, A Brief History of South Dakota, p. 216.
in the basic structure of their system were needed. There was an abundant food supply, and even surpluses at times; the material facilities introduced by the whites were easily adapted to the Dakota way of life, adding comfort and convenience. However, after 1850, the increasing traffic of white settlers and traders through the Dakotas' territory began to affect the buffalo numbers. The territory, and the plant and animal life in it, were considered by the Dakotas as theirs, and was being encroached upon by the whites. This continual penetration of an alien population into Dakota territory developed a defensive solidarity among the Dakotas, and a war for survival began.¹

Their means for subsistence rapidly decreased until finally, in 1868, the Dakotas signed a treaty with the U. S. Government, ceding all claims to land except the reservation tract set apart for their use. Even with the treaty conflicts continued between the white men and Dakotas which ended in the Battle of Little Big Horn in 1876. After this battle the Government dismounted and disarmed the Dakotas, and forced them to remain on their reservations.²

¹Goldfrank, loc. cit., p. 82.
²Robinson, loc. cit., p. 220.
Between 1876 and 1889 the Dakotas made an attempt to adjust to reservation life as set up by the government. But the differences between the U. S. and Dakota social systems were too great. Accepting Western life meant giving up traditional ways. A conflict had begun which led to growing dissatisfaction and misunderstanding between the government and the Dakotas. The plight of the Dakotas on the reservations became worse—discouragement led to utter despair, and the only way out seemed to be through supernatural aid.\(^1\) The Dakotas turned to the Ghost Dance which provided a supernatural means for salvation of all their problems: the coming of a messiah who would overthrow the U. S. Government, destroy non-Indian society and culture, and renovate the world according to Indian ideas.\(^2\) Thus, from 1889 to 1891, there was a complete rejection of white culture and its concomitant evils. The government finally suppressed this new religion, but at the cost of a massacre of Dakotas at Wounded Knee. The Dakota social system was completely subjugated then, and a passive acceptance of white man's ways began.\(^3\)

\(^1\) Mekeel, loc. cit., p. 139.  
\(^2\) Malan and Jesser, loc. cit., p. 44.  
\(^3\) Mekeel, loc. cit., p. 140.
Socialization and Communication

Socialization and communication with regard to food practices were traditionally done mainly within the framework of the Dakota *tiiyospaye*. The child's biological parents as well as close relatives, especially grandparents, aunts and uncles, were responsible for the child's socialization. Myths and legends were used to indoctrinate the younger generation with the basic values of the society. Early informal training was given in the skills and crafts necessary for assurance and ability in later self-support.¹

For boys, this included developing their powers of observation for hunting, learning to make bows and arrows, and how to ride and hunt and care for their ill. They were encouraged to join in activities with their older brothers to learn many of these. For girls, activities of gathering and preparing foods with older sisters and women helped prepare them for their later role with foods.

General attitudes transmitted that were related to food practices included the importance of tribal solidarity and equality for the maintenance of their hunting society; the obligation to contribute to tribal welfare through sharing of foods with those in need; the importance of acceptable rituals and procedures for preparing and consuming foods; and the importance of internalizing the virtues of bravery, fortitude, generosity and wisdom.¹

The Dakota language shows the manner of their thinking, and was an avenue for internalizing some of the basic systemic values. As an example, the possessive pronoun cannot be used with reference to food. One can say "the meat that is in my tipi," but cannot say "my meat" any more than one can say "my mountain" or "my buffalo."² The word "thanks" was regarded as superfluous since dividing food was an obligation.³

Reservation living rendered the traditional socialization processes regarding food practices nearly impossible and unapplicable with changes in food supply

²Boas, loc. cit., p. 346.
³Ibid., p. 495.
and family living. An active attempt was made by the
government to socialize the Dakotas into Western ways.
MacGregor discusses three approaches taken by the govern-
ment in their forced assimilation program, within which
attempts were made to instill new food practice atti-
tudes: "first, the suppression of Indian custom and
authority; second, the education of the children in the
techniques of white life; and third, Agency and other
white pressures upon the adults to adopt white ways of
making a livelihood." ¹

Since the agent had control of the food supply
and its distribution, as well as control over all the
Dakotas' personal freedom, he held a power with which
the Dakota leaders could not compete. He used this
power in various ways, including: when the Indians
seemed to cling too tenaciously to their old ways, or
were uncooperative in some way, the agent withheld the
rations; and, official regulations were instituted which
forbade native dances, ceremonies and traditional
customs which seemed inconsistent with Western ways. ²

In 1874, an Indian Police force was organized
by an agent. A building with a mess room, kitchen and

¹Macgregor, loc. cit., p. 35.
²Ibid., pp. 35-36.
dormitory was constructed at the agency for the use of the police. Here the police were given meals three times a day at regular intervals. This arrangement was for "civilizing,...teaching how to eat at tables and properly prepared foods."  

The insistence that the Dakotas establish permanent dwellings and undertake farming as an occupation also were contrary to the traditional nomadic, hunting and warring way of life. While the attempt to make the Dakotas into farmers was relatively unsuccessful during the early reservation period, it was nevertheless an attempt by the government to change the Dakotas' way of life.

Probably the most effective means taken by the government to socialize the Dakotas was through the education of the young people. The school policy "was 'to civilize,' 'to humanize,' and 'to put the children in boarding school where they will learn English' and 'not relapse into their former moral and mental stupor.'"  

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1The Executive Documents of the Senate of the United States for the Second Session of the Forty-Eighth Congress and the Special Session of the Senate Convened March 4, 1885, 1888, pp. 262-63.

2Macgregor, loc. cit., p. 36.
Macgregor further describes the government's educational policy with the Dakotas:

Children were virtually kidnapped to force them into government schools, their hair was cut, and their Indian clothes thrown away. They were forbidden to speak in their own language. Life in the school was under military discipline, and rules were enforced by corporal punishment. Those who persisted in clinging to their old ways and those who ran away and were recaptured were thrown into jail. Parents who objected were also jailed. Where possible, children were kept in school year after year to avoid the influence of their families. ¹

Since the children's preschool socialization was in their homes in the traditional manner, and they were exposed to Western ways after they went to school, they found themselves faced with conflicting values. The adults, too, were faced with conflicting values. They lacked understanding, feelings and motivation for adapting to Western ideas of food practices. The differences between the two societies were too great. Consequently, there was a general, passive acceptance of the rations from the government for meeting their need of food, even though the rations were often of low quality and insufficient quantity.

In summary, the master process of system linkage has analyzed the linkage of the Dakota and American

¹Ibid.
social systems. It began with a casual linkage with white men in the woodlands of Minnesota in 1640, then with the early fur traders around 1700, followed by intensified contacts with white men and their government. Finally, the Dakota social system was subjugated by the larger American social system. The government's policy of forced assimilation was to leave many marks on the Dakota social system. The traditional socialization and communication processes which were related to the food quest became nearly impossible or unusable with the forced assimilation program instituted by the government on the reservation. Conflicting ideals between traditional and reservation food practices were experienced by the Dakotas, which resulted in a general passive acceptance of rations as a means for meeting their goal of obtaining food.
CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

Between 1800 and 1876 the Teton Dakota Indians were primarily a hunting people, roaming the plains of the Dakotas in pursuit of buffalo, the backbone of their economy. They lived in small kinship groupings which seemed to best meet their systemic needs.

The Dakota social system had basic beliefs, values and sentiments of food practices which were oriented to the goal of providing food for the system's members. These three elements formed the "basic building blocks" for a patterned, interdependent and interrelated system of behavior related to food practices. The Dakotas maintained their relatively stable system through the socialization process, communicating their system's beliefs, values and sentiments from the older generation to the younger generation within the extended family. Through socialization, individual attitudes were formed, and these attitudes were reflected in actions.

There were status-roles structured for the acquisition, preparation and consumption of foods. Norms, extracted from the system's "basic building blocks," were guides for proper behavior in the various
status-roles. To meet the systemic goal of food provision, buffalo, other plains animals and plant food facilities were utilized, prepared and consumed in accordance with the system's prescribed, accepted ways. Food practices were a real part of Dakota life, related to all aspects of their social system.

A continued systemic linkage with white men led the Dakotas to eventually being put on reservations, and becoming dominated by the U. S. Government. Between 1877 and 1900 great changes took place in the food practices of the Dakotas. Through military control over the Dakotas, the government was able to impose an accelerated assimilation process; consequently, disruptive forces which were too great to resist under military domination, were injected into the Dakota social system. The Indian agent became the controlling power on the reservations, and was the direct link between the government and the Dakotas. To accelerate the assimilation process, the government extended its control over the socialization of children. The children were taken from their parents and forced to attend schools, in which a determined effort was made to strip the children of their traditional family mooring. When a child was socialized in the ways of the
dominant social system, he could serve the agent as an interpreter to his people of the dominant society. Once the government was in control of the master processes of socialization and communication in the Dakota social system, the government had undisputed power. Western influences were projected upon the Dakotas. The results of governmental control became apparent in the "basic building blocks" (beliefs and knowledge, values and sentiments) and in the social psychological aspect of the social system. These foundation blocks are tied together by the socialization and communication processes, and hence, the Indian agent was able to simultaneously undermine both of these fundamental configurations by controlling the socialization and communication processes.

The beliefs and knowledge, values, and sentiments related to the food quest became unusable with the vanishing of traditional ways; or the government actively suppressed them and attempted to project Western beliefs and knowledge, values, and sentiments onto the Dakotas. Likewise, with the traditional socialization and communication processes related to food practices disrupted, the effects were transmitted into the social psychological aspect of the system. The conflicting ways of life led
most of the Dakotas into adapting some elements of Western living and retaining some of their traditional ways of living. Thus, the Dakotas found themselves in a state where neither system provided specific guides for patterned interaction. A condition of anomie ensued.

There were three adaptations to anomie evident in the Dakota social system with regard to food practices: (1) conformity, (2) rebellion, and (3) innovation. The traditional goal of obtaining food for its members' sustenance was still held, but the actions for achieving this goal were altered with the buffalo gone, and living on the reservation. The government set up the ration system to provide foods, but with the idea that the rations would be provided only until the Dakotas could obtain food themselves through actions in accordance with acceptable Western ways. Some Dakotas conformed to the government's plans by adopting the agriculturalist approach to providing foods, and using rations as a supplement when needed.

The second mode of adaption, rebellion, was one which was short-lived during the early reservation period, but one of importance since it was after the rebellion that the third mode, innovation, became a
general adaptation to anomie. Rebellion took place between 1889 and 1891 with the Messiah Craze and Ghost Dance. Through the Messiah a new social order was to be established that was similar to the old traditional Dakota life with buffalo plentiful and no white men. The Messiah Craze culminated into the Battle at Wounded Knee, resulting in the U. S. Government becoming the undisputed power over the former hunters and warriors.

Most Dakotas, however, adapted to the condition of anomie through innovation. The differences were too great between the old traditional norms and those being imposed upon them by the government. There had not been time to learn new norms to replace the old. Rather than accept the government's agricultural approach and accompanying way of life for providing food, a passive acceptance of rations and no sincere attempt to successful farming and ranching was made.

All of this seems to imply that the breakdown in the foundational aspects of the Dakota social system were basic to many of the problems which besieged the Dakotas. The disorganizing effects of the forced changes in actions related to their food practices, including the change from an outdoor, nomadic life on the plains to an indoor, sedentary life on the reservation,
appear to be related to the poor health conditions of the Dakotas. They are recorded as being "superb in health and physical strength, owing to their outdoor life"\(^1\) during the traditional period. In contrast, Eastman, an Indian physician who practiced at Pine Ridge, describes the health conditions of the early reservation period:

It was well known that the wild Indian had to undergo tremendous and abrupt changes in his mode of living. He suffered severely from an indoor and sedentary life, too much artificial heat, too much clothing, impure air, limited space, indigestible food—indigestible because he did not know how to prepare it, and in itself poor food for him. He was often compelled to eat diseased cattle, mouldy flour, rancid bacon with which he drank large quantities of strong coffee.\(^2\)

Today, the health problem is attributed to virtually the same causes:

These conditions are created by poor housing, overcrowding, improper ventilation, lack of knowledge of sanitation, and a low economic base. A lack of knowledge regarding health and sanitation have brought about these conditions and not a lack of desire to maintain proper health standards.\(^3\)

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\(^1\)Fiske, loc. cit., p. 30.

\(^2\)Eastman, loc. cit., p. 136.

In summary, this study has answered the initial problem set for it by making a descriptive analysis of the traditional Dakota food practices. It has described the changes in food practices which accompanied the transition of the Dakotas from nomadism to reservation living. From the information assembled in this study it may be concluded that the forced food practice changes are related to the disruption of the Dakota social system, and a state of anomie resulted from the disruption. Further, these changes appear to be related to the health conditions which are still in existence with the Dakotas today. This study is not meant to imply that food practice changes alone are responsible for the Dakotas' problems. They are only one of possibly several contributing factors to the problems being experienced by the Dakotas. Other aspects of interaction must be considered to gain a complete picture of the Dakota social system.

The social systems approach provided effective tools for a comprehensive analysis of Dakota food practices from a sociological perspective. However, some difficulties were experienced with the use of this method: (1) the PAS Model was developed to view all areas of interaction within a social system, yet this study was restricted to one aspect of interaction in a social system. Limiting the analysis to the interactions
related to food practices made it necessary to extract these interactions from the total interactions of the social system. By doing this food practices may appear exaggerated out of proportion in importance to other interactions which took place within the Dakota social system. (2) A discussion of one phase of actions related to food often had to be broken down and discussed under several categories. This prevented an over-all picture being presented at one time, and thereby necessitated some repetition. As an example, the educating of children was treated in sentiment, values, and status-roles categories, as well as in the master processes of socialization and communication. (3) The social system elements and their articulating processes are, in reality, interrelated and interdependent. By using the discreet categories provided in the model, it was difficult to portray the interrelationships among the various elements as they exist in reality.

The question arises, "What other method of analysis might have provided fruitful results for a study of this nature?" An alternative approach might have been to treat food practices as norms (expected patterns of behavior), to examine their changes, and analyze the repercussions of these changes in the elemental areas of
the social system. However, some aspects of food practices could not logically be considered as norms (conditions of action and comprehensive processes are examples), thus eliminating as comprehensive an analysis as the social systems approach provides. Consequently, viewing food practices as norms might also have its limitations.
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