

Integrating *Maya Market Women* in Archaeology

Introduction

Marketplaces offer a peculiar representation of a culture that seems to simultaneously represent deep-rooted tradition and modern advancement. It is a microcosm in which people from all walks of life come together to provide for their most basic needs or to seek out valued items. The study of markets and marketplaces offers a particular challenge to archaeologists studying complex societies, in which extensive exchange systems are necessary to bind specialized producers to consumers as well as dispersed hinterlands to cores, yet leave scant traces. Even when located, interpreting the types of social relationships and exchange mechanisms that existed within these specialized contexts can still be challenging. Marketplaces tend to be linked to market economies, in which regulation of exchange depends on availability and demand of products and services. These are in turn linked to modern concepts of equivalencies, rationality, and individualism. Reconciling the presence of marketplaces in pre-modern, non-Capitalist societies has posed some theoretical issues for anthropologists preferring to view exchange organized along more centralized/redistributive or decentralized/reciprocal lines in societies outside the western, capitalist tradition. However, views of ancient economic systems have recently undergone substantial revision, particularly within Maya archaeology. This has resulted in more openness toward the presence of both marketplaces and market economies among the Classic Period Maya. The use of modern ethnographies on Maya markets, such as Kistler's (2014) *Maya Market Women*, will become critical for developing better middle-range theories that account for variation in exchange practices within ancient market economies. In this paper, I examine some of Kistler's findings on the unique social positions of female

market vendors in the community of San Juan Chamelco, Guatemala, and their implications for the social organization of ancient marketplaces.

The initial hurdle of identifying the locations where exchange regularly took place shows signs of being overcome. A compelling volume edited by King (2015a) brings together researchers using multiple techniques and lines of evidence to demonstrate the presence of markets in sites throughout the Maya Lowlands. Among the relevant sources of information are ethnohistoric accounts and ethnographies of indigenous Maya communities. Although markets were known from Spanish contact period accounts (Oviedo y Valdes 1535, Landa ca. 1566), for a long time they were dismissed as imported and atypical structures. An openness to their presence and more systematic use of ethnohistoric accounts and epigraphy have furnished more evidence for established long-distance traders, specialized vendors, and indigenous terminology specific for exchange (e.g., lowering prices) (Tokovinine and Beliaev 2013), at the time of contact.

Identification of markets in the more distant past have also relied on the ethnohistoric descriptions of Mesoamerican markets for identifying the locations and internal organizations of these locations. Aztec markets in particular have shaped expectations about artifact distributions and chemical signatures. Markets now seem to be well accepted for several sites in Yucatan dating to the Post-Classic period and more and more research suggests extensive market systems going back into the Classic Period (A.D. 250-900) or even earlier (King and Shaw 2015).

Finding the physical correlates of markets is undoubtedly important. As an example, King and Shaw (2015:12) reiterate that locating marketplaces is a critical aspect of understanding how markets were integrated into local and interregional economies. However, just as market exchange cannot be expected to account for all economic exchanges in a society, an appeal to

market economies cannot account for all the variation present in the size, location, structures, and functions of marketplaces. The social context of marketplaces is therefore an important aspect of consideration and one that has not been systematically addressed. Even when archaeologists were themselves examining modern markets, they focused on chemical signatures rather than the social composition and organization that led to their deposition (Wurtzburg 2015). This assumes a great deal of uniformity of signatures produced in what is arguably a dynamic settings, with many actors interacting in complex ways. As markets become more archaeologically visible and market exchange becomes better established as a viable and widespread form of economic integration, middle-range theories accounting for observed variations between regions and time periods that do not simply substitute exchange mechanisms will become more important.

Ethnographic work on markets has the potential to contribute to building powerful middle-range theories. Kistler's work offers an appealing starting point because it challenges many latent conceptions about traditional gender relations, value systems, and forms of prestige building among the Maya. Yet the dominant themes of kinship, exchange, and prestige that Kistler repeatedly encountered in conversation with her informants and form the principal sections of the book, are not far removed from traditional archaeological concerns. Many of her findings are consistent with archaeological narratives of Maya organization. These congruencies suggest that the divergences are well worth considering and integrating in archaeological thought.

The History and Tradition of Chamelco

Kistler's ethnography offers a qualitative look into the lives of women involved in market, social, and political interactions in the town of San Juan Chamelco, Guatemala. Fieldwork was conducted over 18 months between 2004 and 2006. Kistler was able to find capable and welcoming insiders, like Doña Rogelia, who gave her access into a variety of social spheres. Throughout her research, Kistler resided in the homes of two key informants and worked alongside them in household and market activities. She interviewed additional women, spending time in some of their homes to gain a better understanding of the variety of experiences people had in the community and within the marketplace. Her integration into community life was assisted by the adoption of traditional dress, or *traje*, and residents gained a level of comfort and respect for her, to the point that she was asked to be a godparent for a couple of local children. Although this work does not offer much in the way of quantifying labor investments and profits from market exchanges, it does offer some very interesting insights into a community that is clearly interested in both tradition and participation in globalizing economies. Interestingly, trade and exchange form important parts of the local tradition. This community is known to have served as an important trading center in pre-Columbian times (Kistler 2014:8).

Chamelco is located in the department of Alta Verapaz in Guatemala. It is within the Q'eqchi' homeland and the majority of its inhabitants still identify as Q'eqchi. The Mexica once referred to the region as "Tezulutlán" or land of war, in recognition of its military achievements (Kistler 2014:19). This fame seems to have given the Spanish some pause about entering the region, even after the capture of the Q'eqchi' leader in 1529 (Kistler 2014:20). The town of Chamelco was officially established in 1543 as part of an indigenous people resettlement program instituted by Spanish Dominican friars. The region remained under Dominican control for many years, giving it some degree of isolation and autonomy from the Spanish colonial

government. Following Guatemalan independence in 1823, the region's population expanded with European immigrants set on growing cash crops, including sugar and coffee. The high demands placed on local labor by German coffee growers and exploitive government measures greatly marginalized Chamelqueños. Nevertheless, they continued to fight to preserve their cultural practices.

The first study of Chamelco was conducted in 1944 by Antonio Goubaud Carrera. Kistler notes that then, just as now, Q'eqchi' was the dominant language, with very little Spanish spoken, and commerce was an important activity. A gendered division between female vendors and male long-distance traders was also present, which Kistler does not explore in her work. At the time of her research, 98% of the population identified as ethnically Q'eqchi' and Q'eqchi' remains the dominant language. Tradition and cultural continuity are deemed critical aspects of local identity by many residents and important resources for political empowerment (Kistler 2014:27-28). Locals see their town as a more "authentic" representation of Q'eqchi' culture, citing greater autonomy due to the actions of one particular historical leader, Aj Pop B'atz' (28).

The historical figure of Aj Pop B'atz' is treated as mythical ancestor by the community and forms their most prominent link to ancestral practice. His memory is honored in several fairs and festivals. He is a standard of value for the community, both symbolically and literally, as upstanding citizens that have contributed to the wellbeing and political prominence of Chamelco are honored in his name. Many, including the market women, look to his actions to find inspiration for their own practices and roles in the community. It is of note that Kistler's own inquiry into the legacy of Aj Pop B'atz' demonstrates that his story has served as a cultural symbol going back at least to the 1900s, therefore he is not a figure that has only recently reemerged through revivalist movements (Kistler 2014:32).

The story of Aj Pop B'atz' was salient to Kistler's research for several reasons. Although he serves as an important link to tradition, he is also lauded for visionary introduction of change (Kistler 2014:33). This is exemplified in his negotiations with the Spanish and acceptance of a new religion in exchange for preserving the region from violent struggles. Additionally, this hero participated in a critical political exchange, traveling with other Q'eqchi' leaders to gift Carlos V quetzal feathers, live birds, and textiles and returning with extravagant gifts, among them the church bells still ringing in the town's Catholic church (Kistler 2014:30). This narrative is consistent with the expressed view in the community that exchange and marketing were bequeathed to them by their ancestors and vital to their continued survival. Many women are more directly called by their ancestors to market, as they are trained from childhood and bequeathed the trade by female relatives (Kistler 2014:53).

Exchange, Kinship, and Prestige in the Marketplace

As previously stated, Kistler identified and organized her ethnography along three major themes: kinship, exchange, and prestige. It was through these themes that she explores how capitalist exchange intersects with social value. Kinship is discussed through a construct familiar to Maya archaeologists, that of the household. Chamelqueños define their family through the *Junlab'al*, literally translated as "one house." This represents the people that share their residence and daily struggles and the people of whom you always think when consuming food outside the home. It is common among local households to bring in adopted children, children related to them through fictive ties, for example godchildren, and young employees, who they come to think of as close family members. Inheritance among consanguineal and affinal

descendants depends less on relationship than duration of membership in the household. In practice, this probably privileges male natural children, who tend to marry later than females, and by virtue of birth reside longer in the house than adoptive children. This is not extensively discussed by Kistler, who focuses more specifically on the transfer of marketing rights between women. In some cases, appropriate market successors are selected outside the household and specifically brought in for mentoring. Although women voice a preference for training their children and having them maintain at least some involvement in the marketplace, they are more interested in using their own market activities to pay for an education that offers them other opportunities. It is unclear to what extent this priority reflects changing attitudes toward gender roles and economic success brought on by globalization and capitalism versus traditional views on social mobility. The transfer of market position and wealth within the household forms an important concern for many women.

Supporting the household through marketing appears as an important theme. Exchange offers women a degree of economic stability and also social independence, as it takes them outside the house and allows them to communicate with other female vendors. Many of the successful women use their profits to invest in such things as vehicles, cell phones, and freezers, to grow their businesses, as is expected in market economies. However, their primary concern remains sustaining their families and providing their children with educational opportunities. They also use these exchanges to improve their own value to the community and demonstrate their moral behavior. Stated in other words, they use their participation in capitalist economies to build social prestige within a community that values tradition and indigenous identity to a great extent.

Prestige is very simply explained as being “taken into consideration” (Kistler 2014:68) and is a goal all Chamelqueños share. This includes being talked about in favorable terms, emulated, and invited to important life-cycle celebrations and community events. Being remembered by future generations for your achievements and embodiment of Q’eqchi’ values, like Aj Pop B’atz’, is the highest form of prestige. Economic wealth is not specifically linked to prestige by any of Kistler’s informants, though it is recognized to afford individuals a certain amount of power. Two specific individuals discussed as having accrued great prestige, Andres Cúz and Oscar Fernández, are both educated men with access to resources, but possessing different economic means. They are renowned for their work in promoting indigenous languages and developing a local tourist attraction, respectively, which is recognized for the benefit and value it brings to the community. The relationship between marketing and prestige is similarly framed in non-economic terms. Nevertheless, the most prestigious vendors are women who have great economic success.

Marketers and other community members attribute their prestige to several factors. One is their presence in the market from a young age. The work and dedication they show demonstrate good moral character and that they are able to fulfill household obligations by contributing financially. Additionally, because of the market’s central and inclusive location, they become some of the best known individuals in the town (Kistler 2014:75). Vendors that are amicable and devote special care to their customers by providing reliable and diverse stocks and fair prices grow extensive social networks that increase their prestige as well as assure their continued economic success. In many cases, they build value on which future generations can capitalize, demonstrated by the higher economic success of second generation marketers over newly incorporated vendors. The recognition of marketing as an ancient activity also brings prestige to

the women, as they are upholding Q'eqchi' tradition by participating in marketplace exchanges. This link to tradition is augmented by some women's ability to access wider social networks and accrue information on folklore. Two prestigious women in particular, Doña Rogelia and Doña Valeria, were sought out to advise and judge contestants in the *Rabin Aj Pop Batz* (Daughter of Aj Pop Batz) pageants, meant to embody the ultimate expression of indigenous identity (Kistler 2014:85).

The market women in Chamelco are also very active in religious and municipal leadership positions. Notably, women in this region are able to hold leadership roles in Saint's Day brotherhoods individually, with relatives, or, as is traditionally preferred, with their husbands (Kistler 2014:87). These roles require a great deal of financial investment in the celebration of religious ritual, but are also very commonly recognized as a prominent source of prestige in Guatemala. It is not surprising then, that the women that have served in these roles individually are market women. It should be noted that the themes of kinship, exchange, and prestige have many interconnected and overlapping structures. For instance, individually accrued prestige is believed to reflect well on the household and therefore enhance its prestige as a unit. The maintenance of marketing within the household maintains tradition, thereby enhancing prestige.

Contextualizing Exchange

King and Shaw (2015:22) suggest that the Maya economy was "at the heart of the formalist-substantivist debate," and perhaps still remains so for some. Although the study of craft production and long distance movement of goods has formed a focus within Maya archaeology, the nature of exchange has not been significantly explored beyond the limiting framework of the

debate, addressing nuances of exchange structures. Instead, adopting Polanyi's fundamental distinction between modern capitalist and pre-modern economies, many assume a redistributive or gift-based system working to supply household needs and a separate, elite sponsored luxury trade.

Within capitalism, economic exchanges are presumed to occur independently of social and political relationships. In this sense, they are highly individualistic transactions, involving impersonal exchanges using money and barter, on the basis of a rational decision making process. Despite this individual and self-interested basis of transactions, the overall economic system is believed to find a balance beneficial to all parties over the long-term (e.g., Smith 1937). There are obvious limitations to this concept of capitalism and even in the Western nations believed to rely primarily on this form of exchange; actual economic behavior does not always conform to rational decision making. The points of contact between Western Capitalist economies and non-Western economies can be very informative about the limits of the substantivist-formalist dichotomy. As exchange becomes more "formal" and based on competitive market values, many presume that the more personal, social institutions that previously regulated exchange would become eroded, to the detriment of indigenous traditions and social ties. This promotes a sense of incompatibility between rational economic exchange and exchange along social and political ties. Even when it is recognized that a range of exchange behaviors can exist in a society, assigning prominence to more than one at a time appears to be problematic. Kistler finds this not to be the case in Chamelco. The savvy business behavior of the women that are the object of her study is in no way incompatible with the traditional values and roles they fill within the community. Furthermore, they are able to navigate economic roles,

building status and prestige within them, as well as ritual and political roles, in a way that suggests the interdependence of these seemingly disparate domains.

The reasons women give for their marketing offer a view into exchange practices that is not available to archaeologists. It is also a view that complicates interpretations of economic rationality. Many of Kistler's informants see their transactions as a means for building more lasting relationships, of building trust and reaffirming cultural practice. It is interesting to compare these to Little's (2004) relation of tourist market vendors' views on bargaining. In these contexts, the vendors saw little incentive in significantly marking up prices and leaving room for negotiation with tourists, since there was no possibility of establishing more lasting rapport (Little 2004). Bargaining seemingly invites prolonged interaction, allowing merchant and customer to discuss needs, wants, and material aspects of the goods. Vendors in non-tourist marketplaces, that have these interactions, feel an obligation toward their customers and work to meet their needs by establishing the right ties to producers and providing reliable access to the objects. They can play a stabilizing role in market economies, balancing demand and supply as middlemen, and managing access to information that informs purchasing decisions. In some cases, this may seem to promote conditions inconsistent with market economies. Reina and Hill (1978), for instance, observed that there was a high reliance on *costumbre*, or tradition, in the organization of pottery exchange in Guatemala. This limited innovation and competition between producers working in specific regional styles, because merchants seek out only wares and forms that meet the traditional needs of their customers. These practices, however, should not be seen as incompatible with the functions of market economies, since building customer loyalty and stability remains an important factor in the way merchants and producers maintain advantages in markets. From an archaeological standpoint, these types of interactions could provide the

necessary conditions for a regular market exchange, namely an assurance that the marketplace forms a reliable means for satisfying material needs and for reliably compensating surplus production.

Chamelco's Market Women and the Archaeology of Markets

Even though archaeologists are successfully demonstrating the presence of marketplaces and market exchange in major centers of the Classic Period, some of the most compelling evidence for the role of these exchanges in Maya societies has come from the discovery of painted murals with unusual content. Although the interpretations of their scenes remain contested, the Calakmul murals appear to provide a detailed view into the composition of Late Classic Maya marketplaces. Located on Structure 1 of the Chiik Nahb Complex, the murals depict seemingly prosaic scenes from daily life, rather than the better represented mythical and royal themes. The text accompanying the figures engaged in transporting, exchanging, and consuming food and other goods, is equally generic, offering titles such as “tamale person” rather than priestly or royal titles, which are usually accompanied by names (Vargas et al. 2009). Nevertheless, these seemingly humble activities are honored on the walls of the pyramid in a vivid and highly visible way.

The murals are dated to between A.D. 620 and 700 based on the styles of the depicted ceramic vessels and the styles of the hieroglyphs (Vargas et al. 2009). Some have argued that the scenes represent feasting contexts and preparations rather than markets, given that many of the exchanged objects are food or food related. However Wurtzburg (2015) argues that the foods are raw or of a kind that is easily transported, and not the festive dishes associated with feasts.

Further, she suggests that the titles in feasting contexts are more likely to mark the honored guests than the servers. There may be a counterargument made, inspired by the structure of Saint's Day brotherhoods, that the scene generically depicts the people and positions necessary to properly execute festivals, since service in these roles is what accrues prestige. However, it seems unlikely that the titles of these positions would be so specifically tied to the materials of the feast. There are some additional factors, particularly in the architecture of the complex, that suggest its use as a marketplace. The general openness and the long aligned buildings behind Structure 1 bear notable similarity to the structure of the East Plaza marketplace identified at Tikal, which in turn conforms closely to ethnohistorically known markets (Jones 2015).

These murals offer archaeologists the unprecedented ability to see people, actual actors, engaged in a market exchange. Because of this, they bring attention to certain unexamined aspects of the social composition and social institutions relevant to the way we model marketplace and market interactions. There are at least two features of these murals that suggest common ground between Chamelco's market practices and Classic Maya practices; the prominence of women in market exchange and the prestigious aspects of markets. These aspects serve as my starting point for forwarding a more balanced examination of gender roles and the organization of exchange in the archaeological record and for proposing directions for the development of middle-range theories explaining variation in market practices.

In the recent volume on ancient Maya markets, Susan Wurtzburg (2015) evaluated the potential contributions of ethnographies to future archaeological work. Among them was the simple recognition of women in the past. This does not equate to assigning gender to the archaeological record, which in many cases is based on assumptions about average behavior and examples from ethnographic and ethnohistoric accounts, it merely promotes inclusivity in the

manner in which archaeologists build their narratives about the past. Wurtzburg calls for a recognition that women may have filled different roles throughout their lives and in different regions and periods. She suggests that child rearing and domestic work place different demands on women throughout their life cycles and can be flexibly arranged within larger households and social networks. Denying women's presence in public spheres because of these seemingly universal and persistent domestic burdens is therefore not always well-founded. The Calakmul murals have perhaps best demonstrated the public prominence of non-royal women in the past. One-third of the preserved figures in the murals are female. Additionally, the only specific individual named holds a female title, seen in several of the inset moldings (Vargas, López, and Martin 2009:19248). Although her relationship to the mural scenes are unclear, some have proposed a vital management role (Wurtzburg 2015). This potentially makes the insights gained from the female vendors in Chamelco more valuable to the way we address the presence and perception of women in the archaeological record.

The gender composition of the murals may also address imbalances promoted by the focus on long-distance trade, seen ethnographically and ethnohistorically as the purview of males. Among them is the potential exclusion of women from exchange based on a perceived limited ability to transport stock over large distances. To me, this type of thinking would follow the same flawed logic that denied the exchange of utilitarian clay vessels over large distances. As Reina and Hill's (1978) work demonstrates, as long as there is a desire for such products, human porters are more than capable of providing. Although at the time of their work, many producers and traveling merchants were opting for motorized transportation, there were still those undertaking the journey on foot to keep costs low. Plate 391 and 395 in this volume also demonstrate the movement of just such large burdens by women. It may be over short distances

and of empty vessels, but is nevertheless impressive. Chamelco's vendors, who now make their trips to suppliers in vehicles, recall their mothers and grandmothers undertaking these trips on foot along unpaved trails with a deserved note of admiration. Although it is difficult to make claims about the distances over which their products were carried, the merchants of the Calakmul murals, both male and female, have been depicted with cumbersome ceramic vessels, likely filled with foodstuffs. Perceptions of physical limitations are, therefore, insufficient indices for populating the ancient markets. Models would be better served by addressing the value attributed to different roles, interactions, and spaces.

The Calakmul murals and marketers of Chamelco also bring attention to the construction of prestige in relation to economic exchange. Generally, status in archaeology is determined from the point of consumers and final consumption or deposition, such as burial, of objects. One would assume that for marketers to be honored in murals they held a high status, albeit as a group rather than individuals. The qualities that the murals reference in relation to this status, interestingly, are related to behavior more so than material possessions. There may be subtle markers of differentiation in the mannerisms, clothing, and accessories between the vendors and consumers that are currently imperceptible to us, but overall, the Calakmul marketers are differentiated through their roles in exchange relationships and visibility in this particular complex. Much like the Chamelco case, this suggests that economic exchange can contribute to prestige in multiple ways, beyond simple access to material objects. Examining the Chamelco market women can help elucidate the features of this context that contribute to the status and reception in the community granted to these people and their trade. Some aspects that I found particularly interesting are specialization and visibility, which have implications for both prestige and the built environment. Before examining the potential models addressing the integration of

market economies with other social structures, it would be useful to discuss further the political power held by Chamelco's market women, especially as related to the marketplace.

Through their sustained interactions with each other, market women discuss political matters and organize to assure that their needs are properly addressed. Because of the status they accrue in their marketing activities and other religious ritual roles, they are even successful in securing political positions that are increasingly being made available to women, with one vendor even asked to run for mayor (Kistler 2014:84). This involvement leads many locals to joke that the municipal government cannot carry out changes in policy or new programs without the women's consent (Kistler 2014:83). Yet the administration of the market is not entirely in their hands. Regulation is instead achieved through both official, administrative means, as well as local, self-organized efforts. This is seen in the manner in which stalls are acquired and in the way in which indoor market women have addressed competition from itinerant outdoor market vendors and lobbied for improved working conditions. Officially, space allocation is regulated by the municipal government, which requires a series of documents that demonstrate the candidate's good standing in the community, among them are proofs of payment of municipal and property taxes (Kistler 2014:46). However, it is acknowledged that few stalls are allocated through this application process, being transferred instead between family members, as previously discussed. Women gaining space through this mean are not expected to complete the paperwork, presumably because they have demonstrated their standing by growing up in the marketplace. This demonstrates competing frameworks of citizenship, one emphasizing infrastructural organization by tax and another based on participation in established community institutions. This type of negotiation between the local marketers and municipal government is illustrated in a number of vignettes, ranging from conflicts over the location of the Christmas

market to altercations between street vendors and indoor vendors. Imposed structure is often, though not always, effectively contested or circumvented by the marketers. This has important implications for the way we think of market regulation in the past and the way we examine prestige and power in the context of market exchange, often involving foodstuffs rather than luxuries.

Returning to the issues of specialization and visibility, I suggest that certain variations in the location, structure, and vendor populations of the marketplace have implications for the way market exchange intersects with other social categories, particularly with respect to the accumulation of prestige. To begin, the physical structure of marketplaces can indicate the level of organization and prestige among marketers. Chamelco's market was once located in the plaza by the town's Catholic Church. Although it was relocated next to the municipal building 60 years prior to the time of field work, it remains at the heart of community life, or rather forms its heart, or *ch'ool* (Kistler 2014:1). Similarly, many of the archaeologically known markets appear in site cores (e.g., Tikal, Maax Na, and Calakmul). However, Chase et al. (2015) argue that the Caracol markets were located outside of the site core, accessed by causeways leading into neighborhoods closer to the hinterlands. To these authors, such an arrangement offers the most logical integration between consumers and producers and urban centers and hinterlands. Whatever the logic of the placement, I would suggest that it holds serious implications for the status of the vendors, who are now operating outside the community core. Visibility is one of the factors clearly attributed to the status of Chamelco's marketers. Although women are expected to be moral and hardworking in any occupation, the ability of the market women to exemplify these qualities in a public setting seems to be, at least in part, what gives them an unusually high status compared to other women in the area. Visibility may also be a key distinguishing feature

between Kistler's findings and Burtner's (2004) work with Tz'utujil vendors traveling to the Panajachel market. Wurtzburg (2015) juxtaposes these cases as examples of different gender relations among indigenous communities living a mere 200km apart, but perhaps there are other factors at play as well. In both towns, women appear to develop and rely on extensive social networks, with Tz'utujil women selling the weaving output of their social network at market, yet this does not appear to bring the same social standing. In the latter community, women have to balance significant social stigma for their participation in tourist street markets, because of the late hours and lack of male supervision, against the economic and social benefits of vending. They are stigmatized because their economic activity takes them away from the community and its established values and away from immediate scrutiny. Conversely, Chamelco's market women are at the heart of the community and often perceived as integral to maintaining its traditional values. I would suggest then that the proximity of marketplaces to a community and to its religious and administrative center affords greater opportunities for individuals involved in economic exchange to accrue status.

Another measure of status often used in archaeology that can inform the perception of marketers and markets is architectural investment. In recognition of the value of their marketing activities, or perhaps in an effort to control and appropriate their activities, the Chamelco municipal government has invested in the construction of a more formal marketplace over time. It was relocated from the open plaza to a space with cement floor and low protective walls, and a perishable roof. Eventually, a new two-story market building was even constructed (43). Evidently, the relocations caused clashes between officials and established vendors over issues such as stall allotment and location and inadequate considerations of space and security. It is unclear to what extent the marketers were involved in these initial construction projects, but

more recent improvements were secured through successful lobbying by the women. This history of development can be compared to that of Tikal's East Plaza marketplace.

Jones (2015) notes the development of more permanent stone architecture in the marketplace in the Late Classic Period (A.D. 600-800), consistent with findings from other sites (see various authors in King 2013a). Some take this to mean a greater institutionalization of market exchange and crystallization of exchange practices present in much earlier periods. At Tikal, the first stages of the construction are linked to the revival of the polity's power in the 8th century A.D. and suggest a prominent role for commerce (Jones 2015). The distinctive gallery rooms of the market structure are long, narrow rooms with close-set doorways separated by narrow wall segments, or piers (Jones 2015:73). The construction of this specialized building was accompanied by the addition of a ballcourt and sacrificial structure to the complex and the construction of grand entrances and causeways. Similarly to Chamelco's early market structure, the early gallery had thin masonry walls likely supporting a perishable roof. Overtime, this was converted into an all-masonry vaulted structure, which represents a substantial investment. In the final iteration of the structure, there are 310 doorways, corresponding to about 6.5 square meters of floor space each. Indications of posts in the plaza just in front of the doorways may represent supports for perishable awnings extending the available space outward. Two small structures at the complex entrances constructed in similar styles suggest the presence of guards or other administrators. Both the effort of the construction and the proximity of the East Plaza buildings to the palace have been suggested to represent greater elite control over marketing practices (Jones 2015). Although this is certainly a possibility, the placement may also have to do with the preferential placement of marketplaces in central locations, at the heart of public life, providing easy access and social visibility between vendors and customers. Jones himself speculates that

the causeways formalized existing footpaths, suggesting this was a central location prior to the architectural investment. In terms of investment, this may be evaluated as a case of collective action, per Fargher et al. (2011), in which the successful lobbying of taxpaying groups, presumably merchants, promoted the investment on the part of the ruling elite. This certainly seems plausible for Calakmul, where the merchants themselves were honored within a formally constructed marketplace.

Whether elite- or merchant-led, the investment in a more permanent market space holds the similar implication for the status of the economic activity and the marketers. Although merchant-led investment suggests a more elevated overall status of marketers, any architectural improvement would follow and contribute to a certain degree of status differentiation among marketers both within and between sites. I base this on Kistler's observations of the clashes between the indoor market vendors and the street vendors in Chamelco. When the municipal government opened up the streets to ambulant vendors, mainly women from rural villages selling agricultural products from baskets, the established indoor market women felt their economic interests were threatened. These are people that do not necessarily specialize in marketing, but rather attempt to bring in income from domestic surplus when available. In the case of Chamelco's street vendors, their products tend to be limited to perishable foodstuffs and live animals. Although they constitute an important part of the marketplace, as even the indoor market vendors admit to supplying their own households through them, their presence had different economic and social dimensions from that of specialized vendors. Their impermanence does not allow them to establish the same social networks, so even though they are able to offer more competitive prices, they are not able to build a business, assure stable profit, and acquire prestige in the way the indoor market women can.

If we accept that economic exchange was present in all Maya communities to some extent, which is not unreasonable in a society with developed craft specialization and surplus production, then the physical organization of these exchanges will bear on the prominence of market economies and the extent to which it intersects with other social relationships. Open-air markets, for instance, may foster larger non-local itinerant vendor and part-time vendor populations. Although this may promote integration between town centers and peripheries, it may limit the value attributed to the activity and the prestige of the vendors. Better established, full-time specialized vendors might be differentiated through the physical delineation of market stalls, adding permanence to their activities, perhaps even across generations if the stalls become a heritable property of the household. Their activities may add greater stability to regional interaction networks by establishing reliable ties between producers and consumers. As in the case of Chamelco's market women, these economic networks may become a source of support and power for the individuals that mediate them.

Discussion and Conclusions

In her ethnography, Kistler specifically sets out to explore contemporary models of personhood that mediate historical practice and increasing pressures from a globalizing capitalist economy. Although this does not preclude us from applying some of her findings to the archaeological record, particularly those related to indigenous constructs of value, some caution must be exercised. It is tempting to view Chamelco as an unusually pristine, or rather resilient, indigenous community, yet it has undergone significant social, political, and economic changes.

In addition to temporal distortion, we must also account for synchronic variation. This is particularly relevant when trying to draw conclusions about the ancient Maya as a whole. Although a great deal of cohesion in material culture and ritual practice allows us to speak of an ancient Maya civilization, the large geographic extent and temporal span of this complex society would surely subsume a great deal of diversity. Relating this prehistoric diversity to modern indigenous communities can be difficult, as it is not readily apparent if current variation is a reflection of divergent practices in the past or of the fragmentation experienced by indigenous communities due to colonial rule, violent dictatorships and civil conflict. However, sensitivity to this existing diversity can prevent us from attributing gross generalizations to the past.

These cautions are perhaps most apparent on the topic of gendered activity, where the public activities of women are underestimated archaeologically, but potentially overestimated through unexamined application of ethnographic data. The modern dominance of women in markets seen in some ethnographic and tourist literature, as noted by Little (2004:145-146), has more to do with modern perceptions of culture and the commodification of indigenous culture that render non-*traje* wearing market men invisible. Rather, a greater variation in arranging gendered activity is present within both modern and ancient communities. This is true for markets, as much as Saint's Day brotherhood participation and political rulership.

There are also many benefits and warrants to using ethnographic work in general, and this work in particular, for building archaeological theory. For one, it offers a better understanding of the intersection between social institutions and market exchange that can allow us to move beyond formalist/substantivist, pre-modern/Capitalist dichotomies. The fact that this community has embraced new technologies and capitalist economies without abandoning traditional social institutions and constructs of value and prestige, suggests that economic exchange can exist

alongside more socially embedded forms of exchange. Furthermore, their commitment to embrace practices and technologies in ways that perpetuate their most culturally salient practices seems to warrant the treatment of this community as maintaining key traditional forms. A good indication of the way the specifics of practices can change while still maintaining the essential cultural value is found in the Evangelical Q'eqchi' inauguration of homes (Kistler 2014:38-39). Rather than sacrificing poultry and burning copal to feed the spirits of the construction materials and ask for the blessings of mountain spirits, Evangelical Q'eqchi' assemble prayer groups and prepare a communal meal to meet their obligations toward the spirits in a way more appropriate to their new religion.

The particular structure of the Chamelco market and the social networks it fosters add to our understanding of how market economies function in relation to wider social systems. The perceptions of the market women and other community members of their roles provide a view of the micro-level processes that motivate people to engage in market institutions. This work provides an analysis of a specific network that allows individuals to accrue economic independence as well as social standing. It signals to archaeologists the value of seeking out networks mediated by women in public as well as in domestic spheres. Furthermore, when examined in relation to other marketing communities, it points to differences in the structure of marketing that impact its value and the prestige of its participants. There are a variety of ideological values that can be attributed to vendors. They may be seen as skillful mediators with outside forces (per Helms 1993), or at least other ethnic groups, bringing in wealth and prosperity, or they may be cast in more negative light due to their absence from social view and unequal access to resources valued by the community. On the basis of Kistler's findings, I would argue that variations of market visibility and trade specialization can impact these ideologies

with occasional, open-air markets in peripheral locations being less likely to have offered a source of lasting cultural value to vendors than centrally placed, regularly held, and physically delineated marketplaces. Consequently, the integration and dominance of market exchange can be measured by the placement and prestigious associations of the marketplace.

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