Negotiating Political Economy at Late Postclassic Tututepec (Yucu Dzaa), Oaxaca, Mexico

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ABSTRACT Scholarship of ancient Mesoamerica has traditionally focused on ruling institutions and elite culture, contributing to the often-unchallenged assumption that elites dominated their unwitting commoner subjects. Similarly, the political economy is typically conceived of as an exclusive product of elite strategies. Researchers are now paying greater attention to commoner lives, yet many continue to think of social relationships dichotomously, in terms of elite domination and commoner resistance. I argue that an analysis of political economy through the lens of social negotiation, as informed by postructural theory, encourages more dynamic characterizations of commoner—elite social relationships. I utilize this approach to examine the political economy of Late Postclassic Tututepec (Oaxaca), drawing on the results of household excavations and ethnohistoric data. I argue that commoners may have negotiated a favorable position with Tututepec elites by offering their support in return for a range of benefits, including a measure of economic autonomy and wealth. [*household archaeology, Mixtec, Oaxaca, Postclassic, negotiation*]

ABSTRACTO Estudios de Mesoamérica antigua se han enfocado en las instituciones de gobernantes y cultura elitista. Esta mentalidad ha contribuido a la presunción que las élites dominan a los sujetos inconscientemente. Típicamente se concibe la economía política como un producto exclusivo de estrategias de las élites. Investigadores han empezado a prestar atención a la vida plebeya, pero muchos siguen pensando en relaciones sociales dicotómicamente, en términos de dominación elitista y resistencia plebeya. Sostengo que el análisis de economía política con una mirada de negociación social, inspirado en la teoría posestructuralista, promueve caracterizaciones más dinámicas en los relatos entre plebeyos y elites. Utilizo este método al examinar la economía política posclásica tardía de Tututepec basada en resultados de excavaciones de habitaciones e información etnohistórica. Sostengo que los plebeyos pudieron haber negociado una posición favorable con las élites de Tututepec ofreciendo apoyo a cambio de beneficios, incluyendo medidas de autonomía económica y riqueza.

Drawing on archaeological and ethnohistoric data, I examine the nature of polity finance at Late Postclassic (C.E. 1100–1522) Tututepec (Yucu Dzaa) and how wealth-generating measures were structured, in part, through negotiation between the ruling class and the larger commoner populace. Furthermore, I argue that although discourses examining relations of class and power in archaeology are often framed in terms of domination and resistance, evidence from Tututepec suggests a more dynamic relationship between the ruling class and its constituents that also included elements of cooperation and collaboration. Commoners did not support the ruling institutions of Tututepec simply because they were duped by a dominant ideology or bullied into compliance through blackmail, threats, or outright violence. Instead, elite–commoner interactions are better understood within a broader framework of social negotiation. Tututepec elites and commoners engaged in ongoing practices and discourses that effectively shaped and defined their respective roles. By contrasting evidence for commoner and elite practices, drawn from household excavations at Tututepec and

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ethnohistoric sources, respectively, I examine how these practices articulated through processes of negotiation and how they came to shape social relations and the larger political economy. I argue here that at least one segment of the Tututepec commoner populace was moderately successful in these negotiations insofar as they retained rights over a significant portion of their productive efforts. As a result, they appear to have enjoyed a limited measure of economic autonomy, which was probably one of many incentives that aligned the goals of the polity with that of its citizens, thereby insuring their support. This support, however, was not unconditional. It was contingent on conventions and agreements among various social entities, reached through formal and informal negotiations that were subject to revision.

The present study also contributes to a comparative understanding of the variable nature of social relations and political economy among premodern polities of 16th-century Mesoamerica and beyond. Furthermore, the Tututepec study provides a valuable historical perspective for scholars examining social dynamics of the colonial era and later periods, given that these relationships were based, in part, on earlier formations in the prehispanic past (see Brumfiel 2003).

POLITICAL ECONOMY AND PRACTICE

Practice theory views the social world as emerging from the recursive relationship between human action and the structural matrix in which it occurs (Bourdieu 1977; Giddens 1979; Ortner 1984). This structural matrix refers to the overall sociocultural context as well as the temporal and spatial dimensions in which practices are elaborated. Practices are thus contingent on the broader cultural, historical, and environmental contexts in which they occur. But while human action or practice unfolds within the context of structure, these practices also collectively reproduce and can modify structure. Practices can be articulated in a range of embodied action or dispositions, such as methods of cooking or building a house, attitudes, and approaches to social interactions with others. These are not innate behaviors; rather, they are better understood as regularized actions both constrained and enabled through their relationship to broader and ongoing flows of conduct (Giddens 1979:55). Drawing on their variable experiences, knowledge, and abilities, people can reformulate or improvise novel practices that depart from structural conventions and potentially transform them as well. In this study, I am particularly concerned with how everyday practices served as a medium for the negotiation of status and power—which will be discussed further below.

From a practice theory perspective, political economy refers to sets of overlapping and intersecting economic and political practices forged through social negotiation. Thus, the emphasis is on how the political economy was lived by people on a day-to-day basis and how these practices not only reflected but also recursively transformed the tenor of social relations. Here, the agency—or the ability to produce outcomes in the world—of all people must be considered to appreciate the dynamism of social relations and how microscale practices are the "stuff" of broader macroscale change (Pauketat 2001:78–79). Practices are also grounded temporally in that they must reconcile and accommodate past practices but have, at the same time, sufficient leeway for improvisation and innovation. Practices lead to both intended and unintended outcomes because they are predicated on subjects' incomplete and sometimes flawed knowledge.

Stemming from the writings of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels (1994), the dominant ideology thesis has been highly influential in studies of political economy, positing that political leaders exercise power over their constituents by means of deploying an impenetrable ideology that obscures actual inequalities and thereby establishes a "false consciousness" among the masses. Given the dialectical relationship between domination and resistance, scholars have criticized the dominant ideology thesis for ignoring peoples' capacity to produce outcomes in the world, whether articulated as resistance or actually preempting forms of domination (Miller and Tilley 1984). In response, studies of resistance have proliferated in cultural anthropology (see citations in Brown 1996) and to a much lesser extent in archaeology (but see Brumfiel 1996; Joyce et al. 2001). These studies have exposed the inadequacy of the dominant ideology thesis, deepened our understanding of asymmetric social relations, and examined some of the different faces of resistance. For instance, subalterns can lodge explicit acts of resistance for all to see but may often express dissension more covertly or subtly in what James Scott (1990:2–20) refers to as the "hidden transcript." But scholars are also critiquing resistance studies, in what amounts to a veritable "resistance to resistance" (Brown 1996; Hutson 2002; Ortner 1995). Studies focusing on resistance alone are troublesome in that they portray people as primarily reactive as opposed to active (see Frazer 1999:5–6). Little attention is given to how people's practices contribute to the construction of their own "identities and histories" (Johnson 1999:123). Furthermore, resistance is but one response to domination; acts of cooperation, compliance, and accommodation are also possible postures that merit further examination (Ortner 1984: 157).

A number of archaeologists, many influenced by poststructural theory, are reconsidering social relations of class and power in more dynamic terms, as the outcome of ongoing negotiation among different social collectivities (e.g., Barber 2005:27–33; Barber and Joyce 2007; Brumfiel 1994, 2005; Hendon 2005; Hutson 2010; Janusek 2004:8–9; Joyce 2008:221–223, 2010; Joyce and Weller 2007:146–149; Joyce et al. 2001:347–349; Lohse and Valdez 2004; Pauketat 2001:80; Robin 1999; Rodríguez-Alegría 2005; Sørensen 2007; Yoffee 2007). Here, attention is drawn to the manner in which all social groups, to a certain extent, participate in social "debates" or discourses that affirm, modify, contest, or reject the terms of their relationships with other social segments. Although these negotiations may be undertaken with the intention of reaching some semblance of common

ground, the resulting obligations and rights that define the terms of these relationships can be characterized as ranging from harmonious to discordant, cooperative to competitive, and symbiotic to parasitic. Additionally, social negotiation provides a medium for the crafting of social identities, which, in combination with structural and historical contingencies, provide the context for courses of action (or lack thereof) in the world (Janusek 2004:8–9).

In the remainder of this article, I examine the political economy of Tututepec as a conglomeration of practices related to political or economic ends that were forged through social negotiation and in reference to the broader sociocultural, ecological, and historical contexts. Late Postclassic Tututepec's political economy was negotiated at multiple scales and by multiple stakeholders with variable access to power. Here I pay special attention to the relationship between elites and commoners at the Mixtec capital. Based on an admittedly small sample of three commoner households at Tututepec, I contend that this group had reason to support the larger polity, in part because of their success in negotiating the terms of their economic relationship to the polity, which resulted in their retention of a certain degree of economic autonomy. Tututepec's leaders derived revenue for the polity through a diversity of practices, which minimized the tax burden on local commoners and enabled them to thrive economically.

THE ETHNOHISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY OF TUTUTEPEC

Tututepec was a Mixtec or Ñuu Dzahui (used interchangeably here) capital located in the agriculturally rich lower Río Verde region of Oaxaca, Mexico (see Figure 1). Tututepec also lies within the western coastal area of Oaxaca referred to as the Mixteca de la Costa, south of the highland Ñuu Dzahui regions known as the Mixteca Alta and Baja. During the final centuries of the prehispanic era, Tututepec presided over a multiethnic tributary empire spanning approximately 25 thousand square kilometers of southern Oaxaca (Barlow 1992; Joyce et al. 2004; Smith 1973:84–88; Spores 1993; see Figure 2). Until recently, scholarly understanding of Tututepec was based almost entirely on incomplete and fragmentary accounts from the ethnohistoric record (see Woensdregt 1996). But archaeological survey work (Joyce et al 2004; O'Mack 1990; Workinger 2002) and household excavations within the ancient capital (Levine 2007) are beginning to reveal details of the sociopolitical,

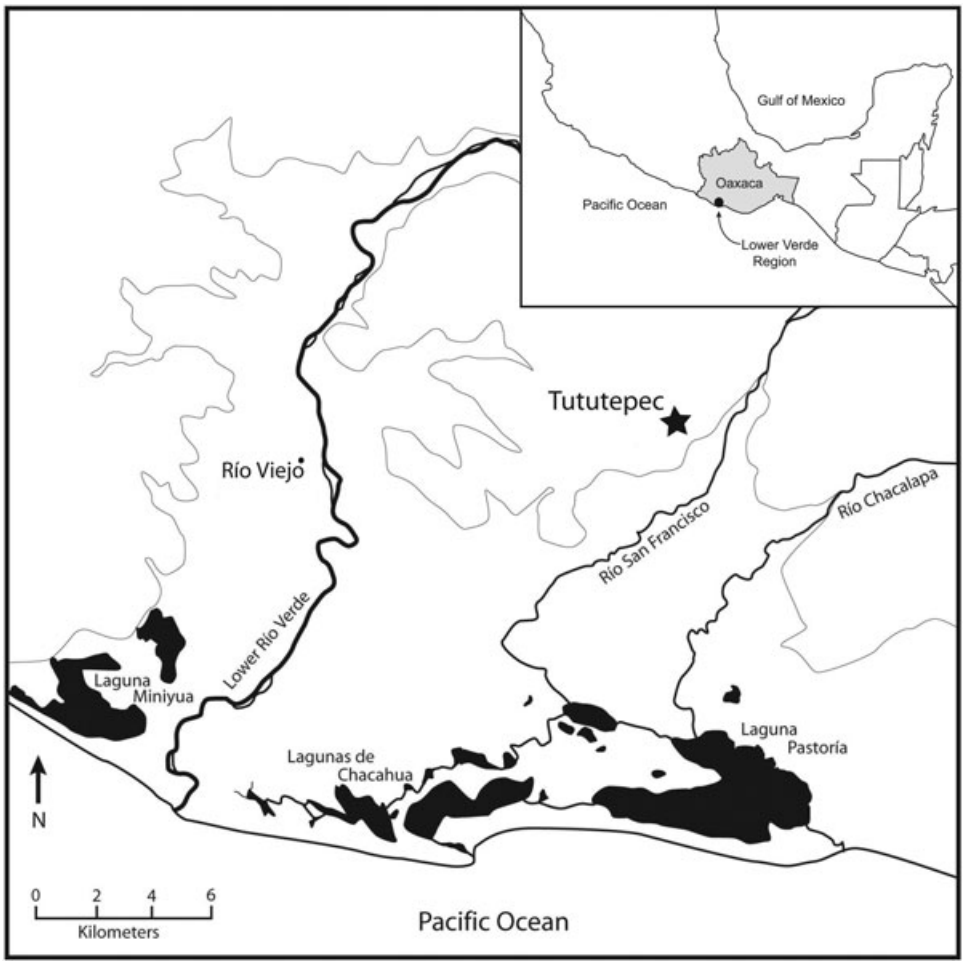

FIGURE 1. *Lower Río Verde Region of Oaxaca, Mexico.*

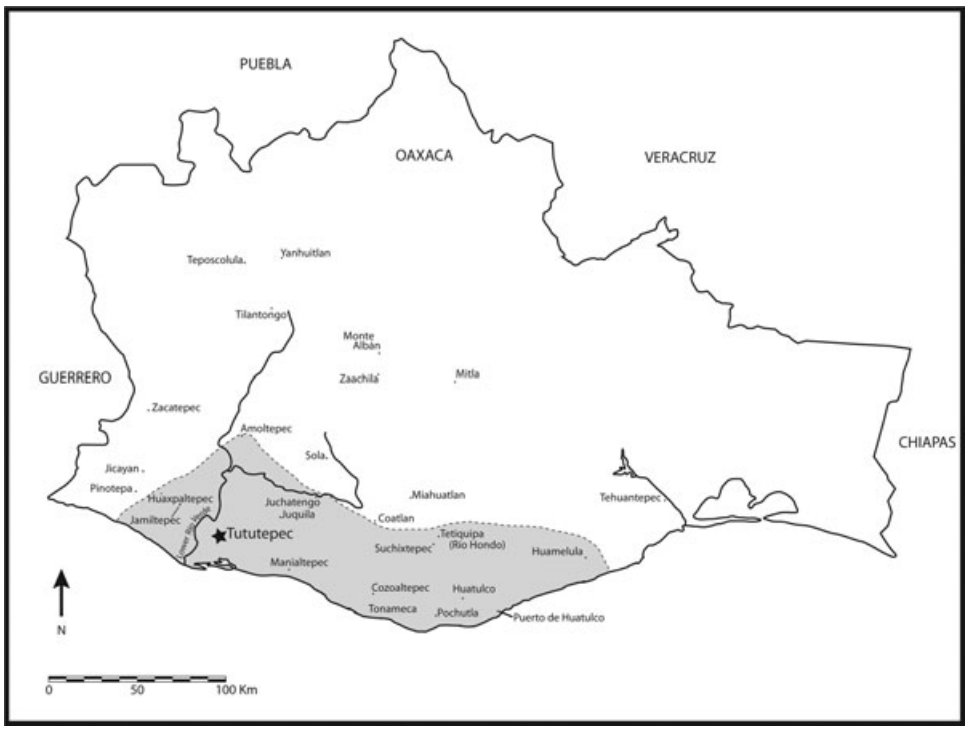

FIGURE 2. *Approximate extent of Tututepec empire circa C.E. 1522 (based on Spores 1993).*

economic, and ideological interworkings of Tututepec and its relationship to other Late Postclassic centers. As part of a broader study of settlement in the lower Río Verde region, Arthur Joyce and colleagues' (2004) survey of Postclassic Tututepec found that it covered 21.8 square kilometers, making it one of the largest sites in Mesoamerica. Importantly, much of Tututepec's settlement is dispersed, with limited pockets of nucleated areas, particularly toward the site's core. Finding little evidence for settlement prior to the Late Postclassic Yucudzaa phase (C.E. 1100–1522), the survey also indicates that Tututepec was established as a new regional capital at approximately C.E. 1100. Furthermore, Joyce and colleagues (2004) note a clear shift in regional settlement at this time, when the majority of the region's population moved from the lower Río Verde valley into the hills of Tututepec.

Ethnohistoric sources provide invaluable information regarding ancient Tututepec, but the limitations and biases of these accounts must also be acknowledged. The sources utilized herein can be divided into three broadly defined groups, with the first consisting of documents authored by Spanish conquistadors, clergy, and administrators. These papers have been referred to collectively as the "colonial library," consisting of documents generated by and for the use of the Spanish crown and church toward the furtherance of their aims (see Schmidt and Patterson 1996:5, 22). Examples include the writings of the conquistador Bernal Díaz del Castillo (1996) and missionaries such as Bernardino de Sahagún (1950–82) and Diego Durán (1994). Given the interests and identities of the authors, the works of the colonial library must be read critically such that their implicit and explicit subjectivities are brought to light. Although glaring ethnocentric and racist descriptions of native people are readily apparent, less obvious are the "silences" of the colonial library that leave many aspects of prehispanic culture undocumented (Trouillot 1995). These silences are manifested, for instance, in the dearth of information regarding the roles and experiences of native commoners, particularly women (Brumfiel 2001:62).

A second group of ethnohistoric documents includes a variety of early-colonial-era texts written by indigenous people in Spanish or in native languages using Spanish orthography. The Relaciones Geográficas are documents written in Spanish, some accompanied by maps, that describe indigenous lifeways and sociopolitical organization prior to the Spanish Conquest (e.g., Acuña 1984). The Relaciones were compiled and written by native communities in response to questionnaires distributed by Spanish authorities in the 1570s. The Relaciones provided an opportunity for indigenous people to actively participate, I would argue self-consciously, in the literal writing of their history. Here was an opening for native people to assert, disavow, or reinvent elements and features of their past, which had concrete ramifications in terms of legitimizing group interests, access to resources, and political action in the present. Scholars have also focused on a wide variety of colonial-era documents written in native languages, including personal letters, court proceedings, legal records, business accounts, petitions, and other miscellany (e.g., León Portilla 1993; Lockhart 1992; Terraciano 2001). The primary advantage

FIGURE 3. *Codex Nuttall, page 45, with place-name glyph for Tututepec ("Hill of the Bird") in bottom left corner.* © *Dover Publications, reproduced with permission.*

of studying these documents is that they provide indigenous historical perspectives and that because they are articulated in native languages, they reveal additional cultural insights.

The third source of ethnohistoric information utilized here comes from the Mixtec Codices, screen-fold books painted by Ñuu Dzahui scribes in a fully developed indigenous pictographic symbolic system (see Figure 3). The codices document royal genealogies, historical events, rituals, and elements of native belief systems and cosmovision (Furst 1978; Jansen and Pérez Jiménez 2007; König 1979; Pohl 1994; Smith 1973; Van Doesburg 2009).

All of the aforementioned ethnohistoric sources are alike in that they present a primarily elite male viewpoint of Mixtec society. The Spanish accounts were written by conquistadors and their descendants who sat at or near the apex of society in New Spain. Similarly, the colonial period texts written in Ñuu Dzahui language were undoubtedly penned by nobles, as the vast majority of indigenous society was illiterate at the time (Terraciano 2001:54). In addition, elite artisans painted the codices for the exclusive consumption of other elites (Pohl 1994). The ethnohistoric sources thus provide an expansive view of the lives and practices of the ruling class but lack a commoner perspective and give little attention to the commoner condition. Finally, the ethnohistoric record is dominated by male voices, which contribute to biases in our interpretations of the historic and prehispanic past. In many cases, archaeological methodologies provide the best, and often the only, means available for collecting information regarding the experiences and practices of lower status men and women in ancient Mixtec society. With these considerations in mind, the Tututepec Archaeological Project (TAP) sought to collect new data regarding prehispanic Mixtec society that was otherwise unavailable. I present the results of the TAP, providing insights into the lives of Tututepec's commoners, following a discussion of ethnohistoric data pertaining to the Mixtec capital's ruling elite and aspects of its political economy.

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE TUTUTEPEC YUHUITAYU

Throughout the Late Postclassic Period (C.E. 1100–1522), the Mixteca was dotted with scores of small autonomous

polities, referred to in the Ñuu Dzahui language as *yuhuitayu*. In the Mixtec codices, the pictographic convention for the yuhuitayu is an image of the *yya toniñe* (king or *cacique*) and *yya dzehe toniñe* (queen or *cacica*) seated on a reed mat, symbolizing the "throne" or place of rulership (Terraciano 2001:165). The royal couple lived in the *aniñe* (palace), "the household of the lordly establishment and the symbolic site of the yuhuitayu" (Terraciano 2001:160). In effect, the yuhuitayu was an institution of joint political rulership consisting of a marital pair and the combined holdings of their respective lineages—including buildings, lands, resources, and relatives. Because the married couple came from separate communities, the yuhuitayu represented both an interdynastic marriage alliance and an actual place (Terraciano 2001:173). The yuhuitayu consisted of one or more *ñuu* (communities), many of which were further subdivided into discrete *siqui* (barrios). As discussed below, Tututepec was not a typical yuhuitayu.

Tribute and Taxes

In establishing a tributary empire spanning much of coastal Oaxaca, Tututepec was larger and more powerful than the highland Ñuu Dzahui yuhuitayu, none of which controlled a similarly large territory (see Figure 2). The surviving Relaciones Geográficas from Tututepec's vassal communities provide details regarding their relationship with the imperial capital (see Table 1). The remaining Relaciones describe the variety of goods and services paid to Tututepec in tribute—defined as the transfer of resources from a subordinate to a dominant polity (Smith 2004:84). Tribute goods included both staples and social valuables, but it is less clear how frequently these items were delivered to the capital. Tututepec's subjects also paid tribute in services: servants were dispatched to work as slaves at Tututepec and warriors were conscripted to fight in their wars. In preparing their respective Relaciones, it is possible that indigenous communities may have deliberately underreported the amount and variety of tribute that they had formerly paid to Tututepec. This would have effectively concealed the true nature of resources at their disposal—resources that were susceptible to Spanish expropriation or taxation.

Greater scrutiny of the variety of tribute goods and services listed in the Relaciones can tell us much about Tututepec's economic moorings. A number of tribute items were subsistence goods (e.g., corn) that were likely utilized or consumed directly by the Tututepec elite (see Table 1). A second class of goods are identified as valuable raw materials (e.g., gold dust, feathers, cochineal) for crafting highly ornate luxury goods or social valuables, such as jewelry or fancy clothing. A third class of items consist of fungible goods, including cacao, cotton cloth *mantas,* gold dust, and copper axe-monies—all of which were used as forms of currency during the Late Postclassic (Berdan et al. 2003:101–102).

Postclassic Mixtec artisans produced some of the most spectacularly crafted luxury items known from ancient Mesoamerica, including intricate turquoise mosaics, gold jewelry, and polychrome pottery (Caso and Rubin de la Borbolla 1969; Nicholson and Quiñones Keber 1994; Pohl 2003a). The great number of tribute payments to Tututepec rendered in valuable raw materials indicates either that elites themselves were skilled artisans or that they supported "attached" craft specialists. The Tututepec elite could have produced luxury items as a strategy to garner wealth through trade, to use as reciprocal gifts for building alliances with other elites (Pohl 2003b), or to compensate subordinates for services rendered. Decisions regarding how elites used

TABLE 1. *Tributaries of Tututepec Included in the* Relaciones Geográficas

Subject community	Tribute paid to Tututepec
Amoltepeque(Amoltepec)	"They gave tribute each year a dozen quail, and forty loads of ears of corn and seven loads of pine firewood . . . and a green feather . . . They helped the lord of Tututepec in the wars that were fought with the Mexicans [Aztecs?] and other neighboring Indians . . . "
Tetiquipa (Río Hondo)	"Copper axe-monies and bars of the same copper, besides this they went to help in the wars that were waged by said lords of Tututepec . . . "
Pueblo de Guatulco	"They served them in wars that they fought with other *pueblos* and provinces . . . and paid them tribute in gold and *mantas* and cacao . . . "
Puerto de Guatulco	"Gold dust and *mantas* . . . "
Cocautepeque (Cozauhtepec?)	"Copper axe-monies, cotton *mantas*, and cochineal and generally came to their aid with all of the other things commanded of them in times of war and in peace and they provided them all types of services."
Tonameca	"Pieces of yellow copper and clothing and cochineal that they went to buy in the mountains . . . And they would generally go to war in aid of Tututepec against Tehuantepec and others . . . "
Pochutla	"Gold dust and jewels and pieces of yellow copper and feathers and clothing, and they gave them Indian servants that served them as if slaves . . . "

Note. This is a partial list of Tututepec's subject communities included in the Relaciones Geográficas (Acuña 1984; Berlin 1947:21–24; Smith 1973:84–88; Woensdregt 1996:35).

luxury items, however, would have been rendered in light of commoner practices as well. For example, the nature of commoner participation in craft production and marketing would have played an important role in negotiating the symbolic and exchange value of luxury items.

The fact that much of Tututepec's tribute was comprised of valuable fungible commodities (e.g., mantas, cacao, axemonies) suggests that elites may have sought this form of payment because it provided them with the greatest amount of flexibility. Transferable commodities could be used to pay subordinates as well as bankroll projects, ritual events, trade expeditions, or crafting activities. Alternatively, commodities could have been exchanged for finished crafts, additional raw materials, or food. Stores of fungible goods would have allowed Tututepec's leaders to best respond to, or anticipate, fluctuations in the availability of resources owing to shifting environmental, political, or social conditions. These shifting conditions would have been reconciled through social negotiation, a process of reevaluating the roles, rights, and responsibilities of different groups.

Aniñe Land Holdings and Other Resources

Ixtac Quiautzin was the second colonial period *yya* or ruler of Tututepec and was later baptized as "Don Pedro de Alvarado." On his death circa C.E. 1547, a controversy regarding the inheritance of the yuhuitayu and associated aniñe resources was sorted out in the Spanish courts (Woensdregt 1996:40). Documents from the legal wranglings provide details of Quiautzin's property, including numerous pieces of turquoise and gold jewelry, strings of pearls, greenstone beads, quetzal feathers, mirrors, and other goods (Berlin 1947:31–32). Quiautzin also claimed ownership to 15 fishponds, 10 saltworks, and 52 cacao orchards. The orchards were reportedly rented out at a yearly rate of 82 *juiquipiles de cacao,* equivalent to over 27 loads *(cargas)* or 656,000 beans.[1] The fish ponds presumably included the sizeable lagoon systems of Chacahua and Miniyua, which flank the mouth of the lower Río Verde (see Figure 1).

What remained of Tututepec's royal estate during the colonial era probably represents only a fraction of its earlier prehispanic holdings (Smith 1973:84–86). Throughout Mesoamerica, the arrival of the Spanish emboldened dependants to break away from their indigenous overlords to end tribute payments and reclaim their autonomy. Furthermore, the Spanish also competed with the native yya for land, labor, and other resources (see Terraciano 2001:145–148). Even so, the sum of the reported colonial period aniñe resources would have yielded considerable amounts of fish (fresh or smoked and dried), waterfowl, salt, cacao, and other goods. The quantity of goods produced was probably sufficient to not only fulfill the needs of the Tututepec elite but also provide surpluses for exchange. The trade value of salt, dried fish, and cacao would have increased significantly when exported to highland areas where these items were scarce. The Relaciones confirm that salt from Tututepec was exported to towns in both the Valley of Oaxaca and Mixteca Alta (Acuña 1984:37, 323). Archaeological survey in the lower Verde region has identified the location of saltworks (Grove 1988), but extensive research has yet to be carried out at these sites.

Ethnohistoric studies indicate that the aniñe typically owned large tracts of the best agricultural land available, referred to as the *ñuhu aniñe* (Terraciano 2001:table 7.1). The property was passed down from generation to generation and worked through a system of corvée labor (Spores 1984:66–68). In some cases, commoners worked the ñuhu aniñe to fulfill tax obligations, but there was also a substratum of serfs *(ñandahi ñandahui)* that labored more exclusively in the service of the yya (Terraciano 2001:145). According to Ronald Spores, "Reference has been made to the existence of serfdom in at least six of the more important Mixtec communities, including Yanhuitlan, *Tututepec,* Tecomaxtlahuaca, Teposcolula, and Tilantongo" (1984:229, emphasis added). Labor service provided to the yya constituted practices of subordination, but variability in the labor commitments of serfs and commoners suggests that some groups may have had the ability to negotiate the weight of these obligations.

The Tututepec aniñe undoubtedly laid claim to much of the floodplain of the lower Río Verde, some of the most fertile land in all of Oaxaca (Joyce et al. 1998). With access to a virtually free source of labor, the yya of Tututepec could have orchestrated large enough agricultural surpluses to provision their families and still retain enough for exchange. The ñuhu aniñe yielded fruits and vegetables and, almost surely, prodigious amounts of cotton, which was in great demand in highland areas where the plant grew poorly. The Relaciones attest to the fact that Tututepec was a well-known exporter of cotton (Acuña 1984:220, 272), and the TAP excavations (discussed below) demonstrate the importance of cotton spinning at households within the Mixtec capital. With their access to the best arable land and labor service supplied by commoners and serfs, Tututepec elites could have potentially generated significant wealth through cotton production and trade.

Yet Tututepec elites' control of land and labor was not absolute. Ethnohistoric records demonstrate that heritable land rights were extended to individuals, households, and *siqui* (neighborhoods) but that "the acquisition, retention, and alienation of lands were subject to collective consent" (Terraciano 2001:208–209). Thus, although the details regarding the nature of Mixtec land tenure were complex and variable, decision making through social negotiation remained a constant through time. Kevin Terraciano points out that "tensions between corporate groups and lordly establishments over land and labor had always existed" (2001:207). The people of Tututepec would have addressed these tensions through an iterative process of negotiation that sought to reach some form of consensus. In general, elites came out ahead in these negotiations, but some commoners, such as those described below from Tututepec, achieved a level of wealth suggesting that they also benefited from these relationships.

Markets and Trade at Tututepec

Polities can generate significant wealth through their intervention or participation in market exchange and trade. But details regarding the nature of political elites' involvement in economic affairs in prehispanic Mesoamerica, particularly during the Late Postclassic Period, remains a major point of debate (e.g., see Blanton 1996:47–49). Influenced by the broader formalist-substantivist debates in the social sciences (Smith and Berdan 2003:10–12), scholars' interpretations range from views of elites as market interventionists and profiteers to those seeing elites as taking a more laissez faire approach to the economy (see also Brumfiel and Earle 1987). Benefitting from a large body of archaeological data and ethnohistoric sources, theoretical work on the political economy of Postclassic Central Mexico is arguably the most developed for prehispanic Mesoamerica. Even so, many perspectives still presume that elites primarily determined the makeup of the political economy and tend to describe elite practices in normative terms, as if guided by rigid and enduring policies or logic. In contrast, this study gives equal footing to commoner and elite practices and considers how the interplay or negotiation of these practices shaped the contours of Tututepec's political economy. The conceptualization of practices as ever unfolding and iterative also lends itself to an appreciation of economic strategies that were flexible, shifting in concert with changing conditions and relationships.

Markets were a common feature of Late Postclassic Mesoamerica and are especially well documented in Central Mexico (Berdan 1985; Blanton 1996; Cortés 1986; Díaz del Castillo 1996; Lockhart 1992; Smith 1980). Markets were also present in the Ñuu Dzahui region, although less well-documented archaeologically and ethnohistorically (Lind 2000:573; Spores 1984:82–83; Terraciano 2001). John Pohl and colleagues (1997) have argued that "border markets" were held in neutral areas of the Ñuu Dzahui region to facilitate trade between rival polities. The exchanges may have included some luxury items, but the variable geography of the region and its associated resources suggest that the markets dealt primarily in subsistence goods (Pohl et al. 1997:219). Tututepec appears to have utilized similar border markets to collect tribute payments from distant subject communities. Francisco de Burgoa (1934:352) reports that Tututepec obliged its highland subjects to deliver their tribute to the "grand market" of Putla, located in an intermediate area between the Mixteca Alta and southern coast.

The most direct ethnohistoric evidence for markets in Postclassic Tututepec comes from a letter written by Hernán Cortés to King Charles V of Spain, in which he explains that, following the conquest of Tututepec in C.E. 1522, "the natives carried on their markets and commerce as before" (1986:276). Also notable is the description of Don Melchor de Alvarado's installation as yya of Tututepec in C.E. 1570, reportedly held in the central *tianguis* or open-air market (Woensdregt 1996:49). Archaeological data from the TAP excavations, presented below, bolster the ethnohistoric evidence for markets at Tututepec.

HOUSEHOLD EXCAVATIONS AT TUTUTEPEC

The Tututepec Archaeological Project (TAP) included excavations at three Late Postclassic Yucudzaa phase (C.E. 1100–1522) commoner residences (Levine 2006, 2007). Residences, A, B, and C, were found among a cluster of a dozen or more households located approximately 1.25 kilometers northwest of Tututepec's civic-ceremonial center. This discussion highlights the extensive excavations at Residences A and B, whereas the more limited studies at Residence C are discussed sparingly. The TAP study focused on household patterns of production, consumption, and exchange to evaluate the nature of commoner participation in Tututepec's political economy. The relatively small sample of households investigated by the TAP admittedly speak to the experiences of only a limited segment of Tututepec's citizenry, which was surely a much more heterogeneous lot than available data allow us to appreciate at this time. Also of note, the TAP focuses on commoners living at the imperial capital of Tututepec, whose practices and experiences were likely different from those of their peers living in rural or subject communities. Notwithstanding these limitations, the TAP provides new and valuable information regarding the daily practices of Tututepec commoners, including details regarding household work and participation in local and long-distance trade.

Horizontal excavations cleared a total of 322 square meters at Residence A and 230 square meters at Residence B, exposing the remnants of domestic architecture, occupational surfaces, and associated features (see Figures 4–5). Because of time constraints, excavations at Residence C were much more limited, clearing 16 square meters in midden contexts located southeast of the residential structures. The excavations at Residence A and B revealed fairly modest household structures; foundations were comprised of one to three courses of roughly worked or unworked stone and sometimes capped with an additional course of unfired adobes. The structures' upper walls were most likely wattle and daub, which are common in the region today. There was no evidence of more elaborate architectural features, such as plaster floors, masonry stairways, friezes, pavements, benches, or drainage systems. Each household included a central patio with several adjacent rectangular or square structures, with one structure conspicuously larger in size. Deeper excavations found little evidence for superimposed architecture at either household, suggesting relatively short occupations of a few generations or more. Floors and living surfaces of compacted earth were the norm and, because of erosion and animal burrowing, often difficult to discern. Nonetheless, a relatively small number of artifacts and features were found in direct association with living surfaces located in patio areas, as well as in and around the structures. The vast majority of artifacts were recovered in stratified midden deposits found along stone terrace retaining walls

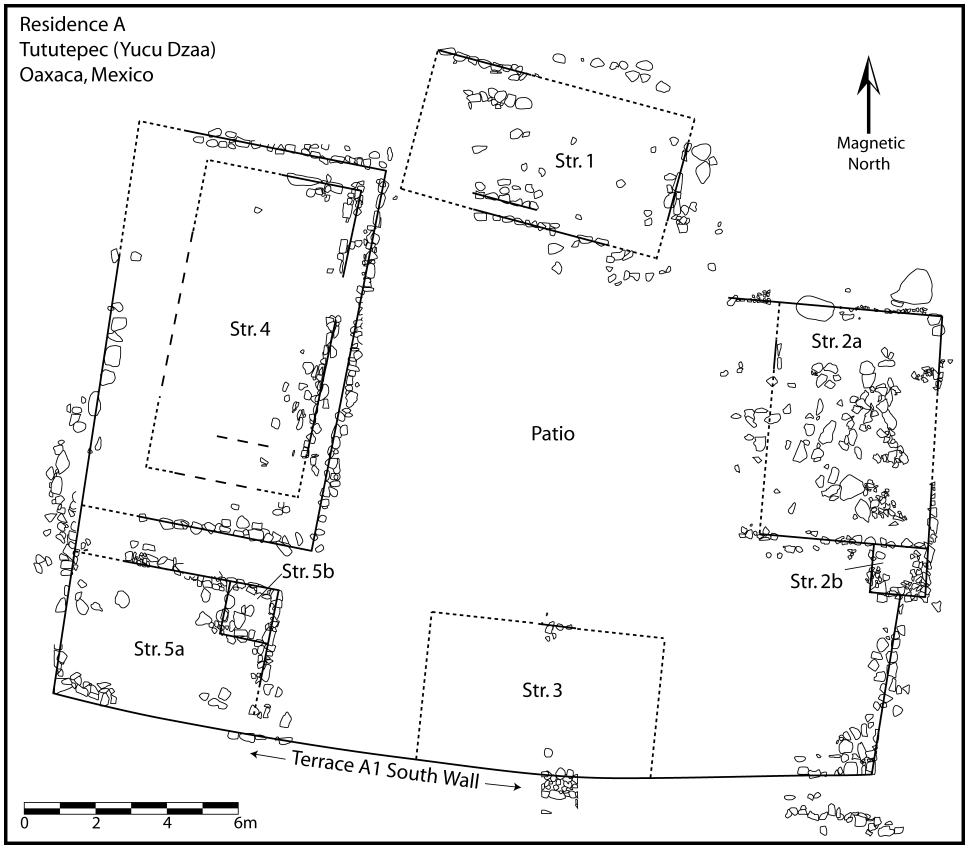

FIGURE 4. *Plan view map of Tututepec Residence A.*

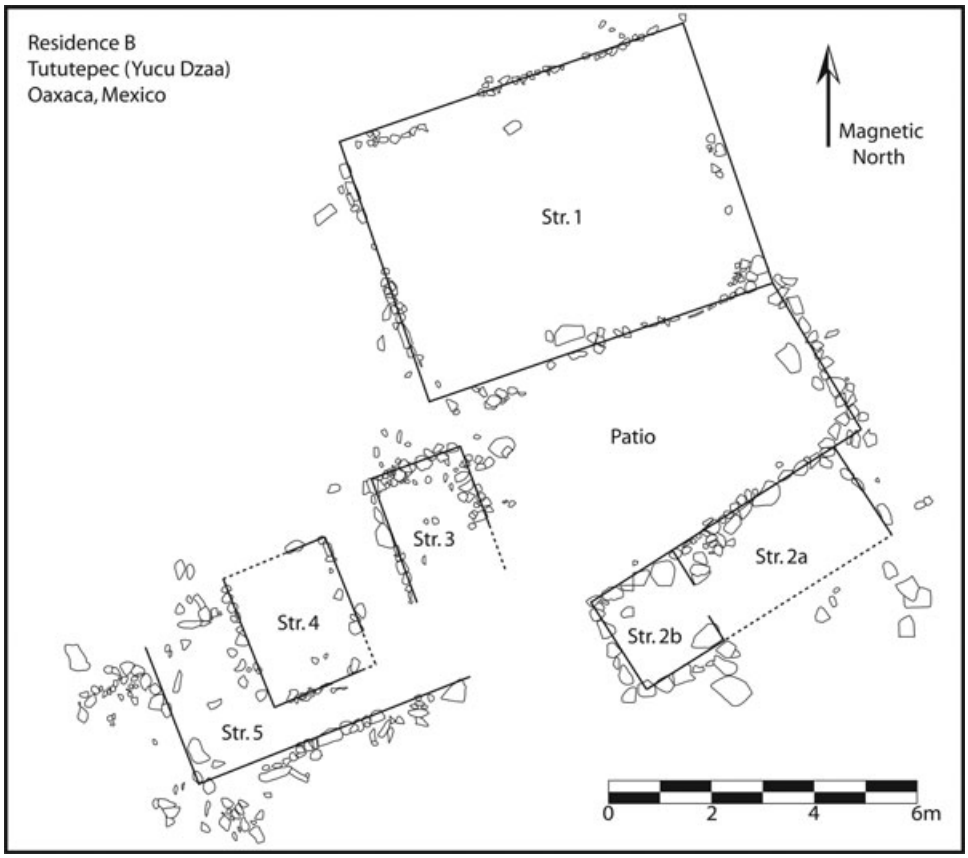

FIGURE 5. *Plan view map of Tututepec Residence B.*

that were clearly associated with each household. The middens included an abundance of domestic debris, including pottery, ceramic whistles, figurines, spindle whorls, chipped stone tools and debitage, groundstone, copper artifacts, fire-cracked rock, animal bone, architectural debris, and carbonized botanical remains (Levine 2007:248–321). The midden deposits at Residences A, B, and C included a similar range of materials, although artifact type frequencies varied. The midden data provides a wealth of information regarding household production, consumption, and participation in exchange.

Excavations at Residence A revealed five main structures arranged around a central patio, which was the focal point of the household and measured 126.3 square meters (see Figure 4). Structure 4 was identified as the primary habitation, based on its relatively large size (38.5 square meters), rectangular shape, and position atop a low (0.25 meter) mound. Although somewhat smaller in size, Structures 1, 2a, 3, and 5a may have also served as habitations. Structures 2b and 5b, both square in form and exceedingly small (2.25 square meters), are tentatively identified as storage rooms, and the absence of subfloor storage pits elsewhere at the residence lends support to this assertion. Midden deposits of up to a meter in depth were recovered along a stone retaining wall immediately south and east of the household structures. Two calibrated radiocarbon (AMS) dates of carbonized plant material from the midden indicate that Residence A was occupied during the 14th century.[2]

At Residence B, excavations uncovered five structure foundations and a partially enclosed patio area, the latter of which measured 29.7 square meters (see Figure 5). Structure 1 was the primary habitation, based on its large size (37.45 square meters), rectangular shape, and central position along the patio. Considerably smaller in size and less well-preserved, Structures 2a, 2b, 3, 4 and 5 were more difficult to interpret in terms of function. Midden deposits discovered along the retaining wall immediately southeast of the structures were considerably less concentrated in terms of artifacts in comparison to analogous contexts at Residences A and C. One calibrated radiocarbon (AMS) date of carbonized material from the Residence B midden indicates that the household was occupied during the 15th century.[3]

Although none of the Residence C structures were excavated, the outline of at least three structures arranged around a central patio visible from the ground surface indicates that it was also a household, similar in scale and layout to Residences A and B. Stratified midden deposits excavated along a terrace wall just south of the Residence C patio group included domestic debris nearly identical to that found at the other TAP residences. Although radiocarbon dates are not yet available, the pottery and other cultural material date to the Yucudzaa phase, suggesting general contemporaneity with Residences A and B.

Because excavation data from elite residences at Tututepec are not available for comparison, the identification of Residences A and B as commoner *(ñandahi)* households is based on direct and indirect means.[4] First, the scale and layout of the households are typical of the multitude of residential ruins observed throughout greater Tututepec. Given that the vast majority of the capital's population was commoners, the "principle of abundance" suggests that the most frequently observed household ruins should be those of commoners (Ashmore and Wilk 1988:9–10). Second, the TAP residences were located just over a kilometer from Tututepec's center, where the highest-ranking elites or lords (yya) would have resided in palaces or aniñe. Some of the lower-ranking nobles *(toho)* could have resided in the outer neighborhoods or siqui (Terraciano 2001:136), but it is unclear if this was the case at Tututepec. Third, none of the TAP household excavations revealed elaborate architectural features, such as stone friezes, that are known to have adorned some elite residences (Spores and Robles García 2006:194–201). Compared to excavated commoner residences in the Mixteca Alta region of highland Oaxaca (e.g., Nicayuhu, Teposcolula), the TAP structures were simpler in construction yet somewhat larger in size, although this could be because of the more dispersed pattern of residential settlement at Tututepec or differences in climate. Finally, few sumptuary goods were recovered at the Tututepec residences, which is consistent with their being commoner households. Elites displayed their status by wearing elaborate jewelry and ornaments, the remains of which we would expect to find in elite household contexts.

Although archaeologists have attempted to measure the relative burden of tribute payments at the household scale, research at Tututepec indicates that evaluative measures are not as straightforward as some suggest (e.g., Brumfiel 2003:209). Archaeological methods are well-suited to detecting changes in household production, but how these resources were consumed or spent is devilishly difficult to determine. Surplus household production was conceivably utilized in a multiplicity of ways: as direct consumption, trade for goods or services, funds for household or community rituals, reciprocal exchange, and payment of taxes or tribute. Nevertheless, the TAP household excavations provide an opportunity to evaluate the nature of tax payments, defined by Michael Smith as "obligatory transfers from individuals to the state" (2004:84).

The TAP excavations recovered a high proportion of spindle whorls from Residences A, B, and C, virtually all of which conformed to the size and weight characteristics of whorls used for spinning cotton (Heijting 2006). Measured in proportion to total potsherds, spindle whorl frequencies at Tututepec are among the highest reported from excavated household contexts in Mesoamerica (see Table 2). These numbers attest to the importance of household spinning practices and the production of thread surpluses for exchange. Although some of this thread was likely used to fulfill tax obligations, there is evidence that a portion was traded for a wide variety of items consumed in the home. Thus, the initial practice of surplus thread production may represent

TABLE 2. *Comparison of Spindle Whorl Frequencies from Postclassic Tututepec and Yautepec, Morelos, Also an Important Cotton-Growing Region*

Commoner residences	Spindle whorls	Total sherds	Spindle whorls per 1,000 sherds
Tututepec, Oaxaca			
Residence A (14th century)	79	60,816	1.3
Residence B (15th century)	40	17,090	2.3
Residence C (C.E. 1100–1522)	13	5,833	2.2
Yautepec, Morelos[a]			
Atlán phase (C.E. 1300–1440) Units 501, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 512, and 517	190	188,065	1
Molotla phase (C.E. 1440–1540) Units 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 515, and 517	754	659,402	1.1

[a]Yautepec data include totals from 10 Atlán phase and 14 Molotla phase houses (Fauman-Fichman (2006:table D5–4).

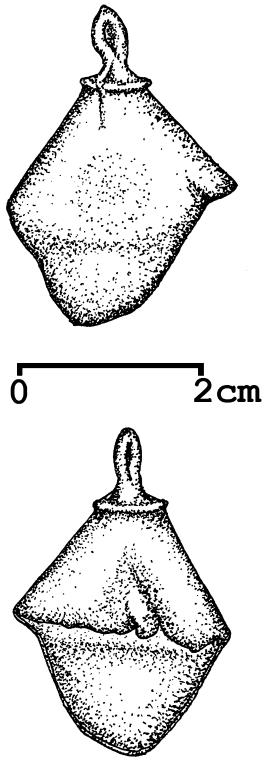

FIGURE 6. *Copper bell (FS 996) from Residence A. Drawing by Guy Hepp.*

a commoner "tactic" that innovatively worked within, while also taking advantage of established institutions and conventions of exchange (see De Certeau 1984:xviii–xxii).

Most of the artifacts found associated with the TAP residences—such as pottery, groundstone, copper artifacts, ceramic figurines, and whistles—were not produced in the households but instead were acquired via local and long-distance trade networks. Many items were imported from afar, including obsidian as well as a limited number of groundstone and copper artifacts (see Figure 6). The relatively high amount of obsidian imported to Tututepec is especially notable, given that the Mixtec capital is hundreds of kilometers from the nearest obsidian sources. A comparative analysis of the relative quantity of obsidian artifacts at the TAP residences demonstrates that they consumed far more obsidian than households in the Mixteca Alta, both at regional capitals such as Teposcolula (Yucundaa) and rural communities like Nicayuhu (see Table 3). At the TAP residences, over 96 percent of the chipped stone was obsidian, with the remainder consisting primarily of chert—the reverse pattern is typical at Postclassic sites in the Mixteca Alta. Obsidian frequencies at Tututepec are not quite as high but, rather, more similar to the proportion found at Aztec Yautepec, located much closer to obsidian sources in highland Mexico. X-ray fluorescence combined with a visual analysis indicates that Pachuca and Pico de Orizaba comprised over 95 percent of the obsidian from the TAP residences (Levine et al. in press). The obsidian data demonstrate Tututepec's participation in highland–lowland trade networks and reveal that commoners too enjoyed access to valuable imports.

Further comparisons reveal that Tututepec commoners also consumed a significantly higher amount of decorated Mixteca-Puebla style polychrome pottery relative to their highland counterparts (see Table 4). Only commoner households at Teposcolula had polychrome frequencies approaching those of Tututepec. This suggests that Mixtec commoners at large capitals such as Tututepec and Teposcolula enjoyed greater access to wealth items in comparison to their rural-living peers. Independent petrographic and neutron activation analyses of pottery from Tututepec, including Mixteca-Puebla polychromes ($n = 32$), reveal that commoner households acquired pottery representing approximately six to ten distinct paste recipes, presumably from different producers (Cecil and Glascock n.d.; Fargher n.d.). Polychrome pottery accounted for much of this diversity in paste, with as many as four distinct varieties derived from both local and as yet undetermined import areas. I have argued elsewhere (Levine 2007:369–377) that the elaborate polychrome vessels recovered at the Tututepec residences were utilized during household ritual practices and feasting occasions.

Jamie Forde's (2006) analysis of polychrome pottery from the TAP excavations indicate that commoners accepted elements of the polity's official ideology and enlisted these in forging their own distinct social identities. Commoners selected elaborate serving vessels bearing iconography

TABLE 3. *Comparison of Obsidian Artifact Frequencies from Postclassic Commoner Residences*

Commoner residences	Total obsidian artifacts	Total sherds	Obsidian artifacts per 1,000 sherds
Tututepec, Oaxaca			
Residence A (C.E. 14th century)	838	60,816	13.8
Residence B (C.E. 15th century)	281	17,090	16.4
Residence C (C.E. 1100–1522)	71	5,835	12.2
Mixteca Alta, Oaxaca			
Teposcolula, Unit J-1 and J-2[a]	75	13,891	5.4
Nicayuhu, House 1 (C.E. 1491–1527)[b]	27	40,061	0.7
Nicayuhu, House 2 (C.E. 800–1521)[b]	15	6,658	2.3
Yautepec, Morelos[c]			
Atlán phase (C.E. 1300–1430) Units 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 512, and 517	4,952	191,585	25.8
Molotla phase (C.E. 1430–1521) Units 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, and 517	20,126	751,564	26.8

[a]Teposcolula data combines two households (J-1 and J-2); from J. Spores (2006:582).
[b]Nicayuhu data based on Pérez Rodríguez (2003:tables 4.5, 5.3, and 5.4).
[c]Yautepec data include totals from 11 Atlán and 13 Molotla phase houses (Norris 2006:tables C4–3, C4–4).

TABLE 4. *Mixteca-Puebla Polychrome Potsherd Frequencies from Excavated Postclassic Commoner Residences in Oaxaca*[a]

Commoner residences	Mixteca-Puebla polychrome sherds	Total sherds	Percentage of pottery comprised by Mixteca-Puebla polychrome sherds
Tututepec, Oaxaca			
Residence A	2268	60,816	3.73
Residence B	369	17,090	2.16
Residence C	338	5,835	5.79
Mixteca Alta, Oaxaca			
Nicayuhu, House 1[b]	26	40,061	.065
Nicayuhu, House 2[b]	18	6,658	.27
Yucuita Midden N217B[c]	2	2,448	.082
Teposcolula, Units J-1 and J-2[d]	315	13,891	2.27

[a]Chi-square analysis confirmed that differences in polychrome frequencies at Tututepec and other sites in Oaxaca were significant, although frequencies from Residence B and Teposcolula (J-1 & J-2) were not.
[b]Nicayuhu totals calculated from Pérez Rodríguez (2003:table 4.4).
[c]Yucuita totals calculated from Spores (1974b; see Lind 1987:table 29).
[d]Teposcolula (Yucundaa) ceramic data include two households (Spores and Robles García 2005:629, table 2).

expressing elements of the local ideology, worldview, and social affiliations (see Figure 7). Themes of warfare and sacrifice, most clearly manifest in eagle imagery, were well-represented in the commoner households and therefore seem to have been especially compelling. Forde argues that these martial and sacrificial themes would have been congruent with the official imperial ideology of Tututepec. Thus, his study supports the notion that to a certain extent, Tututepec commoners supported the polity's political program. For example, Tututepec commoners were likely willing to provide warriors for missions of conquest because these campaigns secured more tribute payments, lowered their own tax burden, and provided other benefits. In addition, the ideology of conquest was likely framed in sacred terms, which may have also compelled the support of the general populace. But commoners' decision to support the polity was contingent on mutually understood preconditions that were arranged and established through negotiation. Polychrome pottery would have been utilized during household rituals marking auspicious occasions, such as lifecycle events or other religious observances. These symbolically charged contexts were sites of social negotiation, where identities and relationships were asserted, affirmed, and reconstituted. Polychrome pottery would have played a central role in ritual practices enacting notions of difference or sameness among various social segments. In this way, polychrome vessels were a "partner in the structuring and negotiation of social relations" (Sørensen 2007:47). It is probably safe to assume that Tututepec's elites did not attend the domestic rituals at Residences A and B, yet the identity- and status-affirming practices elaborated therein may have come to the attention of elites by indirect means and thereby figured in larger social negotiations.

The significant amount of local and imported valuable goods consumed at Residences A and B indicate that Tututepec commoners were relatively affluent compared to their peers at other sites in Oaxaca (cf. Tables 3–4; Levine 2007; also see Smith 1987). Based on the data at hand, the prevailing impression is not one of commoners living on the economic margins of society and struggling to make onerous tax payments. Instead, Tututepec commoners were active participants in interregional exchange and had sufficient resources to invest in a variety of valuables. Commoners seem to have been somewhat successful in negotiating their tax

FIGURE 7. *Yucudzaa polychrome tripod* olla *(FS 967) fragment from Residence A. Photo by Jamie Forde.*

burden with Tututepec elites to the extent that they retained control over a significant amount of their surplus production. Although the negotiations between households and the larger polity would have been ongoing, there was enough concordance that at least some commoners willingly cooperated with, and submitted to, the authority of the Tututepec administration.

Studies of household consumption, production, and exchange at the TAP residences provide indirect evidence of a regular, reliable market at Tututepec. As described above, the households investigated were nowhere near self-sufficient. Apart from textiles and food, the vast majority of household goods (e.g., raw material for stone tools, pottery, ceramic figurines, whistles, copper artifacts) were obtained through exchange. The denizens of Residences A, B, and C produced a surplus of cotton thread, which was then traded for additional household needs and wants. Economic practices emphasizing surplus production for exchange would have been predicated on having a consistent and permanent nexus of trade—most likely a central marketplace. The fact that Tututepec commoners also depended on imported obsidian rather than a more locally available material to fashion their stone tools suggests that they had ready access to a market with strong interregional ties (Levine et al. in press). The ceramic-sourcing studies discussed above reveal that Tututepec commoners consumed a diversity of compositionally distinct pottery types from producers both within and outside the capital. That commoners had a choice among a variety of roughly equivalent ceramic vessels made by multiple producers, including elaborate polychrome serving vessels, lends additional—albeit indirect—evidence for a marketplace at Tututepec. A central marketplace would have benefited both elites and commoners at Tututepec by creating new economic opportunities and giving them a competitive edge in trade. Local merchant-producers at Tututepec would have had virtually no transportation costs to bring their goods to market, providing an advantage over their peers and making exchange more profitable. The viability and success of the Tututepec market should be appreciated as a cooperative effort of both elites and the general populace. The central market at Tututepec was also probably one of the most frequent settings for elite–commoner interaction, suggesting this was an important site for negotiating status, identity, and power. Commoners' regular participation in the market would have also afforded them continual access to information imparted by regional and interregional traders, contributing to knowledge that may have proved useful in negotiations with local elites (see Hutson 2010:98).

Drawing on the ethnohistoric sources of the colonial library, the Mixtec Codices, and archaeological data, scholars have argued that Tututepec was an important trade center that established a lucrative highland–lowland Ñuu Dzahui exchange corridor (e.g., Joyce et al. 2004). Variation among highland and lowland environments in Oaxaca results in great ecological diversity and a differential distribution of resources. The uneven distribution of animal, plant, and mineral resources would have encouraged and stimulated interregional exchange (Monaghan 1994). In regard to establishing a coastal trade center at Tututepec, Spores argues that

> the incentives for combining kingdoms in the Mixteca Alta and the Costa Chica are quite considerable. Cacao, cotton, precious feathers, animal skins, fish, and salt were available on the Costa and sought after by the populations of the Mixteca Alta and Baja and their leaders. By the same token, the cochineal, pulque and other maguey products, minerals, and agricultural surpluses of the Mixteca Alta and Baja would have been in demand on the coast. [1993:169]

Joyce and colleagues (2004:285) elaborate on Spores's thesis by drawing on information from the codical narrative of Lord 8 Deer "Jaguar Claw" (Figure 3; see also Pohl 1994). Although Lord 8 Deer was not born into a royal lineage at the highland yuhuitayu of Tilantongo, he fulfilled his regal aspirations after proving himself a successful warrior, ritual practitioner, and founder of Tututepec in C.E. 1083 (Joyce et al. 2004:212). Joyce and colleagues argue that, apart from his personal ambition, Lord 8 Deer established Tututepec as a broad strategy to open up highland–lowland trade. The Codices Nuttall and Colombino-Becker depict Lord 8 Deer setting out from Tututepec, conquering a number of communities, and receiving tribute in coastal goods such as cacao, feathers, and jaguar pelts. Conspicuously absent in these codical accounts are commoner warriors who played a pivotal role in Lord 8 Deer's triumphs and may have shared in some of the spoils of war. At any rate, Tututepec's wealth, much of it siphoned off from vassal communities,

would have presumably attracted a bevy of highland suitors eager to establish links with lowland trading partners.

But what can be said of the relationship between Tututepec elites, markets, and trade? In broad reference to the Ñuu Dzahui, Spores argues that "intercommunity and interregional trade and markets were sponsored and probably, at least to some extent, monopolized by the ruling elite" (1974a:300). Similarly, Pohl (2003a) contends that elites were deeply invested in long-distance trade, from which they profited handsomely. Terraciano (2001:245) reports that during the early colonial period most long-distance Ñuu Dzahui traders were nobles, suggesting that this was a continuation of prehispanic roles, perhaps resembling that of the Nahua *pochteca* merchants (see Hassig 1985:113–126; Lockhart 1992:191–197). Given the general consensus that Ñuu Dzahui elites participated in long-distance trade and that Tututepec had much to offer in the way of lowland valuables, elites at the coastal capital probably reaped considerable profits through trade. But what bears repeating is that the nature of elite participation in trade did not occur in a vacuum apart from negotiations with commoners and other social segments. The resulting agreements, however tenuous, insured the flow of tax and tribute to elite pockets as well as maintained access to land and labor, all of which were crucial factors in generating goods for export. The TAP data also help dispel the notion that elites alone benefited from trade, demonstrating that commoners too achieved a modest measure of material wealth. The right to this wealth may have obtained through negotiations that asserted commoners' vital role in production and other means of support, such as providing foot soldiers for Tututepec's military conquests.

CONCLUSION

Through a multiplicity of practices, Tututepec generated sufficient wealth to support and administer a tributary empire that covered an area of southern Oaxaca larger than the modern state of Belize. These revenue-generating practices included, but were not limited to, taxing the local populace, collecting tribute from subject polities, crafting or sponsoring artisans to fashion social valuables, extracting wealth from royal land holdings and resources, participating in trade, and possibly intervening in market exchange. Because practices associated with polity finance were structured in part through social negotiation, they can shed light on the nature of social relations at Tututepec. The TAP excavations suggest that commoners retained a measure of economic autonomy that facilitated their participation in marketing and long-distance trade and enabled them to enjoy material luxuries such as polychrome pottery as well as imported obsidian and copper artifacts. The weight of evidence indicates that Tututepec commoners successfully negotiated a favorable economic position, enabling them to retain much of their surplus production that could be consumed, exchanged, or allocated in other ways. Although the commoner response to elite domination at Tututepec was surely variable, much of the data presented here suggests an active choice to cooperate and participate with—rather than resist—the will of the ruling class. Commoners supported the polity because they were sufficiently vested in sharing some of its successes.

The TAP results also underscore differences in wealth between urban Ñuu Dzahui commoners and those living in hinterland areas, although more detailed studies of nutrition and other means of evaluating standards of living are needed to confirm this pattern. Evidence of surplus cotton-thread production at Residences A, B, and C suggests that Tututepec's economic success stemmed in part from its role as a regional producer and supplier of cotton to highland areas. Commoners may have parlayed their key roles as cotton farmers and thread spinners to influence the terms of their relationship with the ruling elite. Considering that TAP commoners crafted little apart from cotton thread yet acquired a diversity of local and imported goods provides compelling evidence for the presence of a local market and brings the nature of Tututepec's highland–lowland trade strategy into sharper focus.

In this article, I have not sought to portray Tututepec commoners as servile collaborators; rather, I hope I've shown them to be active and dynamic participants who engaged in a discursive process with political leaders. Examining the political economy as an outcome of practices of negotiation provides a more nuanced view of social relations in comparison to perspectives that tend to essentialize relationships between elites and commoners in terms of dominance and resistance. This study suggests that a portion of the urban commoners of Tututepec mustered sufficient leverage in their negotiation with elites to assert a degree of autonomy over their productive efforts. Tututepec elites funded the polity through a diversity of means, which gave them greater flexibility when negotiating the terms of their economic relationships with subject communities and the local populace at the capital itself. More archaeological data from Tututepec and its subject communities are needed to confirm the conclusions proposed here. Nonetheless, it is clear that a continuous dialogue mediated by commoner and elite practices was instrumental in shaping the political economy of one of the most powerful Mixtec polities of all time.

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NOTES

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1. In the native vigesimal system, 1 *jiquipil* = 8,000 cacao beans, and 3 *jiquipiles* = 1 *carga,* the amount that one man could carry (Piñero 1994:table 1).
2. AMS analysis yielded dates of cal C.E. 1291–1405 (uncalibrated: C.E. 1335 +/−38) and cal C.E. 1298–1372 (uncalibrated: C.E. 1371 +/−38).
3. AMS analysis yielded a date of cal C.E. 1399–1484 (uncalibrated: C.E. 1479 +/−38).
4. Until excavations of the Residence C structures are carried out, its identification as a commoner household remains less secure.

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FOR FURTHER READING

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