

# Interaction Between Urban and Rural Residents in a Guatemalan Marketplace<sup>1</sup>

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**ABSTRACT:** Despite the hostile attitude of the urban administration, rural vendors predominate in the trade of the Antigua Guatemala marketplace. Market participation integrates Indians and Ladinos, urban and rural dwellers into a system of personalized economic relations. Interpersonal cooperation is rationalized by invoking a common class identity as "poor people" within a national system of socioeconomic classes. The paper concludes that class identity may prove more important than urban-rural or ethnic distinctions in analyzing Guatemalan society.

This paper analyzes interaction between urban and rural dwellers in the marketplace of a small Guatemalan city to examine the relationship between urban and rural social structures. It documents the ability of rural vendors to establish themselves as permanent market participants in competition with urban vendors, to obtain permanent rights in market space, to cope with hostile administrative structures, and to form trading partnerships with urban customers. The paper argues that the success of rural vendors in an urban institution indicates that the sociocultural gap between city and countryside is relatively small. It concludes that common class identities that unite lower class Guatemalans are more important than urban-rural distinctions in the analysis of national society.

The observation of market interaction offers a number of advantages in the study of urban and rural relations. Unlike rural courts (Hunt and Hunt 1968) or cultural brokers (Wolf 1956) mediating between segments of a complex society, markets involve masses of individuals in face-to-face interaction. The market is an institution essential to both urban and rural economies, providing urban dwellers with vital foodstuffs and rural participants with manufactured goods (Adams 1962). Market encounters are frequent and important elements in the life of both urban and rural dwellers.

Since market populations, unlike migrants to urban places, are residentially stable, vendor adjustment to urban life is not complicated by adaptive strate-

gies associated with a change of residence. Descriptions of migrant adaptation to urban life are prominent in the literature of urban anthropology (Eames and Goode 1977; Weisner 1976; Snyder 1976; Mangin 1970) and tend to emphasize the need of migrants for personal networks, regional associations, brokers, or gatekeepers to ease the adjustment to urban life. While these studies highlight the contrast between urban and rural ways, there is no means of assessing to what extent change of residence itself may produce reliance on interpersonal networks for support. The study of market interactions controls important variables overlooked in migrant studies.

Interaction between urban and rural dwellers in urban markets has been described as a hostile encounter between individuals from distinct social and cultural backgrounds. Reina writes that middlewomen in the Guatemala City markets "are quick to argue, disparage the jars, and threaten Indians who get angry, and are given to removing the merchandise without the full consent of the potter" (1966:74). Waterbury reports of the Oaxaca marketplace that "common ways of cheating are to employ modified balance weights on one's scale, short measuring of goods, and sleight of hand in switching high quality for low quality merchandise" (1969:116). Fox even uses the peasant marketer as a symbol of anthropological uncertainty in dealing with the urban world. He writes, "As peasants come to a market day in the city, so social anthropologists have entered the study of the urban world . . . As the peasant fears the greed of the city merchants, so the anthropologist wonders what scholarly price must be paid for dealing with urban environments" (1977:199). The urban market is portrayed as a place where rural dwellers venture at the risk of being swindled and browbeaten by avaricious urban middlemen.

This view of the urban market as a hostile meeting ground between city and country folk contrasts with numerous reports of cooperative interpersonal bonds in peasant markets. The *pratik* relationship reported by Mintz in Haiti is paralleled by the *casera* relationship in Bolivia (Buechler n.d., personal communication), the relationship between "customers" in Jamaica (Katzin 1960), and the *suki* relationship in the Philippines (Davis 1973; Szanton 1972). Similar bonds are reported in Java (Dewey 1962) and the Middle East (Khuri 1968). In each of these cases trading partnerships are based on the extension of credit, sharing of risk, the giving of small gifts or favors, or even through the extension of fictive kinship relationships. None of these studies deals with the social background of partners in cooperative market-based dyadic relationships or indicates to what extent market bonds link members of different ethnic groups or social classes.

Fieldwork in the marketplace of the small Guatemalan city of Antigua Guatemala produced data indicating that cooperative market bonds are present in urban as well as rural markets. Rural vegetable producers, it is true, encounter aggressive, hard-bargaining middlewomen when they sell their goods. These middlewomen, however, are more likely to live in a rural town than in the city, for

the vast majority of market traders are rural dwellers who commute regularly to the city. Antigua's urban administration discriminates against rural vendors in allocating market space, but rural dwellers manage to covertly obtain some of the best locations for their stands. Once established in the marketplace, rural middlemen compete on an equal footing with urban merchants for regular customers with whom they establish personal economic relationships. Cooperation between sellers from different ethnic groups and municipalities is frequent, and rationalized by an assertion that all sellers, Indian and Ladino, urban and rural, are "poor people." Instead of a hostile meeting ground for individuals from dissimilar social structures, the Antigua market is the scene of cooperative dyadic relations between urban and rural dwellers who share a common class identity in national society.

The success of rural vendors in an urban institution suggests that the socio-cultural gap between urban and rural dweller may be more modest than migrant studies have indicated. While few urban anthropologists endorse Wirth's (1938) contention that urban life is inherently atomistic and impersonal, most migrant studies accept implicitly the proposition that migration is in part an enculturative process in which the migrant acquires new roles, new ideas, and new values (Willems 1968). Urban and rural culture may be interrelated, but they are presented as distinct components of a larger society. The success of rural vendors in an urban institution indicates that urban and rural poor share a common, lower-class identity in contrast to elite elements who reside within the city. If this is true, a class, rather than a community-study approach might be the most appropriate analytical tool in the study of peasant society.

The paper presents the case for class analysis in five sections. It begins by documenting the predominance of rural middlemen in market trade and describing the commuting practices by which they attend the market nearly as frequently as their urban counterparts. The second section outlines the discrimination against rural vendors by the market administration and the system of covert purchase by which rural sellers obtain desirable locations in the market. The third section examines participation by rural vendors in the system of personalized economic relationships in the marketplace. The fourth section describes the rationalization of interethnic cooperation by the affirmation of a common class identity on the part of all market sellers. The concluding section explores the theoretical implications of the ease with which rural vendors adapt to living and working in an urban milieu.

#### Rural Participation in the Antigua Market

While the Antigua Guatemala marketplace is an institution organized and maintained by the city government, the bulk of its trade lies in the hands of rural middlemen. Vendors from outside Antigua outnumber city dwellers not only

TABLE 1. Antigua Market Vendors by Ethnic Group, Sex, and Residence

Residence	Total	Indian men	Indian women	Ladino men	Ladino women	Other men	Other women
Antigua (urban central zone)	192	12	26	11	143	0	0
Antigua (rural hamlets)	122	3	38	0	75	0	6
Municipios within department	371	9	221	8	120	1	12
Other municipios	176	73	72	9	20	0	2
Other and no answer	62	2	21	2	5	5	27
Totals	923	99	378	30	363	6	47
		20.8%	12.1%	6.9%	36.7%	0%	0%
		13.2%	3.0%	10.1%	20.7%	0%	12.8%
		40.2%	9.1%	58.5%	26.7%	16.7%	25.5%
		19.1%	73.7%	19.0%	30.0%	0%	4.3%
		6.7%	2.0%	5.6%	6.7%	83.8%	57.4%

TABLE 2. Producer Participation Among Market Sellers by Product Type

Product	Producer-sellers	All sellers	Producers as %
Fruits, vegetables, flowers	161	527	30.5%
Maize and dried beans	9	63	14.3%
Chickens, eggs	2	9	22.2%
Lime, sand, pitch pine, charcoal	3	33	9.1%
Manufactured articles	18	150	12.0%
Entire market	193	923 <sup>a</sup>	20.9%

<sup>a</sup>Includes products in which no producer-sellers trade.

among the ranks of producer-sellers but also among the middlemen who constitute two-thirds of the selling population. Rural vendors either commute to Antigua from their homes 3 days each week or from kin-based groups, which rent rooms so that they can reside semipermanently within the city. The market is not a spot where urban merchants fleece rural producers, but rather an institution in which urban and rural dwellers mix freely, playing the role of both buyer and professional market trader.

Survey data from Antigua reveals the extent of rural participation in the marketplace. As Table 1 indicates, only about one-fifth of market vendors reside within Antigua's urban zone. Over half live in rural hamlets surrounding Antigua or in other rural municipalities in the same department. Vendors from outside the department are overwhelmingly rural as well; only 13% come from major centers such as Guatemala City or Quetzaltenango. Rural dwellers outnumber city dwellers by nearly four to one.

Although a majority of market sellers reside in rural municipalities, less than one-fifth are agricultural producers or village craftsmen. As Table 2 indicates, producer-sellers never constitute more than one-third of the sellers of any commodity type in the market. Even these modest figures overstate the influence of rural producers on market trade, for the stocks of market middlemen average several times larger than those of producer-sellers. Most market traders are neither city merchants nor peasant farmers, but rather rural merchants who travel to the city to earn an income as professional traders.

The careers of market vendors extend over their entire lives. As Table 3 indicates, the average market seller of whatever sex or ethnic group has spent more than 10 years as a market seller, and market careers may last as long as half a century. The relatively advanced age at which vendors enter the marketplace renders these figures even more impressive. The mean age of vendors with fewer than 2 years of selling experience is 28, and only one-third began selling before they were 20. Vendors of both Guatemala's ethnic groups are able to permanently establish themselves within the institution.

Rural vendors attend market each Monday, Thursday, and Saturday, commuting by bus from communities as distant as 100 kilometers from Antigua.

TABLE 3. Sex and Ethnic Group Membership and Length of Time Selling in Antigua Market

Sex and ethnic group	Mean years selling	Median years selling	Range	Number
Ladino women	16.6	13	0-62	240
Ladino men	17.8	15	0-49	25
Indian women	12.9	10	0-65	175
Indian men	12.7	10	0-55	87

Those who live within the Panchoy Valley in which Antigua is located or in the neighboring department of Chimaltenango remain in Antigua only during the day and return home by bus at nightfall. Vendors from such highland pueblos as Sololá, Momostenango, Chichicastenango, Totonicapan, and San Pedro Sacatepquez rent rooms within the city and remain in Antigua from 2 to 4 weeks at a time. Although they room in Antigua, these vendors shun the market on slow days, either traveling by bus to other marketplaces or traveling on foot to peddle door-to-door in surrounding rural pueblos before returning to Antigua each night.

The kin groups that rent rooms are based on an initial set of two to four brothers. As sons mature and become independent vendors they are brought into the group as paying members. In instances in which the founding brothers have died or retired from marketing, the kin group renting the room is a set of patrilineal cousins. Occasionally neighbors from the home community or (more rarely) employees may be included in the renting group. By dividing costs between from four to nine cooperating vendors, sellers in 1970 were able to reduce per person room cost to as little as 1 *quetzal* a week (1 *quetzal* = \$1 U.S.).

The costs that rural vendors face in commuting to the city are counterbalanced by the lower living costs and the opportunities for supplemental income afforded by residence in rural towns. The cost of transportation for nearby rural dwellers in 1970 ranged from \$.20 to \$.40 a selling day. For those renting rooms and buying meals in Antigua, total cost averaged more than 1 *quetzal* a day. Antigua sellers, on the other hand, faced housing, food, and clothing expenses higher than those in a rural municipality. Although few rural sellers are agriculturally self-sufficient, they are able to farm agricultural plots for family consumption, sometimes producing as much as a third of the year's maize supply on their own fields. Rural vendors see little economic incentive in moving to the city and abandoning their native municipalities.

#### Administrative Policy and Rural Market Participation

The major impediment to rural market participation comes not from the economic competition of urban vendors but rather from the policies of the

TABLE 4. Stand Ownership and Place of Residence: Administered Patios

Residence of stand owner	Pedestrian traffic greater than 10 persons/minute		Pedestrian traffic less than 10 persons/minute		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Antigua urban zone	22	84.6	12	20.0	34	39.5
Outside Antigua urban zone	4	15.4	48	80.0	52	60.5
Total	26	100.0	60	100.0	86	100.0

market administration, an arm of the urban government. The market's chief administrative officer (*fie!*) openly prefers urban residents to rural dwellers in assigning market stands. Rural vendors circumvent the administration and obtain permanent market stands by making covert illegal purchases from Antigua sellers. While the administration is cognizant of this practice and disapproves of it, the *fie!* feel powerless to stop the sale of market stands. Rural vendors are able to cope with hostile administrative policies and establish themselves as permanent market participants.

In order to gain legal rights to a permanent space in the market, a vendor must agree to rent the space as a *puesto fijo* (permanent stand) from the market administration. The owner of a fixed post gains the right to erect a permanent stall on his spot for the display of his goods and prior claim on that stall when he attends the market. In exchange, he agrees to pay market taxes at a fixed weekly rate regardless of market attendance. For rural vendors who attend only 3 days a week, the weekly rate of 50 *centavos* is higher than the 10 *centavos* per attendance they would be charged if they did not own a fixed space. As a result, stand ownership exists primarily as a means of reserving space on the preferred busiest market aisles or of placing display racks on back aisles. Vendors without fixed posts rely on informal bonds with neighboring sellers to secure their claims on market locations.

Formal rights in a market stand may be acquired by inheritance, by petitioning the administration of the market, by covert purchase, or by assuming another individual's tax lien. In a survey of 30 stall owners, purchase and petition were by far the most frequent means with 15 and 13 cases, respectively. In one case a father had granted his stand to his adult son when he left to sell at another marketplace, and in the final instance a woman extended her own stand by assuming the tax debt of a neighboring seller. Petition and covert purchase are the predominant means of obtaining a market stand.

TABLE 5. Ownership and Place of Residence: Patios with Covert Purchase

Residence of stand owner	Pedestrian traffic greater than 10 persons/minute		Pedestrian traffic less than 10 persons/minute		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Antigua urban zone	18	32.1	36	33.0	54	32.7
Outside Antigua urban zone	38	67.9	73	67.0	111	67.3
Total	56	100.0	109	100.0	165	100.0

The administration's bias against rural sellers is evident in the distribution of stands in the patios most recently added to the marketplace. In response to a dramatic increase in the number of sellers in recent years, the market expanded the four original patios of the market to include two new ones. Allocation of market stands was handled by petition when the patios were opened, and few subsequent sales have affected the pattern of distribution. As Table 4 indicates, vendors from Antigua's urban zone have a virtual monopoly on stands on the busiest aisles of these patios. Nearly 85% of stands on busy aisles are owned by local residents, and almost two-thirds of all local residents own stands in preferred locations. Over 90% of vendors from outside Antigua's urban zone are relegated to the slower back aisles of the market.

In other patios of the marketplace, the administration has relatively little influence on the distribution of market space. Although only a minority of the spaces in these patios are formally owned, locations on the busiest aisles have been claimed for over 50 years. The only locations available for administrative distribution are along back aisles, which are only worth owning if one wants to erect a large permanent stand.

Sales of prime locations along the market's busiest aisles have provided the means by which vendors from outside Antigua can obtain preferred market stalls. As Table 5 indicates, rural vendors encounter little discrimination in purchasing market stands. Antigua vendors appear among owners along busy aisles no more frequently than do vendors from outside the city. The absolute percentage of Antigua owners among stand owners is lower in older patios than in new ones. Vendors residing in Antigua's urban zone number slightly more than 20% of all sellers. While urban Antiguans constitute almost 40% of stand owners in administratively organized patios, the percentage in patios with covert purchase is only 32%. With the exception of periods of market expansion, rural vendors have competed on a virtually equal basis with Antigua sellers in obtaining preferred locations in the market.

inheritance of market stands provides the legal fiction by which illegal sales are accomplished. The *fiel* explains:

What happens is this, that here it is not permitted to sell stands, but it is allowed that one gives one's place to family members. Thus [the vendor may say], "I am going to give this stand to my brother or my sister," and perhaps they are not related; thus, there is a sale among themselves. Here they come to say that they are giving the stand and if money changes hands they can say that it was to pay for furnishings of the stand, but the location was given free. But directly, such activities are forbidden.

Although the market administration disapproves of sales of market stands, the political power of local vendors is sufficient to prevent effective action against the practice. As a political appointee, the *fiel* is liable to replacement with each municipal election. Vendors in the market may petition for retention of the *fiel*, a petition backed by a tacit threat to close the market if the demand is not met. In the absence of a petition, the administrator is likely to be replaced. Local vendors, particularly those controlling prime market space stands, see nothing wrong with the practice of selling market locations, particularly since the prices of market spaces may range as high as 150 *quetzales*. A *fiel* who energetically pursued a policy of forbidding the sale of market stands would run the risk of angering potentially powerful vendors and eventually losing his position. Rural vendors have effective urban allies in gaining access to market space.

This interest of urban vendors in selling their own market stands has overcome any impulse to exclude outsiders from market selling. While Antigua vendors may grumble at the price competition from rural sellers whose cost of living is lower than theirs, this resentment has not been transformed into any organized attempt to close the market to nonresidents. Indeed, the number of vendors from outside the city is so great that the market could not function without their participation. The administrative bias against rural vendors has little effect on their establishment as permanent market participants.

#### Rural Participation in Market-Based Personal Economic Relationships

Ownership of a permanent stand opens the market's system of dyadic personal economic relationships to the rural vendor. In the rapidly fluctuating economic environment of the marketplace middlemen seek clienteles to ensure a steady flow of sales. Cooperation with neighboring vendors further reduces market risks and eases the routine of the vendor's day. Market participation not only brings the rural vendor physically to the heart of the city, it integrates him socially into the city as well, for he interacts on a personal level with individuals from a wide variety of social and geographic backgrounds.

Two terms, *cliente* and *marchante*, identify the member of a middleman's clientele. Although *cliente* literally means "client, customer, friend" and *marchante*, "merchant," the terms are synonymous in market use. The buyer or seller may be identified by either term, the distinction being that *marchante* is more ordinary, or common, than *cliente*. A vendor explains: "The word *marchante* is a very common word, very ordinary. For instance, if I wanted to put a bench along that wall and put up a sign, 'For my appreciable *clientes*,' I would never write, 'For my *marchantes*.' This would not serve. I would write, 'For my *clientes*' or 'For my *clientela*.'"

Use of the term *cliente* is not restricted to the marketplace. A *cliente* may be any distant acquaintance whether the relationship is social, political, or economic. The market vocabulary merges trading partners into a diffuse body of individuals with whom one interacts but who are not as close as friends or *compadres*.

Transactions with *clientes* are personal. Vendors address their customers by name, or if they don't know the customer's name, indicate by gesture or word that they recognize a regular customer. Bargaining with *clientes* is either brief or nonexistent, and the seller quickly arrives at his lowest selling price. Vendors often perform favors for customers, such as watching packages while the customer shops elsewhere.

In addition to personalized service, a retail *cliente* may expect lower prices, gratis extra measures of goods on large purchases, or even small gifts from a vendor's stock. The extra measure thrown into a 20-pound sale of maize, for instance, weighs nearly a pound. If Holy Week or Christmas is approaching, a pork butcher will add extra sausages "to help you celebrate." Direct price discounting, however, is rare, for vendors fear that general knowledge of a lowered price might result in generalized price competition.

The danger that discounting might expand into direct price competition explains the large amounts of credit extended by many sellers. On an informal level, almost any vendor will be willing to allow a *cliente* to defer payment on a sale for as much as a week. Vendors of clothing, shoes, and industrially manufactured articles, however, carry the credit system even further, keeping credit books in which customers maintain balances on a revolving-charge basis. The total credit for a typical vendor can reach 150 *quetzales*, with the average *cliente* owing 2 to 3 *quetzales*. These sums represent from one-third to one-half of a vendor's operating capital.

Clothing vendors who extend credit to steady customers also expect credit from their suppliers. A market rule of thumb states that one's debts and outstanding loans should remain roughly in balance. This ratio may be altered to anticipate periods of peak demand. One vendor of industrially produced shoes and plastic sandals, for instance, obtained nearly 2,000 *quetzales* of merchandise on consignment. In the week preceding Holy Week he sold over three-

TABLE 6. Ethnic Identity and Mode of Dress:  
Market Men

Ethnic group	Dress style	Self-identified
Indian	32.8%	73.7%
Ladino	67.2%	22.5%
Other/no answer		3.8%

fourths of this stock, and by the end of the month the remainder was also sold. In the following months, his credit purchases returned to more normal levels of 200 to 300 *quetzales* a month. By manipulating his personal relationship with suppliers, he dramatically expanded his market profits.

Although agricultural producers do not extend credit to middlemen, clientage is important in marketing these crops. Rural cultivators of fruits, vegetables, and flowers feel that they must sell their goods in a single day for their goods will decline in quality before the next selling opportunity. Middlemen with whom a producer does not have personal relationship sense this advantage and bargain vigorously to drive the price as low as possible. A *cliente*, in contrast, will pay the prevailing price with no bargaining, and will accept delivery of goods unless he has absolutely no use for the product. In return, the agricultural producer is expected to deliver his best produce to the middleman. Both buyer and seller mutually profit from the partnership.

While the *cliente* relationship clearly serves the economic self-interest of both parties, it also serves to reduce status inequalities between the parties involved. Although *clientes* may be no more than acquaintances, they adopt modes of address and demeanor of friendship in their interaction. In about 10% of recorded cases middlemen and suppliers become *compadres*, a relationship involving formal obligations of mutual support. Since buyers and sellers in the market usually come from different communities, the *cliente* system stretches across community boundaries, bringing the predominantly rural selling population into contact with customers residing both in the city of Antigua and in the surrounding municipalities.

Ties of friendship and cooperation bind neighboring vendors, as well as customers, and suppliers. Vendors are eager to be *amigos de trabajo* (literally "work friends") with one another because of the mutual advantages of cooperation. When a vendor leaves his stand during a market day, he can rely on surrounding sellers to guard his stall and even make sales if a *cliente* should arrive in his absence. During the slow afternoons, vendors gather in small groups to chat and pass the time. Although market friends rarely interact outside the institution, ties between neighboring vendors do form a network along which gossip, news, and information about market conditions can travel.

TABLE 7. Ethnic Identity and Mode of Dress:  
Market Women

Ethnic group	Dress style	Self-identified
Indian	41.4%	48.1%
Ladino	58.6%	45.8%
Other/no answer		7.1%

Extensive social contact with urban dwellers has led vendors to abandon rural life-styles. Sellers can be found at such urban public events as city fiestas, sporting events, or movies, or watching the World Cup Soccer matches on television sets in local barbershops. Indian vendors, particularly Indian men, often abandon the style of dress associated with their ethnic group, to adopt Ladino styles. As Table 6 indicates, while three-quarters of male vendors identify themselves as Indians, less than a third dress in "Indian" style. Table 7 shows that while nearly half of market women identify themselves as Indians, only slightly more than 40% use Indian costume. Vendors from the highlands often bring their families to Antigua as tourists during the spectacular Holy Week celebrations. Far from being a timid peasant in an alien world, the rural market seller is at ease in the city, interacting on a personal level with urban dwellers and accepting urban styles that please him.

#### Common Class Identity as a Rationale for Interpersonal Cooperation

Vendors rationalize interpersonal cooperation by emphasizing their common identity as "poor people" within Guatemala's national social structure. In contrast to the selfish rich, poor people are stereotypically viewed as being forced to build interpersonal networks to stabilize their precarious financial condition. Tales of discovered treasure reinforce the contrasting images of cooperative poor and selfish rich. Market participants thus emphasize a common class membership, which transects ethnic and geographical divisions throughout Guatemala.

Vendors' assertions that "here we are all poor people" describe a common need to cooperate with others rather than an absolute equality in wealth. Control of market wealth is concentrated among a small number of vendors. The richest 10% of market vendors own more than half of the value of goods in the market, while the poorest half of market vendors control only about 5% of all stock. These disparities are evident to all in the size of a vendor's stock and the location of his stand. Despite such differences in personal wealth, however, the security of all sellers rests in the maintenance of a personal clientele, for even the richest sellers could not survive long on savings alone. A market vendor can

be described as *rico* (rich), but not as *un rico* (a rich man), for his life-style remains that of other sellers.

Market participation, in fact, brings little contact with the wealthy upper-class or foreign population of Antigua. Upper-class women frequently have their servants do their food shopping for their households, and upper-class men purchase their clothing either in stores in the capital city or from one of Antigua's many tailor shops. Even those middle- and upper-class women who prefer to do their own shopping in the marketplace seldom enter into *cliente* bonds with the market's middlewomen. With the exception of the errant tourist or the idiosyncratic foreigner, the market is a scene of lower-class commerce.

In describing themselves as a homogeneous group of *pobres*, vendors contrast themselves to others in a system of social classes that crosscuts local community boundaries. The fundamental distinction in the class system is between *ricos* and *pobres*, with the two classes subdivided into the very rich, the rich, the well-to-do poor, and the very poor. Even the wealthiest of market sellers remains a *pobre* when he is contrasted to the plantation owner who controls half of the arable land in the municipality of San Miguel Dueñas or to the proprietor of a hotel, a private club, or a movie theater in Antigua. Such men are known only by reputation, as an American might know of the activities of a Rockefeller or a Kennedy, and like those of the Rockefellers, the actions of rich individuals exemplify a class with whom the vendor has little contact. Market cooperation is thus facilitated by an awareness of a national system of social classes in which urban and rural dweller share a common impoverished status.

Commonly accepted stereotypes of class behavior reinforce the image of the cooperative poor. The rich are described as being miserable, tight-fisted, selfish, mean-spirited, and unwilling to share. The best that is said of them is that they must be this way in order to guard their wealth against the demands of those around them. The poor, while regarded as just as envious and greedy in their basic nature, cannot afford to express their fundamental egotism. *Pobres*, in short, are forced to cooperate with those around them.

The freedom of the rich from the economic need to cooperate is expressed in the treasure tales that abound in the market as elsewhere in Mesoamerica. The response of an individual to suddenly acquired fortune is immediate withdrawal from his interpersonal network. "If one discovers wealth, one must take it from the ground oneself. Otherwise, the workers, being clever, would take it all for themselves." Often the lucky discoverer of a pot of buried gold or silver goes on a hedonistic spree. One spent 4 years in a state of constant drunkenness and kept three separate women until all of his wealth was gone and he was poverty-stricken again. In treasure tales as in real life, then, wealth is the enemy of cooperation.

Emphasis on a common identity as poor people is accompanied by a suppression of ethnic antagonisms in market interaction. While Ladino and Indian vendors privately harbor derogatory images of one another, public expression

of such feeling is rare. Instead, there is at least lip service to the ideal of equality between groups. One Ladino remarked: "Take the case of \_\_\_\_\_ who sells *atoles*. She changed her clothing. The other day I saw her daughters and they are beautiful! You would never think to see them or hear them speak that they are Indians. Beautiful! Here there is no discrimination between Indians and Ladinos. If an Indian came and wanted to marry my daughter, they should be able to live in peace."

Of course such statements must be interpreted cautiously. The individual quoted above is adamant that Indians not be permitted to join the market's *fiesta* organization. Nevertheless, assertion of a common status as *pobres* brings at least a public acceptance of equality between ethnic groups.

A similar suppression of cultural differences was noted by Roberts among a population of migrants in Guatemala City. He writes: "In the life histories that I taped of both Indian and Ladino migrants to the city, it is striking that while in every case they stressed the differences between Indian and Ladino in their home villages, they denied such differences existed in the town" (1973: 21). It seems apparent that poor Indians and poor Ladinos share a clearer perception of their common position at the bottom of the socioeconomic pyramid of Guatemalan society than anthropologists preoccupied with cultural differences have been willing to admit.

## Conclusion

The success of rural dwellers in the Antigua marketplace suggests that Guatemalan society might better be studied in terms of regional class relations than as an interaction between urban and rural localities. Vendors at Antigua do not succeed by abandoning rural life-styles but rather by extending their rural networks to include urban dwellers. The common identification of rural and urban dweller, Indian and Ladino as poor people confirms Stavenhagen's (1968) analysis of an emergent class structure in Guatemala. While a single city, particularly one atypical in many ways, cannot be used as the basis for broad generalizations, the Antigua case suggests the importance of approaching peasant society with models based on economic class rather than local differences.

The vendors at Antigua have not exchanged a rural way of life for an urban one. Indian men continue to cultivate their rural plots, and some invest market profits in prestige-producing local fiestas. The groups that rent rooms in Antigua are based on ties of kinship and neighborhood based within rural communities. The networks of clientage that stabilize market participation are an extension of the system of "dyadic contracts" that Foster (1967) has reported in rural Tzintzuntzan. Cooperation between urban and rural dweller proceeds in terms of shared symbols and common social forms.

Cooperative interaction between peasant and urban dweller derives from realization of a common class position in national society. As Stavenhagen written: "To the extent to which class relations become more clearly defined, there emerges a new stratification based on socioeconomic indices. This stratification already exists among Ladinos, and is progressively expanding to the Indians" (1968:58). Guatemalan society can be seen as primarily structured in terms of interaction between classes that crosscut local communities.

Asserting that rural and urban poor constitute a single class does not indicate rural culture is identical to urban culture but rather that the behavior of rural dweller and urbanite will be similar in identical social contexts. Vendors, when in the city, adopt the "operating culture" (Goodenough 1963) appropriate to that context, including the styles of dress, personal friendships, and entertainments of lower-class urban life. Vendors from Solola (one of relatively few towns with a distinctive dress style for Indian men) dress in Ladino style in Antigua but don Indian clothes during their return to their home community. Everyone in the marketplace knows that such men are Indians and knows their community of origin. They are not "passing" as members of another ethnic group. They are simply adopting the style of dress appropriate to men of their class in an urban setting. Market vendors commute not from one society or culture to another but from one variant of lower-class life to another.

A class analysis of Guatemalan society would dictate a change in research strategy for anthropologists. Rather than conducting community studies of rural locals and urban neighborhoods, the focus of interest would be those institutions that relate the largely urbanized elite in Guatemala to both rural and urban lower-class individuals. Just as Adams (1970) has attempted to define regional and national spheres of power in Guatemala, economic anthropologists would study labor migrations, industrial corporations, rural plantations, and commercial enterprises that bring individuals from many different communities into contact. The influence of urban political and economic events might then be seen to extend far beyond the geographical confines of a city and its suburbs. The aim of such research would be a comprehensive view of national social, political, and economic structure and the role of urban populations in that structure.

Of course, a single case cannot provide the basis for broad generalizations concerning urban markets. In many ways Antigua is atypical of Latin American cities. It is among the smallest of Guatemalan cities (Whetten 1961), it lacks an industrial sector, and the influence of tourism on the city economy, though not directly on the marketplace, is marked. Marketplace interaction itself need not be typical of social relations in other contexts. Nevertheless, the common class consciousness expressed by urban and rural sellers indicates that class structure as well as community organization poses a fruitful framework of anthropological research.



## NOTES

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