CHAPTER 5

HOUSEHOLD ORGANIZATION AND DIVERSITY

In political economies, all households will continue their basic subsistence practices regardless of their social position. However, incipient political economies mean that some households are doing something different than the others in their community. This may involve intensification or expansion of or control over aspects of agricultural or herding practices, increasing craft specialization, increased participation in or control over exchange relations, ritual activities, feasting, and many other activities. The range of activities practiced by upcoming elite households will differ in some patterned way from the rest. Therefore, political economies (specifically, the widening rank differences associated with them) should be reflected in increasing inter-household gaps in the range of activities represented in various domestic assemblages. This chapter examines the household units uncovered at Jachakala with an Index of Assemblage Diversity to test this proposition, namely that the Jachakala Period inter-zonal differences in the domestic economy will be reflected in inter-household differences in the range of activities practiced by each.

The Household Unit

Household remains have been grouped thus far by zone and period. This chapter will examine Jachakala’s households as individual units (each of which includes artifacts recovered from both a house floor and its adjacent midden and features), rather than as anonymous members of wider sectors of the site. Household units are defined as the
typical architecture and features associated with individual co-residential groups. Each excavated house was uncovered with a set of one-by-four meter trenches judgmentally placed to expose full foundations as well as the features immediately surrounding them. After the first three houses were uncovered in this fashion, it became apparent that large middens were usually located just outside the southwestern or southeastern walls. Consequently, trenches were placed to overlap larger exterior areas in these directions. When time permitted, the adjacent refuse pits were sampled with single two by two meter units placed more or less in the center of these features, and taken down in ten-centimeter levels to sterile soil. All artifacts and small features recovered from this set of excavation units inside and next to the house foundations are grouped together as the remains of that residential unit.

The architecture present within each zone in the Isahuara and Jachakala Periods make limited direct inter-household comparisons possible. The differences between zones discussed in Chapters 3 and 4 explore community-wide patterns. The architectural dimensions of these inter-zonal differences can be explored here on a different analytical scale. This focus on domestic architecture forms an important interpretive counterpart to Chapters 3 and 4, because household units were the primary excavation unit employed in the field. A brief discussion of approaches to household organization in the domestic and political economies is followed by descriptions of Jachakala households.

Architectural Dimensions of Ranking

Robert Santley, among others, argues that house size is a typical indicator of status differences, with elites in larger and better-made dwellings (1993:80). Such architectural differentiation between residents of different sociopolitical status should, he continues, be more pronounced as “articulations between households become increasingly vertical” (ibid:80). This relationship holds at many sites where complexity developed to the point that both wealth and status differences were well established. Categories of domestic architecture are usually classified on the basis of a range of morphological characteristics, which in turn correspond to differences in distributions of food, craft, and non-utilitarian resources.
His observations fit well with Hirth’s models in providing additional architectural correlates for both domestic and political economies. According to Hirth, differences in non-elite household structure reflect rank rather than wealth differentiation in a political economy, where land tenure is highly structured and land is in short supply (1993a). If houses differ in terms of size, quality of construction, associated features, and so forth, then by analogy, one can infer similar changes in the community’s social organization related to the composition of cooperative economic units.

According to the model based on Hirth’s observations, the diversification of activities to include craft specialization or trade relations is responsible for the beginnings of political complexity. Because some degree of economic differentiation between households (or sampled areas of the site, in the Jachakala case) is apparent in all three chronological phases, models of household organization can be tested through a direct association between activity diversification and architectural differentiation.

Artifacts and Architecture

Hirth (1993b:123) writes that residential architecture is “the strongest and most consistent expression of wealth and rank in agrarian societies,” in that housing reflects the extra religious, political, or economic functions performed by members of the emerging elite sector (see also Smith 1987). Variations in the domestic economies of a political elite and their commoner counterparts will, ultimately, result in an increasingly rigid structuring of domestic architectural styles. Yet his own work at Xochicalco revealed that architecture and artifact patterns produced different analytical results than expected. Neither quantities nor the relative quality of various artifact classes coordinated well with architectural patterns as he initially hypothesized (1993b:140).

Smith (1987) also recommends employing various classes of household implements to test for wealth differences. Though some types of artifacts can simultaneously serve as prestige or status symbols (such as badges of office or specific types of luxury goods), he stresses that status and wealth differentiation do not necessarily develop in tandem. The architectural correlate of wealth differentiation in particular may include increased spatial segmentation of activities within or between structures. Whether framed in terms of elite sponsorship of craft production (Costin and
Earle 1989), new integrative social institutions and networks with structural components (Byrd 1994), or Hirth’s economic expansion (1993a, 1993b), rectangular structures allow for the incorporation of these functions into the household economy.

Of course, variability in household structural forms can also reflect the household developmental cycle. This is easiest to see with the expansion of patio groups or other architectural means of accommodating for growing household membership via the addition of structures or structural components. Domestic architecture might also be simply rebuilt or replaced by bigger structures as households needs for space increase.

Methods

One way to test for a correspondence between domestic architectural differences (in shape and size) and ranking is through an Index of Assemblage Diversity. This approach is ideal for testing for variability in household organizational forms, because categories of evidence arranged in terms of activities can be employed in direct inter-household comparisons. In Hirth’s application of one such index, scores reflecting assemblage diversity are divided into clusters or groups that reflect emerging social classes (1996). Because the sample of excavated houses from Jachakala is fairly small, and because the approach produced mixed results in considerably larger and more complex case studies, diversity scores for Jachakala’s household units can be used to trace general patterns of activity diversification and architectural differentiation. In other words, somewhat higher IAD scores from households yielding evidence for a relative expansion of their domestic economy may or may not correspond with new architectural forms (square and rectangular) at Jachakala.

JACHAKALA HOUSEHOLD REMAINS

Overall, house foundations uncovered at Jachakala include a range of estimated interior floor areas (from 4.0 to 10.9 square meters), morphological characteristics such as single- and double-rowed round foundations, rectangular and circular structures, interior and exterior features, and associated midden contents. It is this variability (see
Figure 54. Photos of three Jachakala Period domestic structures (clockwise from left, Houses 6, 3, and 8) demonstrate the variable shapes and, to a limited extent, floor areas in household architecture at the site.

Figure 54) that initially led analysis in the direction of inter-zonal rather than inter-household comparisons. Because my project objectives center on describing changes in domestic processes over long periods of time, artifacts relevant to questions of subsistence, craft production and exchange activities are more relevant. Architectural variability relates to these areas of the domestic economy in many ways (e.g., segmentation of space or increased floor areas associated with expanded craft production facilities), but is not a priori how differentiation develops. Nonetheless, implications for the architectural expressions of rank differences, both within and between zones, can be briefly explored using these dimensions of variability. This is accomplished through
comparing individual household Index of Assemblage Diversity scores in the last section of this chapter.

With only two exceptions, all of the household remains described below date to the Jachakala Period, based both on the depth of identified floors at ten to thirty centimeters below the surface, and on associated ceramic sherds (decorated sherds in the middens next to their foundations mostly dated to Tiwanaku V). The two partial foundations excavated in Isahuara Period levels in the southern zone lay almost on top of one another. Yet one of these two is clearly rectangular in shape, demonstrating that architectural variability in shape dates back at least that far. Though the majority of the cleared house foundations were small and circular, they differed in terms of their interior floor area, number of rows of foundation stones, and location of features. However, all had the same basic set of features and structural characteristics described below; therefore, all of these nine structures were dwellings. The houses in Figures 55 and 104 through 111 (Appendix G), the Index of Assemblage Diversity data and results, and the descriptions below, all correspond numerically (i.e., House 1 through House 9).

The Typical Household Unit

Variability in the size and general construction of domestic structures at Jachakala is fairly limited. Single or, occasionally, double rows of small fieldstones were placed in a roughly circular shape, and topped by adobe walls. Sometimes, the two courses of fieldstones were separated, as is visible in the southwestern corner of House 4 (Figure 55) to form what may have been some sort of storage alcove. A few of the house foundations in the central zone of Jachakala also included a short, straight extension off of the southwest corner (again, see Figure 55); its function is not obvious, though I speculate below that it may represent mimicry of the northern dividing wall, since it runs into one of the temple’s foundations. There is no indication in the soil strata around the stone foundations that original floors or living surfaces were subterranean. The basal course of stones was on the same stratigraphic level as that of the floors. Artifacts such as basalt retouching flakes and a few sherds often lay flat on a surface stained with ash and small flecks of carbonized fibrous plant material; these were the surfaces interpreted as floors.
Figure 55. Illustration of House 4 (N511 E509), the second large round foundation on top of a raised, ashy area in the Jachakala Period central zone, and the largest house at the site. The midden (N511 E509) lies to the southeast of the foundation.
Interior features were usually limited to a small, unlined hearth excavated into the floor surface. This was sometimes accompanied by one or more small storage or refuse pits around the interior edge of the foundation. Exterior features included a large midden directly adjacent to the southwestern or southeastern corner of the house, as mentioned above. Also, a number of storage pits, with or without large jars embedded in them, might be dug into the ground surface surrounding a residence. Caches or household ritual features are usually made up of some combination of the following: basalt tools, Tiwanaku-style vessel sherds, burned faunal and ceramic fragments, ash and carbon deposits. These offerings were often placed in small, undecorated La Joya Orange or Inti Raymi Mica bowls, and placed in the bottom of a midden, the interior fire pit, or another conspicuous location next to the foundation.

The interior floor area of these domestic structures are notably small, ranging from just 4.0 to 10.9 m$^2$. Assuming that each household unit (foundation and associated features and midden) was occupied by a single social or economic unit, then households at Jachakala were composed of either very small families or they included the residents of multiple structures. Either way, this is another potential source of variability in the artifact assemblages recovered from each household unit, one not tested by this approach nor approachable in inter-zonal comparisons.

Southern Zone Residential Architecture

Only two domestic structures were uncovered in the southern zone of the site. Though other small, round foundations are partially visible on the surface, only these two structures can be included in this discussion of inter-household variability. One consists of the southern half of a single-row rectangular foundation (House 2, Figure 105). Because the northern half of the stones were removed and/or mixed in the fill of a large household midden that post-dates this structure, the original interior square area of the house cannot be surmised. However, the preserved part of the interior length (2.2 m) and width (2.0 m) place this structure’s approximate interior area of 8.8 m$^2$ comfortably within the range traced below for central zone structures, given that the preserved part of the house alone measures 4.4 m$^2$. 
Underneath and slightly to the north of the midden overlapping the preserved half of this Isahuara Period rectangular structure is another partial round foundation of a single row of small stones. A small hearth ringed with stones is against this portion of the wall (House 1, Figure 104). The section of foundation attributed to house 1 lies along the northern edge of the unit. The group of stones on the western edge might be part of a second structure. Though the partial remains of this exposed household(s?) are, in retrospect, the deepest recognizable foundation documented at Jachakala, no further wall extensions were excavated.

Central Zone Residential Architecture

House foundations uncovered in the central zone include one square and five round structures. All of the houses described below are free-standing structures, with several meters of space separating each house-midden combination from its neighbors. One Jachakala household in the middle, more or less, of the central zone lies atop a slightly raised area of soft white ash. Constructed of a double row of small foundation stones, this house measures 6.3 m² in interior surface area (House 3, Figure 106). The midden just outside the southwestern corner included the full range of artifacts, as well as a ceremonial offering of two undecorated bowls, one inside of the other. Several small, bell-shaped storage pits were also recorded in this same area. The midden was separated from the house by a short straight section of wall stones extending off of the southwest corner, similar to those extending off of the same corner of the two possible temples.

The largest house foundation uncovered at the site has just 10.9 m² of interior area (House 4, Figure 55). It is located just to the northeast of house 3, and lies atop a second slightly raised area of leached white minerals. The foundation consists of two neatly laid rows of small stones, with a unique alcove of sorts along the southern portion. The interior hearth was excavated just inside and to the west of this separated area (see Figure 55). It contained a possible offering of deliberately layered large sherds from a burned cooking pot, in addition to burned earth and carbonized wood fragments. Two pieces of a broken grinding stone were left in place on the floor surface when the house was abandoned, and a single mano was discovered along the northern edge of the floor. The very large midden just outside the eastern edge of the foundation contained a second
offering of two small bowls, one inside the other, with ash, carbon, and a few unidentified bone fragments. It also yielded large quantities of all types of artifacts. This structure further included a straight section of wall extending off the foundation’s southwestern corner. Only these two largest domiciles and one of the temples had this additional wall section.

A third round house foundation (House 5, Figure 107) just to the north of House 4 includes a neat double row of stones. The western half of the foundation is missing, though the structure’s interior diameter can be estimated from the surface characteristics underneath the layer of excavated wall melt. A clear line demarcated the interior of the house floor, covered with multiple shades of gray ash and small flakes and sherds along the interior edge of the stained soil, from the line along which the original stones lay. Though not visible in the photographs, this line is filled in with dashes in the illustration. Based on the interior dimensions of these living floor stains in the soil, the estimated area of this house is 7.9 m$^2$. The series of one by four meter trenches used to expose the foundation, floor, and adjacent features did not reveal a midden next to this house, though it is of course possible that one was located outside of the excavation area in any direction.

A fourth residential structure (House 6, Figure 108) is immediately adjacent to the large, straight wall dividing the central from the northern zone. It is just on the other side of this wall from the only identified domestic foundation in the north. Both were carefully exposed with the specific intention of comparing the two households, though features and subsequent artifact analyses reveal few differences between the two. House 6 was constructed on top of a single row of fairly small foundation stones, with an estimated interior area of 9.0 m$^2$. Its only notable feature was a peculiar arrangement of deliberately placed sherds between two small rocks. No hearths or storage pits were located in the area immediately surrounding the foundation. The onset of the rainy season prohibited excavation of the area outside of the foundation to search for a midden.

The smallest house foundation (House 7, Figure 109) at Jachakala was uncovered along the easternmost edge of the central zone. The partial round foundation is composed of sections with single rows of large embedded stones and others of double rows of smaller rocks. Its interior area measures only 4.0 m$^2$, resembling at first glance the
community depositories to the north. Yet the ash-stained floor uncovered underneath the adobe wall melt, the interior hearth, and the domestic refuse excavated in the large adjacent midden to the southwest, all identify this structure as residential in nature. Artifacts recovered from within the foundation and midden contained no remarkable objects, but do span the range of typical domestic refuse, including sherds, stone tool manufacturing debris, faunal fragments, and so forth.

The only square house foundation (House 8, Figure 110) uncovered at Jachakala is extended by a protruding platform (of 1.0 by 1.7 m) that may have served once as a sleeping platform, shelf, or partitioned area for some specified activity. Though poorly preserved, exterior walls seem to have been constructed with a single row of large stones, with the exception of the platform along the northern wall. Its interior area is 8.3 m², though the total jumps to 10.0 m² if the platform extension is assumed to have been inside the house. This house stood out from its neighbors in a number of aspects other than its shape. Four shallow storage pits with large undecorated ollas (broken into large fragments but with sherds in place) filled with ash and camelid bones were located next to the eastern wall stones. Two vessels found just against an interior wall included half of a keru and the only unbroken vessel recovered at the site: a small La Joya Orange pitcher with a pencil-sized hole in the body of the vessel. This was also the house that yielded all recovered eggshell fragments, in addition to a sizeable portion of the copper slag, Tiwanaku-style sherds, and trunk packet faunal remains from the Isahuara and Jachakala Period central zone remains in the adjacent midden.

**Northern Zone Domestic Architecture**

The house directly on the other side of the wall dividing the central and northern zones from house 6 is slightly larger, with 9.4 m² of interior space (House 9, Figure 111). The absence of features such as a hearth or midden associated with either one of these two households prohibit the direct comparison of their artifact assemblages. This particular pair of domestic units would have made an ideal comparative study of differences between central and northern zone residential structures. However, the northern household’s lack of extraordinary features, interior area, or concentration of prestige goods makes it essentially indistinguishable from its central zone counterparts in
all but location. Fieldwork and subsequent analysis revealed no clues as to why this household was located where it was, nor what extra functions its residents may have performed that explained its unique presence in the north.

*Ties to the Northern Zone: Architectural Mimicry*

To briefly digress, one component of the type of architectural mimicry described by Hirth is also present at Jachakala. Short, straight sections of wall extending off of the two largest central zone houses’ southwest corners mirror the extending walls attached to one of the two temples. Features of the masonry construction and decorative stonework of elite compounds that resemble those of civic-ceremonial buildings are also described by Hirth in his results of fieldwork conducted at the Central Mexican highland site of Xochicalco (1993b:133-134). This feature at Jachakala’s two largest domestic structures may provide then further support for my argument linking emerging wealth differentiation in the center to direct participation in whatever activities took place in the northern area.

At Jachakala though, such additional, non-domestic activities seem to have been primarily associated with the northern zone structures rather than with expanded facilities within the confines of certain households. Numerous ceremonial offerings inside of house foundations and domestic refuse pits provide evidence for the continuation of household ritual practices even after the two large public structures in the north were constructed. Similarly, Tiwanaku-style vessels likely used in rituals were scattered across the site negate any interpretation confining ritual activities to the northern zone. Household storage features inside and next to households in both the south and center and the community depositories are all roughly contemporaneous (i.e., they date to the same period of approximately 200 years). So if the three small structures in the north were for storage, they did not supplant household storage features. However, the existence of the storage structures, camelid corral, and two large public structures in the north do seem to point to the expansion of Jachakala’s community activities beyond the level of household-oriented subsistence practices. One possible interpretation of these patterns is that these communally oriented activities (and the storage of resources collected for them) were spatially separated in order to overcome restraints in the conservative
economic ideology of the population. Though an admittedly weak link, the short extension walls off the southwest corners of the two largest houses in the center seem to represent some sort of architectural mimicry.

HOUSEHOLD ARCHITECTURAL VARIABILITY AND SOCIAL STRATIFICATION

Measuring Assemblage Diversity

The Index of Assemblage Diversity (IAD) presents an ideal approach to direct household comparisons at Jachakala. By choosing lines of evidence that each represent a single aspect of the household’s range of activities, those houses that score highest are those with the most diverse economies. Consequently, the following analysis is intended to provide a more systematic way of comparing the diversity of the domestic economies of nine excavated household units. These results can then be compared to the range of architecture described above to test for correlations between the two.

Though archaeologists’ recommendations for using this statistic vary as widely as the range of formulas available in the literature, the one employed in this analysis bears several advantages. Two dimensions of diversity relevant to this study include heterogeneity and richness. Heterogeneity depends on the frequencies of artifacts in the different categories. Richness is essentially the number of categories represented in a collection. Both are crucial aspects of diversity because an assemblage with more artifacts in a variety of categories is inherently more diverse than one with a hundred artifacts of one type and one each of several more types. Many archaeological applications of diversity studies in fact ignore the heterogeneity component, thereby producing IAD scores that inaccurately reflect a collection’s variety. Consequently, the formula known as Simpson’s Index (from Peet 1974) given below is used, because it addresses both dimensions of diversity.
Simpson’s Index:
where \(n_j\) = the number of items in category \(j\),
and \(N\) = the total number of artifacts in all categories

\[
L = \Sigma (n_j(n_j-1)) \\
N (N-1)
\]

Categories included in the analysis were limited to those artifact types that represented non-subsistence oriented domestic activities, or subsistence implements found in very limited numbers. Including basalt hoe production and consumption, camelid faunal, and utilitarian ceramic remains severely skewed initial calculations because of the extremely large numbers of artifacts in each category. These large quantities of basic goods downplay the heterogeneity of collections. Together, the following set of twelve categories represents the range of activities grouped in Chapters 3 and 4 under “other domestic activities.” To reiterate, this exclusion of ubiquitous subsistence remains also makes intuitive sense for the purposes of this project, because the expansion of the domestic economy and development of a political economy necessarily involves the incorporation of, or emphasis on, other new kinds of activities.

The categories employed here include obsidian and ópalo debris (flakes and cores), projectile points (hunting), groundstone (grinding stones and manos), eggshell and seashell fragments, and weaving and spinning tools (ceramic spindle-whorl discs, bone awls and needles). Also counted are bone scoops, antler digging implements, camelid mandible tools, and incised or painted bone fragments (beads, flute fragments, and decorated pieces). The final two categories consist of decorated ceramic sherds (the vast majority of which are rim and body sherds from Tiwanaku-style ritual vessels) and unbaked ceramic figurine fragments.

Some of these categories represent certain activities, such as the ritual vessels. Others are most likely markers of wealth or status, including the long-distance imports. And many of these classes of goods could simultaneously serve practical functions and be markers of status. Projectile points made of obsidian are a good example of such an
item. Moreover, because all of these artifact types are found rather infrequently, the analysis should be unaffected by small sample sizes. The artifact counts in each of these thirteen categories for the nine households are given in Table 12.

Results of Index of Assemblage Diversity Analysis

The IAD scores calculated for each household are given in the last line of Table 12. These scores have been converted so that they range from zero (a collection with no diversity whatsoever) to one (an assemblage with the maximum degree of diversity, or equal numbers of artifacts in every category). As these numbers demonstrate, the household with the most diverse artifact collection is the central zone square structure (House 9), with a score of 0.7874. Surprisingly, the second most diverse collection comes from the partial rectangular Isahuara Period household excavated in the southern zone (House 2). The household clusters (foundation and associated midden) achieving
Figure 57. Line graph of Index of Assemblage Diversity scores for each household unit, grouped by zone.

...the third through sixth highest IAD scores (Houses 4, 6, 5, and 8) all derive from Jachakala Period central zone levels. The partial round foundation underlying the southern zone rectangular foundation (House 1), the unique northern zone domestic structure (House 7), and the first (House 3) of the two houses atop slightly raised ashy surfaces, achieved the lowest scores. The locations of the houses with the three highest IAD scores are illustrated in Figure 56.

Tentatively speaking, emerging economic and social differences within the community seem to have an additional architectural dimension of standardized house forms. Although differences of structural shape do seem to correspond with ranking, a quick perusal of the IAD scores, the range of interior areas of foundations, and the frequencies and relative ratios of most artifact categories reveals a continuum of variability rather than clusters of domestic groups. These are graphed in Figure 57. Had the relationship between status or wealth and architecture been more standardized or well
established, one might expect subsistence differences between the zones, for instance, to be greater. Similarly, the largest houses (the two with the short extension walls like those off the corner of each temple) should have been those with the most diverse assemblages of non-subsistence artifact types if, in fact, those activities required (or justified) more internal space.

This connection between expanded facilities, economic diversification, and household size is tested again and again in the archaeological literature. The Jachakala case study does provide support for the notion that shifts in the shape of domestic architecture may accompany changes in the richness and heterogeneity of households’ artifact assemblages. Yet these results should be considered in context, because other aspects of architectural expressions of ranking (size, quality of construction, and so forth) do not correspond to the rectangular-circular dichotomy at the site.

However, the range of IAD scores within the southern and central zones suggest that some portion of the inter-zonal variability mapped in Chapter 4 derives from inter-household differences within each area of the community. In other words, household units in the center and south do not differ from one another as groups who expanded their domestic economies in different, but patterned ways from one another. Rather, on average, central zone household units yield evidence for greater diversification of non-subsistence activities than those in the southern zone. This averaging of differences within each zone is, in effect, what the inter-zonal analytical method is all about. I outlined some of the benefits of this approach in Chapter 2; the drawback of this method, however, is that the kind of variability seen in the range of IAD scores within each zone at Jachakala is obscured.
Table 12. Index of Assemblage Diversity analysis and scores, including artifact categories and counts by household.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>South (1)</th>
<th>(2)</th>
<th>Center (3)</th>
<th>(4)</th>
<th>(5)</th>
<th>(6)</th>
<th>(7)</th>
<th>(8)</th>
<th>North (9)</th>
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<tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>Groundstone</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>49</td>
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<td>8.8 m²</td>
<td>6.3 m²</td>
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<td>0.4837</td>
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</tbody>
</table>