

6/Simple Horticultural Societies

*The chores of life exact energy from the talented
which should be devoted to higher things . . .*

It is not for ourselves we ask.

It is for the good of society.

Michael Young

TEN THOUSAND YEARS AGO primitive men first learned how to cultivate, or raise for themselves, certain of the plants on which they depended for food. This important discovery laid the foundation for the eventual emergence of the first horticultural societies some centuries or millennia later. This form of social organization spread both by diffusion and independent invention to large parts of the world, though subsequently it was superseded in many areas by still more advanced forms of social organization.

As their name implies, horticultural societies are societies built upon the foundation of a gardening economy. In this respect they differ both from the more primitive hunting and gathering societies, in which the cultivation of plants is either absent or of secondary importance, and from the more advanced

agricultural societies, which employ more efficient techniques of cultivation and farm on a larger scale.¹ Perhaps the best single criterion for differentiating between horticulture and agriculture is that the latter employs the plow as the basic tool in cultivation while the former depends on the more primitive hoe or the still more primitive digging stick.

Horticultural societies once flourished throughout most of Europe, the Middle East, and South and East Asia before they were replaced by, or evolved into, agricultural societies. In more recent times they have flourished in much of North and South America, sub-Saharan Africa, and certain of the islands of the Pacific.

As noted in Chapter 4, the societies which practice horticulture are extremely varied and it is necessary to differentiate between the more and less advanced. This can best be done in terms of the following criteria:

1. Is the digging stick or the hoe the basic tool in cultivation?
2. Are terracing and irrigation (other than by natural flooding) practiced?
3. Are techniques of fertilization (other than by burning over the land in clearing or by natural flooding) practiced?
4. Is metallurgy practiced and are metal tools of cultivation manufactured?

Simple horticultural societies are those which rely on the digging stick and practice none of these advanced techniques. *Advanced horticultural societies* rely on the hoe and practice one or more of the advanced techniques.²

In modern times simple horticulturalists have been found chiefly in North and South America and certain of the larger islands of the Pacific, notably New Guinea.³ Hence it is with these groups that we shall be concerned in this chapter. Though simple horticultural societies once flourished in many other areas, our knowledge of those societies is restricted to scattered material artifacts, and these afford only limited insights into the working of their distributive systems.

¹ The word "horticulture" comes from the Latin words *horti* and *cultura*, meaning the cultivation of a garden, whereas "agriculture" come from *agri* and *cultura*, meaning the cultivation of a field.

² For a dramatic illustration of what the introduction of just one of these factors can do to a society, see Ralph Linton's description [*The Tanala: A Hill Tribe of Madagascar* (Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History, 1933)] of the transformation of Tanala society as a result of the introduction of irrigation.

³ African horticulturalists are omitted because they used hoes and practiced metallurgy. Most of the horticulturalists from Mexico to Peru are omitted because they used hoes and practiced irrigation, and often terracing and fertilization. These groups will be examined in the next chapter.

Common Features of Simple Horticultural Societies

Simple horticultural societies strongly resemble hunting and gathering societies, especially when the latter are in very favorable environments. In such things as community size, per capita productivity, degree of social inequality, and so forth, there appears to be considerable overlap. As Goldschmidt points out, this is largely a function of environmental variation: the size of communities, level of productivity, and degree of inequality in hunting and gathering societies in very fertile settings tend to be somewhat greater than in simple horticultural societies in unfavorable settings.⁴ Under *comparable* conditions, however, simple horticultural societies are normally larger, more productive, and less egalitarian. We also find that *on the average* simple horticultural societies are more highly developed in all these ways, and the upper limit of their range is significantly higher.

This can be illustrated by comparing population data for the two types of societies. In the case of hunting and gathering societies, it will be recalled, the society and the community were identical and communities averaged no more than fifty persons. In simple horticultural societies, by contrast, societies often contain more than one community and the average size of communities is greater.

At the present time it is still impossible to say whether the multi-community or single community society is the more common among simple horticulturalists. Both occur with considerable frequency. The Hasinai of Texas provide a good example of a multicomunity society, consisting of a very durable and stable federation of nine villages.⁵ Early Spanish writers reported that the Cayuvava of eastern Bolivia were governed by a single chief who controlled seven villages, some with as many as 2,000 inhabitants.⁶ Other sources report similar structures among such scattered groups as the Kapauku and Garia of New Guinea, the Jivaro, Paressi, and Xaray of South America, the Yuma of the American Southwest, the Iroquois of the Northeast, and various tribes of the South-

⁴ Walter Goldschmidt, *Man's Way: A Preface to the Understanding of Human Society* (New York: Holt, 1959), p. 149.

⁵ John Swanton, *Source Material on the History and Ethnology of the Caddo Indians*, Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 132 (1942), especially pp. 107-173.

⁶ Julian Steward and Louis Faron, *Native Peoples of South America* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1959), p. 350; or Julian Steward (ed.), *Handbook of South American Indians*, Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 143 (1946), vol. III, p. 427.

east.⁷ Usually these societies contained only a handful of villages, seldom more than ten. Sometimes, too, intercommunity ties were unstable and impermanent or loose knit and not of great importance. Nevertheless, they constitute a substantial advance compared with the organizational patterns of hunting and gathering societies.

Though it is impossible to state exactly the average size of simple horticultural communities, it appears that it is probably between one and two hundred, or two to four times the average in hunting and gathering societies.⁸ The upper limit is somewhat easier to identify and is approximately 3,000 persons, or at least five times the figure for hunting and gathering communities.⁹

Given the greater size of horticultural communities and the multi-community character of many simple horticultural societies, it is clear that the average size of simple horticultural societies is greater than that of hunting and gathering societies, though it is still impossible to say just what the ratio is. A conservative estimate might place it at about 5 to 1. With respect to the *upper limit*, however, the contrast is more pronounced. In the case of the Iroquois, for example, the population may have approached 16,000 at one time, or at least twenty-five times the maximum

⁷ See Leopold Pospisil, "Kapauku Paupuan Political Structure," in F. Ray (ed.), *Systems of Political Control and Bureaucracy in Human Societies*, Proceedings of the 1958 meetings of the American Ethnological Society, p. 9; C. G. Seligmann, *The Melanesians of British New Guinea* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1910), pp. 58-59 on the Garia; M. W. Stirling, *Historical and Ethnographical Material on the Jivaro Indians*, Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 117 (1938), pp. 38-41 on the Jivaro; Steward and Faron, p. 350 on the Xaray and p. 258 on the Faressi; C. Daryll Forde, *Habitat, Economy and Society* (London: Methuen, 1934), pp. 251 and 257 on the Yuma and the tribes of the American Southeast; and George Peter Murdock, *Our Primitive Contemporaries* (New York: Macmillan, 1934), pp. 304ff. on the Iroquois.

⁸ This is my own estimate, based on a reading of both ethnographic and archaeological materials. See, for example, V. Gordon Childe, who reports that Neolithic villages in Europe comprised eight to fifty houses, suggesting populations from 30 to 300 [in "The New Stone Age," in Harry Shapiro (ed.), *Man, Culture and Society* (Fair Lawn, N.J.: Oxford Galaxy, 1960), p. 105], or H. Ian Hogbin who reports that the average size of villages in New Guinea is 200 [in *Transformation Scene: The Changing Culture of a New Guinea Village* (London: Routledge, 1951), p. 30]. See also Steward and Faron who indicate that the simple horticulturalists in South America had population densities five times that of hunters and gatherers (compare their statements on pp. 298 and 383).

⁹ This figure is reported by both Murdock, with reference to the Iroquois, and Steward and Faron, with reference to various peoples in the tropical forest of South America (see Murdock, *Contemporaries*, p. 297 and Steward and Faron, p. 299). Other instances of simple horticultural communities with populations of one to two thousand are fairly common. See, for example, Leo Simmons, *Sun Chief* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1942), p. 10, or Fred Eggan, *Social Organization of the Western Pueblos* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950), p. 176 on the Indians of the American Southwest.

number found in any single hunting and gathering society.¹⁰ Though this was probably a very exceptional case, it indicates the organizational and demographic potential of these societies.

The greater size of simple horticultural societies clearly reflects the greater productivity of their economies. Although much of this increase in productivity is consumed by population increase, a part of it takes the form of an economic surplus. This manifests itself most clearly in the new "leisure" which members of these societies enjoy. Unlike the members of hunting and gathering societies, they are not compelled to spend most of their working hours in the search for food and other necessities of life, but are able to use more of their time in other ways.

One of the uses to which this new "leisure" has been put is the *production of various kinds of nonessential goods*. A good example can be found in the construction of houses and other types of buildings. The structures of most simple horticultural peoples are far superior to those of hunters and gatherers. For example, so primitive a group of horticulturalists as the Boro of South America are reported to build communal houses which are 60 to 70 feet on each side and 30 or more feet in height.¹¹ The Iroquois built structures which were from 50 to 150 feet in length and in one instance reached 300 feet.¹² The Kiwai Papuans probably hold the record, having constructed one building which proved to be 519 feet long.¹³ Nothing comparable to these structures can be found among hunting and gathering peoples.¹⁴

In many instances the new "leisure" which a horticultural economy makes possible has been devoted to *ceremonial activities*. One cannot review the ethnographic literature on simple horticultural societies without being impressed by the frequent references to ceremonial activities and the great amount of time given to them in many of these societies. The classic case of this occurs among the Zuni Indians of New Mexico, whose way of life has been so vividly described by Ruth Benedict in *Patterns of Culture*. The Zuni devote a tremendous amount of time and energy to these activities, which constitute the focal point of the life of the group.

¹⁰ Murdock, *Contemporaries*, p. 319.

¹¹ Forde, *Habitat*, pp. 133-134.

¹² Murdock, p. 297.

¹³ Gunnar Landtman, *The Kiwai Papuans of British New Guinea* (London: Macmillan, 1927), p. 5.

¹⁴ It is significant to note that archaeologist V. Gordon Childe reports similar differences between the early Neolithic horticulturalists and their hunting and gathering predecessors. In fact, the Danubians, a simple horticultural people of Central Europe, constructed communal longhouses quite similar to those built several thousand years later by the Iroquois. See Childe, "The New Stone Age," in Shapiro, p. 104.

Although the Zuñi (and other Pueblo Indians) are extreme in this respect, ceremonial activities play an important part in the life of most simple horticultural societies. Often these are organized around a number of secret societies or clubs and a calendar of festival occasions, as in the case of the Iroquois. Frequently special buildings are erected for these purposes, something which rarely happens in hunting and gathering societies.¹⁵ In the case of groups with fewer resources, such as the Mountain Arapesh of New Guinea, the frequency and elaboration of ceremonial activities are more limited but are still an important and prominent feature of the life of the group.

Warfare is still another use to which the new "leisure" has been put. This is not to say that warfare is unknown in hunting and gathering societies, but rather that it tends to be a very occasional activity. In some simple horticultural societies, however, warfare is elevated to the point where it becomes a way of life, with food production and other industrial pursuits relegated to a secondary place, at least in the lives of the men. The Jivaro Indians of the upper Amazon are a classic example of this. As early as the seventeenth century, one Spanish Jesuit wrote that their "ruling passion, the object of their rejoicings, of their pleasures, and of their greatest felicity, is war." More recently an American ethnologist wrote of the Jivaro's "never-ending cycle of blood-revenge feuds which may vary in extent all the way from an individual murder by a single man from ambush to desperate struggles of extermination in which several hundreds may be involved."¹⁶ The focal point of all these activities appears to be the tsantsa ceremony, in which the heads of captured enemies are shrunk and preserved. Though the Jivaro are an extreme case, they reflect a widespread tendency among simple horticulturalists. Warfare is clearly much more frequent and much more important among these people than among hunters and gatherers.¹⁷

In this connection it is important to note that references to the taking of captives are far more frequent in studies of simple horticultural societies than in studies of hunting and gathering groups. One finds this practice in both North and South America and also in New Guinea.¹⁸ Male captives are commonly tortured and slain and often eaten afterwards (cannibalism seems more common in this type of society than any

¹⁵ For examples of how elaborate and impressive these buildings can be, see the photographs of Papuan clubhouses in Seligmann, *op. cit.*

¹⁶ Both quotations are from Stirling, pp. 43 and 42.

¹⁷ Again archaeological evidence points in the same direction. See Childe, "The New Stone Age," p. 107.

¹⁸ On South America, see Steward and Faron, pp. 304-305; on North America, see Murdock on the Iroquois in *Contemporaries*, pp. 309-311; on New Guinea, see Seligmann, pp. 318-319 on the Mekeo.

other).¹⁹ Occasionally, however, they are adopted into the tribe, and in time usually come to enjoy all the rights and privileges of full-fledged members of the group. By contrast, women captives are more likely to be made "slaves" and forced to marry and work for their captors.²⁰

One of the most important consequences of the adoption of horticulture is a reduction in the frequency with which communities must move about. Though communities are seldom of a fixed or permanent nature in simple horticultural societies, still they are much less nomadic on the average than hunting and gathering bands. The latter are usually obliged to migrate at least once a year. By contrast, communities in simple horticultural societies tend to remain at the same place for a number of years. For example, the Boro of South America move only every several years, and the Iroquois are reported to have remained in the same village for ten to twelve years.²¹ In a few instances, notably in the American Southwest, truly permanent settlements were possible, thanks to natural irrigation or flooding which constantly brought new, fertile topsoil to the fields to replace exhausted soil.²²

It is difficult to exaggerate the importance of this development. So long as people must constantly be on the move, it is hard for them to accumulate material possessions, particularly when everything must be carried on their backs. When the frequency of such moves is substantially reduced, it is much easier to accumulate possessions of every kind. These include not only objects of utilitarian value such as tools, weapons, clothes, pottery, baskets, and so forth, but also a substantial array of other objects like masks and other equipment used in ceremonial gatherings, status symbols such as skulls and other trophies, and artistic creations such as musical instruments. In short, the members of simple horticultural societies own both more and more varied possessions than the members of hunting and gathering societies.

Compared with hunting and gathering societies, simple horticultural societies generally display a much higher level of specialization at both the individual and communal levels. At the individual level, this

¹⁹ Elman Service in *Primitive Social Organization: An Evolutionary Perspective* (New York: Random House, 1962), says that "terrorization, or psychological warfare, seems to be at its highest development in tribal society" (p. 115). He feels that this is due to the inevitably inconclusive nature of tribal warfare which precludes decisive engagements or the effective conquest of one group by another.

²⁰ The practice of "slavery" in simple horticultural societies will be examined in greater detail later in the chapter. See page 130.

²¹ For the Boro, see Forde, *Habitat*, p. 135, and for the Iroquois, see Murdock, *Contemporaries*, p. 295.

²² Forde, *Habitat*, p. 230. Many New Guinea villages also seem to remain for long periods in a single area. See, for example, Seligmann, p. 228, who refers to traditions indicating that one village had been in the same area for five generations.

manifests itself in a marked increase in specialized economic, political, and religious roles in most of these societies. Elaborate religious ceremonies sometimes require a great number of priestly specialists. Generally these are only part-time specialties but in some instances, as among the Zuñi, the major priestly offices are full-time vocations and their occupants are freed from the task of providing their own livelihood.²³

Political offices are also more numerous and more likely to be full-time positions than in hunting and gathering societies. One of the most significant developments in this connection is the creation in many of these societies of a staff of subordinates whose primary responsibility is to assist the headman or chief and do his bidding. This undergirds his authority and reduces somewhat his dependence on persuasion. Such arrangements are found in varying degrees of elaboration, though even in the most extreme cases chiefly staffs remain quite modest in size, at least when compared with more advanced societies.

The Trumaí Indians of South America provide a good example of minimal development along this line. In this tiny group, two individuals were designated as subchiefs. Their sole responsibility seems to have been to act in the place of the chief, or village headman, when he was away from the village.²⁴ The Roro of New Guinea are more nearly typical. Among them the chief's first assistant was clearly identified as war chief as well as enforcer of the chief's orders.²⁵ His second assistant, usually a man of wealth and influence, had the responsibility "to be near his chief and prepared to render assistance in all ceremonies in the clubhouse, and generally to save him trouble and see that things go smoothly."²⁶

Even in the realm of economic activity specialization is evident. In the case of the Iroquois there was a rudimentary form of specialization, with the old men and others incapable of hunting and fighting devoting themselves to the manufacture of weapons and tools.²⁷ A more highly developed pattern is evident among the Kiwai Papuans, where specialization is not limited to the aged or infirm. Recognizing that all men are not equally skilled in the production of all things, they leave the production of items requiring considerable skill to "the experts." This applies to the manufacture of canoes, drums, harpoon shafts, artistic work, and scarification. Those who have special skills in these areas tend to become part-

²³ See Irving Goldman, "The Zuni Indians of New Mexico," in Margaret Mead (ed.), *Cooperation and Competition among Primitive Peoples*, rev. ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961), p. 332.

²⁴ Robert Murphy and Buell Quain, *The Trumaí Indians of Central Brazil*, Monographs of the American Ethnological Society, 24 (1955), p. 54.

²⁵ Seligmann, p. 218.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Murdock, *Contemporaries*, p. 301.

time specialists.²⁸ Similar developments are reported in some other simple horticultural societies.²⁹

At the communal level, too, there is evidence of greater specialization among simple horticulturalists than among hunters and gatherers. This usually manifests itself in increased trade and commerce between villages or even between societies. Landtman provides a good illustration of the degree to which specialization and trade are sometimes developed at this level. He reports that the Kiwai islanders trade canoes, sago, garden produce, bows, arrows, mats, belts, women's grass petticoats, and feathers; their neighbors, the Mawata people, trade coconuts, certain shells, fish, dugong and turtle meat, and objects made of cassowary and dugong bones; the Torres Straits islanders, stones axes, stone clubs, harpoon shafts, all kinds of shells, and dugong and turtle produce; and the bushmen of the interior, various kinds of birds' feathers, cassowary bones, bows, arrows, and garden produce.³⁰

V. Gordon Childe reports evidence of similar, though probably less extensive, trade among simple horticultural communities in Neolithic Europe. For example, he mentions that Mediterranean shells have been found in Neolithic villages and graves throughout the Danube basin and even in the valleys of the Oder, Elbe, and Rhine. Also, there seems to have been a lively trade in choice rocks and rock artifacts, but Childe says that "neither miners, axe-grinders, nor hucksters are likely to have been 'full-time specialists.'" Though clearly there are variations in the degree of economic specialization and trade in simple horticultural societies, many, if not most, seem to specialize to some extent in the production of commodities the raw materials for which are abundant in their own territory but in short supply elsewhere.

Finally, specialization also manifests itself in the formation of numerous organizations, apart from the family and kin group. These usually take the form of secret societies and social clubs for men, with their primary functions generally being either religious or social in character. They also frequently serve to express—or perhaps facilitate—male dominance. As noted earlier, these organizations lead to the creation of a considerable number of specialized roles and offices, some of which assume tremendous political significance and hence have far-reaching consequences for the distributive process.³¹

²⁸ Landtman, *The Kiwai*, p. 168.

²⁹ See, for example, Murdock, *Contemporaries*, p. 335 on the Hopi Indians of the American Southwest.

³⁰ Landtman, *The Kiwai*, pp. 213-214.

³¹ For a good description of such groups among horticulturalists in South America, see Robert Lowie, "Social and Political Organization of the Tropical Forest and Marginal Tribes," in Steward, *Handbook*, vol. V, pp. 335-339.

Common Features of Distributive Systems

If the first and second laws of distribution are valid, and if the foregoing analysis of the nature of simple horticultural societies is reasonably accurate, then inequalities in power and privilege should be more marked in these societies than in hunting and gathering societies. This is, in fact, the case: one of the striking differences which emerges from any comparison of these two types of societies is that social inequalities are more pronounced in the horticultural. This is not to deny the existence of some overlap between them, a point which will be considered in the next section of this chapter. However, on the average there is a definite difference between the two categories, and *many* simple horticultural societies exhibit a degree of inequality unmatched in *any* hunting and gathering society.

The extreme which political inequality could occasionally attain in simple horticultural societies is suggested³² by the Hasinai Indians of Texas. Fray Casañas, the first missionary to work among these people, has given us the following picture of this facet of their life.

In each tribe [i.e., village] there is a *caddi*. He is like a governor ruling and commanding his people. The office of *caddi* also descends through the direct line of blood relationship. Each *caddi* rules within the section of country occupied by his tribe, no matter whether it be large or small. If large, they have certain officials named *canahas*. Of these, there are seven or eight to aid in governing. If the tribe is small, there are only three or four. It is their duty to relieve the *caddi* and to publish his orders by reporting that the *caddi* commands this or that. They frighten the people by declaring that, if they do not obey orders, they will be whipped and otherwise punished. These *canahas*, in turn, have their subordinates called *chaya*. They do everything the *canahas* tell them to do. They have still other officials whom they call *tmmas*. These are the officers who promptly execute orders. They whip all the idlers with rods, beating them on the

³² Though the Hasinai possessed the horse, their culture was not dominated by the horse complex to anything like the degree characteristic of the true Plains Indians. John Swanton, who has written the definitive monograph on the Caddo Indians of whom the Hasinai were a part, has written: "The Hasinai were prevented from becoming fully fledged Plains Indians by their devotion to agriculture and the pressures of more northern tribes. . . . All of the Caddo originally possessed a woodlands culture, and we may say that in reality they never became anything other than woodland people, though part of them took on for a while a Plains veneer." (*Op. cit.*, p. 198.) Thus, while the political pattern described in the text above may reflect the influence of the horse to some extent, this influence was probably limited. This conclusion is reinforced by evidence from certain South American tribes, such as the Manasí or Bauré, which are referred to in the text which follows.

legs and over the stomach. . . . The peace and harmony among the officials described is so great that during the year and three months we have been among them we have not seen any quarrels—either great or small. But the insolent and lazy are punished.³³

Over the local *caddices* was still another official known as the *xinesí*, whom Casañas described as “like a petty king over them.” Other statements indicate that he was also the high priest of the tribe. This official, unlike the *caddices*, was freed from the obligation of providing his own livelihood.

The Indians of South America provide a number of other examples of chiefly power and privilege. For example, the chiefs of the Manasí had a staff of subordinates to enforce their commands and lived in a huge house built by their subjects. They also had two large fields tilled by their subjects for their benefit, and received the first fruits of the crops of the villagers and a share of all game and fish.³⁴ In the case of the Bauré, another group in the same general area, the chiefs also enjoyed great power and could even impose a death sentence. Like the Manasí chiefs, they were freed from common labor and were supplied by their subjects with all their material needs.³⁵ These groups are especially interesting since both are neighbors of the Siriono described in the last chapter, thus affording a comparison with some measure of control over environmental conditions.

In New Guinea and elsewhere a second type of inequality is often encountered, that based on *wealth*. The Kuma, a tribe of the interior highlands, provide a good example of this. The Australian anthropologist Reay states, “‘Big men’ are found among the Kuma, of the kind commonly encountered in New Guinea. They are wealthy and polygamous.”³⁶ Status

³³ From “Descriptions of the Tejas or Asinai Indians: 1691-1722,” translated by Mattie Austin Hatcher, *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, 30 (1927), pp. 216-217. Quoted by permission.

³⁴ Alfred Métraux, *Native Tribes of Eastern Bolivia and Western Matto Grosso*, Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 134 (1942), pp. 128-131. Steward and Faron classify the Manasí, Bauré, Mojo, Paressi, and Xaray as chiefdoms and link them with the more advanced chiefdoms of the Circum-Caribbean area. From the technological standpoint, however, they were less advanced, since they farmed without irrigation or terracing (p. 253). In fact, Steward and Faron state that “in horticulture, housing, village composition, and certain sociopolitical and religious features, these Indians resembled the Amazonian peoples” (p. 252). In short, though they stand near the boundary between simple and advanced horticultural societies, they seem more properly classified with the former.

³⁵ Métraux, *Native Tribes*, p. 69.

³⁶ Marie Reay, *The Kuma* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1959), p. 114. See also Landtman’s discussion of the Kiwai for a very similar picture, *The Kiwai*, p. 168, or Pospisil on the Kaupauku, p. 11.

and reputation are the major goals men seek and these depend chiefly on a man's wealth as measured in terms of wives, pigs, plumes, and shell ornaments.³⁷ Wives are the crucial form of wealth, since they are the one productive form of wealth that is in short supply. The ideal of every Kuma man is to have ten wives, but Reay reports that at the time of her study she knew of none who had more than six. Even this, however, meant marked disparities in wealth and status within the tribe. In one clan there were eighty-seven men old enough to marry. Of these, one had four wives, five had three, twelve had two, fifty had one, and nineteen were unmarried.³⁸ This was the basis of a very real system of stratification. There was even a term of opprobrium applied to the men who had no prospects of ever marrying because of personal unattractiveness. They were known as "knock-about men" (there were five of them in the clan Reay studied) and were treated as pariahs, being excluded from the ceremonial dances which were major events in Kuma life.³⁹

A third form of inequality found in most simple horticultural societies is based on *religion and magic*. Just as in hunting and gathering societies, certain individuals are recognized as having special powers. The chief difference is that these powers are likely to yield more substantial material benefits in simple horticultural societies than in hunting and gathering groups, where prestige tends to be the primary reward. The Jivaro of South America provide a good example of the material benefits which can accrue to shamans in simple horticultural societies. In this group the shaman is likely to be the wealthiest man in his village, his wealth being the return he extracts for his services.⁴⁰ Among the Manasí, the priests apparently ranked directly below the chief and, like him, were wholly or largely supplied with the material necessities of life.⁴¹ Similar reports come from numerous other groups.

In many simple horticultural societies, magical skills or religious powers are the most valuable resource of all. For example, among the Guaraní of Paraguay it is reported that though each community had a chief, "the actual power was often in the hands of a shaman."⁴² Further west, some of the backward and very isolated tribes of the mountainous Montaña are said to have had no political authority above the family head, except when fighting, and that the shamans often assumed leader-

³⁷ Reay, pp. 97-98.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 84-85. In another study from New Guinea, it is reported that no man had as many as five wives and more than half the married men had only one. See F. E. Williams, *Papuans of the Trans-Fly* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936), p. 149.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 47-48 and 161.

⁴⁰ Stirling, pp. 115-121.

⁴¹ Métraux, p. 130.

⁴² Alfred Métraux, "The Guaraní," in Steward, *Handbook*, vol. III, p. 85.

ship.⁴³ One tribe, the Quijo, regularly made them chiefs. This pattern of shamanistic dominance was not limited to South America, as the case of the Zuñi illustrates.⁴⁴

Another fairly common pattern is that in which the chief assumed religious functions. Examples of this can be found among such varied groups as the Paressí, Mojo, Chiriguano, and Guaraní, to cite but a few.⁴⁵ As Robert Lowie has put it, a "chief's influence is definitely enhanced when he combines religious with secular functions."⁴⁶ In short, despite variations in detail, *religious or magical powers are one of the primary sources of social inequality in many, and probably most, simple horticultural societies.*

A fourth important form of inequality found in many simple horticultural societies is that based on *military prowess*. Once again, a comparison with hunting and gathering societies indicates points of similarity and points of difference. In both types of societies men who are brave and skillful in the use of weapons are honored. The difference appears when one examines the way in which bravery and skill with weapons are used. In the more primitive hunting and gathering societies *hunting* is the major component of the adult male role and is much more important than fighting. With the development of horticulture, the importance of hunting declines considerably, and in many cases military pursuits fill the vacuum by providing men with new opportunities for demonstrating prowess. As noted previously, warfare often is one way men use their new "leisure." Thus the military element is much more pronounced in simple horticultural societies than in hunting and gathering groups. A second difference between the two is also linked with the new "leisure." Because of the reduced demands on men's time in many of these societies, it becomes possible to institutionalize the celebration of the warrior role. This manifests itself in the development of specialized warrior societies and warrior ceremonies, all of which tend to consolidate and validate claims to prestige based on military prowess and insure a satisfying recognition and reward for the warrior heroes.

In some simple horticultural societies, military prowess is a prerequisite to the chieftainship, as in the case of the Chiquito Indians of South America.⁴⁷ More often, however, men of military ability are appointed to the office of war chief, an office sometimes subordinate to that

⁴³ Julian Steward, "The Tribes of the Montaña and Bolivian East Andes," *ibid.*, p. 528.

⁴⁴ See, for example, Goldman, p. 313.

⁴⁵ See Steward, *Handbook*, vol. III, pp. 85, 355, 419, and 478.

⁴⁶ "Social and Political Organization," in Steward, *Handbook*, vol. V, p. 345.

⁴⁷ Métraux, *Native Tribes*, p. 125.

of civil chief and other times equal to it. This pattern is found in areas as widely separated as New Guinea and the American Southwest.⁴⁸ As the title suggests, the war chief functions as the leader of the group in military campaigns. In addition, he frequently has important civil functions, and is often second in command in such matters.

The exercise of military prowess has sometimes given rise to *slavery*, a fifth form of inequality. As noted earlier, male captives are usually killed or adopted, but women are often taken as prizes of war and put to work as members of their captor's household. They become, in effect, their captor's property. Nevertheless, it is somewhat misleading to call them slaves. For one thing, their status is not greatly different from that of the other women in the household. Furthermore, their children are normally free and hence full-fledged members of the tribe. Thus, their situation is intermediate between that of free persons and true slaves of the type encountered in more advanced societies. One might refer to this pattern as protoslavery or incipient slavery in order to call attention to the important differences which set it apart from the more familiar pattern, involving an hereditary class of persons of both sexes, typically in a very degraded status.⁴⁹

A sixth, and final, form of inequality in simple horticultural societies is that based on *skill in oratory*. For example, it is reported that "oratory and arms are the two outstanding paths to fame and distinction among the Iroquois."⁵⁰ While this is not typical of all societies at this level, a surprising number honor in some way the "Rhetoric Thumpers," as the Kuma of New Guinea aptly call them. In many instances, as among the Kuma, the chief's assistant is chosen for his skill in oratory and functions as the chief's spokesman. Among the Guaraní of South America, "an eloquent man distinguished in warfare might become chief."⁵¹

Since the rewards which orators receive in simple horticultural societies are freely accorded them and not based on the possession of coer-

⁴⁸ See, for example, Seligmann, chaps. 19 and 29 and Eggen, p. 108 or Swanton, pp. 171 and 191.

⁴⁹ Steward and Faron discuss this practice, which seems to have been especially common among South American tribes. See especially pp. 253, 256, and 302-303. As they note, after the arrival of the Spanish there was apparently a tendency for some of these tribes to raid neighboring tribes simply to obtain captives which could be sold to the Spanish. Because of their heavy involvement in the slave trade, these raiders found it necessary to keep male slaves of their own to perform the various economic functions they themselves had previously performed, thus leading to the creation of something approaching a true slave class. While the evidence on this subject is far from satisfactory, it appears that this was not a spontaneous and indigenous development, but purely a response to the peculiar conditions created by Spanish colonization.

⁵⁰ Murdock, *Contemporaries*, p. 305.

⁵¹ Métraux, "Guaraní," p. 85.

cive powers, it is fair to ask what services they render which lead others to honor and reward them. Apparently there are a number of kinds of service, though usually not all in the same society. Some orators are entertainers, some are inspirational leaders, some are idea men, some are historians, and some simply are used to dignify, or give "tone," to important occasions. Men value all these functions and therefore reward those who are most skillful in performing them.

As the foregoing indicates, simple horticulturalists have not been slow to seize the opportunities for power and privilege afforded them by the modest economic surpluses of their societies. Any comparison between their societies and those of hunting and gathering peoples makes it clear that inequalities in power and privilege are nearly always more pronounced in the former.

Not only are the inequalities greater, they are also more institutionalized, a development made possible by the increase in "leisure" and the greater opportunities for specialization. In hunting and gathering societies, very few social positions have been formalized to the point where they merit the title of "office." Usually they are no more than informal roles with certain more or less distinctive functions. In horticultural societies, by contrast, many positions have been formalized to the point where they have a title and a definite set of responsibilities and privileges.

This development is extremely important since it complicates the relationship between the personal attributes of an individual and his status. No longer is the latter a simple function of the former; *now status is a complex function of both his personal attributes and his office or offices.* Now it becomes possible for an individual to enjoy a reward to which his personal attributes alone would not entitle him.

The Hasinai of Texas provide a good illustration of this new development. When one of their chiefs died before his son and heir reached maturity, the son was still acknowledged as chief. During his minority the other officials formed a council and ruled in his stead, but stepped aside when he came of age.⁵² Under such conditions personal ability counted for little and the accident of birth for everything. This individual did not have to prove his superior abilities as a leader of his people—they acknowledged it long before any demonstration of such abilities was possible. This is a new possibility which develops in human societies as soon as the vital functions of societies come to be linked with institutionalized offices.

As the illustration of the Hasinai chief indicates, discrepancies between ability and status are most likely to occur when offices come to be transmitted as "property" from one generation to the next. Under these

⁵² Swanton, p. 171.

conditions the correlations between ability and status, and between performance and reward, are likely to be much lower than when an office is made available to all in free and open competition. Even in the latter case, however, some discrepancy is likely to develop when individuals are given extended or indefinite tenures in office. In short, *the development of offices in society represents an important early step in the direction of stabilizing, solidifying, and institutionalizing systems of social inequality.*

Certain definite advantages accrue to society as a whole as a consequence of this development. The alternative would seem to be anarchy in any complex society. The chief disadvantage, as noted above, is the growing gap between performance and reward which institutionalization fosters. If one could plot the net benefit to societies on a graph, he would probably find it to be curvilinear, with the high point occurring somewhere in the middle ranges of institutionalization.

In theory, a considerable number of key offices in simple horticultural societies are transmitted as "property" from one generation to the next, as in the case of the Hasinai chieftainship. In fact, however, careful inspection indicates that certain controls operate to prevent abuses. For example, though the Jivaro Indians customarily pass the office of chief from father to son, the heir of one of the most powerful chiefs of modern times was obliged to relinquish the office because he was sickly.⁵³ In the case of the Kuma it is reported that the leadership of subsubclans (the highest political office in the group) was supposed to pass from father to son, but when a careful check was made it was found that in 36 per cent of the cases investigated, someone else occupied the position.⁵⁴

The tendency to make such exceptions seems to reflect the tenuous quality of the institutional and organizational structure of the societies in question. It is significant that the Hasinai, who had a well-developed political system, with numerous officials providing support for the chiefs, were able to tolerate an incompetent individual in this office, whereas the Jivaro, the Boro, and the Kuma, who lack this, find it necessary to ignore the rules of succession when this threatens to put an unqualified individual in office. Most simple horticultural societies resemble the latter more than they do the Hasinai, so far as political development is concerned. Thus they are inclined either to ignore the rules of succession from time to time or, as in some cases, to define them in such a way that there is no

⁵³ Stirling, pp. 40-41.

⁵⁴ Reay, p. 114. Similar patterns can be found in many other groups. For example, Lowie says that "in many tribes [in South America] substitutes serve if the customary successor is deemed unfit." See "Social and Political Organization," in Steward, *Handbook*, vol. V, p. 346.

automatic succession.⁵⁵ Furthermore, many limit the tenure of chiefs to the years in which they are vigorous and capable, and make provision for them to step aside when they become too old to fulfill the requirements of their office.⁵⁶ Others make tenure conditional on good behavior.⁵⁷

On the basis of such evidence, it appears that simple horticultural societies occupy a position intermediate between that of hunting and gathering societies on the one hand and advanced horticultural and agrarian societies on the other. As in the latter, the functions of leadership have come to be institutionalized and localized in formal offices and the elements of authority and coercion are evident; as in the former, power and privilege are not normally regarded as "property" which can be retained indefinitely or transmitted within families without regard to the qualifications of the possessor.

Another significant feature of the distributive process of virtually all simple horticultural societies is the relative importance of the individual's personal skills. Though not so crucial as in hunting and gathering societies, they are still much more important than in most more advanced societies. Most simple horticultural societies provide numerous opportunities for well-qualified men to advance themselves. For example, any male Hasinai had the opportunity to win the honorific title of *amayxoya*, or "great man," and have this attached to his name. All that was required was distinction in battle.⁵⁸ Hence this honor was not in short supply. The only limitation on achievement was set by the character and constitution of the individual.

The Kuma of New Guinea provide an even more fascinating example of the same principle. In this group, in which power and privilege were limited to a minority of wealthy polygynists, a careful study revealed that success was partly a function of age. Thus while only a third of the adult males might be regarded as influential men at any one time, three-fifths of the men eventually attained positions of leadership.⁵⁹

On the basis of available evidence, it appears that high rates of both inter- and intragenerational mobility are common in most simple horticultural societies. Success is not limited to a fortunate few born into

⁵⁵ Among the Iroquois, only members of certain extended families could become sachems, but the choice of the particular individual was left to the family. See Murdock, *Contemporaries*, p. 306. A similar situation prevailed among the Mekeo of New Guinea (Seligmann, p. 346).

⁵⁶ For example, the Manasí had the chief yield to his son when the son came of age. However, the son first had to validate his right to the office by leading a war party. See Métraux, *Native Tribes*, pp. 128-129.

⁵⁷ See, for example, the Iroquois, Murdock, *Contemporaries*, p. 307.

⁵⁸ Stirling, p. 170.

⁵⁹ Reay, p. 116.

avored families, though compared with hunting and gathering societies a shift in this direction is evident. As we have already seen, there is some inheritance of office. In other cases, as among the Kuma, it is important to be born into a prosperous subclan, since those born into poorer ones have more difficulty finding the means to purchase a wife. In still other cases, as among the Araona of South America, it was important to be part of a large family and to have numerous relatives if one aspired to the chieftainship, with the result that competition for this office was somewhat restricted.⁶⁰ However, despite these occasional limitations, conditions are far more fluid and opportunities for getting ahead far more numerous in simple horticultural societies than in those which are technologically more advanced.

In simple horticultural societies, as in hunting and gathering societies, there are no gross inequalities in material possessions. The reasons for this are twofold. First, *most material necessities are readily available to all*. In most of these societies plenty of land is available and anyone willing to work can supply his own needs. (This abundance of land may well be a by-product of the chronic state of warfare which is so common among these societies, and the high mortality rates which result.)

A second factor which seems to promote equality in material goods is *the relative absence of capital goods*. As a result, the demand for goods is much more limited than in more advanced societies, since the marginal utility of consumer goods declines more rapidly than the marginal utility of capital goods. The one thing always in short supply in simple horticultural societies is *prestige*.⁶¹ Under the circumstances, those who accumulate an appreciable surplus of material goods are very likely to *give it away* since by so doing they can acquire the one thing they do not have enough of, prestige. Thus it is not surprising to find in ethnographic reports frequent references to the liberality of chiefs, shamans, and others who were in a position to accumulate an abundance of goods.⁶²

To persons raised in technologically advanced societies, especially those with a capitalist tradition, the practice of giving away one's wealth as freely as is done in many of these societies seems singularly illogical and an indication of either an amazing concern for others or an obvious lack of common sense. Actually it is neither. Instead, it represents a shrewd and well-calculated pursuit of self-interest designed to maximize an individual's return on his investment of time, energy, and other resources.

⁶⁰ Métraux, *Native Tribes*, p. 39. See also the Kapauku of New Guinea (Pospisil, p. 18).

⁶¹ In some of these societies one might add wives to this.

⁶² In Kuma society, for example, reputation and status are achieved by dispensing wealth—except for wives—with a lavish hand. Reay states, "just as a prosperous clan enhances its reputation by presenting food to others, so a prosperous person enhances his reputation by disposing of his valuables."

To understand the logic of this system, there are several points which must be clearly recognized. First, women are the one really crucial form of capital goods in this type of society.⁶³ Second, in these societies there is a norm of reciprocity which makes it incumbent on individuals to repay all gifts with other gifts of equal value. Third, the principle of marginal utility is applicable here as elsewhere. Finally, status is as highly valued among these people as among us, and the desire for it just as insatiable.

Given these conditions, a "potlatch" pattern⁶⁴ is almost inevitable.⁶⁵ Men have only a limited capacity for the consumption of plumes, shell ornaments, and even pigs. Beyond a certain point, the individual finds that he stands to gain more by giving them away than by keeping them, since in so doing he both enhances his reputation and puts those who cannot repay under moral obligation to him.⁶⁶ Wives, however, are another matter. Being a very scarce and immensely valuable form of capital, they are hoarded and accumulated just as capital is in our own society. Thus the successful man, the "big man," is the individual who is able to accumulate capital, thereby insuring himself a steady stream of consumer items which can be exchanged for prestige and influence. In this way the skillful entrepreneur obtains for himself not only the material necessities of life, but also the more intangible rewards which looms so large in the eyes of those whose material needs are satisfied.

Thus it becomes clear that such actions, though technically "give-aways," are in reality *exchanges*. Those rich in goods trade their material surplus for deference or prestige, of which an unlimited supply is available. *The net effect of such actions is greatly to reduce inequality with respect to material possessions while substantially increasing it in the areas of prestige and influence.*

Before concluding this section a brief examination is necessary of the role of age and sex in the distributive process. On the whole, the situation in simple horticultural societies does not seem very different from that in hunting and gathering societies. Generally men enjoy a somewhat higher status than women, though there are variations in this respect, with societies ranging from near equality in a few cases to pronounced male dominance in others. The male advantage is more marked in some areas of life

⁶³ Pigs are also an important type of capital goods, but they are only productive when tended by women; otherwise they would run wild and be of no value to any single individual even though they breed prolifically. Also, they are not nearly in such short supply.

⁶⁴ This term refers to the famous ceremonies of the Indians of the Northwest Coast, at which the high point was the lavish distribution of gifts.

⁶⁵ To say that a "potlatch" pattern is "almost inevitable" does not mean that the pattern need be developed everywhere to the same degree as on the Northwest Coast.

⁶⁶ In writing of the Kapauku of New Guinea, Pospisil makes the point that a man's debtors are among his most reliable followers, and that giving to those who cannot repay is one of the surest paths to influence and honor (p. 21).

than others. For example, it is more pronounced with respect to political and military activities than with respect to material possessions. Even in the former areas, however, considerable evidence indicates that it is easy to exaggerate the degree to which women are subordinated in primitive life. For example, there are scattered reports of women chiefs, and in the case of the Iroquois the power of electing sachems was vested almost entirely in the hands of women.⁶⁷ As in hunting and gathering societies, the status of a woman is usually closely linked with that of the man on whom she is dependent.⁶⁸

With respect to *age*, increasing years are usually an asset in simple horticultural societies, at least up to the point where senility sets in. There are various reasons why this is so, but one is almost certainly the psychological influence of early childhood experiences. During the highly impressionable years of childhood, individuals come to associate authority and prestige with the older generation. So long as an older person remains physically and mentally vigorous, these childhood impressions are likely to survive, with the result that the younger person continues to grant deference long after the older one has lost his capacity to exact it. Furthermore, the older generation often has the advantage of organization: challenges to its authority usually come from single individuals, but tend to be met by a united front of elders. Since organization is one of the major bases of power, they are usually able to resist quite effectively. Finally, members of the older generation are generally the keepers of tradition, and in societies which place high value on tradition, this is an important source of strength.

Variable Features of Distributive Systems

Simple horticultural societies are no more carbon copies of one another than are hunting and gathering societies or any of the other major types. One need only compare the peaceful Zúñi of New Mexico with the warlike Jivaro of South America to realize how great the differences can be. As with hunting and gathering societies, however, the differences in pat-

⁶⁷ For examples of women chiefs, see Seligmann, pp. 346-347, Swanton, pp. 172-173, or Métraux on the Chiriguano in Steward, *Handbook*, vol. III, p. 479; for a discussion of the role of Iroquois women, see Murdock, *Contemporaries*, pp. 306-307.

⁶⁸ For two valuable discussions of the role of women in primitive societies, see Forde, *Habitat*, pp. 408-410 and Lowie, *Social Organization* (New York: Holt, 1948), pp. 263-266. Both point up the complexity of the relative status of women and the difficulties involved in any attempt to generalize about their status, even within a single society. As both point out, the treatment women receive, the character and extent of their labor, their legal status, and the degree of public prominence must all be considered, and their status in one respect is not necessarily comparable to their status in another.

terns of distribution cover only a limited portion of the total range of variation observable in human societies.

Many of these differences should already be apparent as a result of the preceding analysis. They can be summarized under four basic headings: (1) differences in degree of inequality, (2) differences in type of inequality, (3) differences in the sources of inequality, and (4) differences in degree of vertical mobility.

With respect to *degree of inequality*, the range of variation is not great, though it appears somewhat greater than in hunting and gathering societies. This is chiefly because the upper limit of the range is extended somewhat further toward the pole of inequality. The lower limits for the two types of societies do not appear very different. Among simple horticultural societies at this lower extreme, such as the Boro or Trumai of the Amazon region, inequality seems to be almost entirely due to differences in personal or biological characteristics. Society adds little to these differences in any way, and hence inequality is minimal.⁶⁹ At the other extreme there are societies, such as the Hasinai of Texas, the Kuma of New Guinea, or the Bauré of South America, with a level of inequality unmatched in any true hunting and gathering society.

There is a second important difference between hunting and gathering and simple horticultural societies with respect to degree of inequality. If we think in terms of the frequency distribution curves for the two types of societies, the ethnographic literature suggests that both are skewed, but in opposite directions. Whereas the curve for hunting and gathering societies seems strongly skewed in the direction of minimal inequality, the curve for simple horticultural societies seems slightly skewed in the opposite direction. Thus the overlap is not as great as a comparison of their ranges, or limits, might suggest.

As inequality becomes more marked, it tends to become more variable in *type*. As the discussion earlier in this chapter indicates, there is quite a difference between the systems of stratification in Hasinai and Kuma societies. In the former, political inequality, or differences in degree of political authority, are much more pronounced than differences in wealth; in the latter, this relationship is reversed. There are also differences in the value attached to religious and magical powers, military prowess, and skills in oratory. For example, the Pueblo Indians honor religious distinction much more than military distinction. The Jivaro reward both. Such differences are common.

⁶⁹ In some of these societies, for example, the chiefs were obliged to work like commoners. See, for example, Steward, *Handbook*, vol. I, p. 489, on the Canella, or vol. V, p. 342 and vol. III, p. 478, on the Chiriguano.

Third, there are differences in the *sources of inequality*. In some societies inequality is due almost entirely to differences which are biological in origin. This is especially true of those simple horticultural societies with minimal inequality. In other societies, social factors play a much larger role. Sometimes these social factors serve merely to magnify the effect of the biological factors. At other times, however, they tend to displace the biological factors. This is especially likely to occur when the social factors are *inheritable*, as in the case of private property or offices which pass from father to son.

Finally, as the preceding suggests, there are differences in the *degree of vertical mobility*. All the available evidence indicates that this is greatest in those societies where the inheritance of key resources such as wealth and office are minimal. The appearance of these factors serves to stabilize patterns of inequality and to make it easier for those who enjoy power, privilege, and prestige to retain them and pass them on to their children.⁷⁰

As the foregoing makes clear, all four variable features are highly interrelated. Among simple horticultural societies a low degree of inequality tends to be linked with (1) minimal variation in the types of inequality, (2) maximal importance of biological factors as sources of inequality, and (3) maximal mobility. By contrast, a high degree of inequality is linked with (1) maximal variation in types of inequality, (2) minimal importance of biological factors, and (3) minimal mobility. These relationships are obviously not accidental.

These differences among peoples of the same societal type give rise to many interesting questions concerning causes which have, as yet, been hardly examined. For the present it appears that the best we can do is hypothesize that the same factors cited in the analysis of variations among hunting and gathering societies (see page 113) are also operative among simple horticultural societies. This is clearly an area meriting careful study in the future.

A Critical Development

One of the most important developments associated with the emergence of horticultural societies is the strengthening of the position of political leaders. As noted in the last chapter, the prerogatives of headmen are few in hunting and gathering societies, and these men are obliged to govern

⁷⁰ See, for example, Reay's discussion of this subject as it applies to the Kuma. The systems of private property and polygyny in this tribe had the effect of keeping boys raised in poor subclans poor and those raised in prosperous clans prosperous. Obviously, a similar pattern exists wherever lucrative offices are hereditary, as tends to be true of the Manasí and Mojo.

by persuasion. Authority is almost totally absent, hence tyranny is virtually impossible.

In most simple horticultural societies the prerogatives of leaders are substantially greater. Often they wear special insignia or clothing, setting them apart.⁷¹ In addition, they are often shown special deference, as in the case of the Manasí chiefs, whose people address them only in a very formal manner and in whose presence the young people are not permitted to sit, or as in the case of the Atsahuaka chief, in whose presence the people speak in whispers.⁷² In a great many cases the chiefs of simple horticultural societies have special privileges. For example, Jivaro chiefs are entitled to first choice among women captives, Chiquito chiefs are permitted to practice polygamy, and Boro chiefs are given larger and more convenient garden plots.⁷³ Quite commonly these chiefs are exempted from manual labor and have their material necessities supplied by their people.⁷⁴ In a number of instances they receive the equivalent of taxes, or a share in the product of the labors of others.⁷⁵ Finally, in many instances they can declare war and lay military obligations on others, and in a few instances they can even terminate wars which are in progress.⁷⁶

Obviously, no single chief has all these prerogatives, but some enjoy a number of them. While a few of these rights are found in some hunting and gathering societies, most are not. Most represent new elements of chiefly authority. As a consequence, one finds the first traces of real tyranny in these societies. The cases in which this is reported are not numerous, but they are sufficient to indicate the beginnings of a development destined to have far-reaching consequences in more advanced societies.

One of the clearest evidences of this incipient tyranny is found in an Australian anthropologist's discussion of the political situation in the tribes on the northeast coast of New Guinea. This writer, H. Ian Hogbin, states:

. . . most headmen appear to have used their powers with fairness and discretion. One or two, however, are said to have become filled with their own importance and behaved as though they were masters of their people.

⁷¹ See, for example, the Boro as reported by Seligmann, pp. 220-221 the Kuma as reported by Reay, p. 114, or the Chiriguano as reported by Métraux in Steward, *Handbook*, vol. III, p. 479.

⁷² See Métraux, *Native Tribes*, pp. 129 and 53, respectively.

⁷³ For the Jivaro, see Stirling, p. 56; for the Chiquito, see Métraux, *Native Tribes*, p. 125; for the Boro, see Forde, *Habitat*, p. 135.

⁷⁴ See, for example, the Hopi (Murdock, *Contemporaries*, p. 336), the Manasí, the Bauré, and the Paressí (Métraux, *Native Tribes*, pp. 129, 69, and 165, respectively).

⁷⁵ See, for example, the Manasí and the Paressí (Métraux, *ibid.*).

⁷⁶ See, for example, the description of the powers of the Hasinai war chief according to an early Catholic missionary (Stirling, p. 191). For an example of peacemaking powers, see Seligmann, p. 58.

Yomsa', for example, committed adultery a number of times, was always demanding pigs, and carried out sorcery against all who opposed him.⁷⁷

He then goes on to say that such headmen were usually removed from the scene sooner or later. For instance, Yomsa' was enticed to a lonely part of the beach by some of his own relatives and there stabbed in the throat. This proved to be an ideal solution to the problem; the necessity for blood revenge was eliminated because one of Yomsa's own kinsmen wielded the knife. Hogbin reports that in another community with a similar problem the whole village joined in the assassination.

These cases are interesting because they indicate that in simple horticultural societies a very limited degree of tyranny is possible, but that the means are not yet available for the tyrant to protect himself against the reaction which inevitably develops if he presses his interests too far. For one thing, he lacks a staff of dependent specialists whose interests are linked with his. Furthermore, the general democracy in weapons and the universal experience in their use combine to put him at a disadvantage against an aroused opposition (though sometimes chiefs have special magical powers which can be used for private advantage⁷⁸). Finally, those he exploits are in constant contact and communication with one another so that he does not enjoy any organizational advantage such as tyrants in more complex societies enjoy when dealing with their opponents. All these factors combine to limit the opportunities for the development of tyrannical government in simple horticultural societies. However, it is in societies at this level of development that the first halting steps are taken.⁷⁹

One other factor which contributes significantly to the beginning of tyranny is the way in which certain societies handle the redistributive problem. In some societies this is done in a decentralized, nonpolitical fashion; in others, a centralized, political solution is adopted. In the former instance, those who are able to produce a surplus of consumer goods simply hold a feast and distribute the surplus to their guests directly. In

⁷⁷ Hogbin, pp. 144-145. Quoted by permission.

⁷⁸ In this connection it is important to realize that sorcery actually can be highly effective in primitive societies, owing to the almost universal belief in the efficacy of magic. The anthropological record makes it very clear that many primitives have been killed by sorcery alone.

⁷⁹ There are a number of other indications of this tendency in ethnographic reports. For example, Swanton reports that the Caddo chiefs frequently followed the practice of calling the old men of the village together for consultation before taking action, but then proceeded to do what they, the chiefs, thought best (p. 172). In the case of the Takanan of South America we are told that the common people were obliged to work hard for their chiefs (Métraux, *Native Tribes*, p. 40). The Bauré apparently found it necessary to develop the practice of having certain of the older men remind the chiefs of their duty when they seemed inclined to abuse their authority (*ibid.*, p. 69).

other societies, however, the chief functions as a middle man, and goods are brought to him for redistribution.⁸⁰ This technique affords a unique opportunity for one individual to exercise an inordinate degree of control over the life of his society, provided there is an appreciable surplus. If there is, the chief is in a position to withdraw some of it for his own use, though he would probably have to justify his action by cultivating the belief that this was, somehow, for the benefit of the group as a whole. If the surplus is very small, as is the case in virtually all simple horticultural societies, he is probably unable to do more than free himself and his immediate family from the burdens of food production and other menial labor. When the surplus becomes larger, however, it becomes possible for the chief to free others from subsistence activities and put them to work at tasks of his choosing. Given our earlier assumptions about the nature of man, we should predict that such persons will usually be given tasks which benefit the chief first and foremost, and only incidentally, if at all, the other members of the tribe. Since the enlargement of the surplus is a development which comes to full flower only in advanced horticultural societies, the testing of this prediction must be postponed until the next chapter.

⁸⁰ See, for example, the Koita of New Guinea (Seligmann, p. 54).