Hunting and Gathering Society

As told by Dr. Frank Elwell
The spread of humans around the world
Mode of Production

- Even in the most favorable environments, the population density rarely reached 10 people per square mile, more commonly 3 per square mile.
IN ORDER TO SURVIVE, ALL SOCIETIES MUST ESTABLISH TECHNOLOGICAL AND ECONOMIC SYSTEMS.

TECHNOLOGY AND ECONOMY ARE VERY CLOSELY RELATED IN EVERY SOCIETY, YET THEY ARE NOT THE SAME THING.
The G/wi are contemporary hunter & gatherers living in the Central Kalahari. Anthropological studies of their way of life, and that of the !Kung, have revealed much that throw a light on our early ancestors’ lives.
A SOCIETY'S TECHNOLOGY CONSISTS OF THE TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES THAT ITS MEMBERS HAVE CREATED IN ORDER TO MEET THEIR NEEDS AND WANTS. A SOCIETY'S ECONOMY CONSISTS OF THESOCially ORGANIZED WAY IN WHICH GOODS AND SERVICES ARE PRODUCED AND DISTRIBUTED.
FOR ABOUT 99% OF THEIR HISTORY, HUMANS SUBSISTED ENTIRELY BY HUNTING WILD ANIMALS AND GATHERING WILD PLANT FOODS.
Early Neolithic man in Europe. (Mural by Charles R. Knight.)
THE TOTAL MONOPOLY OF THE HUNTING AND GATHERING WAY OF LIFE WAS NOT BROKEN UNTIL SOME 10,000 YEARS AGO, WHEN SOME SOCIETIES BEGAN TO SUBSIST BY THE PRACTICE OF AGRICULTURE.
HUNTERS AND GATHERERS LIVE IN SMALL GROUPS KNOWN AS LOCAL BANDS. THESE ARE GROUPS OF ABOUT 25 TO 50 WOMEN, MEN, AND CHILDREN WHO COOPERATE WITH EACH OTHER IN THE QUEST FOR SUBSISTENCE.
A fire reinforces the social bond: it becomes the focus of the group and allows contact to be maintained during the hours of darkness, as here where a !Kung trance is in progress.
EACH LOCAL BAND IS A MORE OR LESS POLITICALLY AUTONOMOUS AND ECONOMICALLY SELF-SUFFICIENT UNIT. HOWEVER, MANY LOCAL BANDS ARE USUALLY CONNECTED BY TIES OF INTERMARRIAGE INTO A MUCH LARGER CULTURAL UNIT, SOMETIMES KNOWN AS A TRIBE.
Bushman women returning to camp. They have been out gathering wild vegetables.
A TRIBE IS A NETWORK OF BANDS ALL OF WHOSE MEMBERS SHARE THE SAME CULTURAL PATTERNS AND SPEAK THE SAME LANGUAGE.
A young Cheyenne in special war dress with European influence providing a pistol and cartridge belt.
THE COMPOSITION OF EACH LOCAL BAND IS CONSTANTLY SHIFTING. PERSONS FREQUENTLY MOVE FROM ONE BAND TO ANOTHER. SUCH MOVEMENT MAY ARISE FROM MARRIAGE, OR FROM A NEED TO CREATE A MORE EVEN BALANCE BETWEEN POPULATION SIZE AND THE FOOD SUPPLY.
An elaborate system of hand signals is used by hunting people today. The !Kung is giving the sign for a secretary bird. It is likely that similar signals were supplementary to early man’s relatively simple language.
HUNTER-GATHERERS GENERALLY DEPEND UPON GATHERING FOR THE BULK OF THEIR DIET.

LEE (1968) HAS ESTIMATED THAT CONTEMPORARY H&Gs DERIVE ABOUT 65% OF THEIR DIET FROM GATHERED FOODS.
Bushman woman cooking mongongo nuts. After the exterior of the fruit is eaten, the nut itself is cracked to get at the edible nut meat.
NEVERTHELESS, MORE TIME IS USUALLY SPENT IN HUNTING ACTIVITIES, AND MEAT IS A MORE HIGHLY VALUED FOOD.
MODE OF PRODUCTION

SINCE HUNTER-GATHERERS ARE FOOD COLLECTORS RATHER THAN FOOD PRODUCERS, THEY MUST WANDER OVER WIDE GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS IN SEARCH OF FOOD.
A band of G/wi stalking giraffes in the Central Kalahari.
Model of an Eskimo snow house. The house is heated by stone lamps burning seal fat. The curved entryway reduces the wind effect, as does the small door into the main house.
THEY ARE THUS GENERALLY NOMADIC, AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF PERMANENT SETTLEMENTS IS HIGHLY UNUSUAL.
Winter quarters, Sioux Indians. Part of a group of tipis arranged in a circle in a grove of trees near the banks of the Missouri River.
TOOLS:

THE TECHNOLOGICAL INVENTORY OF H&Gs IS QUITE LIMITED. THE TOOLS AND WEAPONS USED DIRECTLY FOR SUBSISTENCE TYPICALLY INCLUDES...
TOOLS:

- SPEARS
- BOWS AND ARROWS
- NETS AND TRAPS
- DIGGING STICKS
- NEEDLES, PINS, AWLS
- ANTLER HAMMERS
- AXES
Types of spear throwers or atlalts. The spear thrower precedes the bow and arrow in Europe and the Americas.
Traps and snares are widely used. Aluet duck snare.
Bushman animal trap.
TOOLS:

TOOLS ARE SIMPLE, GENERALLY MADE OF STONE, WOOD, BONE, OR OTHER NATURAL MATERIALS. THERE ARE USUALLY FEW OR NO TECHNIQUES FOR FOOD STORAGE OR PRESERVATION, AND FOOD IS GENERALLY CONSUMED IMMEDIATELY.
Percussion flaking of stone implements by striking with a hammer stone. (Courtesy of the American Museum of Natural History.)
Pressure flaking or chipping of stone implements by applying pressure with a bone or similar instrument. (Courtesy of the American Museum of Natural History.)
The fire plow. Heat is produced by rubbing a stick back and forth in a channel in the block of wood. One of the most common fire-making methods.
A pump drill used for boring holes and making fires known to some hunters and gatherers.
DIVISION OF LABOR

H&G SOCIETIES ARE THE SIMPLEST IN STRUCTURE OF ALL HUMAN SOCIETIES. THE DIVISION OF LABOR IS BASED ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY ON AGE AND SEX DISTINCTIONS.
Early morning in a temporary !Kung camp that has been established in a nut-tree grove.
DIVISION OF LABOR

PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR SUBSISTENCE ORDINARILY FALLS TO PERSONS WHO ARE IN MIDDLE ADULTHOOD, WITH BOTH YOUNG AND OLD MEMBERS CONTRIBUTING LESS TO THE SUBSISTENCE NEEDS OF THE GROUP.
Arunta mother and child. All purpose carrying dish on head and digging stick in hand.
DIVISION OF LABOR

- HUNTING IS CONDUCTED BY MALES, GATHERING BY FEMALES.
- ALTHOUGH WOMEN MAY OCCASIONALLY ENGAGE IN THE HUNTING OF SMALL ANIMALS, THEY ARE NEVER INVOLVED IN BIG GAME HUNTING.
Bushman women filling ostrich egg shell canteens at a seasonal water hole.
Cheyenne woman sewing together tanned deerskins to make a new tipi cover. Meat drying in the background is essential for the Plains Indians to guard against periodic game shortages.
LIKEWISE, MEN SOMETIMES SHARE IN GATHERING ACTIVITIES, BUT THEY ARE THE PRINCIPAL GATHERERS IN NO H&G SOCIETY.
The G/wi people live in an area that is even more marginal than the one inhabited by the !Kung. During the dry season they obtain water by eating succulent plants such as melons.
Much of the G/wi food comes from plants such as tubers which are often roasted.
G/wi: after a successful hunt the kill is carried back to the camp.
G/wi shelter.
THERE ARE NO SPECIALIZED "ARROW MAKERS" OR "BOW MAKERS." EACH MAN AND WOMAN MAKES ALL OF THE TOOLS THAT SHE NEEDS IN THE SUBSISTENCE QUEST.
DIVISION OF LABOR

H&Gs ARE NOTORIOUSLY LACKING IN OCCUPATIONAL SPECIALIZATION BEYOND SUBSISTENCE TASKS.
Top: American Indian birch bark canoe; bottom: American Indian dugout canoe.
INDIVIDUAL FAMILIES WITHIN EACH LOCAL BAND ARE LINKED TOGETHER INTO A TOTAL ECONOMIC UNIT, THE LOCAL BAND ITSELF.
THE PRIMARY UNIT OF SUBSISTENCE AMONG H&Gs IS THE FAMILY, AND ECONOMIC LIFE MAY BE TERMED FAMILISTIC. WHILE INDIVIDUAL FAMILIES PRODUCE THEIR OWN SUBSISTENCE, THEY ALSO CONTRIBUTE IN SIGNIFICANT WAYS TO THE SUBSISTENCE OF OTHER FAMILIES WITHIN THEIR BAND.
Socializing is an important part of life among the !Kung: telling a story.
!Kung women playing melon toss--a combination of a dance and a game.
HUNTER-GATHERERS ARE WELL KNOWN FOR THEIR FAILURE TO PRODUCE AN ECONOMIC SURPLUS, AN EXCESS OF GOODS OVER AND ABOVE WHAT IS NEEDED FOR SUBSISTENCE.
!Kung men pegging out a skin.
UNTIL RECENTLY IT WAS WIDELY BELIEVED THAT THIS WAS DUE SIMPLY TO AN INABILITY TO DO SO, AN INABILITY RESULTING FROM A MARGINAL AND PRECARIOUS EXISTENCE.
Artist’s conception of mammoth hunters’ settlement in Czechoslovakia about 25,000 years ago, based on archaeological finds.
SOCIAL SCIENTISTS NOW GENERALLY AGREE THAT THE FAILURE TO PRODUCE A SURPLUS IS DUE TO A LACK OF ANY REAL NEED.
ECONOMY

Since the resources of nature are always there for the taking, nature itself becomes a kind of great storehouse. Contemporary evidence of H&G societies support this—even though they often live in more marginal environments than prehistoric H&Gs.
Bushman mother carrying infant while digging roots.
HUNTERS AND GATHERERS DO NOT APPEAR TO WORK HARD OR LONG. THEY GENERALLY WORK LESS THAN THE MEMBERS OF MORE TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED SOCIETIES.
Yecuana man is shown tying tree cotton to the butt of blow-gun darts. The points are then dipped in curare poison.
Yecuna men using blow guns. The quiver hangs in front where darts can be quickly withdrawn for reloading.
THE !KUNG BUSHMEN ADULTS SPEND ONLY AN AVERAGE OF ABOUT 12 TO 19 HOURS PER WEEK IN FOOD-GETTING ACTIVITIES, AND THUS THEY HAVE A GREAT DEAL OF TIME AVAILABLE FOR RESTING AND VISITING (LEE, 1968).
Life in a !Kung camp is not particularly arduous thus there is a fair amount of leisure time for activities other than hunting and gathering. A !Kung healing dance.
THE HAZDA OBTAIN SUFFICIENT FOOD WITH RELATIVE EASE. THEY SPEND LESS TIME AND ENERGY IN OBTAINING SUBSISTENCE THAN DO THEIR AGRICULTURAL NEIGHBORS (WOODBURN, 1968).
Gathering and trapping are a most important part of the !Kung economy. A kaross of plant food that has been gathered during a day’s sortie.
A guinea fowl that has been trapped together with a collection of eggs.
WHILE IT IS DOUBTFUL THAT ALL HUNTER-GATHERER SOCIETIES CONSTITUTE AN "ORIGINAL AFFLUENT SOCIETY," PROBABLY THE MAJORITY DO.
The mongongo tree provides shelter for campsites and nuts for food. Here !Kung children are playing.
!Kung women dipping for water from the base of a tree.
LIVING AMIDST MATERIAL ABUNDANCE, WORKING ONLY MODERATELY TO MAKE A LIVING, AND ENJOYING AN ABUNDANCE OF LEISURE TIME, MOST H&G PEOPLES MAINTAIN A RETTY GOOD LIFE.
Home and possessions of Paiute family in southern Utah in the 1870s.
IN THE MIDDLE OF THE 19th CENTURY, KARL MARX SPECULATED THAT THE EARLIEST MODE OF ECONOMIC LIFE IN HUMAN HISTORY WAS WHAT HE TERMED PRIMITIVE COMMUNISM.
BY PRIMITIVE COMMUNISM, MARX MEANT A TYPE OF SOCIETY IN WHICH ALL OF THE VITAL RESOURCES AND TECHNOLOGIES WERE HELD IN COMMON. PRIVATE OWNERSHIP OF RESOURCES BY INDIVIDUALS OR SMALL GROUPS WAS NOT FOUND, HE THOUGHT, IN THIS TYPE OF SOCIETY.
THE VAST MAJORITY OF HUNTER-GATHERERS STUDIES BY MODERN ANTHROPOLOGISTS DISPLAY A MODE OF RESOURCE OWNERSHIP THAT CAN BE ADEQUATELY CHARACTERIZED BY MARX'S NOTION OF PRIMITIVE COMMUNISM.
Bushman hunter, southwest Africa.
ALTHOUGH MANY SOCIAL SCIENTISTS HAVE CHALLENGED MARX'S VIEW ON THIS MATTER OVER THE YEARS, CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL SCIENCE PROVIDES CONSIDERABLE EVIDENCE THAT MARX WAS BASICALLY CORRECT.
ALL INDIVIDUALS IN SUCH SOCIETIES HAVE EQUAL ACCESS TO THOSE RESOURCES OF NATURE THAT ARE NECESSARY FOR THEIR SUBSISTENCE.
NO PERSON AMONG H&G BANDS MAY BE DEPRIVED BY ANY OTHER PERSON OR GROUP OF AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY TO HUNT GAME, COLLECT PLANTS, USE A WATERHOLE, OR CAMP ON THE LAND. EVERYONE THUS "OWNS" THESE RESOURCES COLLECTIVELY.
RECIPROCITY

RECIPROCITY IS THE OBLIGATION TO REPAY OTHERS FOR WHAT THEY HAVE GIVEN OR DONE FOR US, OR IT IS THE OVERT ACT OF REPAYING OTHERS.
TWO DISTINCT TYPES OF RECIPROCITY, KNOWN AS BALANCED AND GENERALIZED RECIPROCITY, EXIST.
BALANCED RECIPROCITY

OCCURS WHEN INDIVIDUALS ARE OBLIGATED TO PROVIDE EQUIVALENT AND, FREQUENTLY, IMMEDIATE REPAYMENT TO OTHERS.
BALANCED RECIPROCITY CAN BE IDENTIFIED BY THE FACT THAT INDIVIDUALS OPENLY CALCULATE WHAT THEY ARE GIVING EACH OTHER AND OPENLY DECLARE THE NATURE OF THE REPAYMENT TO BE MADE.
BALANCED RECIPROCITY

EACH PARTY TO THE TRANSACTION EXPECTS TO BENEFIT IN SOME WAY, BUT THERE IS A CLEAR EXPECTATION OF MUTUAL BENEFIT AND A LACK OF "EXPLOITATION."
GENERALIZED RECIPROCITY

OCCURS WHEN INDIVIDUALS ARE OBLIGATED TO GIVE OTHERS WITHOUT EXPECTING ANY IMMEDIATE OR EQUIVALENT REPAYMENT.
GENERALIZED RECIPROCITY

GENERALIZED RECIPROCITY DOES NOT INVOLVE ANY DIRECT OR OPEN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE PARTIES INVOLVED.
GENERALIZED RECIPROCITY

THERE IS A GENERAL EXPECTATION THAT EQUIVALENT REPAYMENT OF A DEBT SHALL BE MADE, BUT THERE IS NO PARTICULAR TIME LIMIT SET FOR REPAYMENT, NOR IS THERE ANY SPECIFICATION AS TO HOW THE REPAYMENT SHALL BE MADE.
GENERALIZED RECIPROCITY

While generalized reciprocity occurs to some extent in all societies (it occurs among friends and family members in our own society), it ...
GENERALIZED RECIPROCITY

GENERALIZED RECIPROCITY CONSTITUTES THE VERY ESSENCE OF ECONOMIC LIFE AMONG HUNTERS AND GATHERERS.
HUNTER AND GATHERING PEOPLES ARE FAMED FOR THEIR EXTENSIVE FOOD-SHARING. INDIVIDUALS CONSTANTLY GIVE FOOD TO OTHERS AND RECEIVE FOOD IN RETURN.
GENERALIZED RECIPROCITY

When a hunter gives meat to others he expects only that he will probably be repaid in some way at some time. Women constantly give away portions of food they have gathered too.
GENERALIZED RECIPROCITY

ONE WIDELY SUGGESTED REASON GENERALIZED RECIPROCITY IS THE DOMINANT DISTRIBUTIVE MODE IS THAT IT IS DUE TO A "NATURAL" TENDENCY TO SHARE FOUND AMONG PEOPLE.
GENERALIZED RECIPROCITY

THE IDEA IS THAT SUCH PEOPLE HAVE NOT YET BEEN CORRUPTED BY THE INFLUENCE OF PRIVATE PROPERTY. THIS EXPLANATION SEEMS DUBIOUS. IT ALSO PAINTS A VERY ROMANTIC PICTURE OF HUNTER-GATHERERS.
GENERALIZED RECIPROCITY

THE EXPLANATION IS MORE LIKELY TO BE FOUND IN THE NECESSITY OF CLOSE FORMS OF COOPERATION AMONG THE MEMBERS OF H&G GROUPS.
GENERALIZED RECIPROCITY

CLOSE FORMS OF COOPERATION AMONG THE MEMBERS OF THESE BANDS IS ESSENTIAL, THEY INTIMATELY DEPEND ON EACH OTHER FOR SURVIVAL.
GENERALIZED RECIPROCITY

WHILE RESOURCES ARE TYPICALLY NOT HIGHLY SCARCE IN A GENERAL SENSE, THEY ARE NOTORIOUSLY SUBJECT TO MARKED FLUCTUATIONS IN AVAILABILITY.
THUS A MAN MAY ENCOUNTER A LONG RUN OF BAD LUCK IN HUNTING. IF OTHERS DO NOT GIVE MEANT TO HIM DURING THIS TIME, HE MUST GO WITHOUT.
Bushman men awaiting the distribution of meat from a small wart hog.
GENERALIZED RECIPROCITY

They give meat to him because they know they too will eventually have bad hunting luck, during which time they will expect to receive meat from him.
GENERALIZED RECIPROCITY IS THUS A SPECIAL INSTANCE OF THE PHENOMENON OF ENLIGHTENED SELF-INTEREST.
STRATIFICATION, NOT

GENERALLY SPEAKING, HUNTING AND GATHERING SOCIETIES ARE UNSTRATIFIED.
STRATIFICATION, NOT

THEIR ECONOMIES ARE CHARACTERIZED BY GENERALIZED RECIPROCITY, BY AN INTENSE SHARING AND COOPERATIVENESS AMONG ALL MEMBERS, THEY GENERALLY EXHIBIT "PRIMITIVE COMMUNISM": OWNERSHIP (OR AT LEAST RIGHT OF USE) OF BASIC RESOURCES IS COMMUNAL.
H&G SOCIETIES ARE NOT CHARACTERIZED, THEREFORE, BY ANY SOCIAL STRATA.
A Sioux grave in a tree. In a region without stone, it is difficult for migratory people to protect the corpse from predatory animals.
YET THE ABSENCE OF SOCIAL STRATA DOES NOT MEAN THAT PERFECT EQUALITY PREVAILS AMONG ALL THE MEMBERS OF H&G SOCIETIES...
INEQUALITIES DO EXIST. THESE ARE MAINLY INEQUALITIES OF PRESTIGE OF SOCIAL INFLUENCE AND ARE TYPICALLY BASED ON SUCH FACTORS AS AGE, SEX, AND PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS.
INEQUALITY

- AS IS COMMON THROUGHOUT THE WORLD, MEN TEND TO HAVE HIGHER STATUS THAN WOMEN.
- PROBABLY DUE TO THE FACT THAT MEN BRING IN THE MEAT, A MORE HIGHLY CONCENTRATED AND VALUED SOURCE OF PROTEIN AND CALORIES.
OLDER MEMBERS OF SOCIETY ARE OFTEN GIVEN MORE HONOR AND RESPECT THAN THE YOUNGER ONES.

PROBABLY DUE TO THE ABSENCE OF WRITING--THE OLD ARE THE KEEPERS OF MEMORY.
INEQUALITY

IN ADDITION, THE POSSESSION OF CERTAIN PERSONAL TRAITS IS GENERALLY A BASIS FOR THE ACQUISITION OF PRESTIGE.
MEN WHO ARE PARTICULARLY SKILLED HUNTERS, WHO SHOW SPECIAL COURAGE, OR WHO ARE THOUGHT OF AS HAVING GREAT WISDOM ARE OFTEN ACCORDED HIGH PRESTIGE. SUCH INDIVIDUALS TYPICALLY ASSUME LEADERSHIP FUNCTIONS.
INEQUALITY

HOWEVER, MEN OF PRESTIGE AND INFLUENCE ARE NO MORE THAN "FIRSTS AMONG EQUALS," AND THEY TYPICALLY HAVE NO SPECIAL PRIVILEGES NOT AVAILABLE TO OTHERS.
IT SHOULD ALSO BE NOTED THAT THE ACQUISITION OF PRESTIGE AND INFLUENCE COMES FROM AN INDIVIDUAL'S OWN ABILITIES, NOT FROM ANY MECHANISM OF SOCIAL HEREDITY OR PROPERTY.
Prestige is both personally gained and personally lost. Individuals must continually justify such honor.
INEQUALITY

Thus, H&G societies permit virtually complete equality of opportunity for individuals to gain high status. In such societies, talent, effort, and social reward are closely aligned, a fact that sets them sharply apart from highly stratified societies.
INEQUALITY

THE DEGREE OF PRESTIGE IS VERY MILD WHEN COMPARED TO THE NATURE OF PRESTIGE IN OTHER SOCIETIES.
H&Gs LOATHE BOASTING AND SELF-GLORIFICATION, AND THEY USE STRONG SANCTIONS AGAINST THOSE PERSONS WHO COME TO THINK TOO HIGHLY OF THEMSELVES. THEIR EMPHASIS IS CLEARLY ON COMMUNAL WELL-BEING AND GENERAL SOCIAL EQUALITY.
SEXUAL INEQUALITY

HUNTING AND GATHERING SOCIETIES VARY IN THE PROPORTION OF SUSISTENCE PROVIDED BY EITHER MEAT OR PLANT FOOD.
SEXUAL INEQUALITY

AMONG SOME, SUCH AS THE ESKIMO, HUNTING ACCOUNTS FOR NEARLY ALL SUBSISTENCE NEEDS. AMONG MOST OTHERS, HOWEVER, THE FOODS PROVIDED BY GATHERING ACCOUNT FOR WELL OVER HALF OF THE TOTAL SUBSISTENCE.
SEXUAL INEQUALITY

WHERE MEN PROVIDE MOST OF THE FOOD SUPPLY THROUGH MEAT, AS AMONG THE ESKIMO, THEIR STATUS IS MUCH HIGHER THAN THAT OF WOMEN.
SEXUAL INEQUALITY

HUNTING GIVES MEN THE OPPORTUNITY FOR THE EXTRADOMESTIC EXCHANGE OF MEAT, THE MOST PRESTIGIOUS FOOD AMONG FORAGERS.
SEXUAL INEQUALITY

WHERE MALE HUNTING PROVIDES THE BULK OF THE FOD, MALE AGGRESSION TOWARD WOMEN IS PROMINENT AND A PATTERN OF STRONG MALE DOMINANCE EXISTS.
SEXUAL INEQUALITY

BY THE SAME TOKEN, WHERE THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF WOMEN TO SUBSISTENCE IS HIGH, THE STATUS OF MEN AND WOMEN IS MORE NEARLY EQUIVALENT.
FRIEDL (1975) CONCLUDES THAT MALE DOMINANCE IS GREATEST WHERE MEN MONOPOLIZE ECONOMIC PRODUCTION, AND SEXUAL EQUALITY IS MOST NEARLY APROACHED IN FORAGING SOCIETIES IN WHICH MEN AND WOMEN WORK TOGETHER TO PROVIDE SUBSISTENCE.
THE MOST RUDIMENTARY FORM OF POLITICAL SOCIETY IS THE BAND, A FORM OF POLITY TYPICALLY ASSOCIATED WITH HUNTING AND GATHERING SOCIETIES.
Arunta men (Australia) preparing themselves for totemic ritual.
AS SERVICE (1971) POINTS OUT, ALL BAND-LEVEL POLITICAL STRUCTURES ARE FOUND WITHIN HUNTING AND GATHERING SOCIETIES, EVEN THOUGH NOT ALL HUNTER-GATHERERS ARE POLITICALLY ORGANIZED AT THE BAND LEVEL;
THE BAND

AND SUCH SOCIEITES AS HAVE DEVELOPED BEYOND THE BAND LEVEL HAVE HAD SOME INFRASTRUCTURAL FEATURES UNUSUAL FOR HUNTER-GATHERERS.
THE BAND

POLITICAL LEADERSHIP RESTS UPON INFLUENCE AND TYPICALLY LACKS ANY SORT OF REAL POWER.
Political decision making is not taken lightly. Cheyenne Indians dressed for a council meeting.
THE BAND

IN ADDITION, LEADERSHIP TENDS TO BE DISPLAYED IN TRANSIENT FASHION, FREQUENTLY SHIFTING FROM ONE PERSON TO ANOTHER. THESE SHIFTS APEAR TO BE ASSOCIATED MORE WITH THE NATURE OF SOCIAL SITUATIONS THAN WITH THE NATURE OF PERSONS.
Bontoc Warrior,
Philippine Islands.
FRIED (1967) NOTES THAT THE NATURE OF LEADERSHIP BEARS A CLOSE RELATION TO VARIATIONS IN ECOLOGY AND DEMOGRAPHY.
MORE EXTENSIVE LEADERSHIP (AND GREATER POWER UNDERLYING LEADERSHIP) IS ASSOCIATED WITH DENSER POPULATIONS AND MORE PRODUCTIVE SUBSISTENCE PATTERNS.
THE BAND

THE POLITICAL STRUCTURE IS THUS A LOOSELY ORGANIZED PATTERN OF FREQUENTLY SHIFTING, INFORMAL LEADERSHIP.
THE BAND

This leadership is typically invested in a person known as a headman, although he is often not the only person who exercises influence or leadership over others.
Bushman shaman in trance, southwestern Africa.
THE BAND

SOME BAND-LEVEL SOCIETIES ARE SO LOOSELY ORGANIZED THAT THEY APPEAR TO LACK ANY SORT OF LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE ALTOGETHER. THE ESKIMO ARE AN EXCELLENT EXAMPLE. NOT "DO THIS!" BUT RATHER "IF THIS IS DONE, IT WILL BE GOOD."
RELIGION

- Sympathetic magic
- Ceremony and Ritual
Medicine tipi of the Sioux, the largest in the camp. Here the group congregate for ceremonies. The shaman is tanning a wolf skin.
Religion

- Sympathetic Magic: Anything done to an image, or a part of a person or animal will affect that person or animal.

- Indicated by drawings of men and women dancing and engravings of processions of men standing before animals, heads bowed and weapons resting on their shoulders in a non-threatening position.
A magician is blowing smoke on a tree struck by lightning to "cool" it. Otherwise, it is believed, the lightning that struck a few days earlier might kill somebody. Gurumbura tribe of eastern highlands, New Guinea.
Split cedar plank house of the Haida Indian fishermen, north Pacific coast. The carved house posts may have genealogical or status significance or perhaps mythological meanings.
THE TIES OF KINSHIP OFTEN PERSIST AFTER DEATH.
The art of this era reveals the growth of human consciousness and the effort of people to understand and control their environment, and it attests to the growing gulf between them and the rest of the animal world.
Cave art by contemporary Australian hunters and gatherers: the water snake and turtle are important figures in their religion.
Polychrome Bison from Font-de-Gaume, Dordogne, France. (Courtesy of the American Museum of Natural History.)
From 40,000 to 7000 B.C.

- Quickening Pace of Change
  - Tools
  - Weapons
  - Art
Horse and hind from Altamira, Spain. (Courtesy of the American Museum of Natural History.)
Cro-Magnon artists in the cave of Font-de-Gaume. Mural by Charles Knight. (Courtesy of the American Museum of Natural History.)
Rapid Acceleration of Change

- Genetic
- Language
- Population
Genetic

The rapid acceleration in the rate of change in the last 30,000 years of the Hunting & Gathering era cannot be explained by genetic change alone, since our species, Homo Sapiens, had already evolved by 100,000 B.C.
While symbol use began much earlier than this, earlier symbols were probably much less effective as instruments for the acquisition, storage, and transmission of information.
Growth of population may also have had an effect on technological development.
The rate of growth of the human population increased substantially after 40,000 B.C.
Population levels also substantially increased.
Population Growth Rates per 1,000 Years

[Graph showing population growth rates over different time periods (1800000 Y.A., 150000 Y.A., 40000 Y.A.)]
One of the last photographs of the Ona of Tierra del Fuego, a tribe of hunters and gatherers now extinct.