

## **WAYS OF LIFE**

The evolution of societies is classified according to Ways of Life, which describe the primary way in which groups organized themselves to survive, including the technologies they used and the resources they extracted. This diagram displays the evolution of different Ways of Life among Chile's indigenous peoples in the country's main geographic zones.

### **HUNTERS OF THE MEGAFaUNA**

The Americas were first populated near the end of the Pleistocene, when environmental conditions were completely different from those presently in force, as the continent was in a transition period between the Ice Age and a modern climatic regime. Thus, temperatures were lower, and much of the land was still covered in ice. In this environment, populations of large herbivores such as the mastodon, the giant sloth, the American horse and the American camel flourished throughout the Americas. All of these so-called megafauna are now extinct. These animals migrated from Asia over the land bridge that spanned what is today the Bering Strait, the same bridge that enabled successive waves of humans to reach the Americas and settle these lands. Many of these early groups specialized in hunting the Pleistocene megafauna, though they undoubtedly supplemented their diet by gathering root vegetables, fruit and nuts and hunting smaller animals. However, the social organization required to hunt these large herbivores—which usually lived in herds—and the large quantity of resources they provided, required these early groups to maintain a certain way of life. Through their hunting they obtained food in the form of meat and fat, hides for their shelters and clothing, and bones and tendons for tools.

### **TERRESTRIAL HUNTER-GATHERERS**

As the climate stabilized into conditions similar to the present-day, around 11,000 years ago, and the megafauna that flourished during the Ice Age became extinct, a foundation was laid for the development of another way of life among certain groups that would prevail virtually throughout the prehistoric period in Chile, and even into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in the far south of the country. These groups practiced a land-based hunter-gatherer way of life, living off the wild resources that existed in the diverse ecological environments of the territory. They usually lived in small kinship bands and practiced a nomadic way of life, traveling great distances around a well-defined territory in an annual cycle. In some periods, hunting seems to have been their main food source, while in others gathering plant-based food comprised the bulk of their diet.

## MARINE HUNTER-GATHERERS

At almost the same time that the terrestrial hunter-gatherer way of life emerged inland, along Chile's extensive coastline other groups relied on the coastal environment as their main source of subsistence. These marine hunter-gatherers learned quickly to take advantage of the sea's potential as a source of fish, mollusks, crustaceans and seaweed, as well as marine mammals such as sea lions, seals and even whales. The groups usually lived in small kinship bands and moved around between different coastal ecosystems, with brief incursions inland to obtain specific resources that were available there. In any case, given the rich resources available on most of the Chilean coast, they often had to travel less than their land-based contemporaries.

## MARINE HUNTERS FISHERS AND GATHERERS

The invention of fish hooks and then seagoing vessels by some early marine hunter-gatherer groups was a turning point that transformed their way of life, transforming fishing into a primary subsistence activity. In some cases, these technologies allowed groups to produce more fish than they required, creating a surplus that they could then trade for resources produced by groups living inland.

## HORTICULTURALISTS

One of the great revolutions in human history was the domestication of plants. Once humans began cultivating plants, they quickly became the principal source of food in the human diet. The first definitive step in this process, after early experimentation, was the horticulturalist way of life. At a certain time, some human groups began to grow plants for food. In most parts of Chilean territory, this occurred by groups adopting knowledge already in use outside the territory. It was a gradual process, and for some time these societies continued to rely mainly on their ancestral hunter-gatherer way of life, hunting animals and gathering wild foods. Over time, however, the greatest change that the incorporation of horticultural technology caused—a decrease in nomadism, as the gardens, though small and watered naturally, needed to be tended—drastically changed the way of life of these early human groups. This need to care for gardens led, for the first time in history, to groups of people living relatively close to each other for an extended period of time. Associated with this process in almost all cases was the development of ceramics, another key innovation in the horticulturalist way of life. Ceramic-making emerged in each region in different ways, but it certainly was only made possible when human groups began to live a more sedentary way of life. Ceramic technology, which produced the first synthetic materials in human history—i.e. materials elaborated by

combining elements and creating conditions that do not occur in nature—enabled the storage, cooking, fermenting and transport of the earth’s bounty.

### **HORTICULTURALIST-PASTORALISTS**

In some regions of Chile, the extensive knowledge that people had acquired of camelids (guanacos and vicuñas) over thousands of years of hunting led to the domestication of these animals. This control over the reproduction of animals and their transformation into livestock began very early, but always in association with the first cultivation of crops. Together, these activities shaped a way of life in which tending sown fields and livestock herds accelerated the process of sedentarism itself. In turn, the keeping of camelids—which in addition to being a source of food also produced wool and offered a means of transporting goods and commodities over long distances—was a unique characteristic of these groups.

### **AGRICULTURALISTS**

The growing importance of crops in the economies of early human groups and the large-scale cultivation of crops such as corn that required more intensive management and irrigation, led to the development of a way of life that centered on these agricultural processes. Agriculturalist societies are characterized by their control over plant reproduction and growth, which also necessitated the construction and maintenance of communal irrigation works (canals, water intakes and/or storage tanks). This in turn led to increased control over a specific territory, a higher degree of sedentarism and a more integrated social structure. In response to these needs, settlements became more agglomerated and social structures more complex.

### **AGRICULTURE AND LIVESTOCK-BASED SOCIETIES**

As horticulturalist groups shifted to growing crops that required more agricultural (large-scale) management and the size of their herds expanded, the horticulturalist-pastoralist way of life was transformed into a clearly agriculture and livestock-based one. As it became necessary to organize the members of each group to tend to crops, livestock and their diverse products (meat, wool, other raw materials and trade goods), a way of life emerged with more marked specialization. The economic potential of this arrangement enabled certain individuals in each group to establish ongoing long distance trade relations with other groups, which laid the foundation for the emergence of more marked social differences.

## **CENTRALLY ORGANIZED AGRICULTURE AND LIVESTOCK-BASED SOCIETIES**

At two times in Chile's prehistoric period a dramatic rupture with the predominant way of life occurred because foreign state-based economic and social models were imposed on the local populace. Both times, the new way of life was organized around a central authority that arranged economic activities on a macroregional scale. These two events were the reign of the Tiwanaku Empire in Chile's arid north and the Inca expansion into north-central Chile.