

McGILL UNIVERSITY

POLITICAL ENTREPRENEURS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: TWO  
VILLAGES AND A TALUKA IN WESTERN INDIA

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BY

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## PREFACE

My work in Poona began in October of 1969 and continued through September of 1971. The first four months were spent primarily in Poona city, studying my first lessons in the Marathi language, and learning about the Poona region at the Deccan College and the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics. A few villages in eastern Poona district were visited, and two which were of particular historical and economic interest were selected for intensive study.

Having arranged for quarters in these villages, so that I could visit them alternately during the next year-and-a-half, I began interviewing the village leaders. I also began a census survey of the villages and drew up a stratified random sample for interviewing on the subject of family economic history. This dual approach was made possible by the help of two very able assistants, Mr. R. P. Nene and Mr. S. V. Kulkarni. Since my language ability was elementary, Mr. Nene acted as interpreter and chief assistant in all the arrangements. Mr. Kulkarni conducted the house-to-house census and later copied out some of the village land and revenue records.

For reasons which will be apparent, I have taken care to conceal the identities of all my subjects and informants by the use of fictitious names. Many forms of political behavior which are considered routine (if not wholly desirable) in the West are considered quite unfit for public discussion by

my informants; and I have made every effort to avoid embarrassing them on this account. Some of the actors in this narration are or were known throughout the district and state. Therefore, I have not only invented names for the villages, but also for the subdivision of the district in which they are located, and for the river and canal which pass through this subdivision. This unfortunately creates some ambiguity in the references to historical documentation which are employed in parts of this essay. The question boils down to fidelity either to the written record or to the living informants.

The originality of this essay resides in the research format and in the method of analysis. The gathering of data was focused on political middlemen, studied against the socioeconomic backgrounds of two contrasting villages. This is not a village study, but a study of village leaders and of the other middlemen in the surrounding area who have had a direct effect on village politics. Thus several movement leaders and politicians are included here who did not live in the villages selected for intensive study, but who have interacted intensively with the village leaders. Along with this wider geographical focus, I have also attempted to trace the development of local politics back in time, to the limits of recollection of the oldest living informants (roughly, from 1900 onwards). Consequently, this is a dynamic study of several different types of political middlemen interacting in local institutions at several different levels--inside and outside the villages.

The analytical approach centers on three contrasting processes: elite-

centered patronage, support-group mobilization, and pluralist machine politics. All three processes are familiar from various political contexts around the world. What is attempted here is to analyze their dialectical interactions. The results appear to be useful in evaluating the interrelations between political and economic development.

It gives me great pleasure to acknowledge the help of those individuals and institutions in India which made it possible for this research to be carried out. I must first thank the University of Delhi and the Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics (Poona) for allowing me to become an affiliated student and to make use of their facilities. Thanks are also due to the Deccan College (Poona) for the use of their library.

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## CHAPTER I

### DEFINITION OF THE PROBLEM

This is a study of the political changes which have been occurring over the last fifty years or so in a small rural area in western India. The strategy of research and analysis is to focus on innovative middlemen, those individuals who help to build new local institutions, who seek to articulate new political demands and to gain control of new public resources. These are the persons, in other words, who help to alter the transactions between small-scale peasant villages and the greater urban-based institutions of government and business which influence village life (cf., Bailey, 1969: Chapter 8).

Innovative local middlemen can derive from a great variety of backgrounds and play out a great variety of roles within a complex agrarian civilization. They appear frequently in local elite groups, "hinge groups," and leadership groups of all sorts. Entrepreneurial middlemen appeared among the local pre-colonial rulers, officials, merchants, etc. (see, for example, Cohn, 1962; Fox, 1971; Pearson, 1972). They have also appeared among the colonial zamindars and other estate landlords, and among their chief tenants and administrators (e.g., Metcalf, 1969; Musgrave, 1972); among the local colonial bureaucrats and their allies (e.g., Frykenberg, 1965); among the local leaders of social reform movements, political movements and caste uplift movements (e.g., Seal, 1968; Lynch, 1969; Irschick, 1969; Kothari, 1970); among a number of overlapping urban or semi-urban elites (e.g., Broomfield,

1969; Leach and Mukherjee, 1970; Bayly, 1971); and among the local party politicians of independent India (e.g., Brass, 1965; Weiner, 1967; Sisson, 1972).

Such a broad range of possible innovative roles can be studied fruitfully together only within a restricted geographic setting. The purpose of my research was to study the innovations and interactions of a diverse set of middlemen operating within a single locality. The area chosen was a single taluka, or subdivision, within Poona district. Shetipur taluka, named after the headquarters town of Shetipur, consists of 63 villages and had a total population of 173,800 in 1961. I did not attempt to study the particular changes which had been occurring in every village in the taluka, though I did study some middlemen who had had an effect on the whole local area. I also did not attempt to study the change processes which were specific to the merchants, lawyers, clerks and laborers, the schools, businesses, and municipal wards, of Shetipur town itself; though I did study several rural middlemen who happened to live in the town and who sometimes participated in municipal politics. My strategy was to select two contrasting villages within the taluka for a study of the grass-roots background and then to follow out all the connections which these villages had with local middlemen of any type, whether those middlemen had lived in the villages themselves, in other villages nearby, or in the town. I did not focus much attention on the local bureaucrats as middlemen, because there were much more innovative roles to be investigated.

In the two villages which were selected for study, I interviewed a stratified sample of families who were representative of the different castes and economic classes. These interviews focussed on the economic histories of

the families and provided insight into the patterns of economic change and social mobility which had been typical of this local area. The sample interviews also provided the necessary background information for understanding the local patterns of social, economic and political stratification. These general patterns are presented in this thesis only as a background to the leadership innovations which are discussed in chapters four through nine. In these chapters, the focus will be on particular individuals and events--not just because they were unusual but because they had a lasting effect on the growth of local institutions and political processes. Though unprecedented in a certain committee, village or taluka, these innovations had many precedents and parallels in the world outside, which will be obvious to those familiar with studies of Indian politics and social movements. If this study is unusual in any way, it is that I have tried to investigate the greatest possible variety of simultaneous and sequential innovations in one rural area and to analyze the manner in which these have intermeshed.

The basic information used here is oral history. The time depth of this study is determined by the extent to which stories of past events could be corroborated among living informants.

#### A. Political Middlemen

In structural terms, political middlemen seem to engage in two kinds of alliances: patron-client relationships and coalitions. The former can be regarded as the vertical dimension of political alliances, the latter as the horizontal dimension (cf., Carter, 1972, from which this approach is derived). Pure alliances of either type are probably rare, and actual cases often combine features of both patronage and coalition-formation. These relationships can be thought of as having various slopes of intermediate value between the horizontal ( $0^\circ$ ) and the vertical ( $90^\circ$ ). The general term for both patron-client and coalition relationships is "alliances."

This use of the term "patronage" is very general and violates the useful analysis of the term found in Paine (1971). Paine says that, "Ultimately, what distinguishes the patron from his client is that only values of the patron's choosing are circulated in their relationship" (1971: 15). This applies well to marginal, isolated ethnic groups submerged in a modern nation-state; but it does not apply very well to the patronage transactions which take place, for example, between politicians in an urban party machine. Part of this essay is concerned with the growth of a rural political machine, in which every local patron is also a client of another patron higher up. It would be impossible to produce data on these sophisticated local politicians to show that the patron, in starting each relationship, chooses to deal in values with which the client was previously unconcerned. Such choices occur, but these are innovative forms of patronage. We shall consider many such in-

novations, but I do not care to assume that patron-client relations are always founded on innovation. Sometimes they are established by partners who begin with exactly the same goals in mind (from their complementary points of view). These relationships involve constant negotiation by both parties, in which they often seek personal ends that are similar and well understood on both sides. However, Paine's definition of the patron does provide insight into the process of innovation, for the patron is more likely to be the innovator than the client.

I also disagree with the analysis of the patron-client relationship as based on "directed (generalized) reciprocity" (Paine, 1971: 17). This formula applies to many transactions between a simple pair consisting of a patron and a client (cf., Foster, 1963); but we shall observe in several later chapters that a patron sometimes makes contributions to entire organizations or communities. In such cases the benefits to the clients are corporate and impartible (cf., Silverman, 1965: 177-178). The clients may reciprocate with their support as a group, but the returns from specific individuals may be very indirect. For example, tertiary supporters may help the secondary leaders in electioneering for the sake of a candidate who belongs to the same party or faction as their own personal patron, at the latter's request. These indirect, reticulated transactions do not correspond to dyadic reciprocity but rather to "redistribution" (cf., Polanyi, 1957; Sahlins, 1960). Many of the effective patrons studied below were involved in both reciprocal and redistributive transactions. Some of these innovative middlemen did not even use generalized dyadic reciprocity as a "starting mechanism" in their leadership careers: they sought to launch protest movements or institutions as corporate entities. It can, of course, be argued that such redistributive efforts do not belong under the rubric of "patronage"--though we shall find

in chapters seven and eight that they are often used as an integral part of what is commonly referred to as patronage machine politics. I know of no other word besides "patronage" which can apply to virtually all vertical resource allocations handled through personal influence in exchange for public support.

In chapter eight I refer to some "brokers" who deal in patronage in a special way. My use of this term agrees with Mayer (1967: 168), that the broker collects clients on the basis of his ability to influence someone else (a politician or administrator) who controls the favors being sought. A true patron, on the other hand, has the control of some favors more in his own hands. This usage agrees with Bailey's discussions of brokers (1963: 60-63, 101-102; 1969: 41-42, 171-175); and it does not seem to conflict with Paine (1971: 19-21). Brokerage is usually not based on long-term reciprocity, the way true patronage often is. Brokerage transactions usually involve immediate repayment, and there is no desire to resume the relationship unless circumstances make it necessary. Thus broker-client relations are intransitive: client A need have no relation with client B. Brokers are capable of attracting votes (which are cost-free for the clients) for the party politicians, but they rarely attract respect or many votes for themselves. (Though of course a mere broker may evolve later into a patron and leader--cf., Bailey, 1969: 174-175).

I agree with Paine that the definition of who is the patron in a patron-client relation must derive from a study of the "management of roles," of "what the patron does" (1971: 9-10). My own definition is that the patron manipulates external contacts, which are unavailable to his client. The client, on the other hand, belongs to a group or class or community of people who are all more or less accessible to the patron. Added to this definition are the

foregoing observations that patronage involves long-term reciprocity and redistribution. If the transactions become very short-term, then the relationship can be labelled as one of brokerage.

Paine correctly points out that initial differences in status do not determine who becomes patron and who becomes client:

High status may be carried into the patron-client relationship as an asset, but this should be treated as an empirical question in each case. The high status may also be brought into the relationship by the client, and not always by the patron. Instances also come to mind from certain political situations where high status enters a patron-client relationship as a restriction upon its bearer (Paine, 1971: 12).

In my own data, this is certainly true with regard to caste status. Fifty years ago, Brahmins had great advantages in manipulating administrative influence and patronage. Today, it is only a very exceptional Brahmin who can be successful in local politics. Likewise, the second-most influential leader and patron in one village today belongs to the Dhangar caste, which has less customary ritual status than the Maratha majority caste; and this leader is less wealthy than some of his clients, much less wealthy than some of his unsuccessful competitors. The Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA), who is the most influential politician in the taluka, belongs to an immigrant Maratha family which is not nearly as wealthy as some of the big farmers and merchants in the area; but many of the latter are his clients. Thus the analysis of patronage must derive from active role-playing, not passive socioeconomic status.

As mentioned earlier, the middleman-patron must also engage in the complementary process of coalition-formation. Coalition-formation resembles patronage in a different dimension, since the partners must again bring complementary resources together through their transactions. Often the top



leaders of a coalition act as patrons to the others; but a long-term coalition will involve some bargaining and cooperation directly between the secondary leaders as well.

Patronage and coalition-formation overlap in most contexts; and it is helpful to emphasize the combination of vertical and horizontal alliances made by middlemen. Indian village politics is sometimes analyzed from a purely segmental point of view; but we must keep in mind here that many middleman alliances cut across social segments in more than one direction. Nicholas, for example, analyzes factions as vertical segments which cut across distinctions of caste and class (1966). In another article he points out that Indian village politics is dominated in some cases by vertical cleavages between factions and in other cases by horizontal cleavages between castes (1968). Bailey appears to echo this approach in an article which suggests that village politics may be dominated at different times either by factions or else by competition or conflict between castes (1968). These analyses appear to be helpful in understanding village politics when the village is relatively isolated from political affairs in the world outside. However, when we come to the study of active middlemen, we find them involved simultaneously in vertical and horizontal transactions, so that no simple form of segmental cleavage predominates for long. These middlemen attempt to manipulate vertical alliances based on patronage, horizontal alliances based on caste and kinship, and also in some cases, horizontal alliances based on class interests which cut across the social ties based on caste. The middleman is not restricted to a pie which can only be divided in so many ways; he has access to external resources (and threats) which complicate things. He uses the village social segments as raw materials, but often in what seem to be unlikely combinations.

When a village is relatively isolated from external resources and middleman activities, the mode of analysis is quite different:

Factions constitute a form of political organization that is particularly well adapted to certain kinds of arenas. In an Indian peasant village, where resources are fixed, or nearly so, the only gain one can make is at the expense of his opponent, and any loss by one's opponent is a relative gain in resources (Nicholas, 1966: 58).

In the chapters which follow, we shall encounter many situations in which the village leaders and local middlemen are not encumbered by this type of zero-sum situation.

## B. Political Entrepreneurship

In processual terms, political middlemen seem to engage in two kinds of polar processes: elite-centered patronage and support-group mobilization. Both processes involve patronage and coalition-formation, but in different structural combinations.

Elite-centered patronage (or the "elitist process," as it might be called) is a familiar form of middleman activity. The patron usually begins with some form of elite status, which may have nothing to do with politics initially. By means of special access to resources outside the local community, this elite status can then be converted into the role of patron (cf., Silverman, 1965: 178-179). When these resources are brought in from outside, they can be used to convert people of other statuses into playing the client's role. In past centuries, aristocratic or feudal patrons depended less, in some cases, on external contacts than on local land control; but this pattern has tended to diminish as colonial governments and new nation-states have exerted more centralized control over agrarian relations at the same time as the market economy has penetrated deeper into every village (Silverman, 1965: 179-180; Metcalf, 1969). Thus in this essay we shall find that the most significant form of long-term elite patronage operates within the developmental institutions which were established for the promotion of social and economic progress. The people who benefit from these institutions, and who therefore come to depend on the elites which control them, will be referred to as the "institutional clienteles." Frequently, informal networks

operating behind the formal structures of these institutions serve to strengthen the influence of the elite patrons and their nearest supporters. However, this influence sometimes triggers a reaction among the less fortunate members of the institutional clientele, who may be able to reach alternative networks of influence, or who may take advantage of certain formal rules (such as the rules on voting for a chairman) which can be used to challenge the elitist process. This type of elitist process and reaction was typical of local political innovation in Shetipur in the last few decades before Indian independence (1947).

Elite-centered patronage also operates as a more short-term process, particularly in elections within broad constituencies. Such elections were only of occasional significance before 1947 in Shetipur; but in recent years the entire adult population has become involved in a host of election campaigns (to the national parliament, the state legislature, the district and taluka councils, the village panchayats). In some arenas, the elections are decided by means of short-term ad hoc bribes and pressures, used simply to produce a majority vote which does not represent any sort of enduring coalition. Instead, the organization used corresponds to the "action-set" described by Mayer (1966). Rather than enduring patron-client relationships, there is a bundle of transitory, single-stranded transactions centered on the leader or his intermediaries (who act as brokers). In the extreme case, these transactions are long-pathed (the candidate contacts the voters mainly through intermediaries) with no lateral linkages (Mayer, 1966: 110-111). This means that the action-set will probably not solidify into a group. The transactions are intransitive, because A and B might both be induced to vote for C (this one time) without any relationship or common interest between

them. As we shall see, the absence of stable coalitions tends to make the actors behave as though they were playing a "zero-sum game."

Structurally, both forms of the elitist process (institutional patronage and action-set patronage) fall into the same network pattern. At the top, there is a local elite network, highly reticulated, with many "closed paths" such that everybody knows everybody else (cf., Barnes, 1968: 115-119; Epstein, 1961: 57-59; Silverman, 1965: 181-182). Of course, as Silverman points out, these patrons also have more powerful patrons of their own outside the local sphere (1965: 182). In any case, the local top of the network is reticulated, high in "density" (Barnes, 1968: 117). The connections leading downward to the local clients, on the other hand, are ramified, low in density (Barnes, 1968: 116-118)--that is, they have few lateral linkages. This structural feature is crucial for the success of the elitist process. It means that the clients must compete atomistically for access to the upward-leading paths. If the clients, alternatively, can form lateral linkages among themselves, then they may have a coalition capable of pressuring and resisting the patron. Or again, if the networks leading downward from two or more patrons happen to overlap, the clients may be able to force the patrons to compete for their support, since the clients could move laterally from one network to the other. Such alternatives define the antithetic and synthetic processes which interact with elite-centered patronage.

The antithetic process is support-group mobilization, which might be called the "populist process" for short. The middleman who attempts to make use of this process works like an elite patron in reverse. He is often the local leader or representative of a political or social movement. This kind of middleman does not have big resources to offer in order to obtain the

support of clients; therefore, he seeks to organize the support first in order to demand the resources afterwards. The movement ideology usually operates on the premise that one local elite group or another has illegitimately withheld resources from the intended support group, so the latter must mobilize to force the former to share its control of those resources. Quite frequently, the ideology views another local elite group as either benevolent or at least non-guilty, and the movement may look to this elite group for some forms of assistance. The initial status of the middleman must usually correspond in some respects to the status of his intended support-group. The latter is often initially a particular status category (such as the non-Brahmin castes, or the "untouchable" castes, or even all of the indigenous people as opposed to the foreign rulers). The middleman seeks to become their patron "on credit" (Bailey, 1969: 44) and to convert the status category into an active support-group, a movement clientele.

The same process operates, with less flamboyance, within more structured, institutional contexts. As noted above, the institutional clients may seize an opportunity to organize a coalition among themselves, and they may also be able to establish contact with an alternative elite patron. This corresponds exactly to a movement on a diminished scale--though with more attention to small-scale, practical issues than to big, rhetorical ones.

The structural network on which this process is based resembles elite-centered patronage turned upside down, for the broad, lateral connections are now at the bottom. If the movement is tightly-knit, this base coalition will be reticulated, with many overlapping, lateral connections. A nascent or unsuccessful movement will probably be horizontally ramified at the base. In any event, the connections leading upward through the local middleman tend to be vertically ramified. In other words, in the case of compara-

tively low-status movement leaders, they have only attenuated connections in the local elite network--connections with some members of the benevolent elites, with some officials or institutional patrons, etc. Their most important connections are with the movement party or organization, which is usually centered in the district headquarters and which often has few linkages with the local rural elites.

Instead of leading directly into mass mobilization, we shall find that the local movements instead tended to feed into a third process, which constitutes a kind of synthesis of the elitist and populist processes. This intermediate process may be called the "pluralist process," and it is a typical development of the post-colonial period. This process leans heavily on institutional patronage. Indeed, it would be impossible without the massive increase of local development spending undertaken by the independent government. It also leans heavily on mass vote-getting, for independence also brought the universal adult franchise and the host of elected bodies mentioned above. The combined process of gathering votes from below and distributing patronage from above defines the pluralist process, at least to a first approximation. We noted above, in the discussion of action-sets, that this combined process can be controlled in some arenas simply by means of elite patronage. However, this is no longer possible wherever the voters (or institutional clients) have been organized into support groups, into coalitions at the base. Then it becomes possible for them to bargain with their vote blocs, and the clients can sometimes force alternative patrons to compete for their support. All sorts of fluid negotiations and alliances become possible, because the new institutional arenas overlap at many levels, making it possible to combine, share and rotate power in many positions at

the same time. These possibilities are also enhanced by the number of potential, cross-cutting interest groups which can arise in these arenas --groups based on caste or kinship relations, factional alliances, economic class interests, etc. The pluralist process thus involves constant bargaining and coalition-formation among various actual and potential support-groups. Alliances and oppositions are formed chiefly with regard to the distribution of patronage resources--both those resources which flow through formal, institutional channels, and those which flow through informal channels.

This description of the process corresponds to what is often called machine politics; but this label also applies to elite-centered vote-getting by means of action-sets. It is probably this latter process, in which the voters have little bargaining power, that is referred to in wholesale condemnations of machine politics. In contrast to the urban action-set described by Mayer (1966), we might consider the urban electoral politics described by Wirsing (1973), in which many of the voters have acquired corporate bargaining power through their educational and cooperative associations, and thus participate in a pluralist process. In order to keep the issue clear, I will maintain a distinction between "pluralist" and "elitist" machine politics in this essay; and the merits of pluralist machine politics will be considered in chapter nine.



### C. Development

Although chapters four through eight are arranged in roughly chronological order, they are basically organized according to types of political entrepreneurs. Chapter four deals with the local elite patrons who flourished in the last decades of colonial rule; and chapter five deals with the movement leaders who appeared during the same period. Chapter six focuses on the new leaders who arose in one village after 1947; and chapter seven is concerned with the higher-level politicians who acted as their patrons during this period. Chapter eight then compares the current leaders in a second village with those discussed in chapter six.

In chapter four attention is focused on the remnants of the 18th century aristocracy and likewise on the new large-scale commercial farmers of the 20th century. Some small interest-group reactions against the elitist process are also discussed; and it is pointed out that such reactions arose when the interests of one segment of the local elite network turned (temporarily) against another segment.

Chapter five is concerned with the much broader reactions which were expressed in efforts to organize mass movements. Different movements were directed at different elite groups, just as they were directed toward converting different sections of the populace into support groups. Locally only one such movement was successful; though the leaders (the middlemen) in Shetipur did not actually accomplish as much as they appeared to. They did not quite establish a solid horizontal base in the villages; and they were also not very good at manipulating elite connections and institutionalized patronage

resources when they acquired the personal opportunities to do so. They were middlemen left in the middle.

Chapter six is concerned with how, after 1947, the leaders of one canal-irrigated village learned to establish and manage a number of development institutions, making use of personal resources and new resources from the government. Once established, these new institutions went through two stages of leadership, the first corresponding to a renewal of elite patronage on a more localized scale, converting the ordinary villagers into institutional clients. The second phase involved the rise of a new generation of leaders and the transition to a "pluralist machine" style of village politics in various arenas. A problematical third stage may have been foreshadowed recently by a new form of populist reaction: an effort to organize the landless and near-landless agricultural workers.

Chapter seven reviews the same post-independence decades in terms of higher-level local politics: politics in the taluka-level cooperatives, in the cooperative sugar factory, and in the constituency of the MLA (Member of the Legislative Assembly). In some of these arenas, the transition to pluralist machine politics came earlier than in the villages; and in others it came later. One big leader became "boss" of the taluka cooperatives and helped to bring them under the political control of village landowners, where they had previously been dominated by urban, aristocratic, and administrative elites. Much later, a local Congress party politician (the MLA) helped to establish more local control over party affairs, against the arbitrary interference of the district Congress bosses. Both of these leaders relied on a mixture of coalition pressure from below and patronage contacts from above, in order to rout their rivals from the middle ground. The cooperative

boss converted institutional clienteles into support groups (though he has also tended to reverse the process, defensively, of late). The party politician engaged in the same process and also converted some neglected status groups into support groups. Larger and larger sections of the taluka populace have become engaged in the pluralist machine process through these efforts, along with the continuation or re-emergence, in some arenas, of the old-fashioned elite patronage process. Since the latter process also involves vote-getting, it is labeled "elitist machine politics."

Chapter eight is concerned with a second village, where the elite patronage process has been continuous, despite some important recent political innovations. The causes of this situation are basically ecological, since the village is unirrigated and poor. Up to the middle 1960's, village leadership continued to be of the colonial elite-patronage type: the principle source of power lay in access to the elite networks outside the village. Support groups were not organized within the village, and institutional clienteles were weakened by the unavoidable economic weakness of the institutions themselves. In 1967 an important new external force (the MLA) became the focus of attention among the village leaders; but the basic situation remained unchanged because of the lack of populist coalition-formation. Political brokers stepped in to manipulate contacts with the new external force; and village politics remained essentially a zero-sum game of atomistic competition.

Chapter nine summarizes the processes which have taken place in the various arenas and analyzes the interactions between the elitist, populist and pluralist processes. The final sections consider the interactions of these processes with the progress of economic development and economic stratification.

## CHAPTER II

### THE SOCIAL SETTING

Shetipur taluka is located in eastern Poona district, in the region known as the Deccan, in the driest part of the rain shadow caused by the coastal mountains to the west. In Shetipur the average annual rainfall is about 20 inches. The taluka is part of a long dry belt, running north and south parallel to the coastal mountains, which became known as the famine belt of western India. Areas to both the west and east of this belt receive more average annual rainfall, and rainfall which is also more reliable than in Shetipur. Thus the ecological contrasts which form the background to this study are more extreme within Shetipur taluka than in most parts of western India.

In order to provide mass employment during one major famine, and to protect a part of the region against future famines, the Bombay government began work on a large dam and canal system, completed in 1885-86. The canal irrigates 21 villages in Shetipur taluka and also parts of neighboring talukas. The canal runs along the Ravi river valley, parallel with the river, and it irrigates those villages which are located on the valley floor between canal and river. The other 42 villages in Shetipur taluka, located uphill on an uneven plateau between the major river valleys, remain largely unirrigated. The dry village farmers depend on their wells, which are often dug 60 feet and more into the bedrock, to make up for the scanty rainfall. These wells capture water at a slow rate, even when there is rain, so the water is usually

lifted by the slow, old-fashioned device of a big scoop on a long rope, drawn by bullocks. In a year with fairly adequate rainfall, a good well helps to produce three or four acres of cash crops. In a very dry year (at least one year out of five), every drop of well water is needed just to raise a small patch of sorghum for home consumption. When farmers can manage the investment of several thousand rupees (which may come in part from the District Land Development Bank), they often attempt to dig new wells or deepen old ones. However, at least 40% of such attempts fail to secure a new water supply adequate for even one or two acres, which usually means financial ruin and loss of some of his lands for the farmer who made the attempt (Mann, 1967: 85).

The indigenous staple crop in this area is jowar (Sorghum vulgare), which is grown in the winter (rabi) season, following the largest normal peak in rainfall in September-October. On the rockier soils, jowar is replaced by bajri (Pennisetum typhoideum). When unirrigated, both these millet crops are always sown in mixtures including pulses and often safflower. The latter crop, which produces cooking oil, is an important cash crop in the dry villages, because it can withstand drought the best. The two other important cash crops in the dry villages, onions and cotton, both require moderate amounts of well irrigation, even with some timely rainfall.

Since 1967 there has been intensive work in the dry villages on a set of new percolation tanks sponsored by the state government and an international relief agency. The tanks are intended to trap surface runoff water during the rainy season and to let this water percolate underground into the wells which are located downhill from the tank, thus increasing the productivity of the wells. The labor for constructing some of these tanks is paid for in

imported wheat by the international agency. In famine years, such as 1970-71, the state government also paid for the labor on many more tanks, as famine relief works. In addition, the government provided, through the taluka development officers, the necessary engineering surveys and supervision on all the tank projects. During 1970-71, no less than five tanks were being constructed in Kordegao, the dry village which I studied. Because most of the tanks were uncompleted and there was no rain at all that year, it was impossible to assess the potential economic impact of the tanks under more or less normal conditions.

On the other hand, the canal village farmers struggle not for existence but for commercial profits. Granted an ample supply of water, the soil and climate in this area are ideal for sugar cane cultivation. (The next chapter gives details on how cane cultivation has expanded and flourished over the past 85 years.) Unlike some of the nearby Deccan districts, this area was not very favorable for cotton until the canal was built. Farmers who take irrigation water from the canal may only plant one-third of the irrigated area to sugar cane each year, because the government wants them to produce a surplus of foodgrains as well. Thus many canal-village farmers irrigate part of their lands from wells, which are very productive in the river valley because the canal has raised the water table considerably. This well water is raised by mechanical pumps, driven by electrical or oil engines; and the water is quite abundant. A third source of irrigation near the canal, which is being used more and more in recent years, comes from pumping water straight out of the canal to an uphill reservoir which irrigates fields above the old command area of the canal. Only cooperative lift irrigation

societies are allowed to use this source of irrigation. One such society was organized on a large scale in the dry village adjacent to the canal village which I studied.

Shetipur town, the taluka headquarters, is located along the Ravi canal in the river valley. One of the largest towns in the district (with a 1961 population of about 21,000), Shetipur contains all the administrative offices for the taluka: the office of the mamlatdar, who is the revenue and judicial administrator; the office of the panchayat samiti or taluka development council, which also includes the office of the Block Development Officer (BDO) and his clerical and technical staff; and the offices of the irrigation department, the Agricultural Produce Market Committee, the Cooperative Supervising Union and Purchase and Sale Union, etc. The town also includes a railway station, a college, two or three small hospitals, a bus depot, three gas stations, a tennis club, and much more. The town is governed by a municipal board (established in 1865), which tends to be dominated by the wealthy merchants and professionals, and also by some of the big Maratha farmers who happen to own property in town.

My research did not focus on town politics as such, though it included several town-based figures who were active middlemen in relation to the villages. I selected two villages in the taluka for intensive study, on the basis of three criteria: ecological contrast, comparable size, and historical interest. One of these villages is Kordegao, a dry plateau village situated by a small stream which flows toward the Ravi river and Shetipur town, about 19 miles away. The other village is Olegao, a canal village located about 4.5 miles from Shetipur along the Ravi canal. Consequently, these two

villages correspond to two of the three main types of villages in the western Deccan--the third being the type which has an assured rainfall and little irrigation from wells or canals (Mann, 1967: 83).

Kordegao, the largest village in the vicinity, has its own weekly market; but the farmers of Olegao find it convenient to attend the weekly market in nearby Shetipur, so Olegao has no market day of its own. In 1951 the populations of the two villages were about the same (6,300 and 6,500); but since that time the population of Olegao has grown disproportionately, due to the establishment of a cooperative sugar factory in that village. In 1961 Olegao had a total population of 12,741, while Kordegao had only 7,703.

The large size of these villages created some problems in finding and interviewing a representative cross section of the inhabitants; but the compensatory benefits were a greater variety and fluidity of political arenas and opportunities for leaders and middlemen than might be found in smaller, more tightly-knit villages.

Olegao possesses some historical interest as the seat of a jagirdar family, a minor branch of the descendants of the rulers of a powerful 13th-century kingdom in the Deccan (see chapter four). Olegao's second point of special interest is the cooperative sugar factory, which was founded in 1955. The factory's area of operations includes 12 other villages around Olegao, all of which supply sugar cane to be crushed and refined into sugar. The economic progress of the factory is outlined in chapter three, and its leadership problems are discussed in chapters four and seven.

Olegao has a large village center, next to a main highway, which



holds about one-fourth of the village population. One lane is crowded with small stores, bicycle rental and repair shops, blacksmith shops, etc. One quarter is set aside for the low-caste residents. The center contains a high school, dispensary, village council office, two cooperative credit societies, an old wall and fort, etc. About one mile south of the village center is the factory colony, with modern houses for most of the permanent factory employees. About a mile from this is a single large hamlet, which is quite old and has its own cooperative credit society for the convenience of the farmers living there. About half the village population (farmers and agricultural workers) live in farmsteads scattered in small clusters around the rest of the cultivated area of the village. These are generally fairly new settlements, established since the Ravi canal brought more intensive farming to the village. Six primary schools are scattered among these farmstead clusters.

During the 17th and 18th centuries, Kordegao was used as the capital of a pargana, an administrative division roughly equal in scale to a modern taluka. For a brief period in the later 19th century, Kordegao was made the headquarters of Shetipur taluka, but the center was shifted to Shetipur town after the Ravi canal was built. In the olden days, Kordegao was a center for marketing and moneylending as well as administration; but as the canal villages began to flourish, Kordegao declined rapidly in relative importance. Many of the important families--Brahmin administrators, Gujar merchants--moved to the cities. In the center of Koregao there are still several large mansions, deserted and decaying, which were abandoned by the old administrative and mercantile families early in this century.

As a second point of historical interest, Kordegao was one of the first centers where the "Deccan riots" broke out in 1875. These were popular

attacks, led by some of the respectable Maratha farmers in the hamlets, against the Gujar moneylenders living in the center of the village. The main object of these attacks was to burn up the record books of the moneylenders. An official inquiry was held into the riots, which helped to precipitate governmental concern with the problems of agricultural finance (see Catanach, 1970: chapter 1).

Only about ten percent of the Kordegao population lives in the village center. This includes most of the Brahmin and merchant-caste families, the Teli oil pressers, the more or less separate wards allotted to the low-caste Mahars, Mangs, and Chambhars, and the houses and shops of tailors, potters, blacksmiths, carpenters, etc. The village center also contains a high school, village council office, bus stop, branch bank, etc. Scattered around the village center, and up to five miles away, there are many clustered farmsteads and no less than twelve significant hamlets. The population is more spread out than in Olegao, because the area of the village is so much larger (39.1 as compared with 11.3 square miles), the land being so much less productive. In fact, the village is much too large to have any real social unity. The boundaries are a remnant of Kordegao's former importance as a market and administrative center. Each hamlet is predominantly inhabited by a single Maratha lineage. (The organization of lineages is explained in the next section.) Each has its own primary school (10 in all) and there are now four different cooperative credit societies serving different groups of adjacent hamlets. Almost every hamlet has a particular god and small temple associated with it, and the larger hamlets each have annual religious fairs which are occasions for active cooperation and solidarity within the hamlet.

One hundred sixty years ago, before the pax Britannica, most of the

farmers lived in the village center, and the fields closest to the center were more frequently cultivated. Most of the hamlets were settled between four and six generations ago, on sites which were close to the ancestral lands of the lineages which settled them. A few of the hamlets were founded by immigrant Maratha families during the same time period (and before the last fifty years, when farmland has become very scarce due to population pressure). Whatever their origins, these small hamlets of between 50 and 80 households apiece constitute the units of intensive social interaction in the village.

### A. Caste Stratification

Tables 1 and 2 list the significant castes in the two villages, giving the number of family households in each caste and their proportions to the total number of all households in the village. (In the census-taking, households were defined in terms of common cooking and eating arrangements; thus several related families might be living under the same roof, but separate cooking and eating indicated at least partly separate economic units.) Tables 3 and 4 show the absolute and percentage-wise distribution of these families according to their caste and class. (The landholding size-classes are explained in section B below.)

The castes are grouped according to their customary hereditary occupations. The assignment of some castes to the "craft" or "menial" service categories is influenced by the social categories of the villagers themselves. Those belonging to the latter category were considered highly impure in the old days. They are now known officially as the "Scheduled Castes." Although the customary caste occupations are no longer binding on individuals, it is obvious that they continue to provide opportunities and constraints in many cases. Those who want to break away from disadvantageous backgrounds must usually migrate to the cities to do so. The object of presenting Tables 3 and 4 at this point is to show the strong correlation, in some cases, between caste and economic status. The boxed cells on the Table draw attention to the large proportion of Brahmin and merchant-caste landowners in the large size-classes, and the large proportion of Scheduled Caste residents

among the small landowners and the landless. This does not mean that caste status has a determining effect on class relations. The Marathas, it will be noted, constitute the largest group in every economic class.

Caste and kinship relations are often influential in politics, but they do not have a determining effect on political relations either. The interaction between caste and politics has been concretized as follows:

When candidates were from different castes, they typically sought the support of their fellow caste members in much the same way that American candidates often seek the support of the ethnic group to which they belong. . . .When one faction is manifestly multicasite in leadership and the other is predominantly from one caste, the first group will typically denounce the second on the basis of "casteism" in order to reduce its appeal to other castes. When. . . candidates are from the same caste, neither is likely to make caste an issue at all; both will bargain intensively for the support of multi-caste village factions (Weiner, 1967: 152, 154).

Several authors have also pointed out that political factions tend to recruit across caste lines, so that caste discrimination is not reinforced by politics, even though caste loyalties are used to recruit political support (see chapter nine). Exactly the same considerations apply to kinship ties, both distant and close, when they are used in politics. It is necessary to avoid the assumption that caste and kinship statuses predetermine the lines of political cleavage in the villages.

Following are some details concerning the individual castes which are relevant to understanding their position in local politics. Only the Marathas are numerous enough to require a consideration of their clans and lineages. When non-Maratha leaders seek support on the basis of social origin, they must seek caste-wide support, not just the support of their lineages or clans, which are so much smaller. (Information on other aspects of caste and kinship in this region can be found in Enthoven, 1920, 1922; Karve, 1955: 174-191; and Orenstein, 1965: Chapters 4-9.)

Marathas

The great majority of landholders in both villages belong to the Maratha caste; and of these the great majority again belong to the major Maratha clans. The term "major" is used to indicate that these clans: (1) have many landowning members; and (2) have been long established in their villages. The terms "clan" and "lineage" may cause some confusion because in north India they are applied to social organizations on a much larger territorial scale (cf., Cohn, 1962: 315-316; Fox, 1971). Unless qualified, the term "clan" as used here will apply only to an agnatic kinship group located within a single village. Members of the Jagtap clan in Olegao, for example, recognize a common origin with Jagtaps in several other villages, both near and far; but this recognition does not lead to any common activity at any time. I do not know at present whether these scattered Jagtaps might have represented a united sociopolitical force in the 17th or 18th century; but to refer to them today as parts of a large, multivillage clan would be artificial. The Jagtaps of Olegao amount to over 230 families today. They are therefore probably more densely settled than the farflung Rajput clans of northern India. There are also Jagtaps living in a small dry village next to Olegao and in a medium-sized canal village about six miles away. There are said to be two more Jagtap villages in other parts of Poona district, and they are all thought to have migrated several centuries ago from a village in Satara district. However, these various villages have no common festivals or other forms of activity which they carry out together or in coordination. The total set of Jagtaps in all these villages can be referred to as a "clan of identification," but only the Jagtaps within Olegao itself form a "clan of interaction." This latter phrase will simply be abbreviated to "clan" hereafter.

It should be noted that immigrant Maratha families and lineages which have settled recently in a village may, in fact, consider themselves part of a clan of interaction based in another village. Heads of families, in such cases, return to their native villages every year to worship the family dieties. These attenuated, immigrant kinship groups are not included in the category of "major" Maratha clans.

The clan of identification is, of course, exogamous; but the limits of exogamy go further than this. There are several surnames which are united with the Jagtaps under one devak, an object of totemic avoidance (see Karve, 1955: 176-177; Orenstein, 1965: 62-63). The Jagtap devak is the bamboo plant, which they are not allowed to burn, in theory. The devak has very little effect on everyday life; but when a marriage is being planned, a knowledgeable person must be consulted to make sure that the families which are planning to intermarry do not have the same devak.

The "major" clans are simply those which are largest and longest-established in any given village. But in very large villages such as Olegao and Kordegao, they have an additional feature: they are divided into distinct lineages. Both clan and lineage relationships are referred to by the vague terms of bhauband or bhauki--roughly, "brotherhood." Where more precision is required, lineages are always referred to in the villages by a metaphorical term, bet--literally, a clump of shoots growing from one root. The lineage has a very clear operational definition as the group of agnatically linked households which must observe certain ritual restrictions for a period of ten days after a member of the lineage dies. (This definition applies to the "khari bhauki" discussed in Orenstein, 1965: chapter 4.) These death pollution restrictions are known as sutak, and they involve prohibitions against eating sweets, holding marriages, etc. The village informants also had a

clear operational understanding of the origin of the division of a clan into lineages. This was always explained by a story, the crux of which was that some generations ago, the clan grew to be too numerous. This meant that deaths within the village clan were so frequent that they often interrupted and delayed marriage plans, which are very important affairs. All weddings had to be called off for ten days after a death in the clan. When this began to happen too frequently, the clan would be divided among the descendants of a single group of brothers. In Olegao there are five Jagtap lineages which believe that they are descended from five Jagtap brothers, who may have lived as much as twenty generations ago. The death pollution restrictions are observed only within the lineage boundaries. Each lineage consists of between 30 and 90 families. These lineages are not residentially segregated, as they are in Kordegao.

The five Jagtap lineages had an unequal share in the headmanship rights, as indicated in Table 5. Olegao had a single headman to handle revenue and police work, and the occupant of this office was changed every ten years. Only two lineages shared in this rotation, however. The exclusion of the other three is explained by various stories which center around a temporary emigration to Nagpur, sometime in the distant past.

In Kordegao the clan structure and the sharing of the headmanship was much more complex (see Table 6). This village has no less than four major Maratha clans, comprising a total of nine lineages. These lineages are now localized in specific hamlets of their own, and only certain lineages and households within each clan were involved in the rotation of the headmanship. This rotation also occurred every ten years, but it involved a double office. The Khomme and Chaugule clans succeeded each other in the office of police



headman, while the Bhongale and Khalate clans succeeded each other in the position of revenue headman. It was said that these four clans shared in the headmanship because they had combined to drive another clan, the Kales, out of Kordegao. (The Kales were originally deshmukhs, hereditary district officers; and after leaving Kordegao they settled in some villages near Shetipur.)

In both villages there are immigrant Maratha families which in some cases have grown into small clans of their own, listed at the bottom of Tables 5 and 6. In nearly every case, these immigrants were pahunes, or in-laws, of the major clans which were already living in the village. Those who have immigrated within the last 100 years or so still retain some ties with their native villages, and the heads of household return once a year to worship their family dieties. Each village also has a number of immigrant landholding families which have not had time to grow into clans. In Olegao a few of the wealthy and influential landowners (Marathas, and Dhangars as well) are of this type. (Their economic opportunities were sometimes made available through connections with the jagirdar family, or else more recently in the economic turbulence of the depression of the 1930's.)

#### Dhangars

The Dhangars have immigrated in small groups (of various surnames) to Olegao during the last 100 years. Many came because of the construction work on the Ravi canal, and stayed because there was an increasing demand for agricultural labor. Some families eventually became tenants and later landowners (see chapter three). The Dhangars of Kordegao also consist of small, scattered kinship groups with no major clans among them. Most of the Dhangar landowners in Kordegao herd sheep; and many family members leave the village

each year, after the rainy season, to herd their sheep far to the west in the coastal mountains.

The Dhangars comprise several endogamous "subcastes" or jatis: Hatkar, Khatik, and Shegar (now called Sagar Rajput). All were originally connected with sheep and shepherding; but many have settled permanently in villages scattered throughout the north-south famine belt along the western Deccan. In those Dhangar villages which happened to become canal-irrigated, the Dhangars have now become full-time farmers, indistinguishable from their Maratha neighbors. (Such a village is described in Orenstein, 1965.) Thus in other villages near Olegao and Kordegao, there are major Dhangar clans similar to the major Maratha clans described above. If the Dhangars alone form major clans, as they do in many villages, then they also hold the hereditary village headmanship. It was also possible for a major Dhangar and a major Maratha clan to coexist in the same village, as they do in a large village next to Olegao. (In this particular case, the Marathas held the hereditary headmanship, but this right was vigorously disputed by the Dhangars.)

The major Dhangar clans are mentioned because, although they do not exist in Olegao or Kordegao, they are quite important in political affairs involving the nearby villages, as in the Olegao cooperative sugar factory elections, for example (see chapter seven). The Dhangars are estimated to include about 27% of the landowners in the factory area: an important minority able to press certain political demands on the Maratha majority. (In the 1921 census, the Dhangars accounted for 16.5% of the taluka population; they were much less numerous in the central and western portions of the district [Gazetteer, Vol. 18-B, 1926:7].) In the 1950's the Dhangars

several times secured representation among those elected to the District Local Board from Shetipur taluka, though they failed to reach higher in the elections.

The Dhangars sometimes have a more united vote bloc than the Marathas, because the former are motivated by resentment against the numerical power of the latter. Dhangar candidates who did not obtain Congress party nominations or who were defeated in taluka elections are frequently remembered with bitterness. During the 1920's and '30's the Dhangars, like several other castes, held provincial caste conferences, seeking to improve their status and educational opportunities, etc. One such conference was held in Shetipur and another in Olegao; but little was accomplished besides making speeches and passing resolutions. The wealthy Dhangar farmers have not suffered social discrimination among the Marathas nor any comparative lack of economic opportunities. The nearest Dhangar aristocratic family, which might have sponsored caste educational institutions, lives over 300 miles away in Indore. For these reasons the local Dhangars have not generated a strong caste uplift movement. A further hindrance is that leaders of one of the local subcastes, the Shegars, have for about 40 years been claiming that they are Sagar Rajputs--superior (like the Marathas) to other Dhangars in terms of ritual-social status. Nevertheless, there is often tacit cooperation among the subcastes during elections.

#### Malis

Though small in numbers, the Malis have provided an important economic example by their customary enterprise and expertise in growing irrigated crops. "They had a reputation as a 'progressive' caste, apparently taking easily both to education and to new agricultural pursuits" (Catanach, 1970: 87). Unlike

the traditional Maratha peasants, the Malis were as experienced in marketing their produce as in growing it. Malis from Sasvad came to the Shetipur area after the canal was opened; but they later found even better opportunities when new canals were built in Ahmednagar and Sholapur districts, and so they moved on. Thus the few Malis around Shetipur today do not possess the economic (and political) power of their brethren in the other districts.

#### Brahmins and Merchant Castes

These castes are too few in numbers to have influential vote blocs, but some of the wealthy individuals in the canal area have been influential in cooperative sugar factory politics, etc. Such influence is feasible in arenas, like the cooperatives, which are involved with agrobusiness problems as well as politics. In Olegao, Brahmins functioned as the chief administrators for the jagirdar; and in chapters three and four we shall see that two of these Brahmin administrators acquired large landholdings and became influential in the early cooperatives and a private sugar factory venture. Before independence, Brahmins dominated the local administration, which was involved in many forms of public and private enterprise. Opportunities for public influence are much more restricted today, because of the power of the vote held by the Maratha majority. Some Brahmin and merchant caste leaders are still very influential in Shetipur municipal politics, however; and they also are influential in organizing and financing some of the political party campaigns in the general elections.

In Kordegao the Gujar merchants are still very powerful economically, as moneylenders. They have no open influence in politics, however. Fifty years ago, a great deal of land was also in the hands of some distinguished old Brahmin administrative families. (Some of this was inam, or revenue-free,

land.) But these families migrated to the cities in search of new careers; and since independence their tenants have been forcing them to give up their lands under the provisions of the tenancy acts. Little political influence belongs to the few Brahmin families which have remained in the village.

#### The Craft and Community Service Castes

Few in numbers and with little or no lands, the craftsmen castes have never had any political influence in the villages. There is considerable variation in ritual status among the castes I have included under this heading. Washermen and watchmen are considered much lower than potters and goldsmiths. Still, these are all specialized service castes above the category of Scheduled Castes, which were formerly regarded as "untouchables." Along with the Scheduled Castes, most of these service castes participated in the traditional baluta system, comparable to the jajmani system of northern India (see Wiser, 1936; Beidelman, 1959; Kolenda, 1963). In the old days these castes provided their services to the village farmers as and when they were needed, and in return the service castes received certain fixed shares in the annual harvest of those farming families which they had served. The baluta system emphasized security, stability and village autonomy in the supply of basic goods and services and was relatively immune to short-term fluctuations in supply and demand (cf., Epstein, 1967; Orenstein, 1962). In Olegao by 1970 the system had been almost completely eroded by the progress of the market economy, while it remained somewhat stronger in Kordegao. (See Orenstein, 1965: 204-228, for a complete description of the system in one village.)

#### The Scheduled Castes

Though fairly strong in numbers, these castes are weakened politically by their small or nonexistent landholdings and low ritual status. The

pressure of these disadvantages led to the growth of a Scheduled Castes movement, which is discussed in chapter five. This movement is not significant in village politics, however, in part because the different low castes refuse to unite with each other politically and also because opportunities for economic improvement and leadership are to be found mostly in the towns and cities. (Shetipur town has several Scheduled Caste cooperative housing societies, for example, and a new school and student hostel under construction by the Buddhist-Mahar organization.) Every village council has seats reserved for Scheduled Caste representatives; but regardless of the quality of the persons elected to fill these seats, they are unable to influence the rest of the council members because of the disparity in individual economic power. Since many members of the Scheduled Castes own no land, they cannot belong to the agricultural cooperatives, which are the most important political arenas in the canal villages. Only the Buddhist-Mahars have organized a political party to represent their interests in the general elections; and their vote alone is not big enough in the Shetipur area to give the party much leverage in confronting the dominant Congress party.

Caste stratification is no longer a strong political issue or mobilizing force, except to the Scheduled Castes. In the past, there was antagonism between the poorly-educated Maratha majority and the Brahmins who dominated the civil service and who also originally dominated the local independence movement (see chapter five). This conflict gradually evaporated after independence, with the coming of the universal franchise and the resultant takeover of the state Congress party and the legislature by the Marathas. As other writers have emphasized, the caste system in Maharashtra

is essentially three-tiered, with the Brahmins and other "advanced castes" at top, the Marathas and allied castes in the middle, and the Scheduled Castes at the bottom (Patterson, 1952: 19-46). The old patterns of Brahmin influence are discussed in chapter four. The organized attempts at upward mobility by Marathas and Scheduled Castes are discussed in chapter five; and the complete success of the Marathas is demonstrated in chapters six and seven. By comparison, in the Shetipur area the Scheduled Castes residing in the villages have lacked effective middlemen and coalitions.

## B. Economic Stratification

The economic systems of the two villages are very different. Kordegao has over 20,000 acres under cultivation, while Olegao has just 6,000 cultivated acres. This difference reflects the much higher productivity of land in Olegao. Tables 7 and 8 indicate the various dry and wet crops grown in the two villages in 1969-70. Fully 29% of the cropped area in Olegao is devoted to the profitable sugar cane, while only 15.9% of the area in Kordegao is devoted to all cash crops, including wheat, onions, cotton, and the hardy safflower. In Kordegao, 84.1% of the area is devoted to the staples, jowar, bajri and pulses, while the area devoted to these crops in Olegao is just 45%. In Olegao 80.9% of the gross cropped area is amply and reliably irrigated, while only 10.3% is irrigated--scantily and uncertainly--in Kordegao.

Along with the basic difference in population densities, the two villages are quite different in the employment structures of their populations, as shown in Tables 9 and 10. In Olegao, of the total number of families engaged in primary agricultural production (plus related menial work), the ratio of landowners to landless is 0.54. In Kordegao, on the other hand, the ratio is 5.7. Thus the ecological difference created by canal irrigation has led to a remarkable differentiation between "peasant" farming and commercial farming within the taluka. Olegao farming is based in large part on the use of wage labor (which is not to suggest that the landowner-managers are idle). However, in Kordegao it seems that over five-sixths of the farm labor required is supplied by the landowning families themselves. During the last



85 years, the canal area has attracted tens of thousands of immigrants from dry villages all over the western and central Deccan. Whenever there was a drought in the Shetipur region itself, many farmers in Kordegao would leave their lands and go to the nearby canal villages in search of employment as daily laborers. As families grew in Kordegao, and their holdings shrank due to partitions or debts, some families settled permanently in the canal villages as laborers, or else emigrated to the cities.

This huge and relatively mobile supply of surplus labor meant that customary master-servant relations disappeared many years ago from the canal villages. (In the nineteenth century, there was a labor-mortgage system which was commonly used by village headmen, deshmukhs, and other large landholders. In return for an advance of about 100 rupees plus maintenance, a laborer would bind himself to work for five years [Keatinge, 1912: 66-67].) There are still a few large farmers who employ some laborers on an annual contract basis, which gives security to the laborer at an average wage which is somewhat lower than the usual daily wage. However, the annual contract requires some personal accommodation between employer and worker, and it is not very popular with either class (cf., Keatinge, 1921: 141-142).

As a preliminary step in the research, I wanted to interview in depth a stratified random sample of the village landowners, along the lines followed by Epstein (1962: 42-43). These interviews were focused on family economic histories and were intended to provide the basic socioeconomic background for my research in the villages.

In order to draw up this sample, an assistant made a census of the two villages. He visited every house and recorded the number of residents per kitchen (plus dependants who were away in college, etc.); and he also

recorded the number of dry and irrigated acres which the respondents claimed to own. This basic information was then used to calculate, for each census family, the ratio of standard acres per consumption unit.

Although land values are affected by many important variables, including the variable quality of different irrigation sources, it was assumed that all wet lands in each village were equivalent, and likewise for all dry lands in each village. Wet and dry then had to be made equivalent to each other. Examination of land-sale records for the last four years, plus discussions of the costs and profits of wet and dry crops led to the estimation of value-equivalence ratios between wet and dry lands in the two villages. In Olegao, I estimated that wet land was at least six times more valuable than dry land. (Orenstein estimates that in 1954, the net income per acre of jowar was five times greater on irrigated than on dry land. However, the net income from an acre of sugar cane was 48 times the net income from dry jowar [1965: 238].) With the few families which had partly dry holdings in Olegao, I divided the dry acres by six and added the quotient to the wet acres, to produce the standard wet acres held by that family.

In Kordegao, I estimated that the small patches of land irrigated somewhat unreliably by well were at most worth three-and-a-half times the value of the dry lands. For each family in Kordegao, I multiplied the number of wet acres by 3.5 and added the product to the number of dry acres to give the total of standard dry acres held by that family. I deliberately followed inverse procedures in the two villages, as indicated by these formulas:

$$\text{Olegao: Wet} + \frac{\text{Dry}}{6} = \text{Area (standard wet)}$$

$$\text{Kordegao: Dry} + (\text{Wet} \times 3.5) = \text{Area (standard dry)}$$

Simple realism suggests that the normal standard in Olegao is wet and in Kordegao, dry. I wanted to avoid the implication that the same standard might be applied to both villages; for they are two different economic systems, and it may not even be safe to assume that the value of money is the same in both systems.

The number of standard acres per consumption unit in each family was then computed. The number of family members was reduced to consumption units by means of the ratios (somewhat simplified) given in Epstein (1962: 43):

1 adult male = 1.00 consumption unit

1 adult female = 0.83 c.u.

1 child under 14 years = 0.62 c.u. (average)

Thus a family of mother, father and two children amounts to  $1.00 + 0.83 + (2 \times 0.62) = 3.07$  c.u.

When the ratios for each family were computed, they were then arranged in a sequence, from the family with the fewest acres per consumption unit up to the family with the most--one sequence for each village. These sequences were then divided into groups of ten families, creating an arbitrary number of "size-groups" for each village. A matrix was formed, with the sequence of size groups controlling the columns and the caste membership of the landowning families controlling the rows. (See Tables 3 and 4 for simplified versions of these matrixes.) I selected a 10% random sample of

the 535 landowning families in Olegao, and a 5% sample of the 1057 landowning families in Kordegao. These samples were carefully distributed so as to be representative of the mutual distribution of castes and size-groups.

In the intensive interviews which followed, the census data on these sample families had to be corrected in some cases; but in most cases the refined data remained roughly consistent with the original data used for plotting the sample on the matrixes. Figures 1 and 2 show the results concerning the distribution of acres per consumption unit, from the smallest to the largest farmers. The broad categories of small, medium and large farmers were not used in drawing up the samples. The samples were derived from several dozen size-groups in continuous sequence. Lumping these size-groups into three or four major classes is a result of correlation and analysis done after leaving the field.

These size-group sequences and broad size-classes are based on land/man ratios, not on the absolute sizes of family holdings. In most cases, the absolute scale of a family holding is roughly consistent with its position in the small, medium, or large class of land/man ratios. Of course an unusually large family population sometimes reduces the ratio compared with the absolute size; and a very small family increases the comparative value of the ratio; but the extreme deviations are not many. In any case, the use of ratios was found to correlate well with significant economic and political features, as shown below. Of course these ratios neglect other determinants of relative economic standing, such as employment in industry or the professions. A more rigorous sampling procedure would have to take account of such variables--particularly in Olegao, where there are many jobs available in the sugar factory and in the nearby town.

Tables 11 and 12 show how the small, medium and large classes were distinguished and located on Figures 1 and 2. In Olegao, the "small" farmers are defined as those who must work as laborers on other farms during part of the year. This feature is distributed over the lower 41% of the scale in Figure 1, as shown by Table 11. The lower boundary of the "large" farmers is determined by another feature: grape growing. Only large farmers can afford to grow grapes in Olegao, as shown in Table 11. The residual size range between these two classes naturally constitutes the "medium" farmers, who have enough land to avoid doing menial work for others and who work the land with their own hands (unlike the large farmers).

As Table 11 shows, many small farmers must work as agricultural laborers, while others have become workers in the Olegao sugar factory or have obtained some other form of non-agricultural employment. A few also supplement their income by trading cattle, selling eggs or milk, herding sheep, etc. Even with their small holdings, most of these farmers grow some sugar cane and own shares in the cooperative sugar factory. (Among the factory shareholders, 81.7% have contracted to grow one acre of cane or less for delivery to the factory; and only 2.7% have shares equivalent to more than five acres of cane.) For some of the heavier cane-growing operations, they too must use hired labor when they can afford it.

The medium farmers have enough land to support them and absorb all their family labor supply; but they are not "peasants," because they also depend on a regular supply of hired labor for the cultivation of sugar cane. The distinction between "upper" and "lower" medium-scale farmers is not a sharp one. Among the lower-medium farmers, it is common for the womenfolk to work in their own fields, weeding, threshing, etc. (but never for hire).

This becomes uncommon among the upper-medium farmers. Another difference is that the latter often have good sugar factory jobs, while the lower-medium farmers rarely have outside employment of any kind--indicating the demand for family labor on their comparatively under-capitalized farms. The upper-medium farmers make more use of hired labor and machinery. The family labor which is freed in this way is either used in outside employment or (very often) in especially intensive management of the family farms.

The large farmers follow these same options. Some neglect agriculture for the sake of politics or other amusements, but quite a few are dedicated to intensive farming. They experiment with various fruits and vegetables, especially grapes. Grapes require heavy initial investments and heavy treatments of irrigation, fertilizer and pesticides. When the vines are mature, they may yield fruit annually worth about Rs. 50,00 per acre, sometimes more. Many of the large and upper-medium farmers also cultivate their sugar cane very intensively--though cane, unlike grapes, is a crop which can be grown fairly casually on a large scale. Compared to the local average production of 50 metric tons of sugar cane per acre, the best farmers grow up to 135 tons per acre. Some large farmers living near Olegao have won national awards for the highest yield per acre in sugar cane.

The graph in Figure 1 shows an interesting feature of the large farmers in Olegao. For the smaller 82% of landowners, the slope of the graph curves very gradually upwards, with no sharp breaks between small, lower-medium and upper-medium farmers. Above the 82% mark, however, the curve slopes very rapidly above  $45^\circ$  and approaches  $90^\circ$  at the end. If this graph is compared with Figure 2 for Kordegao, it will be seen that the latter curve has much less sag. What this seems to indicate is a more extreme amount of

economic differentiation resulting from the commercial nature of Olegao agriculture--as might be expected.

All of the large farmers, and many of the upper-medium ones, are committed to providing higher education or even professional degrees for their sons. Some of their sons are sent as young boys to expensive English-style prep schools in Poona. A number go on to take the B.Sc. in agriculture, or degrees in engineering, pharmacy, etc. Some of the large farmers also run shops in the village, dealing in bicycles, foodgrains, stationary, etc. The very wealthiest have personal connections with the big industrial families in Poona and have a variety of urban business investments.

Most of the upper-middle and large farmers in Olegao own motorcycles, the most convenient form of transportation over muddy tracks from home to fields, and to the sugar factory, political and social gatherings, the Shetipur market, etc. Sixteen of the large farmers own tractors and four of them own automobiles. Two families even have private telephones.

In Kordegao there is a fairly clear distinction between the small and medium farmers. The womenfolk of the former, as well as the menfolk, usually work for part of the year as agricultural laborers on lands owned by others. (On the other hand, during famine years the men and women of many medium farming families must also do menial wage labor--on famine relief works, for example.) In normal years, the womenfolk of the medium farmers work only on their own lands, doing weeding, threshing, cotton-picking, etc. As shown on Table 12, this feature even extends up into the large farming families in Kordegao, whereas it disappears in the upper-medium class in Olegao. Although their wives work only at home, the menfolk in the lower-medium class in

Kordegao sometimes work as agricultural laborers. There is no clear boundary between the lower- and upper-medium strata, but doing labor for hire in normal years is much rarer in the latter. There is also no distinct boundary between the medium and large farmers, for many of the latter do their own plowing, etc., and some even have their womenfolk working in their fields (see Table 12). About one-third of the top 40 landowners belong to the Brahmin or merchant castes, and these were mostly rentiers until about a decade ago. (Most of the tenants were smaller Maratha landowners, who were able in some cases to take over parts of these rented lands under the tenancy acts.) Now the big Brahmin and merchant landowners are cultivating more with the use of hired labor and sharecroppers. But the large farmers of the peasant castes (Maratha, Dhangar, Mali) provide much of their own labor.

Table 12 also shows that the large and medium farmers grow sugar cane and citrus fruit. However, these crops do not require massive capital investments as grapes do. A good well on a small patch of land and a good team of bullocks are the basic requirements, so some of the small farmers also grow little patches of these crops. As the table shows, another feature which defines the small farmers is that they often lack a full team of bullocks, because fodder becomes too scarce and expensive in the dry years. During famines, many of the medium farmers also sell off their cattle, expecting to buy new bullocks when the rains return. A few small farmers supplement their incomes by herding sheep or collecting and marketing eggs.

The upper-medium and large farmers need hired laborers in the planting and harvest seasons, and often in between to help lift and distribute irrigation water from the wells. Since the landowners outnumber the landless



agricultural workers by almost six to one, much of this hired labor comes from the small farmers, who constitute 33% of the total number of village families. The extensive but under-capitalized large farms and the small farmers with surplus labor are therefore symbiotic.

Only a very few of the large farmers have motorcycles in Kordegao. Coupled with the long distances between hamlets, this means that communication among these farmers is very limited. Regular contacts include only local clusters of hamlets, supplemented by casual contacts in the weekly market at the village center. (In Olegao, by comparison, the leaders buzz around day and night to each others' houses, when there are political affairs at hand.) The large farmers in Kordegao have a standard of living which is quite unlike that of the large farmers in Olegao. Only a few of their sons attend college, and the Kordegao farmers all continue to live largely in the style of their peasant ancestors, in hamlets which are isolated most of the week from outside communication except by the post and the radio.

### C. Political Stratification

The delineation of economic classes based on the land area ratios, discussed above, proves surprisingly helpful in understanding the structure of political leadership in Olegao. (That the same is not true of Kordegao is due to this village's lack of a strong leadership structure, as described in chapter eight.) Table 13 shows the distribution of various types of leaders in terms of their economic classes.

Olegao village residents defined as "leaders," who are all listed on the table, are those who in 1969-70 held a public office--as a member of the gram panchayat, the high school committee, the cooperative sugar factory board, or one of the managing committees of the cooperative credit societies. The "active" leaders are those who were continuously involved in politics in many, if not all, of the local arenas. This is sometimes indicated by multiple public offices, but not always, since influence was often wielded behind the scenes. Membership in the "active" category could only be established through prolonged observation (see chapter six for a discussion of these active leaders in action).

The "secondary" leaders are in some cases those who regularly support and work for the active leaders. The former regularly appear in one public office or another, wherever their support may be convenient to the latter. The secondary leaders often do not win these positions as a result of their lone influence and merit, but as part of a team effort and strategy. But there are also secondary leaders who operate more or less on their own. They have influence, in some arenas, because of personal wealth, and they

desire office just for the sake of prestige. These leaders have a tendency to become nuisance candidates, and the active leaders often try to accommodate them in order to keep the competition orderly and predictable. These secondary leaders differ from the active leaders and their supporters in that the former do not devote time and resources to building up a clientele, nor do they reveal much commitment to the management of the institutions they purport to lead. They seek the prestige of positions, but not the active influence derived from patronage and coalition-formation. This political laziness is a result either of lack of skill or of a primary concern with agriculture and other business enterprises.

The remaining leaders can accurately be called place-holders. As Table 13 indicates, they are all small farmers. Two of the five place-holders belong to the Scheduled Castes, and they occupy the two seats on the village council which are reserved for Scheduled Caste representatives. The other three (a Dhangar, a Maratha and a Ramoshi) represent small caste or kinship vote blocs and provide conveniently passive support in the positions assigned to them by the other leaders.

With these definitions in mind, we can see that Table 13 shows a very close correspondence between the patterns of economic and political stratification. Only large farmers become active leaders, and small farmers only become place-holders. There is also a striking difference revealed between the lower and upper-medium farmers. The industrious and comparatively self-reliant lower-medium farmers do not appear as leaders of any sort whatever in this village. This is obviously because the lower-medium farmers, for one thing, do not have the spare time for political affairs, nor the wealth to build up clienteles. Because their farm operations are fairly self-

sufficient and consume all their family labor, the lower-medium farmers also do not have to seek access to employment through political patrons, in contrast to the place-holding small farmers. Table 11 demonstrates this point in the column concerning employment at the Olegao cooperative sugar factory, among the sample families interviewed. Six out of 22 small farmers in the sample hold sugar factory jobs, but only one of the lower-medium farmers. Two of the small-farmer place-holders hold sugar factory jobs. Employment at the factory is a reward given for political support, so these figures indicate how some of the small farmers are dependent on the political leaders for their employment opportunities.

This finding is repeated even more dramatically in the information on sugar factory jobs held by secondary leaders in Table 13. Nine out of 26 secondary leaders, or their immediate family members, hold jobs in the cooperative sugar factory. (Naturally, these are better jobs than those held by the place-holders.) In sharp contrast, only one of the active leaders holds such a job. The active leaders have influence over the allocation of these jobs, as we shall see later; but they prefer not to be tied to them personally--not to have to follow orders from administrators whom they control politically. (One former elected director of the sugar factory, not a resident of Olegao, later became the managing director of the factory. However, very few of the elected directors would qualify for such a high administrative post, nor would they accept a subordinate position.) Thus the data on sugar factory employment among the village leaders shows a very strong pattern of dependency among the secondary leaders and the placeholders, which is related to the control of factory jobs by the active leaders. Fully seven out of fifteen gram panchayat members, in

1970, were employees of the sugar factory. In Olegao, political loyalties are strongly influenced by the allocation of sugar factory jobs, and political class positions revealed by the same means.

The information on caste affiliation in Table 13 is also significant. Eight out of nine active leaders are Marathas, the only exception being a Hatkar Dhangar. This of course reflects the position of the Marathas as the numerically dominant landholding caste. However, the caste affiliations of the secondary leaders show a significant reverse tendency: only 11 out of 26 are Marathas, while 6 are Hatkar Dhangar and 9 belong to various other castes (Mali, Brahmin, Lingayat Wani, Gurav, Ramoshi). This indicates a striking tendency for the active leaders to build up the broadest possible support bases, recruiting secondary leaders from many different backgrounds as their personal clients. (This is necessary for the technique of the balanced election slate, discussed in chapters six and seven.) Conversely, we can see that the non-Marathas have a much smaller chance of moving into the top leadership ranks. The only exception to this rule in Olegao is a leader of remarkable abilities.

Thus the use of acres-per-consumption-unit as an index to relative economic standing has shown a strong correlation with certain features of relative political standing. However, the largest landowners are not always the strongest leaders. The two largest landowners in Olegao, who have been active in village politics, are not proving to be effective leaders in competition with others of lesser economic standing. The largest landowners can easily influence elections, especially through bribes; but they are often considered too aloof to make good modern politicians. They do not seek to establish long-term patronage ties or coalitions with other leaders. As the others say, they do not maintain good contact with the people.

Nevertheless, the active leaders must be able to afford to spend a lot of time away from agriculture and other forms of business enterprise; and they must have large landholdings to afford this. One of the most effective leaders has his farm managed by his brother, while he devotes himself to politics as a full-time career.

Somewhat similar information on the Kordegao leaders is given in Table 14. As we shall see in chapter eight, the informal leadership structure is not very clear, so this table is based more on the formal criteria of tenure in certain offices, etc. Even so, there is a fairly clear hierarchical pattern, with the panchayat and credit society chairmanships going to the larger farmers. Members of the credit society committees of management also tend to be larger farmers, on the average, than gram panchayat members. The latter category includes no less than three landless persons, only one of whom is occupying a seat reserved for a scheduled caste representative. The others are a Teli oil-presser (a businessman of moderate means) and a Muslim trader. These two were elected from the village-center ward, where the Maratha farmers are in a minority; but even so their presence on the panchayat suggests a lack of peasant power which is curious by comparison with villages such as Olegao. There are two special categories on this table which relate even more emphatically to that lack of power, as we shall see. One is the category of secretaries to the credit societies, who are still very influential in the working of their institutions--quite unlike the situation in Olegao. The other special category is that of the brokers (one of whom is also the panchayat secretary, or gram sevak). As we shall see in chapter eight, these brokers are not leaders with public followings, yet they have great influence over some of the key issues in village politics.

## CHAPTER III

### THE HISTORICAL SETTING

The growth of local institutions and leadership has been much affected by striking economic and ecological changes which originated in the latter part of the 19th century. The present-day socioeconomic setting, outlined in the preceding chapter, has also been molded by the same changes. The first part of this chapter is concerned with the varying conditions of private agricultural business in Shetipur taluka since about 1850--such conditions as the spread of cash-cropping, the terms of credit and leasing, the results of price fluctuations and indebtedness, etc. The second section is concerned with the entrepreneurial activities of some large-scale sugar cane growers. The third part of this chapter is concerned with the growth of new economic institutions: the cooperative credit societies and marketing unions, the private and cooperative sugar factories, and the local development councils. These institutions, it will be seen, were greatly influenced in their performance by the changes in local agrarian conditions during the first half of this century. After about 1950, however, these institutions grew to such an extent that they exerted a strong reciprocal influence over the whole local economy, particularly in the canal-irrigated villages.

The historical process which has differentiated the commercial economy of the canal villages from the "peasant" economy of the nearby villages can be summed up as the stabilization of the factors of production. Water is

the most important factor in this process, but others such as credit and marketing facilities have also exerted a great influence in both types of villages.

For convenience, I refer to all individual cultivators (with regard to their economic activities) as "farmers." The farmers of Olegao were actually peasants until at least the 1920's, and the farmers of Kordegao are still peasants to this day--since they cultivate largely for home consumption. It would be clumsy to try to distinguish which of the canal-village cultivators were peasants or farmers at which particular date, so the distinction is usually ignored. When it is necessary to call attention to the difference, I refer to the "peasant economy" of Kordegao and the "commercial economy" of Olegao. Another reason for not forcing the distinction is that all of these farmers are still in some ways part of a "peasant society," a society based partly on traditional patterns of caste and kinship, integrated in part by traditional beliefs and rituals. I will refer many times to the "peasant castes" and "peasant clans," when no other phrase would serve as well. Economically, many cultivators are now farmers, but socially and culturally they are nearly all peasants.



#### A. Factor Stabilization and Agrarian Change

Behind much of the progress in local agriculture lies a series of changes which tended to stabilize the availability of crucial factors of production. And behind many of the setbacks lie changes which tended to promote instability in certain other factors. This is not intended to slight the role of technological innovation in promoting progress, but only to suggest that the successful and widespread adoption of such innovations was dependent on the preceding tendencies toward factor stabilization. Historically, Indian agriculture has always been a "gamble in the rains," and this was particularly true in areas like Shetipur, which is in the heart of the "famine belt" caused by the rain shadow of the coastal mountains to the west. Consequently, as in many peasant societies, the cultivators around Shetipur customarily followed production strategies aimed at minimizing the risk of starvation. The very germ plasm with which they worked inevitably reflected this adaptation. Their grain was tough, resistant to pests and drought; but it was also not very responsive to heavy doses of irrigation and fertilizer--the antithesis of the modern, high-yielding hybrids. Thus progress in monsoon agriculture has depended to a great extent on the reduction of some of the risks involved. It is convenient to discuss such reductions in terms of the various factors of production. Risk reduction through factor stabilization perhaps makes the difference between a peasant economy and a commercial farming economy (cf., Bennett, 1966: 206-207).

Many changes toward factor stabilization were the indirect result of technological innovations in other fields (such as navigation, public health, railway transport, etc.); but they were also the direct result of concomitant changes in the scope and method of public administration. The first new form of stabilization was the uniform code of land administration developed by the British regime in the middle of the 19th century (Kumar, 1968: 84-127). This code reduced uncertainty in the terms of landholding in various ways. All hereditary district officers were eliminated from the administration; only the hereditary village headmen and accountants were retained. The hereditary officers were replaced by civil servants; the somewhat arbitrary discretion of the former was changed, at least in theory, to the uniform red tape of the latter. In practice, of course, the new bureaucratic procedures, and the courts which backed them up, were subject to manipulation by those who had the right education, social contacts or wealth (cf., Cohn, 1965: 103-115; Frykenberg, 1969). Another sweeping administrative change was the fairly uniform assessment of revenue charges against each individual plot of land. These assessments were fixed in advance for a period of thirty years, because the government in fact believed that a stable revenue demand would help to promote agricultural progress. The rates at which these assessments were pitched were not onerous, in most areas, during years of adequate rainfall; but they were very difficult to pay in years of drought. To deal with this latter problem, the government finally found that it had to introduce a regular system of remissions and suspensions toward the end of the 19th century--following the examples of Indian rulers of previous centuries (Keatinge, 1912: 29). The effect of these administrative innovations was to make the cost of owning and operating land

more predictable over the long run. At the same time, they helped to break down the traditional social and political bonds which had previously enabled the villages as corporate units to survive the periodic onslaughts of war, famine and plague (Kumar, 1968: 128-150). But other types of changes were at least as important in breaking apart these customary bonds.

The pattern of holdings which consequently evolved in Shetipur taluka was one of numerous, small landholdings cultivated by their owners. In 1902-03, the proportion of landholders who were cultivating their holdings, instead of renting them out, was 84.7% in this taluka (Selections, 1912: 45). In 1921-22, of the holdings in Shetipur taluka, 36.3% were under five acres in size, and 82.5% were under 25 acres (Mann, 1925: 102). In a study of a dry village similar to Kordegao, it was estimated that 20 acres should constitute the minimum economic holding for an average family; but it was also found that 77% of the holdings were under this minimum in size (Mann and Kanitkar, 1921: 43). There were very few landless agricultural laborers in the dry villages, though they were attracted by the thousands to the canal villages. In 1902-03 the landless laborers constituted 17% of the agricultural population in the taluka (Selections, 1912: 45); but by 1961 this proportion had risen to 50% (Maharashtra Census Office, 1966:77).

The holding of land in individual units was also secured by another type of administrative innovation, the cessation of warfare. During the 17th and 18th centuries, crops and cattle were sometimes pillaged, men were sent off to war. Moreover, to field an army was a heavy and irregular financial burden on the state, one which led to the imposition of special taxes and probably caused the chaotic exactions of the revenue "farming" system at the close of the 18th century. The pax Britannica rendered access to the land

and its produce more stable, and it also reduced some of the irregular movements of population which were a product of war. Thus began the stabilization of a second factor, labor.

The availability of a steady supply of labor was further assured by other administrative measures. Toward the end of the 19th century the Bombay government began to adopt systematic famine relief measures. Villagers in the drought-stricken areas were offered employment on public works, such as dams and canals; and the new railways made it possible to shift foodgrain stocks from surplus to deficit areas. In the late 19th and early 20th century, the government began to use vaccinations and quarantines to combat epidemics, with results which were good enough to help trigger the start of the population explosion. Thus curbing the massive fluctuations in labor supply brought its own dangers to the peasant economy. In those dry villages which remained in the peasant economy, as much as 85% of the population became "insolvent" because of population pressure on the land (Mann and Kanitkar, 1921: 131). Many villagers had to migrate to the cities for employment (Mann, 1917: 127, 129). However, the canal villages probably benefited from this larger and steadier supply of labor. Sugar cane cultivation was capable of absorbing large amounts of hired labor the whole year round, at least so long as the sugar market was healthy. By about 1910 the labor market was becoming thoroughly monetized, and the majority of agricultural workers preferred to work on a daily wage or piece-work basis, rather than on annual contracts (Keatinge, 1912: 66-67; also Keatinge, 1921: 141-143). (It is possible that this trend may have partly reversed later on, due to increasing population pressure.)

This brings us to the most crucial change, the construction of large-

scale dams and canals, which began in the later 19th century. The Ravi canal was completed in 1885-86 as a famine relief work. The farmers in the villages under the canal's command area soon began cultivating sugar cane as a profitable (and expensive) cash crop. In 1891-92 there were just 1,000 acres of sugar cane in Shetipur taluka; but by 1901-02 this had expanded to 5,000 acres (Selections, 1912: 41). (By 1950-51 there were 8,000 acres of cane, and by 1969 about 17,000 [Maharashtra Census Office, 1966: 250].) The available canal water was not fully utilized at first, since the peasant-farmers at the time viewed it as merely a protection against famine for their foodgrain crops. By the time of the price boom which began with the First World War, however, nearly all the available water was contracted for.

In 1908-09 the average costs of cane cultivation per acre were 400 rupees and more around Shetipur; and in Olegao the profits amounted to more than 100 rupees per acre in most cases (Sahasrabudhe, 1909: 7-8). This compares with a cost of less than ten rupees per acre for ordinary dry jowar in 1917, when cultivated without hired labor (Mann and Kanitkar, 1921: 80). By 1925, the canal-village farmers were producing an average of 7,000 to 11,000 pounds of raw sugar per acre, an output which was said to compare favorably with almost any place in the world (Mann, 1925: 23). (Later, during the depression, the average yields per acre dropped by about 2,000 pounds [Blyn, 1966: 286].)

Because of this rise in cane production, Shetipur town expanded rapidly as a marketing center for gul (raw sugar) (Selections, 1912: 17, 25). Good cane production requires heavy, regular inputs of fertilizer and labor as well as water, so the canal villages began to attract hired labor and manure sales from the surrounding dry villages (Selections, 1912: 3-5). The

stable supply of water from the canal also helped to protect the region from shortages of foodgrains. The monsoon was probably the most unstable factor in traditional agriculture and therefore the most crucial risk. The use of the canal therefore had a profound effect on the use of all factors of production, stimulating the creation of open markets involving cash prices for most of the other factors. (Of course much of the labor, manure, fodder, etc. was still home-grown, so the canal-village economy was not fully monetized.) This transformation had two important consequences: it created a greater dependency on the money market; and it linked the fortunes of the cultivators to the fluctuations of worldwide commodity markets. Credit and produce marketing replaced the monsoon as the crucial point of instability in canal-village farming.

Even in the middle of the 19th century, many farmers in the Bombay Presidency were affected by the changes in the world cotton market brought on by the American civil war (Kumar, 1968: 165-167). Raw sugar production rose sharply in Shetipur taluka when prices climbed during World War I. In this same period the first sugar factory was established in Poona district (Gazetteer, 1954: 203), to be followed soon after by a sugar factory in Olegao village itself.

The growing importance of the credit market was signalled in 1875 by the Deccan riots--outbreaks of violence in scattered villages, directed against the village moneylenders and focussed particularly on the destruction of their account books. Kordegao, in fact, was one of the first villages to have such an outbreak. As village legend has it, a Gujar moneylender was pressing a respectable Maratha cultivator for payments on a loan, and the moneylender made an insulting suggestion concerning the farmer's wife.

The farmer went home and discussed this with others in his hamlet and in several other hamlets as well. On the weekly market day, the farmers gathered in the village center, and then they broke into the shops and houses of all the Gujar merchants. All the business records that they could discover were seized and burned. Some members of the mob went on to loot the contents of the shops and houses, and one house was burned, though no attacks were made on the Gujars themselves. Within days, similar incidents flared up in scattered villages in Shetipur and the nearby talukas (Committee on the Riots, 1876: 3).

The causes of these riots have been debated at some length (cf., Committee on the Riots, 1876; Kumar, 1965; Catanach, 1966; Charlesworth, 1972). Heavy indebtedness was nothing new to the farmers, but it seems that the moneylenders were gaining the upper hand in new ways and to new degrees. The boom in cotton prices, caused by the American civil war, had inflated the borrowing capacity of the farmers and had also created, among the traders, an "enormous increase of capital seeking investment" (Committee on the Riots, 1876: 49). At least in the big market towns like Kordegao, the moneylenders seem to have been taking over ownership of land from their debt-ridden clients (Charlesworth, 1972: 407). In any case, the moneylenders were certainly making more frequent use of the new and alien legal processes. In Kordegao in 1867, there were seven mortgage deeds registered, while in 1874 there were thirty-three (Committee on the Riots, 1876: 317). In the district courts, the number of lawsuits related to agricultural debts doubled in about the same period. Moneylenders were nearly always the plaintiffs and over 90% of cases were decided in favor of the plaintiffs (Charlesworth, 1972: 406-407). As a general rule, the moneylenders were still seeking to control the farmers' incomes, rather than the land itself (Charlesworth, 1972: 409); but in

Kordegao at least, they did take over quite a lot of land. (See Table 4 for an indication of their present standing as big landholders.) In 1917, in one dry village like Kordegao, 23.8% of the cultivated area was under mortgage to a moneylender, involving an average debt of 200 rupees per family (Mann and Kanitkar, 1921: 117-118). What the riots indicate is the increasingly weighty influence of external markets, without an increase in the stability of peasant smallholder productivity. Equally clearly, they indicate a general exasperation with the encroachments of an alien administrative system and the local elite groups which could best manipulate it.

The canal villages changed drastically after 1885, but the villages like Kordegao remained in much the same ambiguous position, strongly affected by external markets and the local elite groups which were able to manipulate the administrative system, yet without any inherent progress in the productive system. Around 1930, one of the Kordegao moneylenders, a Gujar, was lending around fifty to sixty thousand rupees annually--though a large share of this business went to the Teli oil pressers rather than to the farmers. By 1942 this moneylender was paying over 300 rupees on the lands held in his own name (and rented out to tenants). Since the average rate of assessment was one-half rupee or less per acre, this merchant must have owned 600 acres or so. He also managed a cloth shop, with an annual volume of about 100,000 rupees. (These figures are based on first-hand statements, which were likely to be minimized, if anything.) This merchant was on cordial terms with the district collector (an English officer), and he was able to obtain a permit (for pumping irrigation water out of a stream) which would have been denied through normal channels. There were three such Gujar merchant families in Kordegao at that time, and there were also



several Brahmin families, former holders of hereditary offices and inam lands, who were also engaged in moneylending. By about 1940, the Brahmins and Gujars were considered to be the largest landholders in the village. However, the Brahmins were moving to the cities; and as absentee landlords after 1948 they were relatively easy to dispossess by their Maratha tenants under the new tenancy acts. Some of the Gujar families, or their younger members, also preferred to move to the more thriving canal villages or to Poona city. Recently, some of the small farmers have depended on the large farmers for occasional credit, which is repaid by means of a readily available supply of labor, especially for planting and harvesting--almost a return to the old labor-mortgage system of the 19th century (see Keatinge, 1912: 66-67).

The boom in sugar prices in the 1920's caused a considerable disparity between the wet and dry villages; and superficially the depression of the 1930's reduced the canal villages to a peasant-like subsistence economy. But the depression, in another sense, actually emphasized the disparity between wet and dry villages. Part of the great power of the Kordegao moneylenders lay in their absolute necessity to the farmers in case of drought, for the merchants had to provide grain for subsistence and for sowing again next season. The depression caused no basic change in this relationship, but it plunged the sugar cane farmers into debts which were enormous by comparison with the debts in Kordegao. "The big cultivator employing hired labour on a large scale in producing his crop," "the Deccan Canal irrigator and the cultivator of commercial crops like cotton and groundnut" suffered most from the fall in prices. "The self-dependent small

farmer" did not suffer as seriously, provided that the rains were sufficient (Agriculture Department, 1930-31: 24). In 1926-27 the average price of raw sugar in Poona fell to 60% of the 1924-25 price; and the eventual 1936-37 price was just 31% of the 1924-25 price (Agriculture Department, 1924-1937: Statement VI). Many canal-village farmers lost some of their lands, and quite a few of the moneylenders and raw-sugar brokers went bankrupt. According to some of the brokers who survived, the merchants who had invested heavily in the financing of cane cultivation were the most vulnerable, for their clients had no means to repay them. Those merchants who had kept at least half of their investments in the marketing end were able to stay afloat.

On the other hand, most of my Kordegao informants said that the depression had no particular effect on their burden of debts, which was still due primarily ~~due to~~ the uncertainty of the rains. The original Kordegao cooperative credit society, founded in 1925, continued to function through the depression, though it did decline to a D-class audit rating. However, the members at least kept up their interest payments and the society stayed in operation. The original society in Olegao, on the other hand, went into liquidation.

Sugar cane was always an expensive crop. When raw sugar prices fell there was no way for many of the farmers to repay their loans; and many could not afford to go on cultivating sugar cane. The process also operated in reverse, however, for many farmers who could not afford heavy commercial investments in the 1920's were able to buy up lands very cheaply during the 1930's. It is impossible to go into details here, but one interesting example can be given from Olegao. There were two Brahmin families, related by marriage and both having members in the administrative service of the

jagirdar, who had acquired large landholdings by the 1920's (350 acres of cane land in one case). Much of this land was planted to sugar cane, and there was also some experimentation with expensive fruit crops (grapes, etc.). The Brahmin named Lonkar, who experimented most in the '20's, lost all of his lands in the '30's. The other, named Damle, lost about 300 irrigated acres. Interestingly, most of this land was acquired by Damle's former laborers, who were immigrant Dhangars. These landless Dhangars had migrated to Olegao after the canal was opened. They became permanent hired laborers on Damle's land; and later, after the start of the depression, they became his tenants. Eventually, Damle had to sell off much of this land to his tenants. One of the immigrant Dhangar families later produced an outstanding, wealthy leader in village politics. The rapid, large-scale economic mobility of the depression years thus established most of the relative economic positions of the village farmers, more or less as they stand today. It was not only the more conservative farmers who found opportunities to improve their positions during the depression. Some of the farmers who had invested in moneylending in the 1920's found it easy to acquire lands later on, because many debtors were forced to sell some of their lands.

This brings us to the interesting question of whether the big merchant moneylenders took advantage of the depression to acquire direct control over land, as they were thought to do in the later 19th century (Catanach, 1970: 10-36). The answer, in the canal villages, is that they did not, because land was not a good commercial investment for them. A few small traders living in Olegao had some lands, part of which they lost during the depression. The big merchants in Shetipur, who financed most of the cane cultivation, did not attempt to take over much of the land which their clients had mortgaged to them. The reason was simple: the sale and rental values of land were too

low. Sometimes, when the government auctioned off land to recover cooperative society debts, there were no bidders (Registrar, 1937-38: 52). Land which could be irrigated was renting for as little as five rupees per acre on long-term lease; and it sold for as little as 100 rupees per acre. Moreover, tenant cultivation was always inefficient, and there was no margin for inefficiency then. Likewise, the traders could not become owner-managers, cultivating with hired labor, because they did not have the expertise.

Another constraint on their options was in the comparative price of raw sugar and the cost of irrigation. The irrigation charge remained steady at sixty rupees per three-acre block of sugar cane land. Only one acre of the three could be planted to a new cane crop each year, so most of the sixty rupees was a charge on the produce of that one acre (the other crops in the rotation system not being of much comparative value). This cost had to be recovered by the cultivator from a raw-sugar price which varied between 50 and 70 rupees per 1,000 pounds, equivalent to about 300 to 450 rupees per acre of cane--barely enough to pay for manure and labor. Consequently, many farmers gave up some of their irrigation blocks; and the irrigation department found itself overstocked.

## B. The Sugar Cane Magnates

There was one group of commercial entrepreneurs, whom I shall call "magnates," who managed to profit in some ways from the great depression. In the Shetipur area there were just four big magnates who survived--two Brahmins, named Songaonkar and Deshpande, and two Marathas, named Darekar and Jadhav. Before and during the depression they built up large sugar cane operations, of 400 to 800 acres apiece. They followed the example of the Sasvad Malis--by tradition a caste of market gardeners, growers of irrigated fruits, vegetables and flowers. Some of the Malis migrated to the Shetipur area after the Ravi canal was opened. By the 1920's, however, the Malis were leaving the area for other districts (Sholapur and Ahmednagar), where new canals had been completed. In the newer canal areas, where the village farmers had not yet learned how to take advantage of the canal water, it was easy for the Mali immigrants to rent in large areas of irrigable land. They also found the labor somewhat cheaper than around Shetipur (Badve, 1914: 6).

In Olegao village during the 1920's there were at least three proto-magnates. Two were the Brahmin administrators mentioned above--Lonkar and Damle. They both raised large areas of sugar cane; and Lonkar, following the Mali example even further, tried to experiment with grapes and other fruit crops. The two Brahmins were both attached to the personal administrative service of the jagirdar. (All of the big magnates depended on a knowledge of administrative routines, loopholes and personal contacts, which they

managed to acquire in one way or another.) Starting in 1908 the jagirdar arranged for Lonkar and Damle to assist the government in a public agricultural finance scheme (see Section C below). The two brahmins were put in charge of a raw-sugar sales shop, which was set up in Shetipur to sell the produce of the farmers financed by this scheme. They continued in this work until 1914. When a private sugar factory was started in Olegao in 1922, Lonkar again became one of the administrators, along with the "special mamlatdar" (retired) who had been in charge of the original credit-marketing scheme in Shetipur. Thus Lonkar and Damle had their fingers in several pies and were intimately acquainted with the marketing of raw sugar. Unfortunately, the price boom of the early 1920's seems to have encouraged some heady speculations on their part. When the private sugar factory failed and the Olegao village credit society went into liquidation, Lonkar and Damle were in trouble. As mentioned above, Lonkar lost all of his land and left Olegao, while Damle had to sell about 300 acres to his tenants.

The third proto-magnate in Olegao was closely involved with these figures. He was Kisan Jagtap, a member of the major Maratha clan. Kisan Jagtap had some primary school education and a father who had been one of the first cane cultivators in the village. Kisan Jagtap, like Damle and Lonkar, built up friendly contacts with the English officers in the agriculture and irrigation departments, because of his eagerness to experiment with new seed varieties, etc. As chairman of the village cooperative credit society, Kisan Jagtap came into conflict with Lonkar, who was the secretary (see Chapter 4). When the society failed, Kisan Jagtap nearly lost his lands as well. During the depression he had to struggle to repay his cooperative loans; and it was only during the second world war, when prices rose, that he

was able to set up a large-scale cane farming operation again. This was established in a princely state, about twenty miles from Olegao. (The state's ruler was a relation by marriage of the jagirdar of Olegao.) Kisan Jagtap made use of friendly contacts in the state administration to rent in a solid block of about 600 acres. This land had to be levelled and ditched, for a new canal had just been constructed in the princely state in 1925. Kisan Jagtap also had contacts in a new private sugar factory there, which purchased his cane. The factory had an estate farm for supplying cane; but Kisan Jagtap was able to produce more cane per acre, and sell it to the factory at a lower price than the factory farm.

The four big magnates, on the other hand, maintained or increased their areas of operation during the depression. How was this possible? For one thing, they used administrative contacts just as the three proto-magnates from Olegao did. Songaonkar, in fact, was originally a local canal inspector. Darekar belonged to a village headman family and Jadhav was originally a primary school teacher. Deshpande's brother was a mamlatdar, or taluka revenue officer. Administrative contacts were helpful in buying lands which were auctioned at bargain prices for the recovery of debts; and they were necessary for obtaining large irrigation blocks. Because of some disagreement about a bribe, Songaonkar and Deshpande were unable to get along with an irrigation official in Shetipur. This type of administrative contact was so important to them that they both shifted operations away from Shetipur: Songaonkar rented in lands at the other end of the taluka, and Deshpande rented lands in the nearby princely state, just as Kisan Jagtap did later. Deshpande rented about 600 acres directly from the ruler of this state--land which had to be cleared, levelled and ditched before it could produce sugar

cane. In the early 1930's he sold seed cane to the new private sugar factory, the same one which collaborated with Kisan Jagtap later on. Songaonkar and Deshpande in turn helped the state ruler and the sugar factory, by persuading village farmers to grow cane for the factory. Songaonkar and Jadhav sold seed cane to a second factory, in the taluka next to Shetipur.

Kisan Jagtap, like the big magnates, was on cordial terms with one of the highest English officials in the irrigation department. When Kisan Jagtap was unable to obtain an irrigation block for some land which was of slightly inferior quality, he invited this official to visit the land himself. A slight deception was practiced on the Englishman, and he overruled the local authorities in Kisan Jagtap's favor. Thus the magnates depended on a variety of contacts with bureaucrats, aristocrats and industrialists.

But there still had to be reasons why the magnates could grow cane profitably at a time when many of the village farmers could not. These reasons all stemmed from the effects of the depression itself. In the first place, there was a great supply of cheap land and plenty of canal water available. The magnates rented in most of the land they were using. Many farmers were happy to rent to them for as little as five or six rupees an acre, just because of the general difficulties in making a steady cash income. Likewise, many of the farmers had to give up parts of their irrigation blocks, which were costing them twenty rupees per acre annually. Consequently, the government was eager to give blocks to large-scale users, such as the new private sugar factories and the magnates (cf., Keatinge, 1921: 84-86). Further, labor was cheap for the magnates; and here again the depression gave them an edge over the small village farmers. The latter were compelled to raise crops at least for the year-round maintenance of their families. The magnates, on the other hand, made use of hired labor, which they did not have to support



the year round. And they could choose to rotate other crops with the cane purely on the basis of their profitability; they did not have to depend on the cheapest subsistence crops, like jowar and bajri. Thus a big factor in the magnates' success was the availability of a large pool of labor which was partly self-sustained by peasant farming, so that it could be used intermittantly and cheaply on the large operations (cf., Geertz, 1966: 59, 87-90).

Finally, the magnates had excellent large-scale sources of credit. A paradox of the depression in the Bombay presidency was that there was no lack of credit for the credit-worthy. Indeed, the Provincial Cooperative Bank and the district central banks, for example, received a huge influx of deposits despite the low rates of interest which they paid; and these banks found it much harder to locate good borrowers than depositors (Registrar, 1935-36: 28; 1937-38: 30,33; 1929: 9). (This influx of deposits was attributed to the shrinkage of opportunities for investment in trade [Registrar, 1927: 6].) Some of the Shetipur merchants who survived the crash were eager to do agricultural financing on a large scale. Songaonkar, Deshpande and Jadhav all did business with a single raw-sugar broker, and their business was worth over 100,000 rupees per year--50% of the market volume in Shetipur. Because of their scale of operations and personal reliability, the magnates naturally received credit at more favorable rates than the smaller farmers. On the other hand, the broker apparently cheated them of at least 180,000 rupees when prices began to rise again. The magnates therefore went into the brokerage business for themselves for a few years. On some occasions they also tapped another large credit source, the Shetipur branch of the Bombay Provincial Cooperative Bank. When the bank set up operations in Shetipur in 1911, it planned to finance only agricultural cooperatives. However,

temporary measures were adopted during the depression, allowing the bank to make loans directly to private individuals against real security (such as land, gold ornaments, produce in a warehouse, etc. [Registrar, 1935-36: 28].) As we shall see in Chapter 4, the magnates after independence tried to influence the re-structuring of the provincial cooperative banking structure because of the value to them of the Shetipur BPCB branch.

After independence, the magnates were put on the defensive by the land reform proposals of the new state Congress government. The Tenancy Acts of 1948 and 1957 were intended to protect the small tenants against their landlords; but they also had the reverse effect of motivating many small landlords against their tenants, the magnates. The magnates had rented in most of the lands which they operated. The effect of the tenancy acts was to make most landlords attempt to terminate tenancy agreements, for fear that the tenants might be able to take away the land through legal action. (The tenancy acts were otherwise not notably effective. See Dandekar and Khudanpur, 1957: 109.) Thus many of the magnates' landlords asked for the return of their lands, and in some cases the magnates agreed, though two of them decided to keep the best of their rented-in lands. An important factor in these calculations was the threat of a land ceiling, which was enacted in 1961. Like all the big farmers, the magnates divided up their owned lands among family members before the law was passed; but the ceilings act meant that they could not buy up all the hundreds of acres of canal-irrigated land which they had been renting in.

With some new hedges against their largest operations, the magnates began to seek more intensive and expensive crops. Songaonkar introduced the

premium crop of the 1950's and '60's: grapes. Grapes had not been grown successfully in this area before. They fetched very attractive prices in Poona and Bombay, especially before they were adopted by many of the big village farmers. In 1969, the grapes from a mature one-acre vineyard were worth from about 50,000 to 75,000 rupees. Costs, including meticulous spraying, frequent irrigation, metal trellises, etc., were correspondingly high. One of Jadhav's sons claimed to produce grapes worth about 100,000 rupees from one acre with especially intensive cultivation; and part of his crop was shipped to Calcutta by air. This same Jadhav was also experimenting with European milch cattle and other forms of production more intensive than sugar cane.

Sugar cane was more suited to the resources of the average cultivator --particularly with the help of cooperative credit and an assured market in the new cooperative sugar factories. In 1970, very careful cane cultivation cost about 4130 rupees per acre, of which 2400 rupees was readily available from the credit societies. (The average farmer got by on the lesser amount and produced about 50 metric tons of cane per acre, while the better farmers grew from 90 to 135 tons per acre.) Many of the larger village farmers can nevertheless afford the annual investment of about 30,000 rupees per acre for grapes. Olegao now has 69 acres of grapes, mostly planted in plots ranging from one-half to four acres in size. The entire taluka has 476 acres of grapes. A few small vineyards are found in the dry villages, watered by wells enhanced by the new percolation tanks. (None have been started as yet in Kordegao.) Thus the magnates by their example have made a real contribution toward the intensification and diversification of local agriculture.

Partly because of the land ceiling legislation, some of the magnates'

sons, and a number of the big village farmers, have turned their entrepreneurial energies to urban/industrial investments. Songaonkar's son has a factory in Poona, and Darekar's son has a giant cinema theatre and other investments there. One farmer in Olegao is planning a rubber gasket factory in Shetipur and already owns a petrol station in the village. This family, like several others in the area, has social and business ties with the biggest Poona industrialists. One farmer in Shetipur is a member of the board of directors of one of India's largest steel companies.

The magnates have thus led the way in an impressive number of economic innovations. As we shall see in Chapter 4, they have sometimes had to assume leadership of political enterprises as well.

### C. The Growth of Development Institutions

It is necessary to outline here simply the organization, and the causes of success or failure, of certain institutions which provide the contexts for the political innovations discussed in later chapters. The greater part of this section is devoted to cooperative organizations because their importance as political arenas depends on whether they can be successful economically. This latter constraint does not arise, by comparison, in a political party organization, nor does it apply very much to the elected local development councils, which are also outlined briefly below.

Before the Bombay government had committed itself to the spread of cooperative credit societies throughout the presidency, it tried another sort of experimental finance scheme in the Shetipur area (see Catanach, 1970: 88-89; Sahasrabudhe, 1909). This was called the tagai loan scheme. Following the example of older regimes, the Bombay government, by the late 19th century, was giving intermittent advances to cultivators in drought-stricken areas to enable them to plant the next year's crop. The advances were to be recovered as part of the next land revenue collection. The tagai loan scheme undertaken in Shetipur was a novelty, in that the advances were given cultivators freed from drought in order to raise an expensive cash crop, sugar cane. This was part of a series of efforts directed toward liberating the farmers from the clutches of the moneylenders, efforts which led from tagai loans to a large cooperative movement. The tagai loan scheme begun in 1908 was administered by a "special mamlatdar" assigned to work in Shetipur. The special mamlatdar investigated each farmer who applied for a loan, and he

advanced the loans in small sums according to what was required at each stage of the cultivation process. The mamlatdar's assistants went around to the farmers' fields to make sure that all the required work had been done on their cane crops before the new installments were made. The mamlatdar also set up a shop in Shetipur, to which the farmers were obliged to bring their raw sugar after the harvest. The raw sugar was quickly auctioned at the shop and the farmers were paid for it within a few days, after deducting their tagai advances plus interest and a small brokerage commission (Sahasrabudhe, 1909: 4-5, 9). There were 24 canal villages involved in this scheme, with a total of 250 clients. With the encouragement of the jagirdar, Olegao was one of the most heavily involved villages, with 44 farmer-clients. The jagirdar also allowed or encouraged two of his administrative servants to undertake the management of the Shetipur raw-sugar sales shop, one as the manager and the other as head clerk.

In 1911 the Bombay Provincial Cooperative Bank (BPCB) was formed, and it immediately opened a branch in Shetipur and took over the tagai loan scheme and the sales shop. Within a few years, the shop was undertaking to purchase oil-seed fertilizers in bulk to supply to the farmers as part of their advances (Badve, 1914: 10). The shop remained a part of the branch bank's operation until 1926, when it was formally organized into a Cooperative Purchase and Sale Union with a board of directors consisting of local notables like the jagirdar of Olegao. The Union performed quite satisfactorily through the depression under the guidance of the BPCB branch manager (Registrar, 1930: 36; 1931: 26; 1935: 20). Around 1950 the Union went through a change of management and financial difficulties (see Chapter 7); but by 1970 it was in very healthy financial condition. The Union in that year handled 6% of

the total produce sales in the Shetipur market, amounting to a total volume of 2,680,000 rupees. At the same time, it was just bringing into operation a large new cotton ginning and pressing mill, and it had a tractor parts and repair shop under construction.

When the Provincial Cooperative Bank took over the tagai loan scheme in 1911, the farmers were organized into village cooperative credit societies with unlimited liability. Olegao had one of the largest and most efficient societies, with the jagirdar's son as its chairman. By 1913, it had collected local deposits worth 20,400 rupees and had assets totalling 89,000 rupees (Registrar, 1912: 4; 1913: 4). There were 28 other village societies operating under the jurisdiction of the special mamlatdar and the bank's branch in Shetipur. By 1915 there were already some problems of arrears: "Of the 29 societies, 8 are thoroughly bad and 7 more are in a most unsatisfactory state." The problems were that the managing committees, consisting of elected farmer-members, did not reject uncreditworthy loan applicants, and also that some members were attempting to evade the requirement to sell their raw sugar through the bank's shop. However, the Olegao society was an exception, for the jagirdar and his son decided to purge it of 54 "undesirable members" (Registrar, 1915: 6). The problems were not so much a fault of the societies but a consequence of the great numbers of insolvent and unskilled farmers who were attempting to get rich on sugar cane and who were able to borrow over their heads (from private sources as well) because land mortgage values were rising (Nayak, 1957: 46).

The cooperative movement had as one of its ideals the goal of inculcating democratic self-sufficiency in the village societies. Unfortunately, when the provincial bank took over the tagai loan scheme it took over a structure

which was not suited to this goal, and which eventually contributed to the problems mentioned above. In fact, most of the society members assumed that they were still borrowing as individual clients of the special mamlatdar in Shetipur, rather than as members of a village corporation. There was no growth of "co-operative sense," therefore (Registrar, 1927: 17-18; Nayak, 1957: 47). The original tagai loan scheme involved 250 clients, so this system of centralized supervision of individual clients worked adequately then. However, by 1915 the 29 canal-village societies had 2,508 members, and some sort of localized responsibility was clearly required (Registrar, 1915: 5-6), though none was forthcoming.

These organizational problems contributed to the disaster which befell the canal societies during the depression. By 1928, the overdues represented nearly 70% of total loans outstanding in the Ravi canal societies, as compared with 12.4% overdues in 1923-24 (Registrar, 1927: 17; 1928: 16). The lack of member loyalty and responsibility in the canal societies was evident. "When the price of gur began to fall, the members began to wriggle out of bringing their gur to the Shop, and during the last season it was necessary to employ sepoy to watch them at harvest time" (Registrar, 1927: 18). The bank entered a long period of retrenchment, in which it sought to constrict the volume of fresh finance being given for cane cultivation. Unfortunately, though sugar cane had become unprofitable for most farmers, there was no other crop which could make a dent in the sugar cane debts. Still, the bank sought to restrict fresh financing to "deserving members" (Registrar, 1930: 49) and to deal severely with the others. The cooperative department appointed a special liquidation officer in Poona district, and a special head clerk in Shetipur to deal with arbitrations and liquidations (Registrar, 1928: 60; 1929: 3). The Olegao village society went into liquidation in 1932.



The dry village societies in Poona district were also in a bad condition, though not particularly as a result of the depression. In 1927 it was held that, "A large part of the arrears goes back to 6 or 7 years. This year the season was above the average in the greater part of the area. It is therefore clear that in the majority of cases the defaulting members have no intention of paying of their own accord" (Registrar, 1927: 16). Unauthorized arrears rose to 74% of the amount due for the district by 1931 (Registrar, 1931: 14). The Kordegao society declined to a D-class audit rating during this period, as did many others. All the dry-village societies in the district were being financed and administered through the Poona District Central Cooperative Bank. Because of the weakness of the village agricultural societies (partly due to inadequate supervision), the district bank began to invest more than half its working capital in non-agricultural loans to individuals and in other basically urban forms of business (Registrar, 1927: 34-35; 1935: 26).

By the middle 1930's, the cooperative department had adopted a more lenient attitude toward the agricultural debtors, and various concession schemes were adopted for refinancing those who had made some effort to make repayments (Registrar, 1935: 12). The initial enthusiasm for auctioning off the lands of intentional defaulters gradually abated. Regular token repayments by the farmers became sufficient effort to prevent their holdings from being attached and auctioned. This change of policy was partly due to pressure from the nationalist movement; and in 1937, after the first Congress party legislature was elected under a broadened franchise, the department even began to attempt to sell some of the attached lands back to their original owners (Registrar, 1937-38: 18).

Thus efforts were made to use innovative institutions to control the instabilities in local agriculture--the instability of the credit-marketing system in the wet villages and the more potent unreliability of the monsoon in the dry villages. However, the depression thrust the credit-marketing instability right back into the new institutions, and the canal-village societies in particular found that they had financed an impossible debt.

A further demonstration of the institutional problem comes from the private sugar factory which was established in Olegao in 1922, one of the first in the region. Much of the financing derived from some Bombay financiers who were also the backers and directors of the Provincial Cooperative Bank. Shares were sold to some of the magnates and to the big cane farmers in Olegao, including the Brahmins, Lonkar and Damle. (Lonkar became an administrator in the factory.) Other shares were purchased by the jagirdar and his royal relatives in some of the princely states. The factory did not do well and it had to close in 1926 when prices began to collapse. There were problems of leadership and administration which contributed to this result (see Chapter 4); but there were some serious techno-economic problems as well. Just a few years later, in the very middle of the depression, successful private sugar factories sprang up all over the Deccan canal areas. Most of them are still operating today. The Olegao factory, though it was established during a price boom, labored under two comparative disadvantages. It was not until the late 1920's that the agriculture department had bred and distributed a cane seed variety which was suitable for making refined sugar on a large scale, instead of the raw sugar customarily made at home (Hirsch, 1961: 51). At about the same time, the government of India finally imposed a tariff on imported sugar (1932). Lacking these two advantages in

the early 1920's, the old Olegao factory could not sustain its pioneering role (cf., Hirsch, 1961: 73). As will be noted in Chapter 4, the Olegao factory also suffered from problems in obtaining a regular supply of cane from the village farmers. Again, the later enterprises had an advantage in this respect, for they could easily rent in large blocks of land to form factory estates; and the irrigation department was eager to provide them with large-scale irrigation blocks. In these respects, the private factories established in the early 1930s got the same advantages as the big magnates discussed above.

Before 1947 the provincial government usually aimed to reach only the most reliable (and consequently well-off) farmers through the cooperative credit movement; that is, they aimed to enroll about 10% of the village farmers in the credit societies. After 1937, and later independence, the official goals expanded considerably and it was hoped that the cooperative movement would eventually benefit all of the cultivators. Olegao and Kordegao, being large villages, each acquired several credit societies. Kordegao still had its original society, which served the better-off farmers in the immediate vicinity of the village center. In 1926 a second society was started to serve the outlying hamlets to the west; and in 1944 and 1946 two more were established for the eastern and northwestern hamlets. The society for the eastern hamlets was a product of the feud between the Chaugule and Khomme clans. The latter dominated the original Kordegao society and would not admit any Chugules as members, so they formed a society of their own. The second society, serving the western hamlets, was dominated by the Bhongales; so when a fourth society was finally founded by the Khalates, each one of the major clans had a credit society of its own.

This expansion of cooperative credit in Kordegao did not prove very successful, because of the recurrent droughts. Many of the medium and small-scale farmers could not repay their loans in these dry years, and thus they could not obtain fresh credit for the following years. In 1970, three of the credit societies were given D-class ratings by the auditors, because of the large proportion of unauthorized arrears. Only one society maintained a B class audit rating. The total membership of the four societies in this year was 498, or about 48% of the number of landowning families. Moreover, many nominal members preferred not to encumber themselves with loans and others were in arrears, so the actual proportion of cultivators being financed by the cooperatives in that year was much lower.

In Olegao, where the original society did not survive, the first new credit society was founded in 1948, in a large hamlet about two miles from the village center. By 1970 this society had 82 members and had built its own office and meeting room. In 1951 the "big society" was started in the village center. In 1970 this society had 369 members and had built a two-story office building of brick and concrete, plus a medium-sized warehouse for storing fertilizers and implements. In 1963 a third society was registered, called the Siddheshwar society. The founders of this society (178 members in 1970) had split off from the big society in 1961 because of temporary political disputes. The Siddheshwar society had only a small, old-fashioned office above a shop, and in 1970 it held its annual general meeting in the spacious office building of the big society. Nevertheless, the Siddheshwar office had become the informal meeting place for all of the most active village leaders, because of the influence of the Siddheshwar chairman. Two of the Olegao credit societies were rated A-class by the auditors in 1970, meaning that they had very few defaulters among their members. The third

was rated B-class. Their total membership of 629 exceeded the number of landowning families in the village, because many holdings are partitioned among several family members. (There is also some overlap between the big society and the breakaway Siddheshwar group. Enthusiasm for political recruitment also leads to the enrollment of minors, wives, etc.)

The Olegao cooperative sugar factory began operating in 1957. It began with 2700 farmer-members, who were under contract to supply cane each year to the factory in proportion to the number of shares they each held. (Each share, worth 500 rupees, was equivalent to one-half acre of cane pledged annually to the factory.) The farmer-members thus initially put up 1,877,000 rupees in share capital, while 8,375,000 rupees were obtained from various government financing agencies. All initial loans to the factory were paid off by 1969, but new loans were taken to finance the expansion of the crushing capacity. The original capacity was for 1,000 metric tons of cane per day; in 1968-69 this was raised to 1,500 tons per day; and in 1970 the factory was expanding to 2,000 tons per day. Between 1957 and 1970 the sugar recovery rate (the weight of sugar produced as a percentage of the weight of cane crushed) ranged as high as 12.82%--a rate which compares favorably with some of the nearby private sugar factories which were established in the 1930's. These rates compare very favorably with the numerous sugar factories (mostly private) in northern India, where most of the country's sugar was produced before 1947. By 1967, in fact, the 21 new cooperative sugar factories in Maharashtra were producing 20% of the national sugar (Cooperation Department, 1966-67: 54).

By 1970 the Olegao factory was completing construction of modern

quarters for all of its permanent employees. Just completed in the same year were large primary and secondary schools on the factory grounds. The factory had also made a large contribution to the new college in Shetipur, and to some other educational institutions there. In 1970 the factory was contributing its organizational resources to starting a new dairy cooperative as a joint project with another cooperative sugar factory nearby.

The only big source of inefficiency in the Olegao sugar factory was in overstaffing and slack discipline among the workers. This problem stems from patronage politics discussed in Chapter 7. A large proportion of the factory employees are shareholders or relatives of shareholders, which makes for an interesting mixture of conflicts and loyalties. However, such labor problems are not unique to the cooperative factories. Indeed, Hirsch reports one estimate, referring mainly to the private sector, that between 17 and 40% of the Indian sugar factory workers could be eliminated with no change in output (1961: 56).

By making the cane growers into shareholders, the cooperative organization has solved the difficult problem of providing a steady supply of cane to the factory and a steady market for cane to the members (cf., Hirsch, 1961: 89). Because the relative prices of refined and raw sugar tend to fluctuate, the cane growers would otherwise be tempted to crush their cane at home to make raw sugar in some years, if they were not obliged to send it to the factory. Indeed, in 1966-67 the price of raw sugar rose so much that quite a few members of the Olegao factory did this. However, these members received heavy fines for failing to deliver their cane to the factory. The fines totalled 600,000 rupees. The national government assumes the right

to control the minimum cane prices paid by all the sugar factories and also their sales of sugar. This gives some protection and stability to the cane-supply relationship, but not as much as might be expected. The farmers of Olegao originally had to cope with uncertain cycles in the rain supply and next with uncertain cycles in the international markets. Now they have to cope with uncertain cycles in administrative price controls. Hirsch, in discussing the north Indian sugar industry, has given a graphic illustration of how these cycles are perpetuated by constant overreactions to new market conditions and by a lack of general policy planning for the whole industry (1961: 76-93).

Table 15 shows the fluctuating cane prices paid by the Olegao factory to its members from 1957 to 1970. The factory board of management has the option of paying any price over the minimum fixed each year by the government, so the prices shown in the chart reflect not those minimums in fluctuation, but rather the widely varying profits earned under various control policies over the sale of sugar. (The directors prefer to raise cane prices rather than dividends, because the efficient large and medium-sized farmers produce more cane per acre [per share] and thus receive a larger share of the increased cane prices.) The effects of these widely fluctuating returns to the cultivators are like any major uncertainty--they produce bad planning. Wind-fall profits, like those in 1967-68, are not invested wisely; they are spent on weddings, etc. When the prices drop way down again, as in 1969-70, the farmers invest less in their crops--which will be harvested 18 months later. This eventually lowers production, which in turn raises prices and the whole cycle goes spinning on. The great problem is the lag of 18 months or so between the time of a production or control decision and the time when its effects are experienced on the market (Hirsch, 1961: 92).

The government is attempting to juggle the interests of consumers, factory workers, private owners, and the very numerous, inefficient cane growers of northern India, along with its export goals and the problems of international trade. Instead of producing an overall plan for the sugar industry, the government keeps reacting to the sporadic pressures from these various interests. In the words of a government commission set up to investigate these problems:

A serious problem for the industry, however, has been its chronic instability. There has been an alternation of increases and decreases in production and prices over short periods, resulting in wide-spread difficulties for consumers and producers. . . . Man-made causes have often synchronized with natural causes to accentuate the instability. . . . Ad-hoc measures to deal with specific problems as they arose from time to time have only too frequently militated against comprehensive solutions being sought. In fact, 'ad-hoc-ism' has been one of the worst man-made causes of the instability faced by the industry. In the absence of a well thought out comprehensive long-term policy, decisions taken in regard to prices, production, controls and licensing have only too often been influenced by competing interests (Sugar Enquiry Commission, 1965: 159).

Under these circumstances, the farmers in the Shetipur area are protected less by administrative planning than by the political resources at their disposal. These latter are quite effective, as we shall see.

Turning now to the local development councils, in 1923 District Local Boards (DLB's) and Taluka Local Boards (TLB's) were reorganized so as to be filled primarily by direct election. (The franchise for the DLB's extended to all landholders paying at least 32 rupees land revenue; and for the TLB's it included those paying eight rupees [Tinker, 1967: 133-134].) District School Boards were also set up in 1923. In 1952 District Development Boards were established as well, and the whole system was soon subjected to re-evaluation and reorganization (Cooperation & Rural Development Dept., 1961; Shrader and Joshi, 1963: 143-145).



The councils in their present form were set up in 1962. In Maharashtra state this was the year of implementation of the national policy of democratic decentralization, or panchayati raj. Below the level of the state legislature, the most important development bodies under this new system were the district councils, or zilja parishads. The district councils replaced the older district local boards, the district development boards, and the district school boards. They acquired much more power than these older boards because the local development budgets were being increased and also because the district councils were given more discretion in the allocation of these budgets. Most of the district councillors are directly elected (there are also ex officio members from other elected bodies and cooperatives on the council). Shetipur taluka elects five councillors, each belonging to a constituency of about 12 villages. Because of the large resources they control, the district councils have become active centers of patronage politics and competition:

With the expansion of government after independence and, in particular, with the growing role of government in developmental activities, local administration had extraordinary patronage powers to which local citizens sought access. . . .Panchayati raj meant in effect that some of these patronage powers which had developed within local administration would be transferred into political hands (Weiner, 1967: 166-167).

(Further information about this level of local politics can be found in Carras, 1972; Rosenthal, 1973; Brass, 1965.)

Poona district contains 13 talukas. At the taluka level, the development council is called the panchayat samiti. The panchayat samiti is indirectly elected by the votes of the members of the village councils (gram panchayats); and it also has a number of co-opted members. The panchayat samiti supervises the funds allocated by the district council, but most of the basic decisions

are made at the district level. The Block Development Officer (BDO) and his staff of civil servants, engineers, social workers, etc., form the executive branch of the panchayat samiti, just as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) runs the executive offices of the district council. The BDO and CEO are both civil servants. Before 1962 the equivalent officials answered primarily to their state administrative departments; but now they must cooperate very closely with the elected council members and with the various party politicians who influence the council members.

The influential local party politicians include the MP's (Members of Parliament) and the MLA's (Members of the Legislative Assembly of the state). There are only three MP's in Poona district, so they have little to do with affairs at the taluka level. There are 12 MLA's in the district, and their constituencies are about the same size as talukas, though the boundaries are not congruent. The present MLA from Shetipur works very closely with the BDO and the panchayat samiti concerning the allocation of development projects--especially in the needier dry villages of the taluka. At the level of the district council, the powerful District Congress Committee (of which the MLA is a member) exerts a very strong influence.

At the village level, the gram panchayat supervises some development projects, such as building primary schools, drinking-water wells, drains and latrines; repairing roads, distributing hybrid seeds, etc. The gram panchayat is directly elected by secret ballot. As in the district council, MLA, and MP elections, all adults are eligible to vote. The gram panchayat has a small administrative staff, including a gram sevak (village servant) who supervises all the development projects and the records.

In this thesis, not much attention is paid to the political competitions

on the development councils. The district council is, of course, outside the scope of this work. The panchayat samiti and the gram panchayats are slighted here in favor of the cooperative institutions. This bias reflects the priorities of the local politicians who were being studied. The various public utilities handled by the development councils are, with certain exceptions, beneficial to everybody in general and nobody in particular. The representatives of each village and hamlet struggle for priority in building roads, schools, etc.; but these are still collective benefits of indeterminate long-term value for any given individual. The cooperatives, on the other hand, deal with the inputs used by each individual farmer in his daily business. In the wet villages particularly, the members of the agricultural cooperatives are a comparatively wealthy minority in relation to the landless laborers and the farmers in the dry villages.

The budgets of these institutions give a fair indication of their relative importance, economically and politically. The budget for the entire panchayat samiti (serving 63 villages) from 1962 to 1970 was 2.4 million rupees (or 0.3 million per year). By comparison, the Olegao cooperative sugar factory, which serves only 13 villages, paid its members 27.8 million rupees for their sugar cane in 1968-69 (one year) alone; and in 1970 the factory had 3.7 million rupees in paid-up share capital. Likewise, the budgeted income for 63 gram panchayats in the taluke, for 1968-69, was 0.47 million rupees. By comparison, the 97 village cooperative societies in the taluka had a share capital of 7.3 million rupees in 1969. The 1970-71 budget for the gram panchayat of Kordegao was 43,262 rupees, which comes to about 4.86 rupees per capita for the entire village population. The comparison with the big credit society in Olegao, for example, is dramatic. In 1969 the big society made loans to its members totalling 859,000 rupees, which

works out to an average of 2,330 rupees per member. The resources of the cooperatives are spread over fewer people (excluding the landless villagers in most cases); and they come under the direct, individual control of the members. The public utilities promoted by the panchayats, on the other hand, yield benefits which are less immediate and of no precise value for any particular individual.

Thus the agricultural cooperatives are the centers of political attraction, particularly in the canal villages. The panchayat samiti has been a relatively passive tool of the MLA recently, and the gram panchayats are taken rather casually. As one researcher has noted with regard to an area in Maharashtra resembling Shetipur:

With the expansion of the co-operative sector and the vital role assigned to it in the government's planning for economic development, politicians realized the importance of controlling these new centres of power. . . . Thus, controlling co-operatives means dominating the political system in general, at least at the local level (Baviskar, 1968b: 492).

## CHAPTER IV

### ELITE COLLABORATION: THE USES OF ADMINISTRATIVE INFLUENCE

This chapter and the four which follow it are concerned with a major transformation in the local political system which took place between 1900 and 1970. During this period a number of political forces were taking shape. Their effect was to transform, "The pre-independence pattern of local politics, in which men of status sought to influence local administration for their own benefit and for the benefit of kinsmen, castemen and members of their factions . . ." (Weiner, 1967: 165). The end result was that, "When administrative functions were turned over to elected local government bodies, the traditional struggle for administrative influence moved into the arena of open electoral politics at the village level" (Weiner, 1967: 182). Thus entrepreneurial strategies in local politics gradually expanded from the manipulation of administrative influence to include also the manipulation of electoral machine politics. These changes did not happen merely because of the policy and resource commitments of the new regime at the center, influential though these factors were. Such changes were catalyzed at the local level by the growth of new institutions and popular movements and the entrepreneurial efforts connected with them.

This chapter is concerned with the local elite groups which were able to make best use of the colonial system through administrative manipulation: the aristocrats and the capitalist farmers. (Town merchants and other strictly urban elites were not studied.) As will become evident, the involvement of

these elites with the administrative system not only expanded their personal influence but also contributed to the eventual transformation of the system.

#### A. Aristocrats as Innovators

At the top of the traditional prestige pyramid in Shetipur taluka was a jagirdar of the Maratha caste, living in Olegao. In the 17th and 18th centuries, this title applied to the holder of a military fief. The jagirdars of Olegao belonged to a branch of an ancient family which had ruled the Deccan kingdom of Devgiri in the 12th and 13th centuries. The jagir of Olegao village, just a small part of the family holdings, was granted to them in the reign of Shahaji Bhonsale in the early 17th century. Under the British administration, the jagirdar of Olegao was simply entitled to receive revenues from some of his lands scattered about the province plus a pension, and to be in charge of the civil administration of Olegao village (cf., Kotovsky, 1966: 104-106). This made Olegao an exceptional village in the Bombay presidency. Although the revenues from specific villages or lands throughout the presidency were often "alienated" from the government to a variety of village and religious officials, former noblemen, etc., the administration of nearly all these lands was under the direct control of the British civil service. Thus Olegao was equivalent to one of the princely states, though on a very small scale. The jagirdar of Olegao was one of just five "first class sardars" in the Deccan who were entitled to exercise civil jurisdiction over their villages (Bombay Government Gazette, 3 March 1910: 284-285). From 1889 to 1942 Olegao was ruled by a single jagirdar, named Raje Krishnasingh. All the Bombay jagirdars were abolished in 1952, so Raje Krishnasingh's descendents have operated in local politics since that time merely as wealthy landholders. Thus in referring to "the jagirdar" at any

point in this thesis, I mean to designate only Raje Krishnasingh himself.

In addition to his civil powers within the village, Raje Krishnasingh was also a first class magistrate. He tried civil cases originating in Olegao and criminal cases brought to his court from a wide area around Olegao. Raje Krishnasingh was thus known personally by many village headmen, who were responsible for law and order in their villages, and the jagirdar's influence spread accordingly. Because of his rank, decisions in his court were not appealed to the district magistrate but went instead to the Bombay high court.

In Olegao the jagirdar held revenue rights to 6,074 acres of cultivable land. A regular revenue survey and assessment was conducted by the Bombay government to determine the value of the revenue he was entitled to collect. As of the last revised assessment (1912), this figure was set at 7,241.5 rupees--a good deal more than the land had been worth before it was canal-irrigated. Most of the jagirdar's annual income derived from a pension of 120,000 rupees which he received from the government in compensation for lands which had been confiscated in Berar, Bijapur, etc. (Presumably, these were lands to which the family had appeared to have a simple tax-collecting, rather than "ownership," right--cf., Kotovsky, 1966: 105-106.) The land rights in Olegao and the pension were permanent and hereditary; and the magistracy may have been hereditary also, though this was disputed by the government after Raje Krishnasingh's death. A point which marked the high status of the jagir was that it was inherited by primogeniture and not divided according to normal Hindu law. The jagir was inalienable and impartible.



Although Olegao was something of a "little kingdom" under Raje Krishnasingh, it was still very much a part of the Bombay presidency. By 1900 the land revenue and judicial systems were congruent with those in surrounding villages. As the canal administration and the cooperative institutions developed, Olegao was fully integrated into these new systems. Moreover, the jagirdar's extensive authority was often resisted by the Jagtaps, the dominant peasant clan in the village. The Jagtaps had lived and ruled in the village for centuries before it was granted to the jagirdar's family, and the Jagtaps never let this be forgotten. Raje Krishnasingh's relations with his villagers were sometimes cordial and sometimes acrimonious, as we shall see shortly. In 1875, the village headman filed a complaint against the jagirdar's father, alleging that he was not being paid as well as the headmen in the surrounding, government-owned villages. In the early part of this century, there was a lengthy court case between the Jagtaps and the jagirdar concerning the issue of who really "owned" the Jagtap lands. Thus the jagirdar and his villagers had to rely on external confirmation and regulation to a certain extent.

Raje Krishnasingh gave his support to several efforts to stimulate social and economic progress within Shetipur taluka. At the turn of the century he encouraged an initially hesitant peasantry to make regular use of the canal water and helped to introduce a more efficient system of water delivery and administration known as the block system. He supported the tagai loan scheme and the canal-village cooperative credit societies at their birth (1908-1911). The special mamlatdar who was in charge of setting up the tagai loan scheme wrote of his gratitude to Raje Krishnasingh and his

chief administrator (karbhari), "without whose hearty cooperation it would have been very difficult to start the scheme. Not only did the Sardar consent to his ryots [peasants] taking tagai but stood security for them all" (Sahasrabudhe, 1909: 31). Damle, the jagirdar's Brahmin administrator, proposed to open a shop in Shetipur for the sale of the raw-sugar produced by the clients of this scheme. The special mamlatdar agreed, provided that all transactions would be under his supervision. Damle's relation, Lonkar, another member of the jagirdar's staff, was then made manager of the shop; and Lonkar "worked very hard and spared no pains. . . . He is an educated and good business man" (Sahasrabudhe, 1909: 8-9, 31). The shop was taken over by the newly-formed Provincial Cooperative Bank in 1911, and Lonkar was kept on as manager (Badve, 1914: 11).

Meanwhile, the Olegao village credit society was being chaired by the jagirdar's son; and this society had become the largest and best-managed in the area (Badve, 1914: 4, 9). One respect in which responsible leadership was evident in this case was in the refusal to grant loans to untrustworthy applicants. The village managing committees were expected to screen membership and loan applicants--to which end the societies were organized on the basis of unlimited liability. However, "nearly all committees display great weakness in refusing loans to persons whom they privately distrust" (Registrar, 1914: 5). Olegao was the outstanding exception, for the jagirdar's son did not flinch from purging the society of 54 "undesirable members" (Registrar, 1915: 6). The noble family not only lent strength to the managing committee; its dignity undoubtedly helped to make the Olegao society, "of all Societies the best managed and most trusted" (Registrar, 1913: 4). This trust was made evident in the collection of

deposits from non-members of the society, which amounted to 43,000 rupees in 1914. Some of these deposits were obtained by advertising in a Poona newspaper (Badve, 1914: 4-5). Besides the prestige and firm control of the jagirdar, the society also benefitted from having a committee of "intelligent men" (Badve, 1914: 9). These included Damle and Lonkar, of course, and also a progressive Maratha farmer of great character, who was later to become the society's chairman and challenge the wisdom of the jagirdar's later actions. There was also a Brahmin lawyer in Shetipur, the jagirdar's legal advisor, who was taking a great interest in the promotion of cooperatives and later (in the depression) worked to reorganize and refinance the canal societies.

In 1917 three guaranteeing unions were organized around Shetipur to supervise the management of the societies. Raje Krishnasingh became the chairman of one of these unions. When these were later merged into a taluka Supervising Union, the jagirdar again became chairman. In 1925 he appointed as a supervisor one Ganpatrao More, who was destined to have an effect on later taluka politics through his sons. More was a Maratha--one of the few Marathas moving into local administrative positions at the time. His grandfather was an immigrant to Shetipur and initially landless; but Ganpatrao was able to buy some land near the end of the depression and to finance college and professional training for his seven sons. One son became a lawyer and a Marxist party organizer in the 1950's. Another son became the Shetipur MLA in 1967, the most powerful leader in the taluka. Soon after Ganpatrao More went to work in the Cooperative Supervising Union, Raje Krishnasingh put him in charge of a new hostel for Maratha students. In 1940, More became managing director of the Cooperative Purchase and Sale Union

(which was the name given to the old raw-sugar sales shop after it was re-organized into a cooperative in its own right, in 1925). And in the middle 1950's, Ganpatrao More helped to organize one of the new cooperative sugar factories. Thus grew the seeds planted by Raje Krishnasingh.

In recognition of his support for the local cooperatives, Raje Krishnasingh was made a member of the board of directors of the Bombay Provincial Cooperative Bank. The leading members of this board were wealthy Bombay financiers, and their contact with Raje Krishnasingh led to an important private venture: one of the first sugar factories established in the Deccan, which was located in Olegao village (1922). Shares in this factory were purchased by Raje Krishnasingh and by some of his royal relatives in Baroda and other princely states. They were also purchased by his personal Brahmin administrators, who took a hand in the management of the factory, along with the retired special mamlatdar who had started the tagai scheme. Shares were also purchased by some of the big sugar cane magnates and by several of the wealthier farmers in Olegao. (One Jagtap family held shares worth 10,000 rupees.) Had this factory succeeded it might have shielded Olegao from some of the worst effects of the depression.

Raje Krishnasingh was also involved in another progressive field, that of education. Like several of the bigger Maratha princes, his relations, he became a trustee of the Maratha Educational Conference and attended (and sometimes chaired) their provincial conferences. These efforts were an outgrowth of the non-Brahmin movement launched by the Maharaja of Kolhapur (Copland, 1973; Patterson, 1952: 98-101). Raje Krishnasingh was certainly not anti-Brahmin, but he did believe in the spread of education. He became

the patron and chairman of a hostel in Shetipur for Maratha students, named the Shahu Maratha hostel after the Maharaja of Kolhapur. Ganpatrao More, as mentioned, was made the secretary-manager of the hostel in 1928. More's first task was to get the hostel built, with the aid of materials donated by the government. The hostel housed about 40 to 45 students and operated under his management until 1945, when it was converted to a high school under the management of a provincial non-Brahmin education society (the Rayat Shikshan Saunsta). Much of the hostel management was actually handled by More's wife. (Mrs. More was elected three times to the District Local board from 1937 to 1952.) Fund raising and general supervision were provided for the hostel by a committee composed of Maratha village headmen, big canal-village farmers, plus the deshmukhs and magnates mentioned below. Though theoretically for Marathas, the hostel also admitted some Dhangar students, and even a small number from the lower castes.

Raje Krishnasingh also attended the meetings of the new agricultural associations which were springing up; and he attended the fairs and exhibitions, which were organized to spread the use of new seeds, implements and techniques, etc. (cf., Keatinge, 1912: 202). For example, the jagirdar was on the platform on the occasion of the first meeting of the Maharashtra Shetkari Parishad in Poona, 1926. As a director of the Bombay Provincial Cooperative Bank, Raje Krishnasingh sometimes lent his presence to the provincial cooperative conferences as well. He also acted as nominal host to a Poona district Dhangar caste conference, which was held in Olegao village (1925). He excluded only politics from his agenda; and whenever an unannounced Congress agitator got up to speak at one of the agricultural conferences, he made a point of departing from the platform.

In these various ways Raje Krishnasingh gained new forms of influence and respect among the local populace and among the various government officials with whom he had dealings. His sometimes fractious villagers were made slightly more dependent. His role as a public benefactor was formally acknowledged from above by the granting of a gold medal at the Delhi Durbar, 1911, and by appointing him as the first Maratha to a seat in the Bombay Legislative Council (1910).

Despite his good intentions, however, the jagirdar's influence in the new institutions did not always lead to efficiency. In the depression, when many canal-village credit societies were suffering as much from poor leadership as from the collapse of prices, Raje Krishnasingh's own village society fell among the worst. Previously one of the most successful credit societies in the province, it was forced into liquidation in 1932. This happened in part because the jagirdar insisted on tolerating some abuses by the society secretary, the Brahmin Lonkar, who was also one of the jagirdar's personal administrators. This secretary managed to obtain cooperative loans in excess of regulations; and he misled some of the society members into standing security for loans which on his part proved to be unsecured. (Lonkar was one of four members of the Olegao society who had been given permission by the Registrar to borrow beyond the usual limit of 6,000 rupees, up to 25,000 rupees apiece--which only made things worse. The others so entitled were the jagirdar, his administrator Damle, and Kisan Jagtap, a Maratha farmer who became chairman of the society in the 1920's. They received this privilege because of the large areas of sugar cane they were cultivating.)

The new chairman of the society, Kisan Jagtap, attempted to prevent

these malpractices; but the secretary got Raje Krishnasingh to authorize the loans in the chairman's absence. This led to open conflict between the chairman and Raje Krishnasingh, in which Kisan Jagtap was backed up by most of the society members and also by some of the government officers in the cooperative department. Kisan Jagtap threatened to resign the chairmanship unless the secretary were removed. The secretary responded by persuading some private depositors in the village to withdraw their funds from the society. Kisan Jagtap was advised by the department officials to meet this crisis by putting the society into liquidation and thus freezing the deposits. Many members came close to losing their lands after the society went into liquidation; but the government adopted a policy, in the middle of the depression, of severity toward intentional defaulters and leniency toward those who at least made regular, if small repayments. Kisan Jagtap's lands were twice scheduled to be auctioned; but with the help of his official contacts he managed to continue the necessary token repayments, and eventually he cleared the whole debt. On the other hand, the secretary had made some disastrous speculations in raw-sugar marketing and raising fruit crops. The prolonged collapse of prices plus the liquidation of the society meant the loss of virtually all his lands. His relative, Damle, also lost a large portion of of his land. Both of these Brahmin administrators were also badly hurt by the failure of the sugar factory, which came just before prices began to fall (1926).

This factory (established in 1922) did not operate for long before it developed a crisis in the sugar cane supply. This occurred because many of the Olegao village farmers suspected that they were being cheated when their cane was delivered and weighed at the factory. Once again, Kisan Jagtap spoke

out as society chairman and advised his members not to deliver cane to the factory. (It could instead be crushed at home and made into raw sugar.) Raje Krishnasingh summoned the chairman and urged him to rescind this advice. Kisan Jagtap refused to do so, as long as there were any doubts concerning the probity of the factory administrators. It seems that Raje Krishnasingh could no more rectify the factory administration than he could change Kisan Jagtap's mind; and this problem of cane supply contributed to the demise of the factory.

Raje Krishnasingh thus helped to bring new institutional resources to the villages. He provided new channels of influence and communication, new opportunities for employment and political recruitment and for the mobilization of capital. As an aristocratic patron it is not surprising that he was unable to contribute to the practical management of these institutions.

Raje Krishnasingh died in 1942, and his family's jagir was abolished in 1952. The family lost their revenue-collecting rights and government pension, but retained those lands in Olegao and elsewhere which had been under their personal management. They were left with about 350 acres in Olegao; and part of this area they were forced to give up in negotiations with their tenants, as a result of the tenancy acts. Thus Raje Krishnasingh's descendants were forced to seek influence on the basis of new forms of legitimation. His grandson, in the early 1960's, was elected chairman of the new cooperative sugar factory in Olegao--a very influential position in the new system of electoral politics. The grandson acquired influence in factory politics because of his college education and business sense, his wealth and traditional



prestige, and because of his "bourgeois" distaste for patronage and nepotism within the factory administration. He was also strategically placed in the struggle between Marathas and non-Marathas for control of the board of management. Thus, as we shall see in Chapter 7, the family's influence was partially renewed through the use of new techniques and strategies of influence.

Next to the jagirdar in traditional prestige were a pair of deshmukh families, each including two or three branches scattered around the taluka. In the 17th and 18th centuries the deshmukhs held hereditary positions as revenue officials, dealing with areas roughly comparable to the present-day talukas. Under British rule the deshmukhs were stripped of all administrative authority. The early British officials found the deshmukhs a nuisance as middlemen in the administrative system, for they seemed to overtax the peasants and underpay the government (Chaplin, 1824: 96-96; Ballhatchet, 1957: 122). By 1863, the government had pensioned them all off (Kotovskiy, 1966: 109; Kumar, 1968: 128-150). However, these families in many cases retained their old inam (revenue-free) lands and their prestige. Those which still flourish in the Shetipur area are both of Maratha caste. At least one branch kept up an active administrative role, not as deshmukhs but as holders of a patil watan, the hereditary right to the headmanship of their village. As mentioned in Chapter 2, one branch of the Kale deshmukh family used to live in Kordegao village but was driven out by a combination of the other clans in the village. These exiled Kales settled in villages close to Shetipur and Olegao.

In the 1920's and '30's, representatives of the two deshmukh families

followed the jagirdar's example. Two of the Kales and two of the other family, the Batates, sat at various times on the boards of the taluka co-operatives and the Shahu Maratha Hostel. One Kale deshmukh was elected to the District Local Board in 1928; and one Batate also got elected to the DLB. Politically less conservative than the jagirdar, this Kale also gave his support to meetings connected with the non-Brahmin movement; and later he joined the Congress party in order to get elected to the Bombay Legislative Assembly (1937). (This did not lead to a career in politics or in the independence movement; it seems to have been done just for the sake of personal prestige.) Both Batate deshmukhs were active in the cooperatives, and one was particularly influential in the establishment of a second branch of the Purchase and Sale Union, located in a small market town at the opposite end of the taluka from Shetipur.

Like the jagirdar, the deshmukhs thus helped to support and legitimize the new developmental institutions, and even some of the new political movements. They opened up channels of communication and influence for their friends, relatives and personal clients. They also opened up channels of political recruitment: one Kale recruited himself into the legislative assembly; and one Batate was followed by his son into the taluka cooperatives. This son, Maniklal Batate, later rose to become "boss" of a major share of the cooperatives in Poona district. A young member of the Kale family is his ally and son-in-law.

Below the deshmukhs in traditional prestige were the patils, the hereditary village headmen who were retained as low-level officials under the British system. In the Shetipur area, most of the patils were Maratha, though

a sizable minority were Dhangar. As noted in Chapter 2, the headmen usually derived from one or two lineages within the major landholding clan or clans in each village. In large villages, such as Olegao and Kordegao, the headmanship tended to rotate every ten years between the appropriate lineages and/or clans.

In the old days the headmen were to some extent representatives of their clans. They were held personally responsible for payment of the total village land revenues and they also had to plead for their villages to the authorities when the harvests were bad and the normal payments could not be made (Kulkarni, 1967: 42). Under the British system of separate revenue accounting for each plot and landholder, this flexible and demanding role was reduced to that of bureaucratic functionary. As in the case of the deshmukhs, the early British officers were quick to suspect that the patils were often cheating both them and the peasants (Coats, 1877: 196; Chaplin, 1824: 6). Thus the new revenue system was gradually tightened so as to reduce the discretionary authority of the village headmen (Kumar, 1968: 128-150). One factor which assisted in this process was the continuing tendency for the office to be subdivided or partly sold (Coats, 1877: 195; Kotovsky, 1966: 110), which probably accounts for the complex sharing system in Kordegao. Thus community authority and administrative authority were split apart and the headman was no longer able to function as a representative of his village. Toward the end of the 19th century, new actors were able to exploit the administrative system to better advantage--the Brahmin village accountant and the moneylender. "Authority is nominally invested in the headman alone, but the superior education and intelligence of the accountant . . . give him almost the whole power. . . . As a middleman between

the cultivators and the Government, who ensures the punctual payment of the land-rent, the moneylender is a valuable public servant" (Gazetteer, 1885, vol.18, part 1: 97). During the 19th century, a large number of merchants from Gujarat and Rajasthan immigrated to the villages of western Maharashtra, setting themselves up as shopkeepers and moneylenders; and it was they who helped to work out the essential accommodation between the rather inflexible revenue demand and the uncertain monsoon. Thus, as Charlesworth points out, the Deccan riots of 1875 probably indicated not so much frustration over the dispossession of the old village landholders as over the displacement of the old village elite, which had had more interests in common with the ordinary farmers (1972: 411-416).

Every village has its tales, ancient or recent, of quarrels over the patil watan; and those from Olegao and Kordegao tend to confirm this change in the content of the headman's role. An 18th century document in Olegao describes the outcome of a trial by ordeal for determining the legitimate claimant to the headmanship. This document is witnessed by representatives of many of the village castes (the balutedars in most cases), which suggests that the whole village was involved to some degree in the settling of the dispute. In Kordegao in the early part of this century, there was another dispute in which the rightful claimants dissipated much of their capital, pursuing a court case against a bastard usurper connected with their own lineage. The bastard won, or rather stalled, this case on a technicality. By comparison with the first case, this dispute was settled in a highly restricted, artificial, legalistic system in which the actual social standing of the defendant was of secondary importance (cf., Cohn, 1965: 103-115).

Thus it comes as no surprise that the patils behaved as minor bureau-

crats and police officials so often do: they cultivated the arts of extortion. Several within living memory also cultivated bad personal habits--drinking, gambling, etc. At least one patil in Olegao was dismissed for drunkenness, and one in Kordegao was jailed for misappropriation of funds. On the other hand, the headmen sometimes exercised their discretion protectively. They were expected to protect their fellow villagers (those of good social standing, et least) from contact with the police department--a service for which they naturally received monetary rewards on occasion. In Olegao at least one headman went farther than this. During the depression, with some backing from the jagirdar, he sometimes avoided collecting the irrigation tax on time, because the farmers were having so much trouble making these payments. Similarly, on at least one occasion in Kordegao, a friendly patil helped a villager to terminate his indebtedness to a moneylender. With the patil as witness, the debt was repaid in one lump sum of cash and a signed receipt was obtained. These precautions obviated the usual tricks for illegally perpetuating the debt.

With all this in mind, it is hardly surprising that the headmen were not much involved in the new developmental institutions or political movements--at least not in Olegao and Kordegao. I did not make a systematic survey of the villages around Olegao and Kordegao, but I knew of one headman who was active in the non-Brahmin movement and one other who was active in the cooperatives and on the board of the Shahu Maratha boarding house in Shetipur and was elected to the District Local Board. Some were sympathetic to the independence movement, but very few in this taluka had any close connections with the Congress party activists.

The headmen usually limited their entrepreneurial efforts to quiet manipulations within the administrative system, coupled with competitive

displays of ceremonial precedence. (The big issues concerned who should lead the annual religious processions and who should sit closest to the district collector when he came on tour.) Thus in Olegao, where many of the farmers were becoming wealthy and well-schooled in the arts of administrative entanglement, it is not surprising that by 1947 the patil was not considered a very important figure in the village. One incumbent, at about this time, sloughed the job off on somebody else because he found it a nuisance. Things were quite otherwise in Kordegao, where even today the manipulation of administrative influence can be more effective than the use of more modern political arts (as discussed in Chapter 8). In Kordegao, the patils were not finished until 1962, when a state act abolished the revenue patils and severely curtailed the discretionary powers of the police patils. This came as the end of a series of acts which abolished jagirdars and almost all other types of inamdars and watandars--thus concluding about 140 years of the leaching-out of official, hereditary prestige from the local political system.

## B. Magnates as Public Leaders

The business activities of the magnates have been outlined in Chapter 3. Here we are concerned with their involvements in public affairs. The big magnates had no use for cooperative credit societies, though during the depression they were able to arrange loans on an individual basis through the Shetipur branch of the Provincial Cooperative Bank. One of the Maratha magnates was very active on the taluka cooperatives, serving as chairman of both the Supervising Union and the Purchase and Sale Union at various times in the 1930's. This magnate, Jadhav, was also a supporter of the Shahu Maratha student hostel; and the other Maratha magnate, Darekar, contributed to this organization in the 1950's. The two Brahmin magnates were supporters of a high school run by the Maharashtra Education Society in Shetipur; and Songaonkar was influential on the municipal board.

In addition to his activities on the taluka cooperatives Jadhav was elected to the District Local Board around 1930, when one or both of the deshmukhs were also on the board. In the 1937 election to the legislative assembly, Jadhav ran (and lost) as an independent candidate against Kale deshmukh, who was running for the Congress.

In contrast to the local nobility, the magnates could be aggressive in seeking to influence government policy-making when it affected their business interests. They were all longstanding appointees on the local Irrigation Advisory Committee, which was formed to discuss the problems of administering the Ravi canal. In this context they were expected to communicate the problems of the farmers to the government and to interpret the

policies and problems of the government to the farmers. In 1930 they were forced to abandon this consultative role for one of action. At that time, the irrigation department officials proposed to introduce a new water-allocation system. The old system provided year-round irrigation, necessary for sugar cane, on one-third of any "block" served by the canal; the remaining two-thirds of each block received water for eight months, suitable for growing two one-season crops (cotton, wheat, jowar, etc.). The proposed revision would allow water for sugar cane on only one-quarter of the area of each block. Bad as the sugar cane business was at this time, the farmers did not see any alternatives for raising cash and paying their debts. The magnates organized a widespread and successful boycott against the new system, in which nearly all the cane farmers in the Shetipur area withdrew their applications to have their block contracts renewed. The revised system was never put into effect, and the one-third block system continues to this day.

The magnates were forced into the public arena more often after independence. Along with magnates from other districts and other big village landholders, they tried unsuccessfully to fight the proposed land ceiling legislation. Of more local interest, the Shetipur magnates tried to prevent the reorganization of the state cooperative credit structure in their area. In 1911 the Provincial Cooperative Bank (with headquarters in Bombay) had opened a branch in Shetipur to finance the canal-village credit societies and run the raw-sugar marketing shop. After 1917, credit societies were organized in the dry villages of the taluka under the separate jurisdiction of the District Central Cooperative Bank (with headquarters in Poona). After independence, the cooperative department proposed to revise this system so that all village societies would be financed by the district central banks;



then the provincial bank would finance only the district banks and would have no direct dealings with the village societies. The Shetipur magnates opposed this restructuring because it would mean closing the Shetipur branch of the Provincial Cooperative Bank. This branch was set up originally just to deal with cooperative societies in the canal villages. However, during the depression the bank had much more money on deposit than it had credit-worthy societies to lend this money to. Consequently, the provincial bank and the district banks all adopted a policy of lending to individuals against real security (land, gold ornaments, produce in storage, etc.). The magnates thus had access, through the Shetipur branch, to the enormous assets of the provincial bank. The district bank, which was financing only dry village societies; had assets and lending policies which were comparatively paltry, and much of their business was with urban borrowers. Thus the magnates did not want to see the canal-village cooperatives taken over by the district bank. They went to considerable effort to organize a "central" bank in Shetipur--one which would be on a par with the District Central Bank and would obtain financing directly from the provincial bank. However, the cooperative department ruled against this move and would only allow them to set up an "urban" cooperative bank--that is, a bank with no dealings in agricultural finance. This was not acceptable to the magnates, and they abandoned the scheme.

Starting in 1948 Darekar, one of the Maratha magnates, became a perpetual anti-Congress candidate for the state assembly. None of the magnates had been sympathetic to the Congress nationalist movement; and partly because of their loyalty, two of them received honorary titles from the British government: "Rao Saheb" and "Rao Bahadur." After independence the

magnates and all the big farmers were disturbed by the Congress agrarian reform policies. A party calling itself the Pesants and Workers Party (PWP), led by Congress socialists and old non-Brahmin leaders, broke away from the Congress in Bombay state (see Chapter 5). Darekar adopted the PWP banner as his own, though more because it represented rural Maratha opposition to the urban, high-caste, Congress leadership than for ideological reasons. Darekar campaigned for an assembly seat in 1948 and 1952; and he won the seat in 1957; primarily because of external factors which affected the Congress adversely. Darekar's ambitions were apparently satisfied on election day, for he kept up no contact with his constituents during his term in office.

Despite these unimpressive results, the magnates played one crucial leadership role in the taluka after independence. In collaboration with the jagirdar and the Bombay financiers, the magnates had participated as shareholders and cane suppliers in the original Olegao sugar factory venture. The failure of the old factory was at least a salutary lesson for the magnates. After independence, they found that their business interests were being constricted by certain policy proposals. For one thing, the national government announced in 1954 that all future sugar factory licenses would be granted only to cooperative concerns. (The first cooperative sugar factory in Bombay had been tried on an experimental basis in Ahmednagar district; it started operation in 1950 and proved successful in just a few years [Gadgil, 1952; Inamdar, 1965: 2-7].) The Shetipur magnates had had their own plans for starting private sugar factories in the area. In Chapter 3 we noted that during the depression the magnates had profitable dealings

with the two private factories near Shetipur. The Mali magnates in Ahmednagar district had also profited from their association with the private factories founded in the 1930's there (Gadgil, 1952: 201-202); and those in Sholapur district had set up their own factory for processing the cane they produced. Thus the Shetipur magnates had plenty of experience and examples to draw on in setting up their own private concerns, until this ambition was stymied by the new licensing policy. Their ambitions were then redirected by discussions in the state cabinet, concerning a proposal which would allow a higher ceiling on irrigated land for members of cooperative sugar factories than for non-members.

Around 1955 then, the magnates applied all their skills to organizing the first two cooperative sugar factories in Poona district. These occupied adjacent areas of operation at a distance of a few miles on either side of Shetipur. The Maratha magnate Jadhav was the leading organizer of the Ganpati factory; while Songaonkar, the Brahmin, was the organizer and first chairman of the Olegao Cooperative Sugar Factory, Limited. Jadhav was assisted in this effort by Ganpatrao More, the former managing director of the Purchase and Sale Union (now retired); and Songaonkar was assisted by several freedom fighters from the independence movement. Aside from their economic expertise, the great asset which the magnates had in pursuing these projects was their experience at making use of administrative contacts to expedite licenses, government loans, etc.

Having learned a lesson from the failure of the old private factory in Olegao, the magnates were extremely careful to build up the confidence of the village farmers who were to be the shareholders and cane suppliers. Songaonkar made many visits to each of the villages and hamlets surrounding

Olegao, taking with him the village leaders and successful farmers. The factory proposal was explained in detail as they solicited share capital. By 1957 they had raised 1,877,000 rupees in share capital, the great majority of shares belonging to farmers owning no more than two shares (a commitment of one acre of cane per year). As chairman of the new factory, which started operation in 1957, Songaonkar established a pattern of techno-economic efficiency. Judging by their sugar recovery rates (weight of sugar produced as a percent of cane crushed), the Ganpati and Olegao factories became slightly more efficient than the nearby private sugar factories. The farmers around Shetipur were fortunate that the magnates' entrepreneurial skills were forced into these public channels.

Darekar, the Maratha magnate, was the official organizer of a third factory, which did not get under way until 1963. The Nageshwar factory, located at the opposite end of the taluka from Shetipur, was slow getting started because it did not seem to have a large enough area of sugar cane around it to support an efficient operation. (This problem, which still exists, is being solved by the factory leaders through the organization of cooperative lift irrigation societies, which are irrigating fields above the command area of the canal.) However, the real problems in the Nageshwar venture were in the leadership. Darekar, a PWP assemblyman, was not liked by the state government leaders who influenced the allocation of factory licenses. Moreover, Darekar was the factory organizer in name only. Darekar was interested in building an outlet for his cane production but not in handling other peoples' doubts and difficulties. The actual job of collecting the share capital was done mostly by Maniklal Batate, who was by then the "boss" of the taluka Cooperative Supervising Union, the Purchase and

Sales Union, and the District Central Cooperative Bank, etc. For his part, Batate was strongly distrusted by important district Congress leaders and he was only able to obtain the license through contacts with one or two state leaders. Before Batate could achieve this, however, Darekar was ready to cancel the whole effort. Batate had to call a meeting of shareholders and have them vote to dismiss Darekar as the official promoter, in order to keep him from returning all the paid-up share capital. Since the Olegao and Ganpati factories were blessed with better leadership to start with, they avoided all these extra manoeuvres and delays.

Songaonkar died before his chairmanship expired, and his place was taken by his son. The son did not continue in the factory leadership after 1960, since he was occupied with an industrial enterprise in Poona. However, a son of Deshpande, the other Brahmin magnate, became a very skillful leader in factory politics in the middle 1960's (see Chapter 7). The sons and nephews of the Maratha Jadav dominate the Ganpati factory to the present day. Darekar's son was elected to the Olegao factory board of management in 1967; but he did not become part of the coalition which controlled the chairmanship, and in 1971 he lost his bid for re-election. The younger Darekar, like his father, does not build up political contacts in the villages. He too has enterprises in Poona to occupy him.

Thus the magnates have adapted their techniques of influence since independence. As agrarian businessmen they have been somewhat hampered by the tenancy and land ceiling acts, the industrial licensing policy, the re-organization of the cooperative finance structure. Consequently, some have turned their energies to urban investments. Others have concentrated on

grapes and other capital-intensive crops and have remained active in sugar factory politics. Political success is not automatic, however. Indeed, for the Brahmins it is quite problematical. Even for the Maratha magnates, local politics requires an expenditure of time and generosity toward supporters which does not suit the demands of their business investments. The Jadhav family, because it is large and wealthy, still dominates the Ganpati factory, but its members do not try to dominate other arenas in the area. The rise of competitive machine-style politics, discussed in Chapters 6 and 7, makes it difficult for dilettantes to succeed in local politics today.

### C. Conclusions

Until the end of the 1950's, much of the social and economic innovation in the taluka depended on elite patronage and the collaboration of elites. For the business entrepreneurs, the magnates, this collaboration was based on economic necessity. The magnates depended on administrative contacts to get speedy large-scale canal contracts, to learn of lands being auctioned for the recovery of debts, to obtain contracts for the supply of vegetables to army units, etc. These administrative contacts were so important that Songaonkar and Deshpande shifted their centers of operation away from Shetipur to avoid unfriendly officials. The magnates also made good use of their contacts with the Shetipur branch of the Provincial Cooperative Bank. In some cases they benefitted from contacts with the nobility. Some of the magnates collaborated with the jagirdar of Olegao in the old private sugar factory venture. Deshpande and Kisan Jagtap of Olegao set up very large cane-growing operations in the princely state nearby. Connections with the ruler and officials of that state enabled them to secure long-term leases on large blocks of land and to obtain large canal irrigation contracts. Other contacts involved an industrial elite. Nearly all of them supplied sugar cane to the two private factories which were started in the 1930's. The original factory scheme at Olegao had been backed by Bombay industrialists who were also connected with the Provincial Cooperative Bank and its branch in Shetipur.

This collaboration had its sociopolitical side as well. The magnates, aristocrats, local lawyers, and government officials collaborated in the management of the taluka Cooperative Supervising Union and the Purchase and Sale Union. They all acted as the local dignitaries at the agricultural conferences, which were held from time to time to disseminate the use of new seeds and implements, etc. The Maratha magnates and nobles collaborated in their support of the Shahu Maratha Boarding and to varying extents in their support of the movement for Maratha education and non-Brahmin uplift at the provincial level. One deshमुख joined the Congress party in 1937, but the magnates and nobles were all either aloof from, or antagonistic to, the efforts to build popular resistance to the British government. After independence the magnates and one deshमुख's son (Batate) were active in building up the local cooperative institutions. As local politics has become more competitive and complex, the individual members of these old elites lost the incentive to collaborate with each other. As Chapters 6 and 7 will make clear, while individual descendents of the magnates and aristocrats succeed from time to time in present-day politics, they cannot do so through alliances with each other. Individuals have adapted well to the abolitions of jagirs and inams, the land ceiling act, etc.; but their strategies of organization and survival have changed drastically.

Even some of the events of the 1920's and '30's suggested that innovation based on elite collaboration alone would not succeed for long. This interpretation can be applied to the failures of the old Olegao sugar factory and the Olegao credit society. In both of these cases the jagirdar seems to have placed too much reliance on his Brahmin subordinates, who were his personal clients but were also part of the whole elite nexus.



The jagirdar began with a role of honor and administrative routine, placed between the villagers and the government. Living in a province where there was no widespread class of zamindars to create the illusion of aristocratic self-sufficiency, the jagirdar decided to strengthen his role by partially converting it. He was rewarded with respect as a public benefactor from both villagers and government; and he was given honorary medals and positions. This role conversion also involved new, more or less lateral alliances with officials, magnates, industrialists, and other aristocrats. It is clear that the jagirdar relied too much on the resourcefulness of the other members of these loose elite coalitions.

As an entrepreneurial middleman, the jagirdar succeeded in making the villagers and the government a little more dependent on him, at least for a while. He added his own resources to the institution-building process, so that governmental efforts were buttressed by the work of his own administrators, for example. This helped to multiply also those resources available to the villagers: access to more credit, to new networks of officials, to new positions of honor and employment, to education, etc. However, this new middleman role also entailed some risks, for it required working with complementary roles which would give leverage to others--leverage which might squeeze the man in the middle. Such complementary roles were those of the chairman, secretary and members of the village credit society and also the officials of the cooperative department. The liquidation of the credit society resulted from a mishandling of the pressures from these other roles.

The populist reaction was led by Kisan Jagtap, one of the institutional clients. Kisan Jagtap was on close terms with the jagirdar and his

Brahmin administrators, with some of the top English officials in the province (in the departments of agriculture, irrigation and cooperation); and he had indirect access to the ruler of a large princely state nearby. Even so, he acted on some occasions as a leader and representative of the village Maratha farmers; he helped to convert them on these occasions from an institutional clientele into a support group. The effectiveness of their reaction was made possible by the possibility of a division of interests within the elite network, for Kisan Jagtap was able to make use of contacts with sympathetic government officials in attempting to out-manoeuvre the society secretary. These populist reactions stymied the village elite but did not bring any net improvements for the farmers. The economic conditions of the late 1920's and 1930's gave no latitude for the readjustment of these interests.

The deshmukhs followed much the same role conversion strategy, except that they were not constrained by an official high position. This meant that they would sometimes give nominal support to the new political movements, as they had more to gain and less to lose.

This type of analysis also helps to explain why the village headmen did not participate much in the innovative institutions and movements. Unlike the jagirdar, the headmen belonged to a widespread, official class upon which the government and the people seemed to depend for the maintenance of law and order and the collection of taxes. On the other hand, the headmen were much more subject to censure and competition from their fellow villagers, especially among the newly-wealthy cane farmers. Thus it is understandable that they were not eager to enter into new complementary role-sets

in which the other role-players might form new coalitions among themselves or new alliances with officials, as Kisan Jagtan had done. From scattered evidence concerning the villages around Olegao and Kordegao, it seems that the more innovative headmen were based in fairly small, unified villages, while those who faced the strongest competition within their own villages (as in Olegao and Kordegao) were also those who did not attempt to dominate the new institutions.

The magnates demonstrate that role conversions need not be based initially on ascribed roles. Their initial roles were as the successful users of local resources, some of which derived from the village land and labor pools, others from the use of government canals, etc. One way or another, everyone was concerned with the management of these resources, and the magnates earned some respect from both sides. Consequently, they were invited into the innocuous new role of official consultants on irrigation policy--in theory, to mediate between the needs of the villagers and the government. Under the pressure of economic necessity, the magnates on occasion converted further: they became boycott organizers and later cooperative sugar factory organizers, and they also tried to become cooperative bank organizers. The effort to block a change in the banking structure was unsuccessful in part because it did not represent a popular demand among the village farmers. The other two efforts worked better because the magnates made sure that the village farmers learned of the issues at stake and understood that they all shared the same interests. In the case of the boycott, the farmers and the magnates constituted the institutional clientele of the irrigation department. The big magnates, like Kisan Jagtap, usually

maintained a collaborative relationship with the government officials; but in this situation they were forced to make a split in the elite network.

The formation of the cooperative sugar factories, on the other hand, was not an adversary process, except that the organizers had to fight through the normal red tape and planning-from-above. (They tried, for example, not to take the particular brand of machinery which the government had decided to import for them, since it was more suitable for sugar beets than cane. Adapting this machinery, in fact, proved expensive and troublesome.) The main adversary was the possibility of another factory failure; and the magnates were effective in building an interest group to deal with this. Their network of contacts in the villages--through the progressive farmers, the cooperative credit societies, and the freedom fighters who had taken part in the independence movement--was broad and reticulated. The new factories combined a strong, common economic interest with a leadership structure potentially open to a variety of crosscutting demands. The government nominated the first chairman and board of directors, thus stabilizing the leadership pattern temporarily. As soon as this nominated board retired in the Olegao factory, the leadership was thrown open to various competing demands. Thus the magnates set the stage for the rapid emergence of the pluralist process.

The nobles and magnates innovated within a framework based on the manipulation of administrative influence; but in doing so they altered the framework, by expanding the channels of competition, the variety of demands and the means for pressing those demands on the authorities. Despite their intentions, then, these elite innovations paved the way for more radical challenges to the administrative-influence game.

## CHAPTER V

### CHALLENGES TO ELITE COLLABORATION: THE USES OF MASS MOBILIZATION

Some of the first popular meetings in Shetipur were connected with the non-Brahmin movement--more or less in competition with the spread of the nationalist movement in the same period. This was because the Congress party leadership at that time was of urban, high-caste, and mercantile- or professional-class origin. It also seems to indicate that those who looked on the local elite networks from underneath were not so much concerned with who was in charge at the top as with who controlled the middle ground. In terms of local opportunities for individual and group mobility, this was undoubtedly the more practical point of view.

The first two sections of this chapter are concerned with caste uplift movements, the first being the non-Brahmin movement which sought to promote the interests of the peasant-caste rural majority against the advantages of the Brahmins and merchant communities, the second being the effort by the minority "untouchable" castes to raise their own status and protect their interests against all the other castes, including the peasants. The third part of this chapter deals with the local effects of the nationalist movement. Each movement had its own elite enemies and elite allies. The non-Brahmin movement was promoted by the Maratha princes and encouraged by the British as a means of undermining the pretensions of the Brahmin nationalist leaders (Copland, 1973). Under Dr. Ambedkar's leadership, the Scheduled Castes movement became

antagonistic to Gandhi and the Congress movement (which by the 1930's was coming to include both Brahmin and non-Brahmin leaders in Maharashtra); and Ambedkar tried to use the British political reform commissions as a countervailing force to protect the lower castes (Zelliot, 1970a: 39-49). In their opposition to the British, the national Congress leaders sought the support of big landlords, merchants, and industrialists; and they attempted to avoid issues where the interests of the workers and peasants might conflict with those of the native elites (Hauser, 1963). Thus these movements sought mass support on the basis of competing visions of who the oppressors were; and it is interesting to note that operationally, at least, the allies and enemies were defined in each case primarily in ethnic terms.

#### A. The Non-Brahmin Movement

The region where the non-Brahmin movement played the greatest political role was in southern India, in the Madras presidency (Irschick, 1969; also Beteille, 1965). The movement also flourished in western India, from the late 19th century until about 1930. The first non-Brahmin organization, the Satya Shodak Samaj, was founded in Poona in 1873 by Jotirao Phule, a former teacher belonging to the Mali (gardener) caste. The movement gathered momentum around the turn of the century, when it began to receive active royal sponsorship from the Maharaja of Kolhapur (Copland, 1973; Patterson, 1952: 98-101). During the 19th century, the Brahmins of Maharashtra had taken actively to English education, so that they completely dominated the universities, the professions and the native ranks of the administration. On top of this, the Brahmins produced the greatest social reformers (except Phule) and nationalist leaders in the region, during the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Johnson, 1970). The other castes, Marathas in particular, began to resent this multipronged domination by a tiny elite; and they felt no particular longing to have the country turned over by the British to the Brahmins. The basic demands of the movement were for more education and civil service jobs for non-Brahmins; and in 1918 there was a direct political demand for "separate electorates for the agricultural classes in the legislatures which were to be instituted under the new constitution" (Kumar, 1968: 316). After 1930, however, the leading non-Brahmin activists joined forces with the Congress nationalist movement, which was seeking to build up a mass rural base. One factor which contributed to this change of allegiance was the

government-sponsored Small Holdings Bill of 1927, which was perceived as inimical to the interests of the majority of village farmers and which provoked some agitation in the countryside (Omvedt, 1973b: 1979-80). Another factor was the exodus of Brahmins from the Congress to the Hindu Mahasabha and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (Patterson, 1952: 117, 120).

To write of a non-Brahmin "movement" in Shetipur may give an impression of organization and continuity which did not exist. Early efforts to set up a non-Brahmin student hostel were supported by the immigrant Sasvad Malis, who were always eager for educational opportunities. However, by 1920 all the big Mali entrepreneurs had emigrated once again, to Sholapur and Ahmednagar districts.

There were occasional public meetings and itinerant popular dramas (tamashas) aimed at satirizing Brahmannical pretensions. Some of the village Marathas "converted," in the sense that they stopped using Brahmin priests for their life-cycle rituals and made do with simplified Vedic texts learned by their own family members or friends. The Shahu Maratha student hostel, inspired by the educational institutions established for non-Brahmin students in Kolhapur, was a continuous and practical source of social progress in Shetipur--as mentioned in the preceding chapter. However, it was a charitable work by sections of the local elite, not a political challenge. The provincial non-Brahmin leaders did not develop regular political contacts in Shetipur until the middle 1930's, by which time they were working as part of the Congress nationalist movement.

In 1920, the Maharaja of Kolhapur was invited to a meeting in Shetipur; but the local Brahmins successfully petitioned the government to cancel this visit, for fear that violent disturbances might result as they had elsewhere.



Nevertheless, the anti-Brahmin tamashas were often welcomed in town and in many villages--though not by Raje Krishnasingh of Olegao. In the large canal village next to Olegao, there were several Marathas who studied pamphlets on the Vedic funeral and marriage rites, and they boycotted the Brahmin priests. They also persuaded the balutedars (the specialized service castes) to boycott the village Brahmins; and they protested vigorously whenever a Brahmin teacher was transferred to the village primary school. In such cases, the villagers wrote letters to the District School Board until the teacher was transferred out again.

In Kordegao there were several large landholding Brahmin families, who had once held hereditary priestly or administrative offices and the inam lands connected with such offices. Those rentier Brahmins who continued to reside in the village had in most cases also taken up moneylending and thus probably added to their ancestral holdings. Around 1930 (or perhaps earlier) there was a meeting of Maratha tenants, in which they vowed not to work the lands of the Brahmins. This action may have been stimulated by word of similar tenant resistance in the villages of nearby Satara district (Omvedt, 1973b: 1974-1979). In any event, the resistance soon petered out in Kordegao.

There was one man in Shetipur who wanted to make the non-Brahmin movement into a force for combating social evils. His name was Hanumantrao Deokate and he was a Hatkar Dhangar by caste, by profession a school teacher. As a young man, Deokate was strongly influenced by the writings of Jotirao Phule. He was introduced to these writings by an older Phule admirer, a Maratha shopkeeper named Shinde, whose son also became an adherent of the

non-Brahmin movement and later a freedom fighter. As a token of their non-belief in caste restrictions, Deokate's daughter married Shinde's other son.

In the early 1920's, Deokate was dismissed from his position as a teacher in a Shetipur municipal primary school, because he refused to segregate the "untouchable" students from the others. In 1924 Deokate set up a boarding house for poor non-Brahmin students, especially non-Marathas. (The Shahu Maratha hostel, being set up at about the same time, was originally only for Maratha students.) Deokate provided boarding, lodging and private tuition to about 25 students of various castes, including Mahars and Mangs. He took whatever small payments their parents could afford and solicited contributions from the well-off Dhangar and Maratha farmers around Shetipur. However, those who could give generously could also have their sons educated in more genteel surroundings; indeed the wealthiest farmers were beginning to send their sons to boarding schools in Poona. The bigger Dhangar farmers expressed an interest in supporting an exclusively Dhangar boarding house; but because of status insecurity in relation to the Marathas, they were quite opposed to any connection with low-caste students. Deokate, who had a fiery and self-righteous temperament and was fond of speaking at public meetings, did not appeal to the status aspirations of the Dhangar farmers.

Deokate attended the provincial Dhangar caste conferences in Olegao (1925) and in Shetipur (1928, 1939); but he went to proclaim his conviction that all the middle and low castes should work together to promote education and abolish the caste system. He did not pretend to have any liking for the goal of raising the Dhangars within the system, which was the aspiration held by all the others of his caste.

Deokate named his institution the Ahilyabai hostel, after a renowned queen of the Holkar family of Indore. The Holkars, who were Dhangars, had been powerful rulers and military leaders in the 18th century. Deokate made several visits to Indore and succeeded in obtaining an annual grant of 1,000 rupees for the boarding house. However, the grant stopped after just two years (in 1930), apparently because of the envy and rumor-mongering of some Dhangars in Poona. Indore being over 300 miles away, and there being no local Dhangar nobles to stand surety for Deokate's intentions, he could not get the grant restored. The Ahilyabai hostel gradually died out in the depression (1938) and Deokate had to hunt for jobs as a teacher in the nearby village schools. At about this time the provincial non-Brahmin leaders had joined the Congress party. The younger Shinde, Deokate's daughter's husband's brother, became a member of the Taluka Congress Committee; but Deokate remained adamant in his loyalty to the non-Brahmin movement, and in his mistrust of the urban high-caste, nationalist leaders.

## B. The Scheduled Castes Movement

Owing to their numerical predominance among the Scheduled Castes and their long-term efforts to organize against the Congress party (as a symbol of upper-caste dominance), the uplift efforts of the Mahars merit most of our attention here.

Mahars account for about nine per cent of the present-day population of Maharashtra. The two next largest Maharashtra Scheduled Castes are small groups in comparison: Mangs 1.8 per cent and Chambhars 1.3 per cent. The total Scheduled Caste population including those converted to Buddhism constitutes 12.68 per cent of the State population . . ." (Zelliot 1970a: 29).

(The general history of the Mahar movement can be found in Zelliot, 1966, 1969, 1970a, 1970b.)

The conflict between Dr. Ambedkar, the Mahar leader, and the Congress party came to a head between 1928 and 1932 over certain issues of constitutional reform. Ambedkar and most of the Scheduled Caste leaders wanted a separate electorate for their castes, so that the other castes would not overwhelm their minority vote--the same argument which had been advanced successfully by the Muslims. Gandhi wanted no divisions in the Hindu electorate; and eventually he compromised with Ambedkar, so that the Scheduled Castes received a number of reserved seats in the provincial legislatures which were, however, voted on by all the castes (Zelliot, 1970a: 45-49).

Before independence, the Scheduled Castes movement had little active leadership of its own in Shetipur. In 1923, Deokate helped to organize a protest march of the Scheduled Castes in Shetipur, led by a Mahar leader from Poona. In 1925 Dr. Ambedkar, the leader of the Mahar movement, visited

Shetipur, stayed at the Ahilyabai student hostel, and complemented Deokate on his work. Around 1930 Deokate joined in a temple entry movement led by another Mahar leader from Poona. Members of all the lower castes attempted to enter a large Hindu temple in Shetipur, but the temple attendants locked the door.

As a teacher, Deokate believed in education as the means for uplift, both in the classroom and in meetings and protest marches. He did not attempt to create a political organization on the model of a political party. Even the movement leaders like Ambedkar did not take clear steps in that direction until the middle 1930's (Zelliot, 1970a: 51-52). One of Deokate's Mahar students went on to become an MLC and chairman of a big state educational association, the Rayat Shikshan Saunstha. But Deokate did not transform his institutional clients into a local leadership coalition. He was hampered by his unwillingness to compromise, to give up small ideological points for the sake of support; and he did not always discriminate crucial from irrelevant issues. One year he pressured the police into arresting the low-caste ruffians who collected "donations" from the farmers bringing their crops to market. This was consistent with a moral-reformation approach to low-caste uplift, but not very politic.

Other teachers helped to keep the Scheduled Castes movement moving gradually along in Shetipur. For example, there was a Mang primary school teacher, now retired in Olegao, who gave free private tuition for decades to Scheduled Caste students. This teacher also helped many people in their dealings with government red tape. He organized the Mang women in Shetipur and got them to desegregate a drinking-water well near their homes (1934). This teacher also participated in a famous temple-entry movement in Nasik (1930-35).

Another Mang teacher, living in Kordegao village, worked as a sort of unofficial secretary for Ambedkar's Independent Labour Party in the late 1930's. Unfortunately, like most of the non-Mahar leaders, these Mang teachers came to feel that Ambedkar's movement was working only for the interests of the Manars, and they left the movement around 1940 or so (cf., Zelliott, 1970a: 50-51). These leaders now have no independent Scheduled Castes organization in which to act (apart from the Depressed Classes League, or Harijan Sevak Sangh, which is an arm of the Congress party).

In Shetipur and in Kordegao village, many low-caste children received some primary-school education from the Christian missionaries. Apart from these signs of progress, Shetipur taluka did not become the scene of much movement activity. The nearby cities of Poona and Bombay tended to draw off the ambitious and skillful young men, when they had little or no land to farm. And Shetipur was not far enough from Poona to be needed as a separate organizational center in the hinterlands.

However, the province-wide movement did have an effect on the ideals and aspirations of the rural Mahars. Around 1954 it was estimated that the literacy rate among Mahars was 11%, as compared with a rate of 7% among the Marathas (Patterson, 1954: 1066). There are three Mahar high school teachers in Olegao village, and one Mahar college teacher in Shetipur.

After independence, the pace of activities began to increase, partly because of the establishment of the universal adult franchise and the new developmental resources being distributed by the government. The movement had also undergone changes, "from attempting to gain status in matters of religion to organizing for political activity" (Zelliott, 1970a: 51). In 1956 Dr.

Ambedkar announced his formal conversion to Buddhism, which does not recognize caste as a religious principle. In that year a mass meeting was held in Shetipur, led by Ambedkar's son, at which all the local Mahars were converted to Buddhism. Ambedkar's movement had also taken a new political name, the Republican Party of India (RPI). In 1957 an RPI candidate was elected to a reserved seat in the state assembly from the Shetipur constituency. The RPI candidate was a moderately well-off, canal-village farmer of the Mahar caste. The RPI won this election because all opposition parties had formed a popular coalition against the Congress over the issue of whether to include Bombay city in a unilingual Marathi-speaking state. The local RPI has otherwise not enjoyed any major successes at the polls, since it usually has no effective allies against the Congress.

Since Ambedkar's death in 1956, the state RPI organization has developed factional problems (Zelliot, 1970a: 60). Most of the Mahar leaders in the Shetipur area are still loyal to B. K. Gaikwad, who seems to have the best following among the less-educated, rural Mahars and to be the least attracted by temptations from the state Congress leaders. However, even the local RPI leadership is unable to maintain internal discipline; and their efforts to combat the Congress at the polls are hampered by maverick candidates of their own. The Mahar MLA who was elected in 1957, for example, was expelled from the party in 1967 because he ran as an independent candidate against the official RPI nominee in a constituency near Shetipur.

What makes the factional problem especially dangerous to the party is that it is partly a cleavage between classes. The urban, educated Mahars are loosening their contacts with the rural party organization; they are helping

less and less in the mobilization of rural protests and in raising funds for student hostels, etc. (Or at least, this is what the RPI leaders in Shetipur believe.) In recent years, ritual status has not been a strong barrier to secular advancement in the cities, and so the rural party members have been losing the support of their own elite.

In 1961 there were 17 cooperative housing societies registered in Shetipur town, many of them for low-caste groups. In the town, low-caste residents are more concentrated than in the villages and it is easier to build up some organizational strength. In 1959 there was a sit-in of Mahars in the municipal office to prevent the construction of a new bus station until the low-caste squatters living on the site were given new land to settle on. Since about 1960 the Mahar ex-MLA and an ex-teacher, along with others, have been organizing a boarding house and primary school for Scheduled Caste students, especially Mahars. Construction of a new building for the Ambedkar Hostel started in 1970. Donations had been collected from the cooperative sugar factories around Shetipur, and from some of the wealthy townsmen. A temporary electoral alliance between Congress and the RPI (in 1967 and 1971) enabled the organizers of the Ambedkar hostel to collect donations with the help of the Congress MLA. The electoral alliance also made it easier for local Mahar leaders to obtain various official favors and also to transact business at the government record office, etc. However, at least some of these leaders disliked having to depend on personal favors from the MLA and Congress, for these could weaken the independence and bargaining power of their organization.

In 1959, some of the local RPI leaders went to Ahmednagar district to



demonstrate for land to the landless and for changing the Mahar watan lands, which were inalienable and tax-free, into normal landholdings. Later, 500 Mahars were arrested for demonstrating in Shetipur. The watan lands were part of the old baluta system of compensating the Mahars for their services to the village. Now that the baluta system was dying out (and the Mahars were repudiating their demeaning duties in it), they wanted to be able to obtain credit through mortgaging their lands. (They were denied access to cooperative credit, for example, because the lands were inalienable.) The demand for abolishing the watan status of their lands was met by the state; but the effect, particularly in the canal villages, has been that peasant-caste farmers have persuaded the Mahars to sell a large proportion of their ancestral lands. (The immediate cash value of the land, for people who have never cultivated it efficiently, is very attractive.)

There is very little independent non-Mahar leadership among the low castes in Shetipur. There are a few Mangs who are petty clients of the big municipal politicians and who serve as placeholders on the municipal board. There is a Dhor who serves as a local welfare officer for the Depressed Classes League and who attempts to organize labor cooperatives, etc. There is also a Chambhar ex-labor organizer attempting to organize a cooperative farming society.

A cooperative housing society for Mangs was organized in Olegao village in 1956. Some share capital was raised and a government loan was obtained. However, the leaders could not persuade the gram panchayat to deed them land until 1971, when they were given five acres for a housing site. Likewise, in Kordegao a Mang rope-making cooperative was organized in 1952, with about

50 members. A government loan of 600 rupees was obtained, which was used to buy the raw fiber; and it was partially repaid through the sale of the finished ropes. However, some of the leaders began to distribute the assets in the form of cash loans, and the society went into liquidation.

All of these enterprises are connected to different strands of the local patronage network and so the leaders have little opportunity to develop a united lobby within the Congress party or to form an independent party of their own. Most non-Mahar leaders believe that they are better off as dependent clients of the local Congress politicians than they would be if allied with the numerically superior Mahars.

Within this locality, therefore, there has been a minimum of organization and public pressure for the sake of low-caste uplift. The emphasis has been on education, religious conversion, and acquisition of some of the developmental resources which serve as spoils in the political patronage system. Since these spoils are distributed piecemeal, there is not much chance for a powerful leadership coalition to develop among the recipients. Such a coalition is rendered even more problematical by the strong dissensions among the various Scheduled Castes.

### C. The Nationalist Movement

In Shetipur the nationalist movement produced dramatic results, in its day. The local progress of the movement can be charted in terms of its increasing contact with the common people.

In about 1930, the Taluka Congress Committee consisted largely of Brahmin lawyers, Gujar merchants and others of similar standing: mainly urban, high-caste professionals and businessmen. Until the late 1930's, the TCC had no regular contact with the masses, particularly the village residents.

In 1920 there was a procession in town to mourn the death of Tilak, the nationalist leader (a Poona Brahmin and ardent opponent of the non-Brahmin movement). In 1930, when Gandhi led the salt march in Gujarat, there was evidently more response in the villages around Shetipur. In Kordegao there was a demonstration march, led by a small committee of Congress supporters. One interesting feature of this march was that the leaders led chants calling for an end to the rule of the patils, along with the British. This logical and seemingly radical extension of official Congress policy was in fact inspired by the composition of the village committee. Only one Maratha had become a party member, and he was the son of a strong credit society chairman, Dadasaheb Khomme, who was always feuding with the headmen belonging to the other clans. The other party members consisted of three young men belonging to Gujar merchant families, plus a Muslim trader and a tailor. Thus the opposition to the patils reflected the continuing antagonism between the old and new elites.

To the extent that there was any nationalist party in daily contact with the common people around 1930, it was the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), "a non-political national organization, primarily of youth, which aimed at revitalizing the Hindu community" (Weiner, 1957: 178). The local party branch was led by a Brahmin lawyer. It differed from the Congress at that particular time in having a course of seemingly practical activities for the ordinary members: regular paramilitary drills and calisthenics. These drills attracted many of the town youths who were glad to find an activity group to join. At that time the local RSS leaders were also affiliated to the Hindu Mahasabha, another Hindu communalist party, which was attempting to reconvert those Indians who had been "forcibly converted" by foreign rulers--that is, the Muslims and Christians. In Shetipur they tried to reconvert some Christians who were mostly members of a "criminal tribe," the Takaris. The Hindu Mahasabha lawyers at least helped the non-Christian Takaris to counter the secular pressures of the missionaries, who were administrative supervisors of the local "criminal tribes." (The RSS intervention naturally deepened the rift between Christian and non-Christian Takaris.)

The composition and activities of the local nationalists changed considerably during the middle 1930's, however. The top leaders of the provincial non-Brahmin movement had joined the Congress party; and thus for the first time prominent Congressmen who belonged to the peasant castes began to visit Shetipur regularly. These peasant-caste Congressmen devoted their efforts in Shetipur to recruiting followers from the same castes; they made a special effort to convert some of the groups attached to the RSS leaders. In 1937, just before the Congress victory in the provincial elections, Jawaharlal

Nehru visited Shetipur and made a speech. From that day, Congress was the only party in Shetipur to stay abreast of national events in the independence struggle.

The 1937 elections were held under a new constitution with an expanded franchise extended to about 14% of the population (Chandra, Tripathi and De, 1972: 190). The Congress, while not approving of the constitution, decided to make a show of strength at the polls. The wife of Ganpatrao More (secretary of the Shahu Maratha student hostel and a supervisor of cooperative societies) was elected to the District Local Board for the Congress. Mrs. More had a primary-school education herself; and she was re-elected to the DLB until 1952. The eastern part of Poona district elected three members to the provincial legislature. One of these was B. B. Kale (deshmukh), the headman of an unirrigated village near Shetipur. Kale was elected to the DLB in 1925 and became the DLB president in 1928. Thus, as a proven vote-getter he received a Congress party nomination, even though his affiliation to the party was not long or well-tested. Kale had served on the boards of the taluka cooperative Unions; he had been a supporter of the non-Brahmin movement and had also served on the board of the Shahu Maratha student hostel. Among the losers was <sup>h</sup>Jadav, the Maratha magnate, who ran as an independent candidate for MLA.

In 1939 the Congress ministries resigned because they had not been consulted about India's commitment to the war effort. In 1940 and 1941 Gandhi launched a quiet campaign of civil disobedience by selected individuals. Then in 1942, in the national Congress meeting in Bombay, Gandhi got the party to pass the "Quit India" resolution calling for immediate independence. All the party leaders were arrested, and many thousands were jailed in the subsequent demonstrations and uprisings. The movement was left almost

leaderless and without direction, and incidents flared up more or less spontaneously (Chandra, Tripathi and De, 1972: 220-221). In Shetipur, the railway station and post office were burned down and telegraph wires were cut. About 150 arrests were made in the taluka. In nearby Satara district, there was a strong underground movement which set up a "parallel government" for a while (Chandra, Tripathi and De, 1972: 221).

In Kordegao village, two of the Congress members planned to burn down the government inspection bungalow, but the plan fell through. In Olegao nothing happened except that some of the farmers who later became village leaders were enrolling primary members for the Congress party. In the big village next to Olegao, there was an active Maratha Congressman, who had already served time in jail; and this time about ten of his Maratha and Dhangar supporters were arrested as well. In another small village next to Shetipur, inhabited by Dhangars with a Maratha minority, most of the farmers belonged to the Congress and went underground. By chance, their leaders contacted S. M. Joshi, the Congress socialist leader, in Poona. They were given explosives and managed to hide out for about two months, though they did not succeed in blowing up a police station and a bridge as they had planned.

We can examine the progress of the movement in more detail through the personal careers of three freedom fighters. These three are a "sample" of the party activists based on a single criterion: they received the Congress party nominations to the Shetipur MLA seat after independence. Thus they were presumably the most active and dedicated freedom fighters, and those most representative of the taluka population in terms of their socio-economic backgrounds.

Popatrao Shinde, the Maratha lawyer, was first an adherent of the

non-Brahmin movement in the 1920's, like his father. Following the example of K. M. Jedhe, Shinde joined the Congress in 1937 and in that year he became chairman of the TCC. Shinde became more prominent in the movement as the Congress turned from constitutional reforms to non-cooperation and resistance. In 1941 the party called for volunteers for an "individual satyagraha" --that is, for individuals to court jail through public defiance of the British government. Shinde volunteered for this role and was accepted, as were the others discussed below. Shinde made a speech advocating non-cooperation with the British war effort and was jailed for six months. In August, 1942 the national Congress framed its "Quit India" resolution in Bombay and the whole party was declared illegal. Many of the Shetipur leaders were arrested in Bombay at that time, while others, like Shinde, were arrested when they returned to Shetipur. Shinde was released after 17 months and was nominated and elected as the Congress MLA in 1946. He was also appointed secretary of the Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee for four years (a key state position) and served as honorary secretary of the District Development Board until 1958.

Shinde was the only one of the older TCC members who deliberately courted jail in 1941-42. As the party turned to more activist methods than it had used in the '30's, the old urban, upperclass leaders lost influence to the young activist leaders.

One of the latter was Govindrao Wadak. Wadak belonged to a Maratha farming family in a large canal village next to Olegao. In the middle 1930's he was attending high school in a nearby town. He began reading Congress pamphlets and attending party meetings. In 1936 he made a public ceremony of burning his clothes made of imported cloth and donning the homespun cloth

of the Congress workers. He became a TCC member in 1939 and the TCC Chairman in 1940. In 1941 he volunteered with Shinde for the individual satyagraha. In 1942 he was with Shinde in Bombay, along with about 50 other Congress members from Shetipur, when the Quit India resolution was passed. Like Shinde, Wadak was arrested on his return to Shetipur, before he had time to organize any demonstrations. After his release, he was elected to the District School Board in a by-election. In 1946, he was elected to the District Local Board and was also made secretary of the District Congress Committee. He was also a member of the MPCC general body at this time. In 1952 he was nominated and elected as the Shetipur MLA. Along with four other freedom fighters he sat on the original nominated board of management of the Olegao cooperative sugar factory and was made the vice chairman.

Another young activist was Vitthalrao Atole. Atole was a Khatik Dhangar. The Khatiks traditionally worked as butchers in the Shetipur market; none lived in the villages. Because of their occupation they were considered by some castes to be ritually impure. In the 1930's Atole was a member of the Shetipur wrestlers' club. (Amateur and semi-professional wrestling is a favorite sport at village fairs, etc. A surprising number of district and state politicians began their careers as wrestlers; this was perhaps one way that an uneducated rural dweller could develop a circle of professional associates and a public name.) Quite a few Khatiks, as well as Marathas, etc., were also members of the club. The wrestlers' club was a focus, around 1933, of the RSS organizing efforts. Presumably the wrestlers, who met regularly for exercises at their gym, were expected to appreciate a party which emphasized gymnastic drills as the basic step toward the Hindu nationalist revival. About 50 of the wrestlers did join the RSS at that time.



It may be that the Khatiks were flattered to have their political support sought by Brahmins and to be able to look patronizingly on the Muslims and Christians. On one occasion, there was a rumor that a Muslim had urinated on a local Hindu diety. The wrestlers were more than willing to make a brawl over this; but the jagirdar of Olegao and the Shetipur police restored order. The wrestlers may also have joined some fights between the Christian and non-Christian Takaris.

This pattern began to change when the provincial non-Brahmin leaders, who had recently joined the Congress movement, began to make regular visits to Shetipur in the middle 1930's. Congressmen like K. M. Jedhe visited the wrestlers' club and succeeded in converting most of the members, including Atole. Atole began making periodic trips to many villages in the taluka to recruit party members--one of the very few townsmen to do so. (As a wrestler, he must have been accustomed to the nomadic life, since the wrestlers travel far and wide to compete for prizes in the village fairs.) He probably had the most extensive party contacts in the taluka. Atole became a member of the TCC in 1936. In that year he attended the national Congress meeting in Faizapur with about 150 party members from Shetipur. In 1940 he attended the Congress session in Bihar with Wadak and about 15 others. In 1941 Atole and a Muslim (also a town-dweller) volunteered for the individual satyagraha, getting six months in jail. By that time he was secretary of the TCC and he remained in that post until the present day.

In 1942, after the Quit India resolution, Atole returned secretly with about 40 others from Bombay. In Shetipur he found that crowds were gathering, and he assisted in the burning of the railway station. He also made one of his fiery speeches, which he always enjoyed. His little group then moved

secretly around some of the nearby villages, cutting telegraph wires and in one case burning the village land revenue records. They were arrested the next day, and Atole was jailed for 21 months.

After his release, Atole became very active in the taluka cooperative Unions, until 1952. He served on the municipal board for six years. In 1955 he became chairman of the Taluka Development Board; and in 1960 he won a seat on the first elected board of management in the Olegao cooperative sugar factory. In 1957 he was nominated by the Congress for the Shetipur MLA seat, but he lost the election.

Shinde, Atole, and Wadak were the three who had done the most work and sacrificed the most for the Congress movement. Thus they were appropriately selected for the Congress MLA nominations after independence. Naturally they faced some competition in obtaining these nominations--particularly from a few comparatively well-off Maratha farmers who had also been jailed in 1942. None of the three were at all affluent; they had to campaign with charisma and with help from volunteers. And they all faced another handicap in the nomination and election processes, which was that none of them belonged to the most important new section of their constituency: the major landholding peasant clans (Maratha and Dhangar). This fact must be related to their common lack of success in post-independence politics.

Shinde, though a Maratha, did not come from one of the major Maratha clans living in town. Being a lawyer also put him at some socio-cultural distance from his rural constituents. While he may not have been concerned with this problem, he was concerned with the conduct of state politics as he perceived it when serving as MLA (1946-1952). Shinde had grown up in a family concerned with the non-Brahmin movement and its ideological atmosphere

of social reformation. He found the norms of post-independence politics too distasteful and retired almost entirely from public life after serving his term as MLA.

Wadak was then nominated and elected in 1952. Wadak was not reluctant to play by new rules, but he selected the wrong adversary. From 1945 he and Atole both became very active in the taluka cooperatives: the Supervising Union and especially the Purchase and Sale Union. The two freedom fighters built up their personal followings on the board of the Purchase and Sale Union. At first they endeavored to curb the power of the old guard. Virtually all control was in the hands of the managing director, Ganpatrao More. More was on very good terms with the nobles and magnates who had been in titular command of the board (and who themselves had not had much economic stake in the results of the union operation). The freedom fighters put these old elites on the defensive with their popular charisma and their ability to mobilize votes. (The old boards had been managed by "consensus," not by voting one candidate against another.) Mobilizing ordinary members for competitive show-down votes and for moving new faces onto the boards were innovative methods made possible by the new atmosphere of popular self-determination and social reform which was gaining legitimacy as a result of independence. Also, of course, the freedom fighters had access to the upper levels of the Congress hierarchy. This access was clearly expected to have an influence on the resources and leadership opportunities available in the taluka development institutions.

Wadak and Atole soon found that one of their allies in this process was going to swallow the whole prize. This ally was Maniklal Batate, son of one of the deshmukhs who had been active on the Union board in years past.

(See Chapter 7 for more details on Batate's career.) Batate did not have the charisma of a freedom fighter, but he did have wealth and inherited prestige and, most importantly, a genius for organizational politics. He first cooperated with Wadak and Atole, using them to open up the cooperative Unions to competitive politics. Then, in a complex series of factional splits and manoeuvres, Batate got three or four lesser freedom fighters (those who just happened to be arrested in 1942) on his side and used all this leverage against Wadak and Atole. By 1952 Batate had manoeuvred the two freedom fighters completely out of power in the Purchase and Sale Union; he had also forced the managing director's resignation. Wadak was elected MLA at this time, and he set about organizing a rival Purchase and Sale Union. However, Wadak's administrative skills did not compare with Batate's and the rival union soon became moribund. The original Union itself was in complete financial disarray as a result of the prolonged factional struggles; it took several years for Batate to get it back into shape. Meanwhile, Wadak made speeches in the Legislative Assembly, calling for an investigation of Batate's management. Nothing was ever done, of course; Batate had friends in high places. Batate even managed to embarrass Wadak in his own village credit society, where Wadak was the chairman. Batate had taken over the taluka Cooperative Supervising Union, which appoints the secretaries of the credit societies. Somehow the secretary of Wadak's society managed to abscond with the society's money and books, and the organization failed. By the end of his term in the assembly, Wadak decided to retire from active politics.

Atole received the next Congress MLA nomination in 1957. He became the only Congress MLA candidate to lose in the Shetipur constituency. Atole lost partly because he was not a Maratha--which the Dhangars still resent.

But there were a host of other factors which contributed to his downfall. For one thing, he continued to rely only on his charisma as a freedom fighter; he did no coalition-building. Indeed, he had gone out of his way to oppose one Maratha faction in Shetipur municipal politics and to oppose Batate in the district cooperatives. (Atole later realized that he would have to join forces with one of these groups, and he chose Batate's.) But mainly Atole's problems were the Congress party's problems. For the first time in the western Deccan, the party suffered numerous defeats because it was opposed by the Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti (SMS). The SMS was an alliance of opposition parties, right and left, which were in favor of including Bombay city within a unilingual Marathi-speaking state (see Stern, 1970). The Congress, which wanted to put nationalism before regionalism and feared the disunity which might result from linguistic states, took the unpopular stand on this issue. In Shetipur, the winner of the 1957 election was Darekar, the Maratha magnate, running for the Peasants and Workers Party (PWP). The big Maratha farmers all preferred Darekar to Atole. (Several of them, in both Olegao and Kordegao, were connected to his family by marriage.) Moreover, Darekar received good support from the ordinary farmers in the dry villages, because there was an active Marxist organizer working in Shetipur for the PWP. The PWP organizer was Vyankatrao More, son of Ganpatrao More, the former managing director of the Purchase and Sale Union. The elder More had been on good terms with K. M. Jedhe, one of the big leaders of the non-Brahmin movement, when More was managing the Shahu Maratha student hostel. Jedhe was one of the leaders who split away from the Congress again in 1948 to found the PWP (Patterson, 1954: 1067); and he appointed More's son to serve as the PWP organizer in Shetipur taluka. Vyankatrao More was a lawyer, and he

often represented the impoverished dry farmers for little or no fee. He attended the mass conversion of Mahars in 1956 (in Shetipur) and gave a speech; and he later acted as the lawyer (without fee) for a number of low-caste squatters who had resisted eviction by the municipal board. Thus he built up a strong personal following among the poor, and he even managed to interest some of his followers in the works of Marx and Lenin.

After the election, the Congress reversed its policy on the linguistic states issue. By about 1960 the state Congress leaders had managed to co-opt most of the key PWP leaders into high Congress positions. Vyankatrao More ran as the PWP candidate in a parliamentary by-election in 1960 and lost. He was killed shortly thereafter, and Shetipur lost its only trace of an effective socialist opposition to the Congress party.

The local Congress leaders, on the other hand, were left in a relatively weak condition; and they were forced to follow the rather arbitrary dictates of the District Congress Committee in Poona. In 1962, because of the pervasive rivalries and unresolved order of precedence among the local Congressmen, the DCC named as its nominee for the Shetipur MLA seat a woman from Poona--a move which certainly rankled the taluka party members.

In Kordegao the PWP had gathered strong support from the patils, who were still very influential. This was based on their perpetual feud with the Gujar merchants, who had supplied the largest number of early Congress party members in the village. Some of the ordinary Maratha farmers were affected directly by Vyankatrao More's efforts on behalf of the PWP; but the fact that the village Congress committee, in 1942, had still been dominated by Gujars indicated the total lack of penetration of the nationalist movement

into the village populace. Thus the strong PWP vote in Kordegao was based on this original lack of Congress mobilization, plus the continued resentment against the Gujar merchants who represented that party during the 1950's.

In Olegao most of the village leaders withdrew their support from the Congress in 1957, partly because of the linguistic state issue and partly because Atole was the Congress candidate. One of the most respected leaders, who died in 1954, was a long-term PWP supporter and a friend of Darekar, the perpetual PWP candidate. The other village leaders quickly returned to the Congress fold, once the linguistic state issue and Atole's candidacy had been disposed of.

Shinde and Wadak, the first two MLAs, were both Marathas, and yet they did not belong to major village clans. Atole's caste, Khatik Dhangar, was even more marginal--both in status and in size of population. It seems that none of the active Congress leaders in 1941-42 belonged to the major peasant clans, though some of their followers, who were also arrested, did belong. If exceptions had existed, it is likely that the practical district Congress leadership would have made use of them in the post-independence elections. Shinde, Atole and Wadak were closest to the major peasant clans, and yet they were still somewhat marginal men. They did not have the concentrated ties of lineage and marriage which are relied on by local politicians today. It also developed that they did not have the political abilities needed to perpetuate their own leadership. At first they moved quickly onto the boards of the taluka cooperatives, the Olegao cooperative sugar factory, etc. But in these institutional arenas they were soon outdone by the descendents of the

older elites (by men like Batate) and also by new representatives of the major peasant clans. Thus the sweeping changes which the freedom fighters helped bring about--the establishment of universal adult franchise, the erosion of aristocratic legitimacy and power, the restriction of economic opportunity of the magnates, and the growth of cooperative and developmental institutions--all of these changes eventually brought more local power to others.

The freedom fighters acquired a novel basis of local influence just at the time when developmental institutions and their administrative functions had begun to rapidly expand. With new techniques and resources they moved into competition for local administrative power, which they rapidly acquired and then rapidly lost again. Those who mastered the new techniques to take their place are described in Chapters 6 and 7.



#### D. Conclusions

The Shetipur area seems to have been politically backward, compared with nearby Satara district. Shetipur did not become a center of non-Brahmin agitation, nor a center of the Congress underground movement in 1942; and the taluka Congress leadership after independence gradually weakened to the point where it was virtually sat on by the DCC. It may be that the prosperity of the canal villages, dating as far back as the turn of the century, kept them politically quiescent. At the same time, the leaders in the canal area managed to control most of the local institutions, thus providing little in the way of an institutional base for potential leaders in the dry villages. Another relevant factor was probably the proximity to Poona city, which was dominated by Brahmin politics. Before 1920, when the Poona Brahmin leadership was at its height, the nationalist movement had virtually no rural base in Maharashtra. Conversely, when the Congress developed a rural base after 1930, Poona became insignificant as a Congress center since most of the Poona Brahmins were defecting to the Hindu Mahasabha and the RSS. This was not true of all the Poona leaders, but there was generally an estrangement between the city and its immediate hinterland which persists to this day in the form of cultural distinctions and, occasionally, outright prejudice.

Recently, the question has been posed as to whether the non-Brahmin movement represented a peasant-based mass movement or whether it simply involved "a transfer of power from an urban-based upper-caste elite to an only

slightly lower, rural-based landholding 'dominant caste.'" (Omvedt, 1973b: 1971) With reference to the non-Brahmin movement in Madras, it has been said that it was "the movement of the later educated middle classes who happen to be non-Brahmins against the earlier educated middle classes who happened to be Brahmins" (K. B. Krishna, quoted in Beteille, 1970: 278). In the case of Maharashtra, a similar viewpoint is argued by Kumar, who focusses on the rise of a class of rich peasants: "Their aspirations formed the driving force behind the movement which sought to wrest social and political control from the brahmins" (Kumar, 1968: 316). However, this analysis is contradicted by Omvedt (1973b).

It is impossible in this essay to pass judgment on the movement as a whole, but it is relevant to ask how this theoretical issue applies to events in Shetipur. To answer this, it is first necessary to ask, what was the non-Brahmin movement? If the Shahu Maratha hostel (with aristocrats and wealthy farmers as its patrons) is taken as a manifestation of the movement, then the Kumar thesis is sustained. If, on the other hand, the Ahilyabai hostel (run by the radical, uncompromising Deokate) is taken, then clearly the Omvedt thesis is correct. What we must conclude is that both points of view are valid, though partial; and that what we refer to, for the sake of convenience, as "a movement" is in fact a whole with several, inconsistent parts. If this comment had been applied to the Congress nationalist movement (which was an amalgam of industrial capitalists, lawyers, labor organizers, peasant leaders, etc.), it would be accepted as obvious in most quarters. Thus it should not come as a surprise that a movement is a multiplex process.

In our own terms, this means that the Shahu Maratha hostel was a

manifestation of the elite patronage process, while the Ahilyabai hostel was closer to the support-group mobilization process. The latter was not too successful, of course: Deokate acted more as a teacher and preacher than as a political organizer. He sought elite patronage, in fact, but was too outspoken and uncompromising to retain it for long. He was, in fact, more than willing to join and lead the public demonstrations which were intended to generate mass support. Unfortunately, the non-Brahmin movement deserted him in the 1930's; and the organization and methods of the Scheduled Castes movement were still emerging from the phase of petitioning for constitutional reforms and "attempting to gain status in matters of religion" (Zelliot, 1970a: 51).

By feeding into the Congress movement, the anti-Brahmin movement contributed to the temporary, unorganized mobilization of 1942. This in turn led to a long-term pluralist process, as we shall see in the next two chapters. After they were released from prison, the freedom fighters initiated this pluralist process in various arenas, such as the Purchase and Sale Union. They broke up the old system of elite patronage and collaboration with their mobilization of votes, their forcing of competitive elections. There were, of course, many institutional clients previously on the margins of elite patronage influence, who were glad to attach themselves to these new middlemen. After the elections of 1937 and the disorders of 1942, there was no longer any doubt that the Congress party would play a significant role in local politics, and the future of its established representatives appeared to be secured. The freedom fighters did move very quickly into influential positions in the party, the legislature, the cooperatives, the

development boards, the municipal board, etc. That they did not rise higher seems to indicate a double weakness: the lack of a solid support group and also a lack of skill in using elite contacts and patronage. New competitors, such as Batate the deshmukh's son, made more effective use of the latter process; and this was soon complemented by the appearance of new leadership from below, from within the major peasant clans.

The Scheduled Castes movement, after 1947, inherited a relatively weak position in the local pluralist process. These castes required a much stronger mobilization than they had had, to make up for the weakness inherent in their comparative lack of lands, ritual status, benevolent elites, and development institutions. Lacking all of these strengths, the non-Mahars are now dependent on the elite patronage process--or rather, on the elite patronage machine, since their votes are now sought after (especially in some urban wards), and there are many more party-machine benefits (such as cooperative housing societies) which can now be made available to them. The Mahars have a fairly solidary party organization, despite some factional problems; but this solid minority vote bloc can only be effective if there is at least a second major party competing against the Congress (Zelliot, 1970a: 58). "Even the victories make it clear that only when the solid Mahar strength behind the Republican Party can be combined with a larger issue or with other groups in election alliances can the party show that strength in the polling results" (Zelliot, 1970a: 60). In the absence of a real two-party system, the RPI was forced to experiment, in 1967 and 1970, with an electoral agreement with the Congress--thus courting the danger of co-optation and patronage control which has already weakened some sections of the state leadership.

## CHAPTER VI

### CHANGES IN CANAL VILLAGE LEADERSHIP: COMPETITION AND COALITION-FORMATION

After independence, local institutionalized politics expanded in two important respects. First, the entire adult population received the franchise; and second, the government greatly increased the number and scope of local development institutions and the resources at their disposal. This double expansion provided the basis for the growth of machine politics--the gathering of votes from below in exchange for the allocation of resources from above. This chapter considers the growth of pluralist machine politics in Olegao, the canal village. The next chapter will review the same process at a higher level, involving the taluka-level cooperatives and the MLA, etc. In the present chapter, the emphasis will be on the analysis of coalitions and factions, while in the next chapter, it will be on competitive patronage.

During the 1950's, as noted in Chapter 4, the magnates attempted to influence state land reform proposals and the restructuring of the cooperative banks; and they did succeed in setting up the cooperative sugar factories. They did not actually work alone at these efforts, for they had many close supporters among what might be called a new class of "bourgeois" farmers. As mentioned in Chapter 2, the depression produced a lot of economic mobility in the canal villages; some farmers remained solvent and

even increased their landholdings, and it was these fortunates who were at a special advantage when World War II suddenly brought another price boom. The changes in relative economic standing had occurred too rapidly and had gone too far to be accommodated within the traditional patterns of ceremonial prestige. Epstein, by comparison, in discussing her own canal village, draws attention to just such a process of accommodation in which the newly-wealthy farmers attempted to share in some of the inherited political prerogatives of their less affluent neighbors (1962: 125-128). Compared to Olegao, this was only a short-run result, for the canal in Mysore was built in 1931. We might have expected fierce competition over the headmanship rights in Olegao, for some of the newly-wealthy families were in the lineages customarily excluded from the rotation of office. However, the patil watan by 1950 was not considered worth fighting over. The ups and downs of commercial agriculture had produced not only economic mobility but a certain cultural transformation, one of which can be imperfectly expressed as the rise of "bourgeois" values. These consisted roughly of favorable attitudes toward efficient commercial management in agriculture, toward the practical aspects of Western education, and also toward the use of bureaucratic institutions for solving local problems.

Since word of the "green revolution" has spread, such cultural growth is no longer considered implausible for at least some Indian villages (cf., Marriott, 1969), though it may seem that the canal villages around Shetipur were unusually precocious. Chapters 3 and 4 have already shown that the farmers in these villages were indeed learning very quickly to adapt to new economic opportunities and institutional settings, even in the 1920's and '30's. By the 1950's, then, there was a class of wealthy village farmers ("big

bagaitdars"), who were somewhat heterogeneous in terms of traditional prestige categories, and who were quite ready to follow and support the innovations of the big magnates. They were very quick to imitate Songaonkar's successful experiments with grapes, for example. They also joined the lobby against land ceiling legislation and provided the essential support group for setting up the cooperative sugar factories and running them successfully.

It is worth referring, by comparison, to the story of how the first cooperative sugar factory in the Deccan was organized in another canal zone in Ahmednagar district. This large and complex innovation was in fact the result of public pressure and organization among the large and small farmers of that area, with the help of some cooperative bank officials and an eminent economist from Poona (Gadgil, 1952; Inamdar, 1965: 2-8). This original effort was not the result of any government planning, though its success led to the planning of similar enterprises throughout the Deccan canal zones. This case is mentioned to show that the spread of capitalistic and bureaucratic "rationality" (in the Weberian sense), around the Shetipur canal villages, was not peculiar nor accidental.

The first part of this chapter is concerned with the constructive leadership of this new "bourgeois" elite in Olegao, during the 1950's. Following this is a consideration of the political changes of the 1960's, occasioned by some younger members of this same elite who began to play politics more competitively--with new goals, new methods and new constituencies. Finally, there is a discussion of the "proletarian" political response, which could be the focus of change in the 1970's.

#### A. The Rise and Fall of Bourgeois Leadership

The start of the Olegao cooperative sugar factory in 1955 was portrayed in Chapter 4 as the product of one man's skill. This of course was an oversimplification. Songaonkar was able to set up the factory because many of the new "bourgeois" farmers understood precisely what it would do for the local economy. The long-term rise in refined sugar prices was considered steadier than the market for raw sugar. The economies of large-scale processing and marketing would be returned to the shareholders through dividends and high prices for cane. And the factory would offer employment to many villagers, some of whom were already receiving educations which would qualify them for clerical, technical or even managerial positions. Songaonkar had a few leaders in every village who helped to collect the share capital and set up operations. Two of these leaders in Olegao were Mugutrao Jagtap and Balasaheb Jagtap, whose political careers will be used to illustrate many of the points in this chapter. Because of their activity in organizing the factory, Mugutrao and Balasaheb were nominated (by the government and bank supervisors) as the two village representatives on the first factory board of management (1955-1960).

Even before this period, Mugutrao and Balasaheb had been doing constructive public work together in the village. Their best work was the village high school. In 1943 an educated villager (a Gurav postmaster) began tutoring boys who found it difficult to attend high school in Shetipur. In order to



enter high school English courses in Shetipur, the Olegao students first had to take a concentrated one-year English course and then pass a standard examination. For several years the Olegao students did quite well on their exams, so a number of the villagers decided that they could probably start a successful high school on their own; and they organized the Shikshan Seva Mandal, the education service society. The original managing committee consisted of the Gurav teacher, Balasaheb's elder brother, Mugutrao, and another big Jagtap farmer, plus a wealthy Lingayat shopkeeper, a respectable Brahmin farmer, another Maratha from outside the Jagtap clan, and Raje Krishnasingh's son. Balasaheb's elder brother, probably the wealthiest farmer in the village, was much respected; and he held the committee chairmanship until his death in 1954. His donations to the high school amounted to about 10,000 rupees in that period. The committee staged a play and collected donations in the village and also got a contribution from the ruler of the nearby princely state. They persuaded the jagirdar family to give them an abandoned fort in the village center to use as a school building. The school received government recognition in 1947. Today it has 37 teachers. Moreover, the committee recently talked the sugar factory board into building a branch high school, under their supervision, in the factory colony--at a cost of 300,000 rupees. For about six or seven years the committee also ran a hostel, which was almost free for poor students. The hostel served about 35 students at a time, but it eventually closed for lack of funds.

The high school is a signal success for bourgeois institution-building. In 1951 the committee went as far as Kolhapur to locate a dedicated headmaster, and this official has stayed on the job ever since. The committee settles all issues by consensus, never by the vote of a majority. New members are admitted

gradually, from among those who regularly support the school. Balasaheb has been the only chairman since his brother died. As a recognized school, it receives government allowances toward the cost of teachers' salaries; but its partial self-sufficiency and complete self-management keep the school free of interference from district politicians. (In the Kordegao high school, by comparison, the appointments and transfers of teachers are controlled by the district council. This control over teaching positions is everywhere a source of great corruption, intrigue and electoral power since the political opinions of teachers can be very influential in the villages.)

Other constructive activities in the same period included the establishment of new cooperative credit societies, the original village society having been liquidated during the depression. The first new society was started in 1948 in a large hamlet which is nearly two miles from the village center. The second new society, known as the "big society," was started in 1951 by the members of the high school committee, with the exception of Balasaheb Jagtap. Balasaheb's family had deposited a very large sum (40,000 rupees) in the original Olegao society, and this deposit was frozen by the liquidation process--though it was returned eventually. Next to the jagirdar family, Balasaheb's had become the wealthiest in the village, so he did not need to participate in the new society for economic reasons. Had he done so anyway, he might have adapted more successfully to the political stresses which were to come in the '60's.

Balasaheb and Mugutrao belonged to separate lineages within the Jagtap clan. Mugutrao was the nephew and the brother of two former patils, so he was known by the friendly, honorific title of "Mugutrao Pail." Balasaheb

belonged to one of the three lineages which were not entitled to share in the rotation of the headmanship. Nevertheless he occupied a large number of influential positions and can be considered an outstanding example of the new "bourgeois" leadership based on wealth and education. (Balasaheb and Mugutrao both completed primary school, a worthy achievement for Maratha farmers before independence.)

Balasaheb's family remains outstandingly wealthy in part because it is still undivided: Balasaheb has a total of eight adult sons and nephews living with him. Most are married and all have attended or are attending college in Poona. Balasaheb became the first elected sarpanch (chairman) in the village when the gram panchayat was organized in 1941. Balasaheb was re-elected sarpanch until 1957, when his eldest nephew took over the position. The family's control of the sarpanch position continued unbroken for thirty years, for Balasaheb's own son took it over from the elder nephew in 1962 and held it until 1971. In 1960 the nephew took Balasaheb's place on the Olegao factory board. The nephew had a bachelor's degree in agriculture, so he strongly reinforced the family's bourgeois qualifications for leadership. He left the factory board in 1964 and his place was later taken in 1967 by his brother, also a college graduate.

Except for the high school chairmanship, all these long-held positions of authority slipped away from the family in 1970-71. This was not really a sudden reversal but rather the culmination of a decade-long weakening in their political position. Balasaheb's family failed to adapt to the new style of politics which began to appear around 1960--a style based on highly competitive bargaining, coalition-building and patronage. The Balasaheb family clung to its vision of elections as a process which reconfirms the individual with the

most qualifications in his position. They understood "qualifications" in the bourgeois sense of qualities which contribute to the attainment of manifest institutional goals: qualifications of education, managerial skill, impartiality, etc. With some justification, they condemn the new politics for its obvious favoritism, compromises, influence peddling, etc. (This attitude resembles that held by many educated, high-caste dwellers in Poona city: it is the appropriate attitude for a bourgeois elite responding to the pressure of machine-style politics. However, this attitude alone does not prove that the gram panchayat, for example, is less well-managed under the machine politicians; and it ignores the "latent functions" of this type of politics, which are discussed in Chapter 9.)

For the moment, we are only concerned with how the Balasaheb family managed to let slip the reins of power. Starting around 1960 they faced competitive pressure from a number of young potential leaders; but it was not so much the new numbers as the new methods which upset the old balance of power. Balasaheb's family was not very sensitive to the new methods because these were first tried out in the big credit society, which they did not belong to. In the sarpanch elections of 1963 and 1967, Balasaheb's son faced strong competition, but the opposition was not at all organized; and for this reason, too, the family did not correctly sense the changes which were taking place around them. The new politicians could be quite well-organized, but they regarded the gram panchayat as secondary to gaining political power in the local cooperatives.

By 1963 Balasaheb and Mugutrao Patil were no longer cooperating closely with each other. (In addition to their previous accomplishments together on the high school committee and the sugar factory board, they had been sarpanch

and deputy sarpanch for one term.) Mugutrao had dropped off the factory board from 1960 to 1964; but in place of this he had obtained the Congress party nomination to the district council and was elected (1962-67).

Balasaheb had been hoping to get that nomination himself. By 1963 Mugutrao was on good terms with the young leaders who were making designs on the sarpanch seat; but Mugutrao did not involve himself at all with gram panchayat politics during the '60's. This was a good way of keeping peace in the village.

Consequently, there was no single opposition leader in 1963 against Balasaheb's son. No plans to defeat him were made until after the 15 panchayat members were elected by vote of the whole village; and then an attempt was made to secure 8 votes for one of the young leaders, who was a Maratha but not a Jagtap. This person, as an individual focal-point, simply did not have the wealth, prestige and clan connections that Balasaheb Jagtap's family did. Consequently, the indifferent panchayat members in the middle could not be bought over to what they expected to be the losing side. Much the same scenario was repeated in 1967, when the wife of the same young Maratha was made the putative opposition leader. For a while it seemed that the anti-Balasaheb group would profit from a general mood of opposition among the Dhangars, who were agitated because one of their number had just been denied the Congress nomination for a seat on the district council. Three Dhangars had been elected to the gram panchayat. There was a general anti-Maratha, anti-Jagtap tinge to the whole opposition group, in fact, for it also included a Mahar, a Mang, a Ramoshi, and only one other Maratha (a non-Jagtap again). The whole group sequestered itself in Maniklal Batate's house, at the other end of the taluka, so that all together they would be immune to bribes and pressures.

However, two or three of the wealthier members broke discipline and went home. Balasaheb's son made a deal with a wealthy, ambitious young Dhangar, offering him the deputy sarpanch seat and his support in the future panchayat samiti election (which the young Dhangar later lost). The second Maratha, though he was not a Jagtap, also had to give in to pressure from his mother's kinsmen, who were Jagtaps. The day before the election, the essential eighth vote went over to Balasaheb's son. Next day, he was elected "unopposed." (The loser never forces a showdown when the votes are all numbered beforehand.)

However, the young leaders allied with Mugutrao Patil were becoming very organized between 1967 and 1970, under the influence of a new outside force, the MLA (see Chapter 7). In 1967 there was a competition much more important than the gram panchayat--the Olegao sugar factory election. Mugutrao and Balasaheb's nephew belonged to opposing slates in this election, but both were elected to the board. (The board is composed of the eleven highest individual vote-getters, regardless of their slates.) Members of the opposing slates were all jumbled together on the new board, and an entirely new coalition had to be worked out (as usual) to elect the chairman. Mugutrao and Balasaheb's nephew did not come to terms, so only the former belonged to the majority coalition; indeed, Mugutrao became the chairman for one year. This led of course to more rivalry in the 1970 election, with Mugutrao and Balasaheb's son on opposing slates again. In this year, Mugutrao's slate was assembled for the first time by his new political patron, the MLA. As a result, his slate swept ten seats out of eleven and Mugutrao was made the factory chairman once again. Balasaheb's son did not win the eleventh seat, and so this family was really on the defensive.

The next gram panchayat election came in 1971. This time Mugutrao did

intervene, not so much to hasten Balasaheb's downfall as to make it orderly and low-keyed, in conformity with his personal style. Mugutrao and his allies held a meeting in the nanchayat office, inviting all those who had nominated themselves for the election. There were 64 candidates for the 15 seats. These were all invited to agree with each other, on a ward-by-ward basis, on who was to withdraw and who was to run unopposed. Mugutrao did not express any preferences of his own--despite many entreaties. It was simply understood that if any bargains were reached publicly in his presence, they would have to be adhered to. In effect, he was a guarantor, since reneging would be a public insult to him. Twelve unopposed candidates were agreed to on the spot. Balasaheb's family was not represented at the meeting, but it was taken for granted that they would have one seat, unopposed. Two of the seats which remained in dispute were reserved for the Scheduled Castes; and none of the leaders were concerned about who would win those seats. (The Scheduled Caste representatives are usually compelled to go whichever way the wind blows.) The only other seat in dispute was contested by a working-class protest candidate, who is discussed at the end of this chapter.

Thus 80% of the gram panchayat seats were filled in advance of the public balloting. This made it easy to plan the election of a new sarpanch. Moreover, Mugutrao's young allies had worked out a special tactic in advance. They got a young and inexperienced Jagtap from Balasaheb's own lineage to run for a panchayat seat. (His name was Chandrarao.) He was going to be nominated as sarpanch by members of the Mugutrao group. The Balasaheb family could not use strong family pressures to deny votes to a fellow lineage member: this would lead to a division of kinship loyalties or else to an ideological backlash. Moreover, Chandrarao's nomination would give

Balasaheb a chance to back down gracefully, since the honor would remain (almost) in the family. And everyone admits, when they have to, that young men should be given a chance after a while.

However, after all the twelve candidates were agreed on, the bargains were kept, and they were voted into office, the Mugutrao supporters found that they were not compelled to use finesse. There was some heated bargaining between two of Mugutrao's young allies, while Mugutrao and the others tried to remain neutral. Eventually, the one most likely to win election to the next sugar factory board withdrew in favor of the other. The aggrieved Chandrarao and Balasaheb's son cast the only two dissenting votes against the new sarpanch.

From at least 1967 to 1971, the general but amorphous opposition to Balasaheb's son had considerably hampered the operations of the gram panchayat. In 1970 not a single quorum for panchayat meetings was achieved, and attempts to call a general assembly of all the villagers ( a gaon sabha) also failed. The air was filled with backbiting (probably unfounded), concerning the alleged mishandling of primary school construction by the sarpanch. No action was taken to deal with the alleged problems or investigate their cause, but the flames of rumour were fanned. It was evident, even on short acquaintance with the village, that the sarpanch was a very isolated leader. There were three places in the village center where the politically-active would gather, and one spot in particular where the most active leaders in the Mugutrao group would gather nearly every evening. The sarpanch frequented none of these places, and other leaders did not spend their casual time in the places where he did. He was considered haughty and aloof, and saw himself in somewhat the same light--only with the emphasis on impartiality. Balasaheb's son was possibly glad to be relieved of the post.



On the other hand, there has been no open conflict in the high school committee, which Balasaheb still chairs. This is partly because the institution is a focal point of bourgeois values and village pride. It is also due to Mugutrao's desire for peaceful relations in general. Moreover, since the district council cannot meddle in the school's affairs, the young leaders are not tempted to use the school as a base for meddling in the council or in other higher-level arenas. The autonomy of the committee is its preservation.

Village unity and consensus is also expressed in other spheres. In 1970 the leaders collected 4,000 rupees for the renovation of the Vithoba temple. This was followed by more than a week of special ceremonies, mahapujas. Each day, the ceremony was paid for by one of the wealthy villagers--a donation of 250 rupees apiece for the services of a learned Brahmin imported from another district. The donors included Mugutrao and Balasaheb, as well as three other active leaders; the other donations came from secondary leaders. The donors consisted of two Jagtaps, two other Marathas, one Dhangar, one Mali, one Brahmin and one Lingayat. Along with the renovations and mahapujas, the leaders collected donations for a meal which was served to all the villagers on Krishna's birthday.

## B. The Rise of Machine-Style Politics

For the Balasaheb family, as we have seen, winning an election was just a question of using short-term pressures and pay-offs. For Balasaheb, as also for Mugutrao and the other old "bourgeois" founders of the 1950's, the ideal form of institutional leadership was just concerned with the explicit, instrumental goals of the institution itself--always keeping in mind that their institutional goals, as a local elite, were not as democratic and social-reformist as those of the government planners and urban intellectuals. They wanted good education, good cooperative credit facilities, and so forth, because these things were of great practical value to their families, kinsmen, friends, and personal clients. They were not at all intimidated by the problems of making these institutions operate efficiently to produce these results; and neither were they troubled by problems which they and their kinsmen did not have--problems of caste discrimination and poverty.

The new young leaders who began to appear around 1960 understood these goals. They belonged to the same "bourgeois" class which had been upwardly mobile during and after the depression; and being younger, they were mostly better-educated than Mugutrao, Balasaheb and their cronies. (About half of them had attended college in Poona.) But on top of the normal institutional goals they added goals of a competitive political nature. In their minds, the resources of an institution were not useful only within that institution: they were part of an extensive, multi-layered network of

political arenas. Thus a particular election was not seen as a goal in itself, but as a move in a complex game of chess involving many players. Balasaheb, by comparison, tended to see public office more as an ornament of the superior person, not as a position in a larger game. In this he resembled the old jagirdar, Raje Krishnasingh--except that Balasaheb's values and bases of legitimacy were bourgeois instead of aristocratic.

Mugutrao Patil played the crucial role in accomodating the new political pressures to the old patterns of village leadership; and as a consequence, he is now the most influential leader in Olegao and perhaps also in the thirteen villages served by the Olegao sugar factory. He seems like an odd character for the part, for his "bourgeois" virtues are all too evident: he never makes public speeches; he invariably avoids quarrels and confrontations; he hardly speaks out even among his friends. His younger allies gather almost every evening in a small office overlooking the shops in the center of the village, but Mugutrao Patil joins them only when there is pressing business to discuss. Childless, he is a solitary, ascetic man--but very practical. He has several fairly taxing business enterprises, all successful: a vineyard, an orchard, and a store for selling cloth and grain; and in 1971 he was building, near the village center, a cinema theater. He is also very practical in politics--practical in the long-term sense which at times resembles idealism. His colleagues find him trustworthy, which is always their main concern. Non-allies find him baffling sometimes, for he does not make a display of power, as some are wont to do. Outsiders wonder what holds his coalition together. The answer is that he does not so much seek to dominate as to regulate: he helps his allies to

accommodate their ambitions to each other and to the world outside. He provides a center on which many individual ambitions are balanced, giving the whole group a much greater weight than it could have as so many competitive factions. This type of leadership was very useful in a decade when political techniques and opportunities were expanding rapidly. It may, of course, break apart when his followers are no longer able to advance into new territories and must compete against each other for political survival.

There was one young leader who played the most interesting and innovative role as a counterpart to Mugutrao Patil, during the events of the 1960's. This was Namdev Gawde, a well-to-do Hatkar Dhangar. Gawde's family was well-off even back in 1925, when his father was chairman of the reception committee for a district-wide Dhangar caste conference held in Olegao. The Gawdes are only a few families in Olegao; but Namdev is the only significant leader among the Dhangar farmers in general, so they are nearly all loyal to him. As a high school student, he became a good orator and left school at age 16 to campaign for the Congress in the 1952 MLA election. The party considered him useful because there was a Dhangar independent candidate running against the Maratha freedom fighter, Wadak. Gawde's family was at first reluctant to let him waste time and resources on politics but changed their minds when he engineered a pair of local elections for his elder brother. (By 1960 Gawde was still too young to run for office himself; he did not even own cooperative society shares in his own name.) In 1960 he first got his brother elected to the managing committee of the big credit society, which was run by Mugutrao Patil and his cronies. This latter group rotated the committee positions among themselves from year to year; and they faced no opposition faction. How could a young man from a minority caste (of somewhat lower traditional status than the Marathas) force his way into their midst?

Gawde had been attending and observing Congress party meetings as much as possible; he was also a protégé of the very skillful Maniklal Batate, the new boss of taluka and district cooperatives. Gawde knew how to rely on pure technique. He got the membership list of the big credit society and he sorted out the largest blocs of members who were not closely attached, through caste and kinship ties, to Mugutrao and his cronies. (This establishment included a Lingayat Wani, a Brahmin and a respected Maratha belonging to a very small kinship group. They were vulnerable in that few of them, except Mugutrao Patil himself, belonged to the big Jagtap lineages.) Gawde then carefully selected young members from the list to represent the largest caste/kinship groups excluded so far from representation. The Dhangars were to be represented by his elder brother. Gawde's next step was to convince the young men that this was their best chance for joining the establishment by acting as a coalition. If they encouraged the membership to vote according to caste/kinship loyalties, their coalition would represent many more votes than the Mugutrao Patil group. The final step was to present this opposition slate just before the election. When the older group saw how the slate was constructed, they all withdrew their names from nomination and the opposition slate was elected unopposed. Neither side wanted to maintain a rift, so in the future some of the young men were always part of the consensual slate-making and some of the old men were elected less frequently than before.

Gawde's older brother profited from a similar method of slate-making in 1960 in the Olegao sugar factory election, though the strategy in this case was worked out by some older politicians in Shetipur town. What occurred was the assembly of a very successful non-Maratha coalition, as a reaction

against apparent efforts by the nominated Maratha board members to exclude the other castes from opportunities for factory employment, etc. (See Chapter 7 for details.) This coalition was created by Brahmins, Lingayats, and three Dhangar sub-castes, with a couple of token Marathas, and it swept the election (nine seats out of eleven).

Gawde planned to follow up these triumphs by making his brother the big credit society chairman for the following year. The Marathas, however, were feeling piqued at the results of the factory board election. Gawde's friends deserted him at the last moment and nominated a Maratha chairman. It was then the Dhangars' turn for feeling sore, and they immediately started to organize a new credit society of their own. Gawde, an extraordinarily cool and practical strategist, was only moderately enthused over this move. Eventually he and Mugutrao Patil became close allies; but the Dhangars meanwhile were in high dudgeon and had to have their own credit society, which was registered in 1964 as the Siddheshwar Society with about 150 members. The Marathas, for their part, thought they would demonstrate just how fair-minded they really were and the next year elected a Dhangar chairman to the big society. (This chairman was a wealthy young man who simply annoyed the other Dhangars by his disloyalty.) The whole affair worked to everyone's benefit later on, when Mugutrao and Gawde were collaborating in the sugar factor elections, for the third credit society provided the village leaders with another voting representative in the election of the "B-class" factory board member. (Each credit society in the factory area constitutes one B-class shareholder in the factory. Now Olegao had three societies and three B-class votes out of 25.)

The firm alliance between Mugutrao Patil and Namdev Gawde became an

established fact in 1962. This was when Mugutrao was nominated by the Congress party for a seat in the district council. Shetipur taluka has five zilha parishad constituencies, so Mugutrao's constituency consisted of about twelve villages around Olegao. There was actually a good chance that he might be defeated by an independent candidate from a nearby village. The "independent" was a disgruntled Congressmen; and as often happens, he was attracting support from many similar leaders who were either dissatisfied with the nomination of Mugutrao or with the Congress faction currently in power at the district level. Furthermore, the taluka did not have, as it did later, a strong MLA to support the official party candidates in their campaigning. (In fact the Congress MLA, elected earlier that same year, was a woman from Poona who had been "imposed" on the leaders in Shetipur by the District Congress Committee in its nominations. This was the outcome of the sequence of three rather unsuccessful freedom fighters, discussed in Chapter 5.)

By the middle of election day, the candidates' poll-watchers were convinced that Mugutrao had lost. He won, however, by just a few dozen votes; and these were secured in the final hours by Gawde, who arranged for some acquaintances who lived elsewhere to come to the polls and impersonate eligible voters who had not made their appearance. This task demanded not only bravado but also Gawde's unsurpassed knowledge of his constituents and his memory for exactly who had voted and who had not. It was a characteristic feat of meticulous organization and technique.

In 1967 Mugutrao in turn performed a feat which was characteristic of his special abilities. On this occasion, he organized a slate of candidates for the Olegao sugar factory board election. He and Gawde and two other

were elected from this slate. The election of the chairman then involved an elaborate reshuffling of coalitions, until a rather complex compromise was worked out. Under this novel arrangement, the chairmanship would rotate every year during the three-year tenure of the board. Mugutrao Patil was to be the first chairman. Without consulting anyone in advance, Mugutrao announced in the board meeting that he was turning over his chairmanship for half a year to Gawde. Everyone else was shocked, but Gawde was deeply touched.

The Dhangar shareholders were certainly impressed as well. Two small villages in the factory area belong to two relatively cohesive Dhangar clans: very valuable vote blocs. In the next factory election (1970) Mugutrao and Gawde led a much better-organized slate which won ten seats out of eleven. Gawde got the highest number of votes; and three out of the four top winners were Dhangars. The other two Dhangars after Gawde were the carefully selected representatives of those two small and cohesive clans. Thus Mugutrao's magnanimous gesture paid dividends for his coalition.

The alliance between Mugutrao and Gawde has thus been remarkably successful. (In the Olegao factory, for example, four out of seven chairmen elected since 1964 have been from Olegao--either Mugutrao Patil or Namdev Gawde.) This alliance has many facets which have not yet been mentioned. Several other young village leaders of about Gawde's age (in their thirties) have contributed to these successes. (And so has another one who is even younger and far more powerful: the new MLA.) The other young village leaders are all Marathas, who take their turns serving on the managing committee



of the big credit society. (The smaller Siddheshwar Society has no other top leaders except for Gawde.)

The MLA, Sureshchandra More, was first elected to his position in 1967, then re-elected in 1972. (His career is fully outlined in Chapter 7.) Gawde and Mugutrao Patil became his supporters, allies and clients in 1967; and the MLA has since then exerted a powerful organizing influence on the Olegao leaders, so that their coalition has remained stable and effective. It was the MLA's influence which made possible the special rotation of chairmen on the sugar factory board (1967-70). The MLA also got the best candidates to join the Mugutrao-Gawde factory slate in 1970 and pressed the superfluous candidates to withdraw. The Olegao leaders have naturally returned ample support to him--and not only for his own elections. For example, they selected a young Maratha among themselves to spend his time and money in a hopeless contest for the position of representative to the District Central Cooperative Bank. This was done just to harass Maniklal Batate, who is boss of the taluka cooperatives and the MLA's biggest rival.

This band of allies had to deal with a somewhat complicated situation in the 1967 election of the district council member. They had decided that Gawde was to succeed Mugutrao Patil in this position; and the MLA placed Gawde's name before the District Congress Committee for nomination. However, there was an older MLA from a nearby taluka who was fearful of Sureshchandra More's rising influence in the DCC and the state cabinet. The older MLA had some strong friends in the DCC, and he was adamantly opposed to nominating Gawde, More's ally. The DCC therefore dropped Gawde and gave the nomination to Wadak, the old freedom fighter and former MLA. The leaders in Olegao were incensed, and the Dhangars in the whole area were beside themselves. They all got together and nominated another member of

the Olegao band as an "independent" candidate. The one chosen was another young Maratha leader (for it was impossible to run a Dhangar against a Maratha Congress nominee with any hope of success; and Gawde did not care to acquire the stigma of party indiscipline for any reason). The independent candidate from Olegao defeated Wadak and gave an object lesson to the DCC bosses, concerning the power of the MLA's supporters.

The Olegao leaders and the MLA were involved in still other elections: the national parliamentary election in 1971; the Shetipur Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee election in the same year; and so on. Taken all together, these cases reveal the growth of a complex and efficient, though informal, organization--one which coordinated leadership at many levels.

### C. The Proletarian Reaction

The new "machine-style" politics has had many successes, but it does not go unchallenged. There are many big farmers and old leaders, with the more "bourgeois" values, who grumble that competitive politics will ruin the cooperatives, etc. Objections come also from the opposite direction, from those who have not yet truly received their political franchise. These include the agricultural laborers, who are mostly landless immigrants to the canal villages; and the immigrant sugar factory workers, hired at the time the factories were founded, when there was a local shortage of skilled labor. Lacking old social ties with the local leaders and their families, these workers rarely get access to political favors. They also lack customary ties with each other and thus have no basis for forming caste/kinship vote blocs. The landless do not belong to the powerful agricultural cooperatives. Their votes are valuable in the district, state and national elections, but they have no leverage to bargain with, since none of the opposition parties have any mass contact in the villages of this region.

As for patronage benefits, the farmers do give small loans and emergency assistance to their field hands, though long-term employer-employee relationships are becoming rare. During a closely-contested gram panchayat election, the landless voters in one ward may receive two rupees apiece; but this again is a short-term, "functionally specific" bargain, not an invitation to a long-term connection.

Fortunately, there is one person in the village who has attempted to organize the workers on the basis of their common class interests. His name is Jagganath Unde. A Ramoshi by caste, Unde is a small farmer who built his landholding up from nothing. Thrifty and industrious, he exemplifies the bourgeois virtues, yet his ideals are socialist. He is a member of the Praja Socialist Party (PSP) and is the secretary of the PSP-affiliated union local at the sugar factory.

Apart from his regular party-union work, Unde tried to create a novel force in the village political economy. In 1967 he attempted to organize collective bargaining for the cane contract workers. These workers are already organized into teams of about 10-12 members, each team having a mukkadam or foreman, who bargains with the employers. A farmer hires a team to do an operation like digging channels or fertilizing for a total contract price which is shared equally by the team members. The team members are all young and strong, so they can earn more per day on a flat-rate basis. In most seasons it is also easier to find work as a team, since it is more convenient for the farmers. Unde arranged a meeting with all the cane contract foremen in the village (about 15-20 of them). Significantly, the meeting was held in the daytime. It was fully attended (by team members also), so that it constituted in effect a one-day strike against the cane farmers. At the meeting it was decided that they all were going to demand higher rates the next day, and that the farmers would have to comply because of their united front. However, the next day the farmers took a hard line. They demanded that advances to this or that worker be repaid first; they offered work on a purely take-it-or-leave-it basis. Whatever time pressure the farmers may have been under, the workers had to work every

day in order to eat. Some went back to work on the old terms. Therefore, those who had bargained successfully on that day had to go back to the old wage-rate later. However, the farmers gradually raised their rates, keeping pace with the rising cost of foodgrains. They were apparently worried even by a strike of one day.

Unde and the workers themselves are very clear as to the problems of building an effective strike. Those contract workers who are also small landowners, as they point out, can strike for several days and live off what they grow at home, while the landless cannot hold out with no food supply. Conversely, while the small farmers can afford to strike, they can also afford to settle for slightly lower rates. Thus the workers' common interests are not exactly the same. Further, there is not a feeling of adequate social cohesion and social pressure to ensure that each team will hold out just as long as the others. On the contrary, teams regularly break up and re-form because of suspicions against the leader or perhaps because some of the team members took a job on one day which had previously been arranged for the whole team on the next day. Finally, the workers point out that the farmers could probably import many strike-breakers from the nearby dry villages, unless the strike were organized on a wide scale. Of course the needs for cohesion and breadth of scale tend to contradict each other.

In the 1971 gram panchayat election, Unde made another attack on the village establishment. He ran for election to the panchayat, despite the careful allocation of seats which had already been made under Mugutrao Patil's guidance. In 1970 Unde had tried rather half-heartedly to win in a panchayat by-election and had lost heavily. But in 1971 he lost by only 24

votes. He staged a novel campaign for the panchayat election: he held public meetings at nighttime, and gave speeches demanding to know whether the gram panchayat development programs had been used to benefit the village poor, whether funds had not been misappropriated, and whether the house tax had not been assessed very inequitably. What was significant about the election results was that Unde had run in the same ward with Balasaheb's son, (the previous sarpanch), and his relative Chahdrarao Jagtap. The latter polled just 450 votes, only slightly ahead of Unde's 426 votes. This was considered impressive, since the Jagtaps had distributed two rupees apiece to each of the landless or near-landless voters in the ward.

Thus Unde had succeeded in teaching at least 426 voters (poor and mostly illiterate) to accept their bribes and then vote as they pleased. Unde believed that if he had had better poll-watchers, the election might have gone in his favor. The other village leaders may have thought so too, for they admitted that his showing was surprisingly impressive. The young leaders in Mugutrao's group discussed the possibility that next time they would arrange for Unde to run unopposed, as most of the candidates had done in 1971. This, of course, would circumvent the possibility of an Unde victory over anyone; and it would put him into office with no real power, as a lone dissenter.

Nevertheless, Unde had shown the workers that they could vote against the orders of the wealthy farmers. If his own party, the PSP, had any organization in the other villages around Shetipur, this kind of lesson might have had a constructive effect on the general elections.

#### D. Conclusions

The gram panchayat election of 1971 brings three processes (three sections of this chapter) together. The Balasaheb family, distributing payments to the voters, relied on its usual action-set organization. The Mugutrao group, with its meeting to arrange nomination withdrawals, relied on careful planning and coordination, on the discipline of a successful coalition. Unde, with his anti-establishment speeches, attempted to mobilize working-class resentment against the big farmer-politicians. The action-set was becoming obsolete; and the machine-like organization was in its heyday. The potential working-class movement was just announcing its intentions.

The bourgeois "founders" influential in the 1950's created a number of new institutional clients. Their own roles were as elite patrons, very similar to the old jagirdar, Raje Krishnasingh. They were different, of course, in belonging to a much wider social stratum with new resources and values. These latter made the bourgeois leaders effective not only as founder-patrons but also as the actual directors of the new credit societies, the high school committee and the cooperative sugar factory. By contrast, Raje Krishnasingh was only suited for the more remote, aristocratic patron's role. But just as Raje Krishnasingh eventually had to cope with pressures from the complementary roles he had helped to create, similar demands were placed on the bourgeois founders. Gawde's innovative demands were

only potentially related to support-group mobilization--a potentiality which materialized, at one stage, in the creation of a separate credit society for the Dhangars and other minorities. Most of Gawde's efforts were rather directed toward opening the leadership group to competition from younger aspirants and to the demand for minority representation. He was neither strictly an elite patron nor a mass mobilizer, he was building machine politics. Because he was helping the institutional clients to form groups and bargain with their votes, this must be labelled pluralist machine politics.

It is interesting that the practical, bourgeois values of the upper-middle and rich farmers precluded political conflict over the running of the Olegao high school. This was also due to Mugutrao Patil's skill and determination in maintaining consensus, backed up by his conflict-management in other arenas. One way of keeping peace on the high school committee was to leave Balasaheb undisturbed as chairman, even while he was being subjected to competitive pressure in other contexts.

In Chapter 8 we will observe that Kordegao, with its very different economic conditions, was unable to keep its high-school project free from the destructive influence of factionalism. But this difference is not simply a product of the healthier economic conditions in Olegao: it is a product of leadership. In two canal villages close to Olegao, high school construction projects have been delayed, and funds wasted, by factional disputes. These cases differ from Kordegao only in that the wet farmers can better afford to waste their resources in such a manner.



It may be noted in passing that ritual integration is also a product of leadership, not the automatic reflex of tradition. The big canal village next to Olegao, which has been plagued with factional feuds for several decades, fought some of its bitterest battles over religious matters. During British rule, a court decreed that the village could not hold its most important annual religious procession at all, since the competition for first place in the procession led repeatedly to violence.

In the Olegao cooperatives and gram panchayat, competition has become vigorous; but it has not led to unresolvable discord. In the first two sections of this chapter we considered the reactions of two old, bourgeois leaders to the new competitive pressures--the unsuccessful reactions of Balasaheb Jagtap and the successful reactions of Mugutrao Jagtap. The success of Mugutrao and his young allies was based on their perception that leadership was coming to depend not on performance and pressure within isolated institutional contexts, but rather on complex power transactions over a wide network of arenas. In other words, power was going to depend on negotiating stable coalitions and patron-client relations.

Thus the conduct of political competition moved away from the methods of the "zero-sum game." Balasaheb's method of competition was based on the assumption that whatever prize was at stake, for the moment, should be won by the single most powerful contestant. Mugutrao, however, never met him head-on in a zero-sum showdown. (The factory board elections, where they ran on opposing slates, were not zero-sum situations for the village leaders, since both could be elected.) Mugutrao and Gawde relied on the sharing and extending of power over several interlocking arenas, through coalition-

formation. Balasaheb was gradually encircled by this process, like a lion in a net. Winning was no longer a matter of undercutting the ad hoc support attached to a single opponent like the poles of a tepee.

One of the key innovations in this transition was used by Gawde against Mugutrao Patil. This was the use of the "balanced slate," based on the mobilization of caste/kinship vote blocs and identical in principle to the ethnic slates used by urban political machines in the United States. Once the strength of this device was demonstrated in the big credit society, Mugutrao was enough of a statesman to build up a close alliance with its originator. Gawde and Mugutrao made an excellent alliance with their complementary abilities: the austere, elderly leader, most adept at compromise and reconciliation, the politics of consensus; and the young, energetic politician, most adept at strategy and organization, the politics of competition. The alliance hinges on the qualities they have in common: a very cool-headed practicality, which allows each to make the best use of the other's strengths.

Gawde transformed the more-or-less undifferentiated institutional clients of the credit society into a bunch of actively bargaining interest groups--the caste/kinship vote blocs. This is a natural development in Indian political arenas of many types, but it was not openly manifest in the new village institutions before about 1960. The new emphasis on these vote blocs as political interest-groups meant that the members could pressure their leaders for favors in proportion to the number of votes which each sub-leader might control. The advantage of building vote blocs out of caste/kinship groups is that both the leaders and their followers can count on fairly stable responses. This is a form of political insurance: if either patron or

client ignores the demands of a close kinsman, who else can he turn to later on? Even so, this principle works only part of the time, for close kinsmen can easily quarrel and even brothers may compete with each other. What is recognized, however, is that it is very impractical to indulge in family feuds in the political arena; for a leader who can't even manage to stay on good terms with his kinsmen is not likely to seem a very good risk to others. A politician can be a powerful patron simply on the basis of his individual wealth and elite contacts; but if he must seek the support of potential coalition partners, the latter are much more interested than his clients in his social "credit." A successful coalition depends on a certain amount of mutual trust. Thus it is generally felt that lineage-mates should cooperate with each other politically; somehow they should come to an agreement so that both do not contest for the same office. In the case of the minority castes, however, this principle extends much further. Nearly all the Dhangars in Olegao, for example, wisely allow Gawde to steer them in politics even though they consist of several unrelated agnatic groups. Without this discipline, the Dhangar minority would be entirely impotent.

The bourgeois founders converted many villagers into institutional clients. Gawde and his associates converted many of these into support groups. The original criteria for leadership were the health and stability of the new institutions. Gawde and the others helped to add the criterion of machine-style patronage: favors to those secondary leaders who could deliver the most votes. The provision of such favors depended on the whole network of overlapping arenas: they included, for example, quick long-term loans from the district bank, or honorary positions on some board. And of

special importance were the favors of simply helping their clients to sort out their own competitive struggles. Neither Mugutrao nor Gawde has entered a gram panchayat election himself in the last decade, but in 1971 they were careful to help their supporters decide who was going to win which seats. The MLA has handled even more formidable tasks of this kind, as outlined in the next chapter. Since competition has been stirred up at so many levels at once, conflict resolution has become one of the major tasks and one of the major favors--which is why Mugutrao Patil has become so influential. On the other hand, as the Mugutrao-Gawde group formed, it acquired many overlapping relations within the group. Most of the secondary leaders are tied to both Mugutrao and Gawde; and they have many ties with each other. In some cases they have to settle problems among themselves, as happened when two members of the Mugutrao group were competing for the Sarpanch seat in 1971. Mugutrao and Gawde both declined to settle this issue for them, so some of the group responsibilities were thrust on the competitors themselves. Furthermore, there is a clear, if informal, division of labor within the group. Mugutrao, as mentioned, is the regulator; Gawde is the strategist and organizer. One member of the group took the Sarpanch seat in 1971 because his rival was better suited to represent them in the next factory board election. Another member had the right qualifications to run as a protest candidate, in place of Gawde, in the 1967 district council election. Yet another was judged to be the most suitable stalking-horse in a contest for representative to the district bank. Though done informally, these role allocations are quite efficient and differentiated.

The struggle for control of the gram panchayat may be compared to the

analysis of a "segmentary factional system." Nicholas writes that, "Factions, in what I shall refer to as segmentary factional political systems, have three characteristics in common with the political conflict groups in segmentary societies, such as that of the Nuer: they are (1) exhaustive, (2) exclusive, and (3) functionally undifferentiated" (1966: 53). The Mugutrao-versus-Balasaheb competition does not accord with any of these criteria. The groups were not exhaustive, because there were at least one or two politically significant villagers not tied to either one. One of these was Raje Krishnasingh's grandson, who was a leader in the Olegao sugar factory. Secondly, the two groups were not entirely exclusive. In the factory board elections, especially in 1967, many Olegao farmers voted for both Mugutrao and Balasaheb's nephew, though they were on different slates, simply because it is better to have as many board members as possible from your own village. (That way, if you need a favor from the factory administration, you have more chances of success.) Moreover, Mugutrao's and Balasaheb's own loyalties were not exclusive: both were supporters of the MLA in his 1967 election. They each received support in return, though in different spheres: the MLA supported Mugutrao in the factory elections; and he supported Balasaheb by nominating him as chairman of a new cooperative industrial estate to be set up in Shetipur town. Further, in their mutual support of the high school and the temple renovations the two groups were non-exclusive.

Finally, it is clear that the two groups were quite differentiated as to function. Balasaheb stayed entirely away from the credit society, while Mugutrao and Gawde personally kept away from the gram panchayat all through the 1960's. Balasaheb was free to handle the competitive pressures within the panchayat in any manner he chose. Even their relationships with

the MLA reflect this differentiation: Mugutrao was given the regulatory role in the most competitive arena, while Balasaheb was given an honorary position in a bourgeois-business institution.

This means that both sides were taking part in a non-zero-sum game (though Balasaheb's actions were more suited to the opposite situation). Consequently, their actions override the principles of segmentary analysis, "where resources are fixed, or nearly so, [and] the only gain one can make is at the expense of his opponent" (Nicholas, 1966: 58).

Unde was the only village leader to attempt true support-group mobilization--without elite patronage resources and contacts. As in the case of the Scheduled Castes, his efforts are hampered by the absence of a two-party system. The agricultural workers in Olegao lack confidence in themselves, and they have no external organization to lean on. Although Unde is a member of a socialist party (the PSP) which fields candidates in the general elections, the party has no working representatives in any other villages in the area. In this state, the leftist parties in general are urban-based, involved in the labor unions. In Chapter 7 we shall note that Unde and the PSP have had some effect, at least, on union activities in the cooperative sugar factory.

The problems of converting the agricultural laborers into an active support group are twofold: they must generate internal cohesion and resist counter-attacks. We have noted the basic socioeconomic conditions which make the first problem severe. The second is probably not as formidable as it appears to be. Given an organized base for leverage, the workers could probably obtain many patronage favors, in return for their votes, from the extremely competitive local politicians.

## CHAPTER VII

### CHANGES IN TALUKA LEADERSHIP: COMPETITION AND PATRONAGE

The changes in village leadership discussed in the preceding chapter were partly preceded and stimulated by political changes at higher levels. This chapter deals with some of the higher-level arenas, such as the sugar factories, the taluka Purchase and Sale Union, and the MLA constituency--with their changing leadership patterns since 1947. Among others, we shall consider in detail the political careers of the two strongest leaders in the taluka--the cooperative boss, Maniklal Batate, and the MLA, Sureshchandra More--for these two careers represent distinct stages of growth in the local political system.

#### A. The Boss of the Cooperatives

As mentioned in Chapters 4 and 5, Batate began his political career in the taluka Cooperative Purchase and Sale Union. Batate was the son of one of the old deshmukhs who was active in the cooperatives along with Raje Krishnasingh, the jagirdar. These institutions were supported by elite patronage and collaboration; and the actual day-to-day management of the Purchase and Sale Union (after 1940) was in the hands of Ganpatrao More, the Maratha managing director appointed by Raje Krishnasingh. In 1947, because of their new-won prestige, several of the freedom fighters became voting representatives on the Union, and they began to take a hand in the elections of the board. All the previous "elections" had actually been decided in advance through consensus. The freedom fighters, and young Batate, forced the Union to hold open, competitive elections instead. As with young Gawde and his competitive slate for the board of the Olegao big credit society, open competition was advantageous for the newcomers. Batate was quick to step into this breach in the old pattern of consensus, as an ally of some of the freedom fighters.

Around 1949, Batate went to the Deputy Registrar of Cooperatives to point out that the current board of management (controlled by the managing director) was largely composed of farmers who were not selling their raw sugar, etc., through the Union. (Many of these directors were from the dry villages.) The Deputy Registrar investigated and then had that board suspended. Batate was consulted in the appointment of a new board. Thus he made use of alternative channels of vertical influence as well as the pressure of the vote.



Atole and Wadak, two of the leading freedom fighters, were embroiled in the new factional struggles in the Union from about 1947 to 1952. There were also at least three other freedom fighters involved, Congressmen who had been arrested in 1942 but had not been leaders of importance in the movement. Eventually Batate took these minor freedom fighters as allies and began to maneuver Atole and Wadak out of power. Wadak quit the Union and tried to set up a rival cooperative. Ganpatrao More was forced to retire. Atole later agreed to compromise with Batate.

Batate proved to be as skilled at management as at manipulation. After five years of factional conflict, the Union was a financial ruin; but Batate hired a new managing director and they managed to bring the Union back to life. After twenty years of Batate's continuous control, the Union had grown healthy indeed. It handled 6% of the total produce sales in Shetipur market, amounting to a volume of 2,680,000 rupees in 1970. The Union was also setting up a tractor parts and repair shop, and a big cotton ginning and pressing mill. A major factor behind Batate's success with the Union was that the cooperatives were given special allocations of scarce agricultural inputs, such as chemical fertilizer and cement. Particularly during the 1950's, such inputs were very hard to obtain on the open market, so Batate built up a strong clientele among the progressive village farmers who were eager to intensify their cash-cropping. He not only did personal favors by allocating these inputs through the Union, he also improved the Union's finances.

During the late 1950's and early '60's Batate moved up rapidly into control of the District Purchase and Sales Union, the District Central Co-operative Bank and many of the taluka-level cooperatives throughout the

district. This was a period when the government resources being channeled into cooperatives were expanding at a great rate, and Batate proved very adept at taking over these channels. He also brought many of his clients onto the boards of these institutions. Sometimes the clients were even placed in superior positions, such as the chairmanship of the district central bank, because Batate himself was strongly mistrusted by several district leaders, and he found it prudent to remain in the background at first.

These clients, as mentioned, were the wealthy village farmers, members of the major peasant clans in many cases. In Olegao, by the middle 1960's, Batate's personal clients included nearly all the young leaders discussed in Chapter 6, Namdev Gawde among them. But Mugutrao Patil never had any dealings with Batate, presumably because he did not approve of his character. Further, Mugutrao in 1962 ran for the chairmanship of the panchayat samiti and was defeated by a Batate supporter. Those who have been Batate's clients speak favorably of his skills and his favors to his friends. But those who were at the level of potential competitors tended to esteem him less. He was a valued patron but a treacherous colleague. It was easy for him to win over ambitious young men as his clients, but the older leaders, who would not accept such a dependency, were much less enamoured of him. This was to have important ramifications in Olegao in 1967. (See Part C, below.)

It can be argued that Batate, and others like him, helped to enfranchise the rich and upper-middle farmers by the middle 1960's. That is, he helped to put them in control of the taluka and district institutions which were having a great effect on their farm businesses. Batate's take-over in the district bank worked definitely to the advantage of the village

farmers at the expense of older urban elites. The District Central Co-operative Bank was, until the late 1950's, dominated by its urban shareholders (which was one reason that the magnates were reluctant to see the DCCB take over in Shetipur). A Batate supporter was the first Maratha farmer elected as DCCB chairman, in 1955. When this man took office, the use of English in the board meetings was abolished. The bank began to hire non-Brahmins on its administrative staff; and against stiff opposition, the proportion of agricultural to non-agricultural lending was raised.

On the other hand, when Batate and the big farmers had taken control of all these cooperatives, their efforts were naturally directed toward maintaining their own elite domination, not toward opening these institutions to further competitive pressures from below. Since Batate took over the taluka cooperative Unions, there have been no two-sided elections. The same is true of the cooperative sugar factory which he founded. (Of course, these facts are pointed to, by the people involved, as evidence of perfect management and consensus.)

Batate's successes in the cooperatives did not enable him to build up power in the district Congress party organization, despite his efforts to do so. For one thing, he was not trusted by the district party bosses, and they were careful not to offer him the nomination for MLA which he wanted. And Batate was unable to force them to change their minds. The usual way of doing this is to run as an independent candidate and defeat the official Congress nominee, thus demonstrating to the party that the District Congress Committee erred in not recommending the most eligible candidate. Batate tried to do this in 1967. His brother ran against Suresh More, the Congress

MLA nominee. Later, in 1971 another brother ran against the Congress nominee for parliament. The Batate brothers lost in both cases. The real problem for the Batates is that they have built up their power within a restricted constituency. Only landowners belong to the credit societies, cooperative sugar factories, and so forth; and it is only the canal-village cooperatives which are economically successful and politically powerful, at least in eastern Poona District. (In areas of greater rainfall this is not so much the rule.) Thus Batate's personal clients are from a fairly wealthy stratum mostly within the group of canal-irrigated landowners. In Olegao these landowners make up just 35% of the agricultural population; and the proportion is of course much less for the taluka as a whole, with all its dry villages included. Batate's clients are influential within their own organizations; but in the general elections they must rely on an additional source of power, the Congress party organization. In nominating members to the district councils, the legislative assembly and the national parliament, the party has to appeal to the widest possible constituencies; and it has found itself able, in the Shetipur area, to dispense with Batate's services as a candidate.

The agricultural cooperatives present a different case, however, because apart from their narrower constituency, they are more often structured on the basis of indirect elections. The village credit society leaders decide who is to represent them in the taluka cooperative unions and these representatives then elect the union boards of management. Likewise, the representatives to the district bank are elected by the committees of the village societies, and then these representatives elect the board. It is interesting to note that one of Batate's brothers did win an important elec-

tion against a Congress party candidate, in 1970. This brother was at that time one of the state leaders of an opposition party, even though Maniklal Batate still professed to be loyal to the ruling Congress party. The brother was elected in a by-election to a seat in the state Legislative Council. The Council, unlike the Legislative Assembly, is filled by indirect election: the electors are the members of municipal corporations and the district council. Thus this election fits the Batate family's pattern of success with indirect elections. The Batates are clearly more adept at handling patronage and elite coalitions than at mobilizing broad support.

## B. Changes in Sugar Factory Leadership

As noted earlier, the initial leadership problems of organizing the cooperative sugar factory in Olegao were solved by the Brahmin magnate, Songaonkar, with the assistance of the new "bourgeois" leaders like Balasaheb and Mugutrao Jagtap. The first board of management (1955-1960) was nominated by the government and bank supervisors. It included Songaonkar as chairman, plus a Brahmin lawyer from Shetipur with a background in cooperatives and in the independence movement. Wadak, the MLA at that time, was also included, along with three other freedom fighters. The remainder consisted of village leaders like Mugutrao and Balasaheb. Six out of the eleven were Marathas, two were Dhangars, two were Brahmins, and one was a Mali. Songaonkar's death made the problem of succession in 1960 difficult, but it only hastened the inevitable problems of sorting out a variety of political and economic pressures in the organization. Certainly the factory was a business organization, and a fairly successful one; but it was also intended to be run democratically, which meant that policies would be affected by the manner in which the votes of the farmer-shareholders were acquired and controlled. In other words, the factory was destined to become an important center of patronage politics. This became true to such an extent that the factory chairmanship would be a position of influence in the calculations of the district politicians and the local state assemblymen (cf., Baviskar, 1968b).

Perhaps the most important patronage resources are connected with employment and promotion. An estimated two-fifths or more of the sugar factory employees belong to the families of factory shareholders. There is tremendous pressure on the directors, from those who have close caste/kinship or village ties with them, to provide employment and secure promotions. The directors are eager to comply as best they can, for it is a sure way of securing votes for re-election. Moreover, their client employees will provide volunteer labor in election campaigns and can be put to work for assembly and parliamentary candidates as well. Almost the first order of business on the factory board, after the election of 1970, was to hire about 50 new workers (cf., Baviskar, 1968a, 1969: 159-162).

The directors are also under pressure to provide other kinds of favors. A client shareholder may ask for a routine document showing the number of acres of sugar cane he has contracted to deliver to the factory; this document is used to arrange for crop loans from the affiliated village credit society, which will recover the loans from the factory after the cane is cut and delivered. If the acreage shown on the document happens to be greater than what is actually planted, the farmer can take extra credit from the society and use it, temporarily at least, for some other purpose. The directors are also besieged with requests to have the records altered concerning the dates of cane sowing, for the harvesting is done in strict rotation according to the sequence of sowing dates. If the sowing date is changed to an earlier one in the records, the farmer can get his cane cut sooner and save the expense of late-season irrigation, and he can also prepare the field for a new crop sooner. The directors may receive payments for these favors if the requests come from the wealthy, non-political

farmers. But the more ambitious and skilled directors prefer simply to allocate such favors where they will best serve to build up political support among the shareholders. The great majority of voters, even within the cooperatives, are small farmers. (Nearly eighty-two percent of the factory shareholders have two shares or less--equivalent to just one or one-half acre of cane.) The value of the small farmers as clients depends on how many other voters they are connected with, of course.

There were already some political conflicts brewing in the first board of management, because it appeared to the non-Maratha directors that the Marathas wanted to hog all the employment patronage for themselves. (The Marathas had six votes out of eleven then.) This led the non-Maratha leaders, in 1960, to work out a really effective election slate for trimming the Maratha power. The brains behind this coalition were a small group of wily urban politicians in Shetipur--a couple of Brahmins and a Lingayat. (They were already embroiled in competition with some of the big Maratha farmers in municipal politics, where the odds in favor of the Marathas were more evenly balanced.) The method of balancing out the non-Maratha slate was to secure the solid support of all the minority castes and to try to split the votes of the big Maratha clans. The former objective was accomplished through selecting one Brahmin, one Lingayat, two Hatkar Dhangars, two Shegar Dhangars, and one Khatik Dhangar (Atole, the freedom fighter). The latter objective was accomplished in part by selecting the grandson of Raje Krishnasingh, Sahebrao Gaikwad. Sahebrao was much respected for his college education, wealth, and family prestige. He was not part of a village clan, so he could attract votes from all clans. His presence on the board would displace one of the big Maratha clan leaders. This slate was so well-



constructed that it won nine seats out of eleven, against two competing slates which were dominated by Marathas. (Of course, these two slates helped to split each others' votes.) The resulting board had four Marathas and seven non-Marathas. The latter were not so well-organized when it came to electing a chairman, and they settled on Sahebrao, the jagirdar's grandson, as a weak compromise. The non-Maratha variety, which helped the balanced slate to win so many votes from the shareholders, was something of a problem when it came to deciding which group would hold the chair. As on most subsequent occasions, it proved impossible to elect a chairman from outside the single strongest group, the Marathas--even when the Marathas were in a minority.

The pattern of succession after this year was more complicated, both in form and substance. The Marathas, of course, were bent on revenge. The formal succession pattern required that every two years, one-half the board would resign and open their seats for election. Those who did not resign the first time would then resign after another two years. The first resigners in 1962, were determined by drawing lots; and Sahebrao was among them. It happened that most of those whose lots forced them to resign were Marathas, and four of those who remained on the board were Dhangars. This spurred the Maratha discontent even more. The Marathas were particularly worried that the Dhangar freedom fighter, Atole, whom they regarded as a hot-headed agitator, might be elected chairman. Sahebrao was induced to join a slate of four Marathas and one Mali, which did not include any of the other three members of his original (non-Maratha) coalition who were running for re-election. Sahebrao's panel won five of the six empty seats, and the total board then had five Marathas and six non-Marathas with no new Dhangars.

The four Dhangars absented themselves from the first board meeting,

thus preventing a quorum and the election of a chairman. In order to become chairman, then, Sahebrao had to negotiate with the Dhangars. He and two of his slate members split from the other Marathas to join the Dhangars, and Sahebrao was elected chairman again. However, these switches from coalition to coalition had weakened the respect which the other leaders had for him. In 1964, after the other half of the original board had resigned, another Maratha was elected chairman. Sahebrao's term ended in 1966 and he kept aloof from the factory elections after that.

Sahebrao had been a competent chairman and discouraged employment patronage. In many ways he was a model "bourgeois" leader and attracted the support of the big farmers who did not need jobs and of the many small farmers who did not happen to have director-patrons. However, he did not have the necessary ability to form a strong coalition. Sahebrao let himself be used by one group and then another, just for the sake of the chairmanship. He also offended some of the leaders by his assumption of social precedence: he insisted that for informal meetings, they should come to his house as guests, not vice versa. In short, he did not have the knack of inspiring loyalty among the ambitious, as Mugutrao Patil did so well. (Around 1950, when Sahebrao had just come back to Olegao from college, he ran for a seat on the gram panchayat; and to everybody's delight, he was defeated by a Muslim. The reason was simply that he did not meet or talk with anyone in the village.) He did not learn how to cater to others' pretensions the way a modern politician must do.

Had Sahebrao been more skilled in alliance-making with his colleagues, he might have been able to maintain and strengthen a compromise involving bourgeois standards of administration combined with a careful allocation of

board seats to the various caste/kinship vote blocs. But the non-Maratha victory, combined with a weak chairman, led instead to disintegrative oscillations. In the four subsequent elections, from 1962 to 1967, the following conditions always obtained: there were at least three slates of candidates; and no single slate ever won an outright majority of the board seats. Consequently, there was always a chaotic reshuffling of coalitions necessary before a chairman could be elected. After Sahebrao, no chairman was re-elected until 1967.

Only one director was re-elected continuously from 1960 to 1970, and he was, of all things, a Brahmin. This was Shivrao Deshpande, son of one of the big magnates and a successful grape farmer in his own right. A good businessman, Deshpande did not indulge in patronage politics, and so he was popular with the non-political bourgeois farmers. Unlike Sahebrao, Deshpande also had very good contacts with the average shareholders. Indeed, Deshpande had the best contacts of anyone throughout the whole factory area, for most of the factory politicians tended to rely on their home clans and villages for their support. Deshpande built up his following by helping those who had no patron-directors to call on. His help did not involve bending the factory rules, but rather seeing to it that those without patronage connections were treated fairly. He kept the members informed of what was going on in the board of management, which had a slight inhibiting effect on the other directors. Certainly none of them wanted to acquire an individual reputation for excessive venality, and Deshpande's wide contacts with the voters helped to hold temptations in check. In two board elections, Deshpande got the highest number of votes among all the candidates; but he

was never able to become chairman. Obviously, his colleagues on the board were not very fond of him. Moreover, whatever slate Deshpande was in, he was usually the only member of that slate to win election to the board. This was probably because the stronger village leaders did not want to be allied with him, even in the general election. His influence was very individual, not easily shared with partners; and it was a threat to those with strong caste/kinship followings.

Deshpande eventually got to be factory chairman for one year, as part of a special coalition assembled by the new supporters of the MLA in 1967. Deshpande stayed with this coalition in the 1970 factory election, and he was the only member to lose. This was his first loss, and he lost heavily. The otherwise remarkable efficiency of the coalition did not combine successfully with Deshpande's remarkable success as an individual.

Deshpande's strength had arisen in a situation of chaotic, individualistic competition. During most of the 1960's, all the other factory politicians relied essentially on the voters belonging to their own castes, clans and villages. The voters responded in kind, voting only for those candidates with whom they had some kind of social connection, regardless of their slates. After 1960, slates were not voted for as such. Indeed, it was the ambition of most leaders to deny votes to all other candidate, including those on the same slate with them. The theory behind slate-making was that the partners would share their bases of support (since each shareholder can vote for up to ten candidates of his choice). However, there was not much trust in these arrangements and no means of enforcing them. Consequently, each candidate tended to tell his close supporters, in private, not to vote for anyone else at all. The general results for coalitions were thus unpredictable and disintegrative. Only Deshpande was able

to collect votes far and wide. He had no peasant clan to support him; but by the same token he was not a threat to any particular clan. When he finally lost in 1970, Deshpande was probably the victim of one of the usual, last-minute secret messages--withdrawing the support of one or more of his coalition partners. Since the 1970 coalition was otherwise very strong, these messages had a more telling effect than usual on Deshpande's chances. He was also affected adversely by his year as chairman (1968-69), because he had been a stern overseer and had, for example, forced the dismissal of some workers because of drunkenness on the job. (Those workers had relatives among the shareholders.)

In the elections of 1967 and 1970, what brought order out of chaos was the influence of the new MLA, Sureshchandra More. The formal rules were changed in 1967, so that the entire board was vacated and the new board was to sit for three years, then retire all together. As usual, there were three slates (each with candidates from Olegao) in the board election of 1967. Mugutrao Patil and Gawde were together on the first slate, which won five seats. Balasaheb Jagtap's nephew was on the second slate, which won all the other six seats. With this slender majority, the second slate could not form a quorum for the board meeting. The Mugutrao-Gawde group played the usual trick of not attending the first meeting, and they also kept the district bank representative from attending. Now it happened that Mugutrao and Gawde had become strong supporters of the young MLA in his first election campaign that same year. Another strong leader in their slate, a Maratha patil from Shetipur, was also an MLA supporter. Deshpande, who belonged to the second slate, was yet another MLA supporter; and Deshpande also

controlled two other votes in the second slate. The other three members of the second slate (including Balasaheb's nephew) had no particular leader, and they had not indicated any inclination to support Deshpande for chairman.

Thus an unusual compromise was worked out under the guidance of the MLA. Mugutrao Patil would be chairman for one year, Deshpande for the next year, and the Shetipur patil for the third year. The vice chairmanship would also rotate among their allies, so that each chairman would be matched by a vice chairman from another side. Thus they brought together a total of eight votes, enough for a quorum. (And when the system was put into effect, Mugutrao Patil turned over half of his chairmanship to Gawde, as mentioned in Chapter 6.)

This coalition was then put to a further test in 1970. The same four leaders (Mugutrao Patil, Gawde, Deshpande and the Shetipur patil) set up a new election slate under the guidance of the MLA. Their opponents taunted them over the makeshift arrangement for rotating the chairmanship in the preceding three years and predicted that the coalition would fall apart. But in fact the MLA's influence was so strong by then that every member of the slate except Deshpande was elected to the board. Mugutrao Patil became the chairman for a full three years, and it seemed that a stable leadership pattern for the factory had developed. Many of the shareholders, clearly, had voted for the slate as a slate. (On 2,428 ballots, 18,033 votes were cast, equivalent to 77% of the total possible votes. Thus many voters used all ten of their votes, in contrast to years past.) This was because of the MLA's influence and also because of the skill in constructing the slate. Once again, careful representation was given to the solid minority vote blocs, especially to two medium-sized Dhangar villages. As mentioned in Chapter 6,

three of the four top vote-getters in this election were Dhangars, with Gawde himself in the lead. One other Dhangar, one Mali and just five Marathas completed the list of winners from this slate. Apart from caste and clan affiliation, the candidates on this slate were carefully distributed according to the populations of the twelve villages in the factory area: two candidates each from Shetipur, Olegao, and one other large village, and one candidate each from five smaller villages.

The opposition candidates were united only in not wanting to cooperate with one part or another of the MLA's group. The opposing slate had some good leaders, including one ex-chairman of the factory and three former directors, one being the freedom fighter Atole, another the son of the old Maratha magnate, Darekar. However, the opposition slate had no central focus and it was unable to entice into its ranks the two leaders of the medium-sized Dhangar villages who did so well for the MLA's slate. The resulting opposition slate was not well-balanced: it had only three Dhangars and eight Marathas. It included three candidates from a single large village which was, however, rife with factionalism; and it also had two candidates from one of the smallest villages. Thus Olegao was left with only one candidate (Balasaheb Jagtap's son), and the same was true for Shetipur. The only winner from this group was from a medium-sized village dominated by a single Maratha clan.

Thus the confusing patterns of the '60's resolved into a simple two-sided competition in 1970, a competition with a decisive outcome for both sides. This contest was again unlike a "segmentary factional political system." One side was a complex coalition with many overlapping loyalties and an informal division of labor. The other side had fewer overlapping

loyalties, and it also lacked a central leader. It was a loose-knit coalition defined more by opposition to the MLA group (or to some part of it) than by attraction to each other. To some extent, the opposition slate was accused of being a stalking-horse for Maniklal Batate, the MLA's chief rival in the taluka; indeed, this accusation was printed in a newspaper published by the state Congress party. However, as far as the slate as a whole was concerned, this was just rhetoric. Atole, the Dhangar freedom fighter, was known to be a very close supporter of Batate by this time, but the other opposition leaders were not at all close to Batate. Some, like the Maratha magnate Darekar, were on bad terms with Batate, though it was assumed that Darekar might go along with Batate in trying to defeat the MLA. Two of the opposition leaders, however, had supported the MLA in his first election (1967) and said that they would probably support him again in 1972. They were opposing the MLA's factory slate because other MLA supporters, who were put on the slate, were their village factional enemies. Thus, the 1970 factory election was not a clear-cut competition between the MLA and Maniklal Batate, just as the gram panchayat elections in Olegao, in the 1960's, were not a clear-cut expression of rivalry between the Balasaheb Jagtap family and the Mugutrao Patil group. The rivalry between the MLA and the cooperative boss will be explored in the next section of this chapter.



### C. Progressive Patronage in the Congress Party

Sureshchandra More was the youngest son of Ganpatro More, who was managing director of the taluka cooperative Purchase and Sale Union for 12 years, until Batate drove him out in 1952. Suresh was therefore the younger brother of Vyankatrao More, the Marxist lawyer and PWP organizer who built up a strong anti-Congress base in the dry villages of the taluka. Suresh himself, however, was always interested in the Congress party, even when he was attending college in Poona, where he first came to the notice of a powerful and far-sighted state Congress leader. He joined the Youth Congress in 1958 and became the president of the District Youth Congress in 1962. By 1964 Suresh was secretary of the State Youth Congress and in regular contact with the big party leaders. At the same time, he kept up contacts with Shetipur through an association of Shetipur students who were studying in Poona.

Following Vyankatrao More's untimely death, Suresh's parents wanted him to go to law school and take over Vyankatrao's practice. However, Suresh did not care to suspend his party activities; and his patron, the state Congress leader, paid a visit to Shetipur to put an end to the notion of law school. The state leader was on the lookout for young, talented politicians who would depend on him for a fast start to their careers and would extend his personal influence to areas, such as Shetipur taluka, where there were no strong Congress leaders at the time. (Namdev Gawde and the other young village leaders had been made Batate's clients for the same reason.) Suresh More was given his first nomination as MLA by the Congress in 1967, when he was 27 years old.

At that time, nearly all the younger leaders in Olegao were clients of Manklal Batate and his brothers. In 1962, the Batates had tried to influence the Congress MLA nomination in Shetipur, with partial success. They could not prevent Sureshchandra More's nomination in 1967, though; so one of the younger Batate brothers was nominated as an independent candidate against More. Mugutrao Patil called a meeting of all the young leaders in Olegao and persuaded them to switch allegiance from the Batates to Suresh More. What probably caused Gawde and the other young leaders to change so decisively was the attraction of More's sponsor, one of the most powerful men in the state and also a major figure in national politics. Gawde at that time was chairman of the INTUC (Congress union) local in the Olegao factory; and at party meetings in Bombay he observed that More was already being treated with respect by the state leaders. Gawde concluded that it was time to give up his loyalty to Maniklal Batate.

Suresh More also attracted support in the dry villages. Many of his brother's old supporters were staunchly opposed to the Congress; but Suresh explained that he was preparing a scheme for constructing irrigation tanks in all the dry villages. His brother's supporters had no one else to turn to (certainly not Batate); and they were persuaded to accept Suresh More's good faith.

After More won the election, he rewarded the Olegao leaders by proposing Gawde for the Congress nomination to the district council. As explained in Chapter 6, More's rivals in the DCC blocked this nomination, and so the Olegao leaders taught the DCC a lesson. Later the same year, More helped Gawde and Mugutrao Patil set up the rotating chairmanship in the Olegao sugar factory. Thus piece by piece, a whole array of positions were being occupied and consolidated by More and his supporters.

More himself, meanwhile, was named one of the two secretaries of the Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee, the governing body for the party at the state level. In this capacity, More travelled constantly throughout the state, keeping informed of factional disputes and other affairs in the local party units. This information was fed back to his sponsor, and the sponsor also used Suresh More to communicate his will to the local Congressmen.

The new MLA kept his promises to the dry villages. He set up an extensive program for the construction of percolation tanks. By 1970, thirty-six tanks were under construction in the dry villages and twenty were completed. A prolonged drought in 1970-71 led to an intensification of the program, with state famine-relief funds mobilized to construct more tanks and roads.

In 1971 the MLA was setting up a similar program to supplement the tank scheme. Another private foreign agency was prepared to guarantee loans at just 4% interest, for deepening wells and installing pumps, etc., in the dry villages. Only farmers with less than 10 acres of land would be eligible. By the end of 1971 a geologist had surveyed the proposed sites and indicated those which might successfully tap a larger underground water supply. The MLA appointed a local committee, including himself and the chairman of the panchayat samiti (his client), to screen the loan applications.

The MLA was also attentive to other sectors of his constituency. He arranged for government and private donations to set up a technical high school in Shetipur. He helped to persuade the two nearby cooperative sugar

factories (Olegao and Ganpati) to make large donations to the Shetipur college. (There was some reluctance to be overcome, because the college was built and administered by the Gujar merchants, with no Maratha control.) The MLA also helped to collect some donations for the Ambedkar hostel being constructed by the Mahar leaders in Shetipur. Aiding the educational institutions produced good dividends for the MLA. He himself pointed out that the college students made some of his best campaign workers.

This work in favor of the dry villages and educational institutions made up for previous years of neglect by the party. At the same time, More also devoted attention to the needs of his more affluent and powerful constituents, the canal village farmers and their cooperatives. As mentioned earlier, he helped to organize and stabilize the leadership in the Olegao cooperative sugar factory. In 1970 he selected the candidates for the slate led by Mugutrao, Gawde, Deshpande, etc., and used various inducements to persuade nearly all of the superfluous candidates to resign. No less than seventy-five candidates offered themselves at first, for the eleven contested seats. Many were loyal MLA supporters who withdrew after the best slate was selected. Many wanted to pressure the MLA by threatening to split some vote blocs; and many just wanted to be paid off. The MLA dealt with the latter two groups by promising some candidates a nomination at some future date or a chance to run for some other office. To others he offered his good will, or specific favors in some cases.

The MLA was also on very good terms with the nearby Ganpati cooperative sugar factory, dominated by the sons of Jadhav, the Maratha magnate. One of More's elder brothers was an experienced sugar factory manager, and he was hired as Managing Director of the Ganpati factory. In 1971 the two factories, Olegao and Ganpati, started a dairy cooperative scheme. The MLA's

brother was very active in handling the organization and management of this scheme. It was generally predicted that the project, if successful, would be of more interest and benefit to the small factory shareholders than to the large (who could invest their spare time and capital in grapes and other luxury crops). The Olegao factory was also involved in a proposed plant to make industrial alcohol from the molasses by-product of refined sugar. For a few months in 1971, the Olegao village leaders were enthusiastic over a proposal to build a cotton ginning and pressing mill as an ancillary operation for the sugar factory, one which would absorb some of the idle, off-season labor which the factory had to support. (They were also enthused because the proposed mill would compete with one just completed by Batate's Purchase and Sale Union in Shetipur.) However, it was decided later that the new government controls of the cotton market would make this unprofitable. It was plain that if some of the proposed schemes proved feasible, the MLA would be able to assist in procuring licenses, collecting share capital and stabilizing the leadership.

Finally, the MLA took at least one step toward directly assisting his working-class constituents. In 1971 he sent a Congress socialist labor organizer into the Olegao sugar factory. The officially recognized union in the factory was affiliated to INTUC, the Congress labor organization; but there were many indications that the INTUC local would soon lose a fight for recognition to the competing PSP union. The INTUC local was disliked by a majority of the workers (judging from the sample which I interviewed), even though many had joined it to curry favor with the board of management. It was disliked with good reason. The local's officials

were all relatives or clients of the directors, or directors themselves. Their main function was to arrange promotions for other relatives and clients. Their function should have been, among other things, to seek enforcement of the recommendations of the Central Wage Board, which had formulated standardized job categories for the sugar industry, together with minimum wage scales, seniority requirements, and so forth. The job categories and promotion qualifications had no consistent definition in the Olegao factory (as in many others), which made it easy to exercise favoritism. The INTUC local did little to protect the workers or settle grievances. However, the state INTUC organization threatened a strike against the cooperative sugar factories in early 1971, just before the midterm parliamentary election. The rural Congress leaders took this threat to heart and the Olegao factory, for one, agreed to apply the wage board standards, including back pay for workers who should have been placed in higher job categories.

Despite this progress, the INTUC local in Olegao was likely to lose its recognition. In addition to its own unpopularity there was another factor: Maniklal Batate wanted to embarrass the board of management, so successful in its loyalty to the MLA. Batate met with Jagganath Unde, the PSP union organizer in Olegao; and the two of them were planning to sign up all the workers in the Nageshwar factory as members of the PSP union. This was because of a rule which created one union local for the two factories. Originally, the PSP was the recognized union in Olegao. When the factory began, skilled workers were imported from other parts of the state; and these were more loyal to the union than to individual directors (cf., Baviskar, 1968a). However, in the mid-1960's Namdev Gawde took over the chairmanship of the INTUC local. At that time, he was an ally of Maniklal Batate, who had absolute control over his

workers and had them sign up as INTUC members. The INTUC then challenged the recognition of the PLP local, and a vote of the workers was taken. The solid INTUC votes in the Nageshwar factory overrode the PSP majority at Olegao. But now, in 1971, Batate and Unde were preparing to turn this same trick against the Olegao leaders, including Gawde the apostate. As a consequence, the MLA sent in a good labor organizer to rehabilitate the INTUC local. The organizer, who was a socialist, saw his job as organizing against both the PSP and the factory management. (Nothing else could win the trust of the majority of employees.) The board of management and the local INTUC officials understood his intentions and did all they could to obstruct him. Unde, meanwhile, was getting only token cooperation from Batate, who wanted to set up a paper PSP union at Nageshwar without letting Unde actually meet with the workers and discuss their grievances. At the end of my field work period, these issues of reorganization and recognition had not been resolved, though it seemed likely that the resourceful MLA would get the Olegao workers organized, since the Congress party needed to keep their votes.

This subject leads directly to that of the general conduct of the rivalry between Maniklal Batate and the MLA. They met in a direct contest when Suresh More first ran for the MLA position in 1967. Since then, they have competed with each other by means of flanking manoeuvres, as in the case of the factory unions. The pawns and minor pieces are constantly engaged. As mentioned at the end of Chapter 6, one young Olegao leader was used as a stalking-horse against Batate's domination of the District Central Cooperative Bank elections. Batate likewise attempted to harrass the

leaders of the taluka panchayat samiti, who came under More's control. In 1971 a minor but serious engagement was fought over the Shetipur Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee, and the MLA forces won. Later on, there was talk of trying to undermine Batate's Purchase and Sale Union. In 1970 the MLA held a secret meeting with some of the shareholders in the Nageshwar factory to discuss their grievances. Batate responded by cancelling the memberships of those who attended--an illegal action, but expensive for the ex-shareholders to fight in court.

The most peculiar confrontation revolved around the 1971 mid-term parliamentary election, when the Prime Minister sought a new mandate against the old Congress leaders who had split the party. In Shetipur, the election was a very complicated affair. The Congress nominee in Shetipur was not a local resident; he was a Brahmin, and he was not considered loyal to More's patron. The MLA and his supporters did not want to be stuck with this candidate at all, but they were willing to work for him for the sake of the party. Batate, on the other hand, had a personal connection with the candidate, and Batate arranged for the election campaign to be inaugurated at a big meeting in a village next to the Nageshwar factory. What made the situation somewhat bizarre was that Batate's youngest brother had become an independent candidate and had attracted the tacit support of several opposition parties. Nobody was quite sure what caused this situation. There may have been a family quarrel, or there may have been a plot to achieve just what the younger brother actually brought about: a sharp split in the opposition, which had attempted to form a "grand alliance" of four major parties. In any case, the Congress candidate won decisively, which was good for the MLA's group in terms of



their credit within the party, and good for Maniklal Batate in terms of his personal contacts.

It is not surprising that Batate and More rarely had a direct confrontation. Batate was concerned with bossing the cooperatives, especially in the canal villages. More was concerned with Congress party affairs, touching on much broader constituencies. Obviously, then, this rivalry does not correspond to a "segmentary factional political system." The two sides are functionally differentiated: one is based in the agricultural cooperatives, one is based in the Congress party. Nor are they exclusive or exhaustive. The case of the MP election demonstrates that in some situations the two rivals must recognize a common interest, however reluctantly. In discussing the 1970 Olegao factory election we noted that there are some leaders, like the magnate Darekar, who are attached neither to Batate nor to More. And there are some, like Balasaheb Jagtap, who opposed the MLA's factory slate but supported him in other contexts. These facts have an important bearing on the analysis of political patronage and competition.

#### D. Conclusions

One effect of Batate's and More's careers has been to establish the wealthy village farmers in positions of control over their local institutions. In Chapter 6 we noted that the Olegao village leaders had the managerial skills and coalition-forming abilities to control their village-level institutions successfully. It took a longer time for the proper combination of these same skills to settle the leadership problems at higher levels.

From 1950 on, Batate began to seize control of the patronage resources which were becoming available through the upper-level cooperatives. He seized control from bureaucrats, like Ganpatrao More, who had dominated these institutions under the sponsorship of the local aristocrats and higher officials. In Poona he seized control from the urban Brahmins who had been running the central cooperative bank. Batate's rise heralded the end of the old elite sponsorship of local development institutions. He developed a transactional, competitive basis for leadership through the allocation of favors in return for the delivery of votes. His techniques were not geared to a mass-based machine, however, but rather to the new class of upwardly-mobile "bourgeois" farmers and their needs--often manipulated within a framework of indirect elections: the techniques of "elitist" machine politics.

The competitive efforts launched by Batate and the freedom fighters in the Purchase and Sale Union had the temporary effect of changing the board of management from an "elite council" to an "arena council."

Elite councils are those which are, or consider themselves to be (whether they admit it openly or not), a ruling oligarchy. The dominant cleavage in such a group is between the elite council (including, where appropriate, the minority from which it is recruited) and the public: that is to say, the dominant cleavage is horizontal. The opposite kind of council is the arena council. These exist in groups in which the dominant cleavages are vertical. The council is not so much a corporate body with interests against its public, but an arena in which the representatives of segments in the public come into conflict with one another.

Other things being equal, arena councils will not damp down dispute and will come reluctantly and with difficulty to compromise, if they do so at all, because each councillor (or each group of councillors) is steered by the heavy rudder of those whose interests he represents, and to whom he is answerable (Bailey, 1965: 10).

As Bailey goes on to show, the elite council, on the other hand, usually tries to reach decisions by consensus (1965: 11-12). The old taluka cooperatives were certainly elite councils. When Batate and the freedom fighters opened them up with new competitive techniques, new constituents, new upward channels of influence, these cooperatives became arena councils for a while. This was a sign of political progress--the enfranchisement of a new class --though it also created a period of bad business management. The latter problem was solved by Batate in a return to the elite council format, this time based on a different elite (the new "bourgeois" village farmers and politicians). Batate caused the same cyclical process to occur in the District Central Cooperative Bank: an urban elite council became a temporary arena council, in which urban and rural interests competed for the control of policy. Within a few years, the bank had become a rural elite council.

Gawde, who was Batate's protege, had a similar effect on the Olegao village credit society. He broke open the elite consensus, making it accessible to competitive pressures from minority caste/kinship groups and from the younger generation. This was a very short phase, however, for Mugutrao

Jagtap and Gawde were soon able to restore the elite consensus with the inclusion of several young leaders like Gawde. The new consensus was made possible by their agreement to combine strengths for assaults on the larger arenas--the cooperative sugar factory, the district council, etc. When Batate was moving from control of the taluka cooperative unions to competition on the district bank, he also profitted from this offensive strategy. Consensus at the lower levels enabled his allies to pyramid their strength at higher levels. Today, however, Batate has been forced into a defensive posture by his failure to continue the pyramiding process. Thus the consensus in his sugar factory and taluka cooperatives may be eroding.

The Olegao cooperative sugar factory operated under an elite consensus at first, but the breakup of this consensus was signalled by the first board election in 1960. This resulted in nearly a decade of amorphous competition among a host of leaders representing different castes, kinship groups, villages, and factions--with Deshpande representing some of the anti-patronage class interests. In retrospect, the problems of this period derived from the comparative isolation of the Olegao factory from other taluka- and district-level arenas. (Batate controlled the other big cooperatives and the DCC was dictating to the local Congress leaders at the time.) Thus the factory leaders fought in atomistic, zero-sum competition with each other. Their strategy was not positive and expansionist but rather defensive. Each candidate tried to win by withholding votes from the others rather than by combining strengths. At the village level, the Olegao leaders moved away from this defensive strategy and began to build up an effective coalition. In order to bring this coalition to power in the factory however, they required the extra ingredient of the MLA's influence. The MLA enabled them to build an entire factory coalition with a positive orientation. Beginning in

1967 this coalition was able to administer a rebuke to the DCC and thus restore some balance to the relations between local and district Congress leaders. The MLA's supporters quickly took over the panchayat samiti, and they began competing with Batate's allies in a variety of arenas.

At the same time, the MLA has made local politics more pluralistic. The factory leaders are being forced to deal with the class interests of the workers, because the Congress and the PSP are competing for recognition of their unions and for the establishment of a party base among the workers. The MLA has also worked with other constituencies which were not being helped through the big canal-village cooperatives. These included the dry villages, the educational institutions, and the urban low castes.

Local politics has become more competitive and pluralistic. Elite councils have been broken down and rebuilt; and some are being broken down again. Expansionist coalitions have appeared, which are capable of pyramiding the resources of one institution into power in many others. An important element of all this activity is the competition between patrons for better clients, and vice versa. "Vertical political alliances based on ties of economic dependency are relatively stable. However, one of the most striking characteristics of horizontal alliances in Western Maharashtra is their instability" (Carter, 1972: 436). This comparison appears to be valid, but it should not be interpreted to mean that patron-client relations are uninfluenced by competition.

Since all elite leaders have roughly the same sort of vertical alliances they do not form horizontal alliances on the basis of the special interests of their followings. Rather they seek to form horizontal alliances which will further their own ambitions, which will allow them to provide sufficient patronage to their followers to avoid

their capture by competing elite leaders, and which will protect the interests of the political class. . . .That is, if a leader continues to provide his followers with sufficient patronage they will not withdraw their support when he alters his horizontal alliances . . ." (Carter, 1972: 440).

However, the great expansion of patronage channels and resources in recent years does make it possible for clients to bargain and to force patrons to compete for their support, especially when an arena is in a competitive phase. The economic dependency of clients has been quite variable. In the dry villages, as we shall see, this dependency is very strong. On the other hand, the canal-village farmers are a different case. In Chapter 2 we noted that the small and upper-medium farmers tend to be dependent on the big leaders for factory jobs, etc. The small farmers have little bargaining power in this situation, but the upper-medium farmers have quite a lot. This is proved by the comparative absence of lower-medium farmers in village politics and factory employment, for they are fairly self-sufficient. The upper-medium farmers, therefore, are dependent on their patrons only to the extent that they wish, only to the extent that they find their favors advantageous and convenient in comparison to the support demanded in return. If they want to, the upper-medium farmers (and of course the large farmers) can even make do without cooperative sources of credit, etc.

The bargaining power of clients is illustrated by the abrupt switch that Gawde and the other young leaders made from loyalty to Batate to loyalty to the MLA (1967). (Carter, however, would regard these as "horizontal" alliances, since they link members of the current political elite [1972: 430-431]. I have not followed this approach, since it would be clumsy in a study of the succession of new middlemen and new elites.)

The bargaining power of clients is also evident in the way that clients compete for favors, such as nominations. In the Olegao factory election of 1970, some of the MLA's former supporters were on the opposing slate, because they had been passed over in favor of their personal competitors in the selection of the MLA's slate. With simultaneous competition at so many levels, the patron is able to dispense favors simply by choosing the right candidate for the right election. By the same token, however, he is not able to satisfy all demands. An important case in Chapter 8 concerns a leader in Koregao who changed patrons, from the MLA to Batate, because his demands were ignored. Some defections are inevitable, and their rate is partly determined by the rate of success of the clients who are selected by their patron for nomination. Defections are also influenced by the extent to which the clients are related to each other by competition or coalition. When the MLA's attempted nomination of Gawde to the district council failed in 1967, his other clients in Olegao demonstrated that his will as patron was not so easily circumvented and also demonstrated their power and value to him as a group. The client's support, then, is not passive, and unconditional. It is constantly bargained for, with many clients seeking access to limited favors, and other patrons seeking access to more clients.

When the clients have some bargaining power, they are involved in "pluralist" machine politics. But when they are part of a tightly-run "consensus," under the domination of a leader like Batate, then they are part of an "elitist" machine. The emphasis on vote-gathering makes the difference between the old "elite council" and the new elite machine.

## CHAPTER VIII

### POLITICAL BACKWARDNESS IN A DRY VILLAGE

Kordegao appears to have the same structure of developmental institutions, the same opportunities for leadership, as Olegao; but the resemblance is only superficial. Probably the most critical difference is in the condition of the agricultural cooperatives. Kordegao has four credit societies. One is in reasonably good financial condition (rated B class by the auditors); but the other three are moribund (rated D class). The periodic droughts make it nearly impossible for the average farmer to repay his loans to the society. When his repayments stop, he is unable to get fresh advances, and the volume of business handled by the society dwindles. Each society is a small, localized affair serving one geographic section of the village. There is little competition for serving on the committees of management. Committee positions are taken up unenthusiastically by relatives of former committee members. A few of those who serve are nearly illiterate, and once or twice a committee member has to be dropped because his loans are in default. Quite a few committee members claim that they never take loans from their societies. They are afraid of debts in general--with good reason in view of the treatment which they used to receive at the hands of the village moneylenders.

The four credit societies have no common interests, economic or political, to provide a common strength. There is, of course, no cooperative



sugar factory to bind them together. They are among the 98 credit societies which send representatives to the taluka Purchase and Sale Union and which vote on the representatives to the District Central Cooperative Bank. However, there is nothing in the operations of these higher-level organizations which is directed to the interests of the village as a whole: each society is dealt with as a separate entity. Moreover, the D-class societies have lost the right to vote in the district bank. The Purchase and Sale Union and the DCCB do a greater volume of business with the canal-village societies, of course. And in Olegao, as we have seen, the cooperative sugar factory provides a valuable intermediary level of organization (encompassing 13 villages, 25 credit societies), in which the leaders of the three Olegao credit societies have developed a number of common political and economic interests.

Kordegao also has its place in the panchayati raj institutions. The gram panchayat, partly financed by a share of the land revenue and by a house tax, has an annual budget of just 43,000 rupees, or 4.86 rupees per capita. On these slender means the panchayat attempts to distribute hybrid seeds, repair and clean the roads, build latrines and drinking-water wells and primary schools, etc.

These efforts do not have much impact, scattered over so many hamlets at several miles' distance in many cases. In Olegao we noted that the gram panchayat was not the object of energetic, organized political interest. Later in this chapter we shall see that the competition and leadership in the Kordegao panchayat were also disorganized and remained so through 1971; and that many of the important political processes (as in Olegao) occurred outside the panchayat framework.

The members of the Kordegao gram panchayat, along with those from several nearby villages, participate in the indirect elections of taluka panchayat samiti members. As we shall see, the political disorder in Kordegao prevented this village from exercising its proper influence within the panchayat samiti. Kordegao also participates in the multi-village constituency which directly elects a representative to the district council. Kordegao leaders have won this position in the past, but at present it is held by a leader from another dry village in the area.

Recently, the most potent focus of leadership effort has been the committee in charge of constructing a new high school building in Kordegao. In this context, the village nearly benefitted from the late emergence of the constructive, "bourgeois" type of leadership. However, this progressive effort was muddled and sullied by the combined influence of modern machine-style politics and the old-fashioned covert manipulation of administrative influence--by "elitist machine politics," in other words.

The events relating to the building of the high school were also connected with the MLA, Suresh More. More has contributed economic improvements to the village. But his followers in this village are not constructive institutional managers and coalition-builders; they are "brokers." Thus the impact of a strong external patron has been quite unlike the impact in Olegao.

Thus the points of comparison with political developments in Olegao are these: In Kordegao there has been no rise of bourgeois leaders to found and manage new development institutions, except on a very small scale. Thus recent contact with party machine politics (through the MLA) has not led to a florescence of pluralist machine politics. Instead, it has caused the growth of elitist machine politics.

#### A. Headmen and Other Brokers

In Olegao, by about 1947, the headmanship had become a comparatively insignificant position, thanks to the economic mobility, the new forms of political opportunity, and the bourgeois skills and values which had arrived in the village. The patils, after all, were merely minor officials, and those who had wealth and ability could easily manoeuvre them or manoeuvre around them. In Chapter 4 we observed that the enterprising village farmers like Kisan Jagtap (chairman of the original credit society) were not even intimidated by the jagirdar.

In Kordegao it was otherwise, for even to this day the larger sources of power and opportunity lie outside the village. So long as the potential power in building coalitions and institutions is much weaker than the powers which influence the village from the outside, then influence within the village lies merely with those who can manipulate access to those outside powers. The type of middlemen who have been important in Kordegao, including the patils, correspond to "brokers," middlemen who specialize in being able to "fix" things with government officials (or later, with the party politicians) (Bailey, 1969: 171-175). A broker is usually not a sponsor or founder of institutions, nor a builder of coalitions. He deals in vertical, single-interest transactions, in which he and his clients are primarily interested in their individual, short-term gains. Instead of attempting to build up a coalition for expanding and sharing power through a network of positions and arenas, the broker's basic strategy is to restrict

and monopolize access to the external sources of power. As Bailey points out (1969: 175), brokers are unlikely to evolve into real leaders when a village is cut off from the outside world. Kordegao has its place in the wider cooperative and panchayati raj institutions; but only in a formal sense, since it has very little influence over them. Comparatively lacking in economic resources and leadership, Kordegao is cut off from effective participation. It approximates the isolated, conservative, peasant village of popular fame.

Thus from 1947 to the early 1960's, some of the most influential men in the village were the headmen or their close relatives. The strongest of these leaders was Laxmanrao Chaugule, better known as Laxmanrao Patil. Laxmanrao was not actually a patil himself (like Mugutrao Patil of Olegao), but he was the son, half-brother and father of three police patils. Laxmanrao's own influence was more flexible and extensive than that of his relations. In the 1930's, owing to his father's influence in the district collector's office, Laxmanrao Patil was appointed as the talathi (salaried accountant) in a nearby village. In this position, Laxmanrao built up a valuable administrative expertise and a network of administrative contacts. These later enabled him to have his own son appointed as police patil in Kordegao, against the better claims of his half-brothers and their sons. Most village accountants, whether the traditional kulkarnis or the modern talathis, have been Brahmins. As a Maratha, Laxmanrao Patil was able to use his position not only to enrich himself but also to build up a public network of influence among Maratha leaders in the taluka. As the Kordegao police patil, Laxmanrao's father had often visited the magistrate's court of Raje Krishnasingh, the jagirdar of Olegao, and was on good personal

terms with the jagirdar. One of Laxmanrao's half-brothers was adopted by a cadet branch of the ruling family of a nearby princely state. Laxmanrao Patil was also a close friend and relative by marriage of the Maratha magnate Darekar, the one who became a perpetual anti-Congress candidate in the 1950's and was elected MLA in 1957 as a PWP nominee.

In 1952, Laxmanrao Patil was elected to the District Local board as a PWP candidate. He also held several positions in the cooperatives during the 1950's. First of all, he founded the third credit society in the village, the Sambhaji Society, in 1944, and served as its chairman for more than two decades. The old Kordegao society was long dominated by Dadasaheb Khomne, who was Laxmanrao's biggest rival. As chairman of the Sambhaji Society, Laxmanrao became a client of Maniklal Batate, and thus a member of the board of the taluka Supervising Union for five years, and chairman of the board for one year. Laxmanrao was also on the board of the taluka Purchase and Sale Union for eleven years; and for one year he was made representative from the Supervising Union to the District Central Cooperative Bank. Since these accomplishments in the 1950's, no other leader or coalition from Kordegao has moved into so many positions--in stark contrast to developments in Olegao during the 1960's.

Laxmanrao Patil had wealth and education; and he relied mainly on a network of elite contacts for his strength. He was not part of an innovative group of "bourgeois" farmers, nor of any village coalition, though he did acquire some fairly steady political clients. These latter were mainly active in the gram panchayat, which Laxmanrao did not bother to participate in directly. Two of his clients in panchayat politics were acquired as brokers, able to produce vote banks in the general elections. Their careers are discussed below.

Laxmanrao's rival, Dadasaheb Khomne, belonged to the one Khomne lineage (out of four) which shared in the rotation of the revenue patil rights. In this rotation, the Khomnes and Chaugules customarily became revenue and police patils, respectively, during the same ten-year periods; and so there was a tendency towards rivalry which has persisted under different guises even to the present day. Dadasaheb Khomne was elected as the first Sarpanch of the gram panchayat (about 1941) and served for two terms. He was chairman of the original Kordegao credit society for more than two decades and once served also as a director of the Taluka Cooperative Supervising Union. Dadasaheb Khomne's son followed him onto the gram panchayat for two terms in the 1950's, where he fought against the supporters of Laxmanrao Chaugule. In 1957 Dadasaheb's son was nearly elected Sarpanch, but he lost by a close vote to an immigrant Maratha shopkeeper with no clan ties. This person, named Pataskar, was one of Laxmanrao's clients and later became something of a power broker in his own right, as we shall see. He was elected in 1957 because Laxmanrao bribed some of the panchayat members and sequestered them before the day of the election. Compared to Olegao at the time, it was odd that Kordegao had as Sarpanch a merchant who possessed no affiliation with the major Maratha clans in the village. But then, as we shall see, the scattered clans and lineages of Kordegao remain politically disorganized to this day.

Dadasaheb's son was also defeated directly by Laxmanrao in 1952, when they were both candidates for the District Local Board. Dadasaheb's son was the candidate for the Congress party and Laxmanrao, as mentioned, was the candidate for the PWP. Dadasaheb's son was the only old Maratha member of the Congress party in Kordegao. (The others were a Muslim, a tailor

and three young Gujar merchants, all non-farming denizens of the village center.) After losing the election to the District Local Board, Dadasaheb's son was appointed to the District School Board by his party.

Laxmanrao Chaugule, Dadasaheb Khomne and Dadasaheb's son thus had no difficulty moving into the new positions which opened up in the 1950's, taking their personal feuds along with them. However, it seems clear that these new opportunities did not serve as a basis for the kind of institution-building or coalition-formation that occurred in Olegao during the same decade. The credit societies were not very successful. Panchayat elections were fought out on a short-term, ad hoc basis, much as they were in the Olegao gram panchayat during the 1960's. There were no stable coalitions large enough to make a gram panchayat election into a stable, two-sided contest. In contrast with Olegao, village alliances have not passed into a more strongly ordered phase even under the influence of a strong outside patron, the MLA.

There were various other leaders active in the 1950's, and early 1960's, including the close relations of the other patils. Kakasaheb Khalate was on the gram panchayat for two terms and was elected Sarpanch for one of them. At the same time that he was serving as Sarpanch, Kakasaheb's father was acting as police patil. Kakasaheb followed Dadasaheb Khomne as another long-term chairman of the original Kordegao credit society, and he also served at one time as a board member on the taluka Cooperative Supervising Union. A consistent supporter of the PWP (unlike Laxmanrao Chaugule, who was more of an opportunist), Kakasaheb was appointed for one term to the District School Board (DSB) by his party. Evidently as a result of his first-hand observations of the District School Board, Kakasaheb

urged the leaders of Kordegao to collect funds to build their own high school independent of DSB support, corruption, and politics. (This Kordegao has been unable to accomplish.) Kakasaheb Khalate was not consistently allied with either Laxmanrao Chaugule or Dadasaheb Khomne, though as police patils, his clan tended to feud with the other police patils, the Chaugules. Leaders of the fourth major clan, the Bhongales, also tended to have no fixed alliances. Two of the Bhongale revenue patils were at times elected members of the gram panchayat. Another Bhongale was elected to the District Local Board in 1957 as a PWP candidate. These other leaders were kept more or less in the background, in part because they belonged to the outlying hamlets where communications were slow.

Laxmanrao Chaugule died in the middle 1960's, and Dadasaheb Khomne retired from public life. Dadasaheb's son lost influence because of personal indulgences. The old Congress party committee, never very influential, had been broken up by the conflicts with Laxmanrao Chaugule and by the emigration of the merchant Congressmen to the cities. In any case the old Congress committee had never had any base among the Maratha farmers in the hamlets. Some of the hamlet leaders, like Kakasaheb Khalate, had joined the PWP to express their opposition to this old merchant-led group.

The position of revenue patil was abolished in 1962, and the police patil was made into a non-hereditary, salaried job with quite limited responsibilities. Thus there was even less of an organizing influence over village politics in the middle 1960's, since there was still no group of young, "bourgeois" farmers to take advantage of the new political opportunities. Such political influence as there was tended to gravitate towards the "brokers" in the village center--particularly after 1967 when



external contacts with the MLA became the only significant issue, both politically and economically.

The three most influential brokers have two features in common. First, they live and work in the village center, where they have much readier access to communications, visiting officials and politicians, etc. Second, they are all, one way or another, unrepresentative of the Maratha farmers who inhabit the hamlets and make up the majority of village residents.

Alibhai is a Muslim landowner who has most of his land cultivated by tenants. He operates a business in the village center as a shipper and broker of fruit crops, sent both to and from Kordegao for marketing. The Muslims make up about 3% of the village population and are concentrated in the village center. As elsewhere in this part of India, they tend to be politically cohesive and consistent supporters of the Congress party. Alibhai joined the Congress in the early 1940's; he was part of the small group of party members in Kordegao at the time.

After 1947, most of these original party members were elected to gram panchayat seats at one time or another. As mentioned above, Dadasaheb Khomne's son was active in village politics for a while, until he began to discredit himself. Another original Congressman was a young Gujar merchant, who was also elected to the gram panchayat. He later moved to Poona in search of larger business opportunities. Alibhai is the only member of the old group still active in politics. He controls a usefully solid minority vote bloc; but much of his influence also depends on his upward contacts. In the 1950's, when he was on the gram panchayat, he was a client of Laxmanrao Chaugule (even though Laxmanrao was supporting the PWP during that period).

He was elected to the gram panchayat, 1962-67; and for many years he has been the chairman of the Mandal Congress Committee, which is the basic unit of the Congress party (encompassing several villages around Kordegao). After 1967 his influence, based on outside contacts with taluka Congress party leaders, rose significantly. This was due to the appearance of the new MLA, Suresh More, and his vital project for constructing percolation tanks. As might be expected, the question of which hamlets were to benefit first from the construction of tanks became a crucial economic and political issue. Alibhai and his confederates in the village center were able to keep some of the Maratha hamlet leaders from acquiring influence over this matter.

One of Alibhai's confederates was Pataskar, the immigrant Maratha merchant who was elected Sarpanch once in the 1950's, as a client of Laxmanrao Chaugule. Pataskar drifted out of panchayat politics after Laxmanrao retired; and he began to build up his influence on the basis of personal contact with the MLA. When the MLA visited Kordegao, he often stopped at Pataskar's shop, as an informal meeting place. Supporters and supplicants came to meet him in this shop.

Pataskar has built up some influence as someone who helps to "fix" things. He advises people on their legal and extra-legal problems connected with family partitions of land, disputes between tenant and landlord, etc. He receives payments for these activities, and he also gets paid for helping to manage election campaigns for the Congress party. (It is quite common for village leaders to take payments from the party candidates for district, state and national offices. It is said that Laxmanrao Chaugule used to take payments from all the opposing candidates.) In the 1971 parliamentary election, Pataskar and Alibhai were in charge of a Congress sound

truck, which was sent to the hamlets on market day and election day, for the convenience of voters. Along with various assistants, they also set up a table and loudspeaker in the market when the MLA came to the village to campaign for the Congress MP candidate.

The third influential confederate in the village center group is Shankarrao Chaugule, the son of Laxmanrao. Shankarrao belongs, of course, to a Maratha farming family, but he is nevertheless distinguished from the majority by his occupation as the gram sevak, the government-employed secretary of the gram panchayat. Like his father, the talathi, and like his other relatives who were police patils, Shankarrao is distinguished from the rest of the Marathas by his position as a broker of administrative influence. The events considered in section C reveal the means which the gram sevak can employ to build up his influence and ruin his competitors. The strength of Shankarrao's contacts in the district administration are indicated by the fact that he is allowed to serve in his home village, contrary to the usual rules governing potential conflicts of interest.

## B. Amorphous Elections

Leadership to counterbalance the influence of the village center brokers must come from the hamlets, where the Maratha farming majority resides. Unfortunately, a general absence of leadership is evident in the conduct of the gram panchayat elections in some of the outlying wards.

In 1967 there were 37 candidates running for the 15 panchayat seats. With more than two candidates for every seat, it becomes difficult for the participants to predict the outcome even in one ward (there are three seats for each ward), much less for the village as a whole. In every ward there were attempts to set up two- or three-way alliances; and in some cases there were two opposing alliances, at least in theory. In most wards there were also a few unattached candidates. Most of the alliances were actually used like the many slates in the Olegao factory elections of the middle 1960's. That is, each candidate attempted to bargain for the support of his allies' vote blocs; and then, as often as not, they all betrayed each other at the last minute in the hope that their "allies" had thus been tricked into giving away votes in return for none. In the end, therefore, most of the voters were urged to vote only once, for their fellow lineage members, and not for an alliance of three. The voting was further fragmented by a general lack of pre-nomination compromises and settlements, even among fairly close kinsmen.

Each ward consists of a few hamlets, plus, in some cases, a section of the village center. Thus each is composed of several Maratha lineages,

clustered in their hamlets, and perhaps some of the clustered caste groups in the village center (such as the Mahars, Telis, Mangs, Muslims, etc.). Thus it is easy for the vote to fragment among many candidates, but there is also ample opportunity for organizing balanced slates.

What has actually occurred can be demonstrated by a look at a typical ward in the last two panchayat elections. In ward four there were eight candidates for three seats in the 1967 election; and in 1971 there were no less than eleven candidates. In 1967 there were two alliances, one a two-way agreement and the other a three-way agreement; the other three candidates were independents. The three-way alliance was a union of weakness rather than strength. Only one member of this group won a panchayat seat, and he belonged to Hamlet P inhabited by one of the minor Maratha clans (not part of the four patil clans). His running mates included a candidate of Mali caste from his own hamlet, and another Maratha belonging to a very small kinship group living in Hamlet D. This coalition did not have any representative from one important hamlet (Hamlet C), nor from either of the two big Chaugule lineages living in Hamlets C and D. The two candidates in the second alliance won the other two seats in this ward. Quite reasonably, these two represented the two Chaugule lineages in Hamlets C and D. However, their chances of election and their leadership skills were thrown in doubt by the presence of still another candidate, unattached, who also belonged to the Chaugules of Hamlet C. We have noted earlier that a crucial leadership task is getting superfluous candidates to withdraw from the contest. When this is accomplished and the election results made predictable, then it is easy to negotiate in advance for the sharing and rotation of positions. Ideally, a competent leader

should have the least difficulty in making these arrangements within his own lineage (or within a small local clan or caste group, as the case may be). Unfortunately, the nominations and alliances in Kordegao work like a "self-fulfilling prophecy" of disorder. There is no one with enough personal authority to supervise election agreements, no procedure for their enforcement. The many-sided competitions make the results so unpredictable that the segments of village society, such as the Maratha lineages in their various hamlets, are not able to produce a unified election strategy. In the absence of effective leadership and predictability, there are not enough incentives for the internal regulation of competition within these hamlet-lineages. This is detrimental to the interests of the hamlet-lineage as a whole, for it means that its vote bloc will be split, perhaps resulting in a defeat for both candidates and lack of representation for the group.

This problem grew to astonishing dimensions in 1971, when the same ward fielded eleven candidates. Three of these came from the Chaugules of Hamlet C and three from the Chaugules of Hamlet D. Two were from Hamlet P of the minor Maratha clan and the remaining three were from small, scattered kinship groups. There were only two coalitions, one consisting simply of the three Chaugules from Hamlet C and the other of the three Chaugules from Hamlet D. This was the complete antithesis of balanced slate-making. Only two Chaugules were elected, and they were both from Hamlet D. The leaders of Hamlet C had discarded nearly all chances to represent their group by confining their coalition to it alone. The same was probably true for Hamlet D, in a more indirect sense, because past examples make it almost certain that Hamlet D will be "punished" in the

next election. This punishment will occur because the leaders of Hamlet C will be in a mood to make all feasible concessions to the other vote blocs in the ward, just in order to deprive Hamlet D of any seats in the next election.

### C. Obstacles to the Pluralist Process

Outright opposition to the village center brokers has naturally come from one or two Maratha farmers living in the hamlets. The most significant opposition leader was Anandrao Khomme, who was elected Sarpanch in 1967. Anandrao was not part of Dadasaheb Khomme's lineage or hamlet, so his family was not involved in the old patil rotations and feuds. Nevertheless, Anandrao was another Khomme who challenged the old clients and son of Laxmanrao Chaugule.

Anandrao was a young man of 35 years, living in a Khomme hamlet three miles from the village center. He and his brothers and uncles farm 80 acres together, including some citrus trees and sugar cane. They are prosperous and progressive, as dry-village farmers go. Anandrao himself, with a high-school education, exemplifies some of the constructive "bourgeois" virtues. Given his age, wealth, education, and status as a farmer from a major Maratha clan, Anandrao would be ideally suited to bring some innovations and new forms of stability into the political life of the village. Given enough others of his kind (such as appeared over two generations in Olegao during the 1950's and '60's), Anandrao might have accomplished what he intended. But Kordegao did not produce a whole generation of young "bourgeois" leaders; and given the fragmented geographic and clan structure of the village, more than one such leader was certainly required.

In his school days, Anandrao was much influenced by a religious teacher living in his hamlet. As a young man of earnest principles, he



helped to settle a running quarrel between three sections of his hamlet-lineage. He also played the leading role in persuading the entire hamlet, landowners and landless workers alike, to contribute their labor and bullock carts in building a motorable road from the village center to the hamlet. The road was of value to all the residents, for communication with the market; but in fact it is often difficult to get Indian villagers to contribute to a public utility which all may benefit from. (By comparison, Hamlet D had a comparatively wealthy farmer who offered to give 5,000 rupees to help build a drinking-water reservoir for the hamlet. However, other families in the hamlet refused to put up their smaller shares because they did not want to drink "charitable water.") Thus Anandrao very properly earned credit for getting the road to his hamlet completed by voluntary contributions.

In 1967, therefore, he was elected to the gram panchayat and was then elected sarpanch. In his election to the panchayat, he formed a three-way coalition in his ward and was opposed by three independent candidates. All three members of the coalition were elected--an unusual example of good planning and leadership. While this resulted from leadership in the hamlet, his election to the sarpanch seat resulted more from a static battle of attrition. Initially there were two Chaugules from two different hamlets vying for the required eight votes. After some manoeuvring, one held seven votes and the other six. Anandrao Kohmne held the two deciding votes. The weaker Chaugule felt that his position was eroding, so he and Anandrao came to terms, with the latter becoming sarpanch, the former deputy sarpanch. These coalitions were not based on any pre-existing alliances or social networks, but were rather the product of chance, of whoever happened to have been elected to the panchayat and of what forms of monetary

or social pressure could be used on them in each individual case. These were action-sets; the followers did not feel any ties to each other, but only, for a short while, to their leaders.

Anandrao Khomne was re-elected to the gram panchayat in 1971, but he had no chance of winning the sarpanch seat again. The story of how he lost credit as a leader is illuminating. In 1967 there was a meeting of the Kordegao village leaders with Suresh More, the MLA, and the leaders of the taluka panchayat samiti. Construction of the proposed percolation tanks was the topic of discussion, and the representatives of the different hamlets naturally disagreed as to where the first tanks should be built. Eventually an informal agreement was worked out, whereby each hamlet was expected to donate a certain number of rupees, in proportion to its population, to the high school construction fund which was just being set up. Anandrao Khomne's hamlet was assessed 3,000 rupees, as were several others. As at least some of the leaders present understood the agreement, the first hamlet to contribute its full assessment to the high school fund would receive first priority in tank construction, and so on down the list. Anandrao quickly paid the 3,000 rupees out of his own pocket, expecting that the other families in his hamlet would reimburse him for their shares whenever they were able. However, no tank was built near Anandrao Khomne's hamlet that year or in the years following, including the famine years of 1970-71. The village-center brokers gave elaborate technical explanations for this neglect, some of which were cogent. (For example, the tank site near Anandrao's hamlet would not benefit any other hamlets as well; and there was already one half-constructed tank near the village center, left over from a famine relief work.) But the real explanation was not technical but political:

the central brokers succeeded in driving a wedge of mistrust between the sarpanch and the MLA.

Anandrao was a friend of Kakasaheb Khalate, the older leader from another one of the hamlets. They were elected to the panchayat together in 1967. Khalate, who had been on the District School Board, was the one who was pushing for a collection for the high school. He was a strong opponent of the village-center brokers, and he accused Alibhai of having misappropriated funds used for constructing a dispensary while he was on the gram panchayat (1962-67). Unfortunately, Khalate died in 1970, just when Anandrao Khomme needed his support.

After Anandrao was elected sarpanch, the central brokers began to make much of the fact that he had just been a member of the board of the taluka Cooperative Supervising Union for two years, and that he sold his sugar cane to the Nageshwar cooperative sugar factory. Both of these facts implied a connection with Maniklal Batate, and the brokers used them to suggest that Anandrao was not a loyal supporter of the MLA. These suggestions were conveyed through their contacts among the panchayat samiti and taluka Congress leaders. Anandrao's only contact was with the MLA himself, not with his clients. Ironically, the sarpanch was placed in a double squeeze. After supporting More in his campaign against Batate's brother (1967), Anandrao found that the Nageshwar factory somehow forgot to send trucks to pick up his sugar cane after it was harvested. The cane dried up in the fields and lost a lot of its weight and value. This price which he paid for supporting More was later used against him by the central brokers, for they claimed that Batate was able to force Anandrao to become his client again by the threat of future harm to his cane crops. Anandrao rather ineptly gave substance to these allegations later on.

Even his contribution to the high school was not a politic move. Very few of the individual farmers could do as well, and his hasty gesture was probably more discouraging to collective efforts than otherwise. The idea behind the agreement was to get small donations pouring in from every side, to be added up competitively as soon as possible. (It was not assumed that every hamlet would be able to achieve its full assessment in one year.) When they saw the first position snatched so suddenly, with no collective effort at all, the other hamlets became fed up. After all, they reasoned, if Anandrao can give so much himself, he doesn't need a tank as much as we do. His intentions were good, but they were easily made to look greedy. He did not foresee these reactions nor did he understand the need to bargain and cajole, to form alliances. He believed that leadership consists in setting a good example--an outlook typical of "bourgeois" values and also probably influenced by Gandhi's example.

By 1970, several tanks were under construction in <sup>Kor</sup> ~~Ad~~degao, but none in Anandrao's hamlet or in the hamlet (D) of his deputy sarpanch. Being unable to provide for their own lineage supporters certainly tended to undermine their leadership. Anandrao had been reimbursed by others in his hamlet for their shares in the high school donation; but he felt obliged to return these shares, since they had been pledged with the understanding that they would obtain a percolation tank in return. Meanwhile, the sarpanch was acting as chairman of the high school committee and personally supervising the construction. He kept his own accounts of the expenditures on cement and other valuable materials, expecting in this way to protect the project from peculations. However, Anandrao's assumptions were a bit naive. He only scrutinized his own accounts to satisfy himself, and he even added

money out of his pocket to keep the project going. Unfortunately, he did not think to confirm everything in the public account books, handled by the gram sevak (panchayat secretary). The panchayat secretary, Shankarrao Chaugule, contrived to make Anandrao appear to be an embezzler.

The construction fund had received 5,000 rupees, in 1970, from the district council. A rumor was circulated that Anandrao took advantage of this to reimburse himself for part of his fruitless 3,000 rupee donation. When the panchayat books were examined, 1,000 rupees were unaccounted for. Most likely, this sum was not missing at all but had been spent on the construction. All the panchayat secretary had to do was to destroy some receipts and not record the transactions. The best-informed neutral observer was certain that Anandrao was too level-headed, as well as too honest, to have taken the money; and this agreed with my own assessment. However, there was no way for Anandrao to recoup the credit he lost as a result of this whispered accusation. Since he could not be admired for adroitness, much of his reputation as a leader depended on his simple honesty.

At about this time, the panchayat secretary accused Anandrao of trying to get him transferred. The prospective transfer was blocked by the secretary's administrative contacts.

Meanwhile, in 1970 the local representative to the taluka panchayat samiti died and a by-election was scheduled. The constituency included several villages around Kordegao and the electors consisted of the panchayat members from these villages. In Kordegao alone there were three who wanted to run for this office: the sarpanch, the deputy sarpanch, and Sopanrao Chaugule, who had been the third candidate for the sarpanch seat in 1967. Sopanrao had a growing reputation because in 1969 he had arranged for an electric line

to be brought to the village center, by means of a personal contact in the administration and a bribe of 500 rupees. These three candidates could not settle on who should run for the panchayat samiti seat, so they went to the MLA to have him choose among them. This the MLA would not do (just as Mugutrao Jagtap refused to choose between two of his clients for the election of the Olegao sarpanch in 1971). A patron supports his clients against outside competitors but prefers not to be forced to settle these internal competitions, because he may antagonize the loser or be put under obligation to him for asking him to withdraw. As the largest village in the vicinity, Kordegao should have put up the strongest candidate; but the three leaders still could not agree on who was to withdraw. Therefore, the MLA selected a leader from a nearby small village to represent his group in the election. This candidate was opposed by another, also from outside Kordegao, who was known to be loyal to the Batates. When the votes were cast, Batate's man received four votes. It was immediately rumored that Anandrao Khomme had cast one of the votes against the MLA's nominee, though Anandrao denied this.

Whatever the difficulties of compromising, Anandrao certainly blundered when he failed to reach a settlement with Sopanrao Chaugule and the deputy sarpanch on who was to be the candidate from Kordegao. Regardless of his virtues, or the faults of his enemies, he could not be a good village leader or a good client of the MLA (the two accomplishments had to go together at this time) if he did not have the strength and tact to produce an agreement over so simple a matter. This was a display of weakness, and the panchayat samiti leaders found it convenient to act as though they believed the

rumor that Anandrao had voted for Batate's candidate. They went out of their way to snub Anandrao when they visited Kordegao in the company of the MLA. Anandrao got upset, and he fell into their trap.

Since there had been no tank constructed near Anandrao's hamlet up to 1970, the Batates decided to take advantage of the situation by sending an engineer of their own to survey the site. Plans and estimates were drawn up and submitted to the district council for approval as a famine relief work. The district council did not take any action. In the meantime, one of the Batate brothers happened to win a seat in the state Legislative Council in a by-election, as mentioned in Chapter 7. This brother was one of the state leaders of an opposition party, but he won the election by procuring votes from the various Congress party factions in the district which were disgruntled with the Congress nominee. This indiscipline among the district Congress leaders caused a lot of anger in the state party leadership; Suresh More's own sponsor was particularly incensed. Thus Anandrao Khomme committed a disastrous blunder when he decided, in his anger at the MLA's supporters and their accusation, to invite Batate's brother to Kordegao for a reception in honor of his victory. The reception was headed by the sarpanch and deputy sarpanch and by some other hamlet leaders who were disgruntled with the MLA and his supporters. They were seeking a more responsive patron, and they justified this by suggesting that the village could benefit if the two patrons were competing to provide improvements. This appealing theory was not really testable in practice, however, since the Batates did not command many resources outside the cooperatives.

This point was driven home by the 1971 parliamentary election, in which the youngest Batate brother ran as an independent candidate against

the Congress nominee, who was backed by the MLA. The sarpanch and deputy sarpanch campaigned earnestly for Batate in Kordegao, but they probably did not produce many votes. The vote counts, which were announced by taluka units only, went heavily against Batate. Most of the relatively impartial observers in Kordegao felt that Batate secured few votes in their village, because after all he did not control the allocation of percolation tanks and nobody wanted to anger the MLA.

After the parliamentary election, the deputy sarpanch went with a delegation from his hamlet to the MLA to beg forgiveness and ask once again for a percolation tank. They also got in touch with a distant relative in Poona who happened to be a relative of a state Congress leader; and perhaps as a result of this circuitous prompting, the MLA agreed to put their hamlet on the list for a tank.

Later in 1971, the sarpanch and deputy sarpanch were both re-elected to the gram panchayat, but they had no hope of staying in command. Sopanrao Chaugule, a loyal MLA supporter and friend of the central brokers, became the new sarpanch. Anandrao ran for a seat on the Shetipur agricultural marketing committee that year, still as a Batate sympathizer. He was again defeated by a supporter of the MLA.



#### D. Conclusions

Anandrao Khomme at least converted his lineage-hamlet into a steady support group, which was an accomplishment in Kordegao. With others like himself, he might have formed an effective village-wide coalition, but he certainly lacked the talent for doing this job alone.

It is interesting that the advent of the new MLA provided a point of balance and stability in Olegao village and factory politics while it had, if anything, the opposite effect in Kordegao. The reasons for this have been mentioned earlier: there was a weak network of local institutions in Kordegao (particularly a lack of strong cooperatives); and there was no vigorous generation of young "bourgeois" farmers to found and manage such institutions. Because the cooperatives are economically ineffectual, they do not provide patronage resources to the Kordegao leaders, nor a set of common economic interests to bind them together.

Managing the allocation of percolation tanks did not serve as an adequate substitute for managing big cooperatives. Once the tanks are built, they require no organization or leadership. As they are built, there is no way to share the site priorities; the site list invites atomistic competition among the hamlets, not coalition-formation. The competition for priority on the site list is a perfect example of a zero-sum game. Clearly, the agreement tying site priorities to high school contributions was an effort to blunt this hard fact. The first beneficiaries from the tank program would also be benefactors to the others by means of their

contributions. Unfortunately, this effort to make the competition into a non-zero-sum game was an unqualified failure--partly because of leadership problems, partly because the stakes were too high in the tank-construction part of the deal. Atomistic competition for a fixed prize is, of course, the ideal situation from the point of view of the brokers. Even the "natural" segments of village society, the lineage-hamlets, are not internally cohesive. The present-day relations of production are individualistic, and there are no economic institutions or political interests to counterbalance this individualism. Thus political strategies, in the gram panchayat elections for example, tend to be disorderly and counterproductive. Instead of using the internal cohesion of social segments as a basis for balanced slate-making, the leaders in ward four (for example) alternated between mixed slates which split the hamlets internally and single-hamlet slates which split the ward into uncompromising segments. Both extremes express an inability to regulate internal competition and a consequent inability to predict the outcomes of multilateral contests.

Since the Kordegao leaders cannot organize themselves into effective bargaining units, they are at a great disadvantage in negotiating with the MLA. They become a mass of individuals, like a theatre audience all striving to rush out of one exit. The crucial role then becomes that of gatekeeper, the broker who can monopolize access to the MLA and subvert the contacts made by others. The brokers succeed by the manipulation of administrative contacts, plus the same kind of manipulation now extended to local party politicians. It is appropriate that the three central brokers were previously connected with Laxmanrao Chaugule--"Laxmanrao Patil." Political influence is still handled in Kordegao in much the same ways

as it was under the old patils. Because there are no cohesive vote blocs or coalitions, the main source of power is still external to the village, as it was fifty years ago.

It seems evident that the disorganized aspects of Kordegao politics replicate the unattractive features of factionalism in some other Indian villages. In fact, competition in Kordegao corresponds to a special kind of factionalism, called "pervasive factionalism." According to Siegal and Beals, "The extreme or ideal case of pervasive factionalism would involve conflict between unorganized and transient groupings" (1960: 399). Thus Kordegao would seem to be an extreme or ideal case of this kind. Of course the very size of the village, which tends to create disunity in the first place, dampens the intensity of these conflicts, so that most of the hamlet dwellers are not forced to take sides most of the time. The air is not poisoned with personal bickering and insults, the way it might be in a small community. Siegal and Beals suggest that, "Only in the case of pervasive factionalism would cooperation within smaller sub-groups decline or cease to occur" (1960: 399). Unity has not disappeared within the Kordegao hamlets; but their participation in gram panchayat elections reveals a definite weakness of cooperation and coordination even among members of a single lineage. The alliances which do occur are very transient--action-sets of short duration. "Victory was usually followed by betrayal and the renewal of hostilities along new alignments" (Siegal and Beals, 1960: 397).

Thus recent political changes in Kordegao have tended not to generate a pluralist process but rather an elitist machine process. The villagers can receive definite economic benefits from the political system, in return for their support of the MLA and the Congress party; but they have

no opportunities to bargain over the allocation of those resources, nor can they influence the political manoeuverings which affect those allocations. Thus the village leaders were unable to form even a simple, short-term coalition in support of a candidate for the panchayat samiti by-election; and the election was decided purely according to the MLA's dictates. The MLA's clients are very dependent and atomistically divided --not only due to their own weaknesses but also because of the manipulations of the village-center brokers. Thus there is none of the pluralism which is evident at Olegao, where coalitions are being formed and expanded and new support-groups are frequently mobilized.

## CHAPTER IX

### POLITICS AND DEVELOPMENT

Bernard Cohn has pointed out that eighteenth century India was a segmentary society, and that the segments of which it was composed were constantly competing against each other for power and authority (1962: 313). There seems to have been a constant interplay of competition and alliances directed both vertically and horizontally. For example, there were the Rajput lineages which in parts of northern India controlled all the village lands in the taluka where the lineage was settled. In some areas these lineages were united horizontally in order to resist the vertical pressure of domination from some outside official or raja. In other cases, or other periods of time, the lineages were torn by bitter feuds among their members (Cohn, 1962: 316-317). (These processes are discussed at length in Fox, 1971.)

This interplay between vertical and horizontal processes can also be discerned in the economic structure of the traditional society. Writing about northern India in the seventeenth century, Habib concludes that,

. . . the village was deeply affected by the requirements of commodity production (i.e., production for the market) and yet had to provide all its own needs from within itself. Conditions of money economy and self-sufficiency, therefore, existed side by side. It was the presence of these two contradictory elements that probably accounted for the social contradiction manifest in the existence of an individualistic mode of production in agriculture, on the one hand, and the organization of the Village Community, on the other (1963: 119).

The relations of production were not entirely individualistic either, since part of what held the village community together was the jajmani (or baluta) system, which provided specialized services to the farmers on a non-monetized basis. In any case, Habib has pointed out the interplay between the vertical pressure from the tax collector (which drew agricultural produce out of the village and into the regional market economy) and the more horizontal community relations which kept the village self-sufficient in other respects.

In the 19th and 20th centuries, many of these horizontal cohesive mechanisms have diminished or disappeared. The baluta system is no longer useful in the Shetipur canal villages; and the land-controlling lineages over most of India have lost their revenue-collecting, judicial and military functions--as a result of the British administrative systems and also because of the expansion of commercial agriculture and opportunities for individual economic mobility. Nevertheless, the historical references above are apposite. It may be said that the landholding clans and lineages have passed through a period of latency and are now enjoying a revival, in some areas, in the realm of patronage machine politics.

### A. Dialectical Progress

Most of this thesis has been concerned with political changes among the peasant landowners, especially in the canal villages, because these changes have been most dramatic and decisive. These peasant-caste farmers have undergone a series of dialectical processes. In the first place, some of them were converted into institutional clients under the original credit schemes and the Purchase and Sale Union, the old private sugar factory, the Shahu Maratha boarding house for students, etc. This process was facilitated and strengthened by elite patronage manipulated by local aristocrats, magnates and minor bureaucrats. In this process, the only broad coalition was in the informal collaboration among the different segments of the local elite network.

After independence, a new rural elite became significant: the bourgeois village farmers. In and around Olegao, these farmers formed their own coalitions and set up new development institutions, such as the new credit societies, the Olegao high school, and also (with the patronage and collaboration of the magnates) the cooperative sugar factories. This represented a substantial democratization and decentralization of political power; but the informal processes within these institutions continued on the elite patronage framework. Leadership positions were allotted by elite-council consensus and the rest of the village farmers were treated as institutional clients--as a passive, undifferentiated mass of beneficiaries.

The reactions against this elitist process came in many big and small ways. Kisan Jagtap welded the old credit society members into an interest group, which had to struggle against some of the arbitrary and uneconomic decisions of the jagirdar and his Brahmin staff. Thus a group of institutional clients was converted to a populist support group by one of their own kind. This group was able to defend its interests because Kisan Jagtap obtained access to some of the district cooperative officials. Reaction against the elite process often required the assistance of one elite segment against another. This is demonstrated by another event which occurred at about the same time, the boycott against the proposed new policy of the irrigation department. This boycott was based on the common interests of the sugar cane farmers, who were already the institutional clients of the irrigation department. The boycott was made possible, though, by the leadership of the big magnates, who were usually involved in informal collaboration with the local officials. As members of the irrigation advisory committee, the magnates were elite middlemen; but the proposed policy change drove them to set the opposite process in motion against their normal allies, the department officials.

Much broader populist reactions emerged in the non-Brahmin movement, which later merged with the nationalist movement. Again, the non-Brahmin movement depended heavily on the support of some elite segments--the local Maratha aristocrats and magnates. Indeed, this dependency on elite patronage precluded a true mass movement in the Shetipur area. The Shahu Maratha boarding house was elite-sponsored and entirely apolitical. Deokate, the Dhangar teacher, was the only local non-Brahmin leader who steadily attended meetings, organized processions and spoke out against all forms of caste



discrimination. It is hardly surprising that he failed to garner much support from the elite patrons who were supporting the Shahu Maratha hostel. Partly due to this lack of resources, Deokate's institutional clients, connected with his Ahilyabai hostel, did not convert into an effective support group. (Probably they were too poor and too few and concerned with their own individual career opportunities outside Shetipur taluka.)

The nationalist movement had a much broader mobilizing effect on the village farmers, though not to the extent that it appeared to. Some of the top nationalist leaders believed that the fervor of the movement would even carry over into a post-independence spirit of revitalization, and that the villages would be almost spontaneously ready for progress toward economic self-sufficiency, consensual leadership, and social justice. The impact of the Congress movement in Shetipur was far more superficial. The activist freedom fighters did not build up a strong horizontal support coalition in the villages; and they later failed in their personal opportunities to manipulate institutional patronage resources and elite connections. On the other hand, they did help to open up such old, elite-dominated institutions as the taluka Purchase and Sale Union to competitive pressures from below. They converted the institutional farmer-clients into competing support groups. As this example shows, the populist reaction against the old colonial elite system came to fruition not in a mass revialization but in a dialectical rebound into the intermediate processes of pluralist machine politics.

The establishment of the Olegao cooperative sugar factory involved a dual process. On the one hand, there was the mobilization of a broad support-group among the cane farmers of thirteen villages. On the other hand, the big magnates supplied some of the elite connections needed in dealing

with external agencies; and the large village farmers filled out the leadership network. This dual process of support mobilization and elite-network leadership constituted a "pluralist" process. This pluralism became even more evident after some of the leaders began to mobilize support from various minority groups among the shareholders.

After initially organizing the shareholders, the next concern of the factory leaders was to influence the employment pattern, thus creating strong vertical relationships within the factory system. In competing for this influence, the Marathas took advantage of their numbers and thus set in motion two cross-cutting reactions. One was a reaction by the business-minded shareholders against wholesale nepotism; and the other was the reaction of the minority castes. These reactions intersected temporarily and effectively in the 1960 non-Maratha coalition; but between 1960 and 1967 the factory did not find a top leader who could coordinate the political and economic interests of the competing factions. The 1960 coalition did constitute an important step, however, for it began the conversion of the minority caste groups into active interest groups with a proven ability to influence the elections; thus their representatives were recognized as important in election negotiations, and they were allowed to influence the employment patronage process. This had the additional consequence of provoking intense competition for leadership within many of the caste/kinship groups, which contributed to the free-floating nature of the coalitions between 1960 and 1967. Generally speaking, political loyalty was hoped for within the larger Maratha lineages; or else within an entire clan in a smaller village; or even within an entire minority caste across several villages. But the appearance of internal competition sometimes up-

set these expectations. Even brothers were competitors, on occasion. Painful experience naturally showed that internal competition could prove a general loss for the entire sub-group. Thus the foundations of factory leadership were being laid first in the villages, where those leaders capable of producing unity and compromise among their nearest competitors would gain a clear advantage in the larger field.

That is why two leaders from Olegao village--Mugutrao Patil and Namdev Gawde--became top leaders in the sugar factory by the end of the 1960's. It is also the reason why the two medium-sized Dhangar clans, in two other villages, gained influence in the 1970 election. These clans had demonstrated the ability to deliver a solid bloc of votes, with no deviations caused by internal dissension. (One reason for their internal control was defensive: the need to uphold their interests in competition with the Marathas.)

The conversion of institutional clients to support groups and the establishment of general coalition-control was a dialectical process in Olegao village. It began with young Namdev Gawde's attack on the bourgeois elite which was controlling the big credit society. Gawde converted the minority castes and some of the neglected Maratha lineages into potentially aggressive support groups. Simultaneously, he thrust a new generation of leaders into the establishment. Thereafter, these groups and new leaders were given their due in the consensual rotation of committee positions. However, the competition between Dhangars and Marathas remained a potentially polarizing issue, partly because the Dhangars had been so successful in the factory election. The big society split apart; but the antagonism was dropped after Mugutrao Patil and Gawde melded their

complementary abilities into a very effective coalition. This coalition then succeeded simultaneously in several arenas when the Olegao village leaders attached themselves to the MLA. In the sugar factory, the MLA was able to produce a unified, multicasite coalition, just as Gawde and Mugutrao Patil had done in their village. In each case, the ability to throw off atomistic, zero-sum competition was dependent on the possibilities of gaining control of other arenas--on the chances of pyramiding their resources.

Progress on these fronts meant that the local leaders could also throw off the bonds of domination by the district Congress party organization. The DCC, which had imposed an undesirable MLA candidate on Shetipur in 1962, was punished for failing to nominate Gawde to the district council in 1967. This was the first sign of progress toward a balanced relationship between the local leaders and the DCC--a reaction from elite patronage toward the pluralist process, in which the local leaders could bargain effectively for their interests.

The landowners in Kordegao, the dry village, have not profited from the same processes. A weak economy means weak development institutions; consequently, they have lost the first opportunity, which is to become institutional clients in an effective institutional framework. Nor could these institutions be taken over by a vigorous class of bourgeois farmers. Consequently, the ordinary farmers had to suffer as an undifferentiated, atomistic mass of clients (or potential clients) in relation to the old patils and their brokers.

After 1967 the new MLA helped to ameliorate this situation a bit. There was a rudimentary dialectic connected with his tank construction program,

for this was partly stimulated by, and founded on, the previous organizing efforts of his elder brother. This brother had made some progress toward converting the dry farmers to a broad interest-group coalition, expressed through support of the PWP against the Congress. (However, part of the PWP support in Kordegao village was due to Laxmanrao Patil's elite connection with the Maratha magnate who was the PWP candidate for MLA and also to the opposition of the Maratha farmers to the Gujar merchants who formed the nucleus of the old Congress committee.) As in many nascent populist processes, this new class-based support-group evaporated after the death of the organizer. However, the young MLA picked up the threads of this older coalition in his election campaign of 1967. His percolation tank projects offered for the first time a really important framework for institutional clienteles. The question of priority of locations served to convert hamlet residents into active interest groups. Unfortunately, this was objectively a zero-sum game. The proposal for linking high school contributions to the construction schedule was an attempt to turn the situation into a positive-sum game; but the common interest in the high school was much too weak to override the conflicting interests regarding the tank sites. (This confirms the observation that public utilities of the health-education-welfare type are second in consideration to matters of agricultural production.)

Thus coalitions between hamlets were rendered even more problematic than before. In the 1971 grampanchayat elections, there was a trend for election slates to be formed entirely within single hamlet-lineages, reflecting the inter-hamlet competition for tanks. But this unity within hamlets will probably evaporate after the tanks are all built, because there is no real

premium on hamlet unity in external competition. (In other words, there are no significant opportunities to pyramid leadership control of a hamlet into control of larger arenas.) Moreover, as we observed with regard to the cooperative sugar factory, unity of the local kin group is useful for establishing external coalitions; but it can become self-defeating if it is used to exclude other groups from negotiations.

Thus the hamlets and their leaders in Kordegao continue in a state of atomistic competition, which is quite well-suited to the designs of the village-center brokers. Brokers can manipulate successfully only in a situation where the main power is external, with no horizontal, populist coalition-forming as a counterbalance. Thus a few elite contacts (among the taluka leaders close to the MLA) make it possible to constrict and monopolize access to the external power-source.

Anandrao Khomne, the sarpanch from 1967 to 1971, tried to manoeuver around these brokers and set up a competitive patron-client network, with himself as middleman. Unfortunately, Khomne not only lacked the broad-based support needed to give votes to the Batate family, but the latter, as alternative patrons, did not actually have much control over the district council or taluka panchayat samiti. As a specialized boss of the cooperatives, Maniklal Batate has been unable to build up much influence in these development councils; and despite his promises he is unable to offer percolation tanks to non-supporters of the MLA. Thus access to more water still depends on a rigidly hierarchical, zero-sum game.

Locally, the Scheduled Castes movement did not develop a solid base before 1947 (though more was accomplished in other parts of Maharashtra).

Local leaders did participate in demonstrations in other areas, such as the temple-entry movement at Nasik (1930-35).

The broad effects of the movement elsewhere have created a dialectical rebound, so that local Scheduled Caste leaders can obtain patronage benefits from the political system. In some cases, these benefits accrue by means of a pluralist process. The Buddhist-Mahars, for example, have a strong minority party of their own (the RPI), which is usually anti-Congress. However, in the 1967 district council elections and the 1971 parliamentary election, the RPI made an election pact with the Congress. This meant that the local RPI leaders obtained much better access to the MLA and the administrative officials in the taluka and district headquarters. The Buddhist-Mahars were constructing a school and student hostel at that time, and the project received many donations from big farmers and town Congressmen, as well as special grants from the state government. This was not elite patronage because the Buddhist-Mahars were bargaining with a solid bloc of votes which they could just as easily withhold from the Congress.

However, the other low castes around Shetipur are trapped in an elitist machine system. Having no party of their own, they can only vote Congress and support the big-shots in municipal politics. In return, they receive support for cooperative housing projects, and in a few cases for cooperative farming societies (which are mostly unsuccessful). They also receive the services of a semi-official welfare worker, who investigates cases of discrimination and organizes labor cooperatives, cobblers' and ropemakers' societies, etc. However, this is all piecemeal, elite patronage, made available through various ramified networks (especially in town). The net effect is to divide the low castes rather than unify them. This is the

dialectical result of a populist movement in which the leaders "sell out" quickly to the establishment.

On the other hand, even less has been accomplished on behalf of the landless agricultural workers as a class (largely composed of Marathas and other peasant castes). In emergencies, these workers can obtain elite patronage in small doses (loans, medical service, etc.) from their employers, the middle and large irrigated farmers. For sites for their huts, grazing land for their goats, etc., these workers are also dependent on the generosity of their employers; and thus they vote according to their employers' wishes. There is no opposition party from which they can even have steady communication, much less local support and patronage. Jagganath Unde, working for the PSP, has attempted to be the exception to this rule. Indeed, for one day he converted the cane contract workers into an interest-group; but the group did not endure when the various teams went out the next day to bargain separately with their employers.

In the 1971 gram panchayat election, Unde and his supporters demonstrated that they could use the voting process for the sake of their own class interests. However, to make an impact on the village elections in the future, they are going to need more than one good candidate. And Unde must have some real support from his party, particularly with regard to the general elections. In the 1971 parliamentary campaign, the PSP did not even have a settled policy regarding which candidate in Shetipur they would support.

The factory workers in Olegao benefit from a more dialectical situ-



ation. Those connected with local landowning families are of course involved with the pluralist machine process in factory politics. The others have at least a formal union organization, the PSP local led by Unde. In theory this union was organizing in populist reaction against the patronage system in the factory; but in practice the PSP union was also involved in the local pluralist process. This was because of the rivalry of Maniklal Batate and his Nageshwar factory against the leaders of the Olegao factory. Batate was planning to have his workers enrolled in the PSP local, which would give that union enough votes to oust the Congress-affiliated union in a new fight for recognition. This threat, in turn, entailed its own reaction within the pluralist process, for a socialist organizer for the Congress was sent to the Olegao factory by the MLA. Whatever the outcome between the PSP and Congress unions, it was clear that the recognized union would in future be much stronger in Olegao factory politics. Thus the factory workers, or a broad section of them, were on their way to being converted to an active interest group, as the result of a dialectical interaction between the populist and pluralist processes.

## B. Dialectical Phases of Factionalism

There is no general agreement on the definition of factions and factionalism. The issue is made especially complicated for a study of middlemen by the divergence of outlooks held by anthropologists, who tend to discuss factions in terms of self-enclosed arenas having no effective, formal political organization (e.g., Bailey, 1969: 51-55; Nicholas, 1966: 196), and by political scientists, on the other hand, who usually discuss the subject in terms of successful political parties and multilevel patronage systems (e.g., Weiner, 1967; Brass, 1965; Graham, 1968). Siegal and Beals identify three different types of factionalism which appear in different types of arenas or under different conditions of stress: party factionalism, schismatic factionalism, and pervasive factionalism (1960: 394). The latter variety, as we have noted, corresponds to the situation in Kordegao village. Party factionalism is, of course, the variety which is studied mostly by political scientists. It is difficult to say what label if any, applies to the factional competitions and coalitions which have occurred in the Olegao sugar factory and the other local arenas connected with it (cf., Baviskar, 1971).

Most researchers would probably agree that factions involve patron-client relations and also frequently involve a coalition or clique at the top. In other words, factionalism is a typical result of the elite patronage process and also of the pluralist machine process. The process of support-group mobilization, on the other hand, seems inconsistent with most examples of factionalism.

There are at least two competing points of view on the causes of Congress party factionalism at the district level--a subject which has been investigated in many parts of India (e.g., Brass, 1965; Weiner, 1967; Sisson, 1972; Carras, 1972). We are not interested in district politics as such here, but the issue has some relevance for the discussion of factions in arenas such as the Olegao sugar factory. The most commonly accepted view of district factions has been expressed by Brass: "Factions are vertical structures of power oriented towards influence, that is, towards the establishment of links which will provide for the transmission of favors and services" (1965: 244). Thus factionalism is the result of competition for patronage resources and tends to be antithetical to the formation of horizontal interest groups. "The factional structure of the Congress party organization may be an inhibiting factor in the development of interest group organization in Uttar Pradesh. Factions are alternative forms of political organization to interest groups and are based upon conflicting principles" (Brass, 1965: 244). This is the viewpoint which I prefer to use.

The competing point of view is that district Congress factions are the result of divergences in (horizontal) class interests (Carras, 1972). Carras connects these divergent interests with two "constituencies," which are related to the political system in different ways. One of these is the "economic constituency," centered on the class of urban industrialists. Through taxation and other channels, this class provides much of the liquid capital needed by the government to operate its development programs. On the other hand, there is the "political constituency," which is largely dominated by the dispersed rural farming population, and whose political support is

necessary to legitimate the government's programs (Carras, 1972: 20-22). The "political constituency" is most strongly represented, of course, in the agricultural cooperatives. The interaction of these divergent interests is described as follows:

Support from the 'political constituency' is needed for the legitimation of societal goals, and support from the 'economic constituency' for ensuring access to resources needed for the attainment of societal goals. When conflicting pressures issuing from these 'constituencies' . . . converge in any particular arena of political or governmental activity, a disturbance may result which disrupts a previously existing state of equilibrium. One such disturbance is the common political phenomenon studied here, namely, factionalism (Carras, 1972: 22).

Carras' study centers on the very first election of district councils in Maharashtra state (1962), which followed the general restructuring of the local development councils. She found a general pattern, more evident in some districts than in others, of new leaders from among the class of large farmers (often with a political base in the cooperatives), who arose to challenge the older district politicians (who were usually in control of the District Congress Committees). The latter leaders were often more urban-based and were sometimes associated with private commercial enterprises in the cities, though the pattern does not appear to be as clear-cut as she maintains. (For a full critique, see Rosenthal, 1972.) The upstart challengers included men like Batate, who had already taken over the District Central Cooperative Bank for the rural interests.

In one sense, this thesis is not new, for researchers have pointed out the decisive shift in political balance from the cities to the rural areas in many parts of India. However, Carras has taken a novel stance in her thesis that it is this shift in the balance between urban and rural-based politicians which gives definition to district council factions across

the state. Unfortunately, her data are all synchronic, which is a weakness if we consider the situation to be one of gradual accommodation between an established and a rising political elite. Secondly, her attention is mainly fixed on the socioeconomic backgrounds and opinions of the district councillors, not on factional activities in the councils themselves. Thirdly, although her theory of state politics covers many levels of politics and government, her observations do not include the details of actual transactions between politicians operating at the taluka, district and state levels. Thus she is able to analyze the district councils as isolated, segmentary arenas.

Our concern here is not to settle this question at the district level, but to apply it to the discussion of local politics in Shetipur taluka. Many changes discussed in the preceding chapters have involved the growth of the political power of the village landowning class. The antagonists to the rising interests of this class were usually not an "economic constituency" but rather one elite group or another. Nevertheless, it is useful to ask whether the advancement of this class interest was a basic cause of factionalism in the local arenas. To some extent it was.

The first manifestations of this class interest, in the present narrative, were in Kisan Jagtap's reactions against the jagirdar and his Brahmin administrators--against their arbitrary control of the village credit society. The conflict between the chairman and secretary of the society was certainly a case of factionalism related to the issue of which class would dominate--the old bureaucratic elite or the new village-farmer elite.

The interests of the village landowners were furthered by the non-Brahmin movement (providing new educational opportunities) and later by the

nationalist movement (providing new opportunities in party politics). But these support-group mobilizations did not generate factions in the local arenas. Before 1947 there were few local arenas comprehensive enough to invite such competition. (The Brahmins had one high school; the Marathas had the Shahu Maratha hostel; the Scheduled Castes had the Ahilyabai hostel, etc.) However, the climax of the independence movement, the coming of the adult franchise, and the expansion of local development budgets and institutions released a flood of political activity by the big village farmers.

Some of these big farmers entered municipal politics, to challenge the merchants who had dominated that arena. Batate, making use of the freedom fighters, took over the taluka Purchase and Sale Union from the older elites. Once this arena was opened to competitive politics, it went through several years of chaotic factionalism, in which the conflicting class interests were sometimes in the foreground and sometimes submerged. A similar cycle occurred in the District Central Cooperative Bank, where Batate quite clearly challenged and then routed the urban (especially Brahmin) interests.

Thus the Carras hypothesis seems applicable, in a loose sense, to certain phases in the political expansion of this class of village farmers. However, Carras evidently does not see hers as a phase hypothesis; rather, she argues in terms of a more or less permanent structural contradiction in the state government. For example, she relates district Congress factions to the "conflict of systemic needs" (1972: 16-20) and to all-encompassing issues of economic policy. "Ambiguity toward public and private economic activity in the party ideology, reflected in the juxtaposition of incompatible

economic practices and interests, is, by extension, carried into the political behavior of Congressmen. The result is factionalism" (Carras, 1972: 10).

However, what appears to be the master issue in one phase in the political growth of a particular institution may later on be entirely submerged by other issues. The Carras hypothesis tells us very little about the determinants of factional alliances after Batate has taken over the taluka and district cooperatives. It is important to note that the class of large and medium-scale village farmers, once it has partial control of an institution, is apt to spawn a host of smaller interest groups competing for hegemony. This is evident in the history of the Olegao cooperative sugar factory.

The 1960 Olegao factory election illustrates the dangers of relying on synchronic data. At that time, the most obvious conflict was between Marathas and non-Marathas, though there was also a subcurrent of conflict between a "political interest" (those who derived their support from personal patronage) and an "economic interest" (those who sought support on the basis of their commitment to efficient management). In 1960 either one of these cleavages could have been viewed as the principle determinant of sugar factory coalitions. A preference in favor of the conflict between Marathas and minority castes would have been reinforced by a study of Olegao credit society politics at the time; for it was just shortly thereafter that the Dhangars split away from the big society to form a credit society of their own because the Marathas had refused to have a Dhangar chairman. However, this issue was resolved by 1962 or so, in a pluralist framework of action --one in which the Marathas had to assume that minority-caste lobbyists

could have a decisive influence on the elections if their demands were not heeded.

Carter makes a similar point with respect to his data:

If out of the whole series of shifting alliances on the Municipal Council one looked only at this coalition one might be led to believe that caste conflict, Marathas versus non-Marathas, is the determining factor in municipal politics. But if the whole series of alliances from 1962 until 1967 is examined it is clear that Council members frequently choose their allies without regard to caste affiliation (1972: 439).

The "economic interest" also seems to have been absorbed into the pluralist framework. After 1960, the minority-caste and economic interests did not intersect in one neat coalition. Until 1967, there was disorganized competition among most leaders based on caste/kinship support groups. In the midst of this, Deshpande collected his support on the basis of an economic interest, the demand for efficient operation. But his support was not only based on this class interest. It also reflected a "hedge" taken by many shareholders against the possibility that they would have no closely related representative on the board. Deshpande opposed the atomistic competition for patronage, but at the same time his support was dependent on it. The factory needed a leader who would act as a restraint on the others, for the sake of those shareholders who missed their own patronage opportunities. Thus Deshpande helped to prevent polarization and uncontrolled oscillation between the "ins" and the "outs." The high point in his career came in 1968, when Deshpande was chairman for one year as part of a three-way coalition. Deshpande kept the economic issue alive and potent, but it never became the focus of coalition-building on the board of management. This is emphasized by the fact that the other members of Deshpande's slates usually lost when he won. Thus it is appropriate to speak, diachronically,



of a dialectic between vertical and horizontal interests; but it seems unhelpful to suggest that either dimension was the determining element overall.

With respect to the big credit society in Olegao, one phase of competition involved a younger generation of leaders challenging the elite consensus of the older. Simultaneously, the challenge of the minority castes (particularly the Dhangars) was introduced; and the society soon split apart over competition between the Marathas and non-Marathas. Once again, however, this phase of polarization was resolved later in the continual bargaining of the pluralist process.

Thus the political expansion of the landowning class has in some phases caused a mobilization of horizontal class interests against the older elites. But in other phases, minority castes and kinship groups have been the objects of mobilization. Sometimes, factions organized around vertical patron-client relations have competed with each other and at the same time with leaders representing horizontal class interests.

To the extent that it relates to local developments, the Carras hypothesis appears to apply only to certain phases of political change. It explains a certain kind of "factionalism" which I prefer not to call factionalism, for in essence it is a reaction against the domination of an older elite by new challengers--often based on the mobilization of new support-groups against the old elite patronage process.

### C. Political Pluralism and Economic Stratification

We have noted above that horizontal class interests have played a part in the growth of the pluralist process. However, many observers doubt that the expansion of pluralist machine politics will go beyond the major landholding peasant clans to include the landless agricultural workers as client-beneficiaries. In fact, many commentators assume that this will be impossible, and they may be right.

There are some researchers who suggest, in effect, that only the elitist and populist processes are significant. This could be maintained, as we have seen, with respect to the landless laborers and also, to a lesser extent, with respect to the dry-village farmers. In some parts of India, there definitely appears to be a polarization of rural political and economic interests (see Gough and Sharma, 1973).

A number of researchers in Maharashtra are agreed that present political developments represent "the rise of the rich peasants." "The widening gulf between the majority of the peasants, on the one hand, and a small group of rich cultivators, on the other, was one of the most important consequences of British rule, and it exercised, and continues to exercise, a decisive influence upon social and political developments in Western India" (Kumar, 1968b: 55). This historical analysis is also echoed by Omvedt: "The general effects of colonial land relations were to increase impoverishment and indebtedness and thus to worsen the effects of

stratification, and to introduce a new fluidity into village society" (1973a: 1430).

This theme is frequently taken up in the study of present-day rural political elites. "In Western Maharashtra power is concentrated in the hands of a small elite and the bulk of the elite leaders are recruited from a narrow political class the members of which have privileged access to positions of influence" (Carter, 1972: 425). This conclusion is echoed by Sirsikar: "The local political system is under the control of a leadership which come from the richer peasantry which has traditional social status, wealth and other factors on its side. The gap between the 'led' and the 'leaders' is, to say the least, quite shocking" (1970: 185).

My own conclusion is that this polarization has been exaggerated. There is no doubt that the canal-village leaders are much more wealthy and powerful than the landless laborers (who are mostly immigrants to the area); but attention must also be focused on the intermediate strata and on the political processes which connect them with the leaders.

There is also a tendency to suggest that this extreme polarization is static and virtually permanent. Kumar ties the rise of the rich peasants to 19th century agrarian relations, without considering the effects of the boom and depression cycles of the 20th century (which have caused a great deal of economic mobility, as we noted in Chapter 2). Carter relates his analysis of political stratification to 18th-century status categories: "In the rural portions of Maharashtra the political class consists almost exclusively of the dominant vatandar Marathas. However, in towns and in those villages where Marathas form a small part of the population the political class includes other groups as well" (1972: 425). (The category of vatandar Marathas

includes those who shared rights in the village headmanship, as well as higher-status deshmukhs, etc.) This generalization is inappropriate for Shetipur taluka. The present MLA, the most powerful leader, belongs to a non-watandar family (which immigrated to Shetipur in the later 19th century). Only one preceding MLA, since 1947, was a watandar Maratha. (This was Darekar, the magnate and PWP leader.) On the other hand, Batate does belong to this category and so did the MLA elected in 1937. In Olegao, Mugutrao and Balasaheb Jagtap belong to the watandar category. However, Gawde the Dhangar leader--second to Mugutrao in influence--is an exception; and so are five other young leaders, since they belong to other Maratha kin-groups, not to the Jagtap clan. Thus, six out of nine active leaders in the village are outside the watandar Maratha category. Fifteen out of 26 secondary leaders are not even Marathas.

The panchayat and credit society chairmen in Kordegao village are all watandar Marathas; but politically they appear to be weaker in some senses than the village-center brokers, only one of whom is a watandar Maratha. (The other two are an immigrant Maratha shopkeeper and a Muslim.)

However, the real issue concerns the nature of the historical changes in the local political system and the degree to which present-day politics is based on a sharp polarization between the leaders and the led. With regard to historical developments, what is significant is that the big village farmers have been engaged in a complex process of becoming a political elite. Before independence, their political efforts were usually reactions against the elite patronage and domination of others--reactions against the jagirdar, the Brahmins, the irrigation department, the British, etc. To me it is impressive that out of this dialectical process the

peasants have emerged with such strength. How often do peasants (large or small) become a force in the politics of any state? Why is there a tendency to imply that this is a reactionary step?

With regard to the second question, concerning the degree to which present-day rural politics is based on class polarization, some of the data used by these researchers do not seem to support their conclusions. For example, though Sirsikar writes of the shocking gap between leaders and led (1970: 185), part of his table on landholdings gives a contrary impression. In his data on Satara district (which is next to Poona district, is geographically similar, and is the only district in western Maharashtra in his study), Sirsikar shows that 37% of the leaders have less than 15 acres of land (small and medium farmers) and 31% have between 15 and 30 acres (slightly large). Those leaders who own more than 30 acres amount to 21%. The leaders are wealthier on the average than the rest of the population; but what is most striking about this table is the great continuity of leadership participation extending down well into the medium-sized landholders. A similar observation applies to the study by Shrader and Joshi, in which they point to "the near-monopoly of political office by the upper classes" (1963: 149). An examination of the table on which this conclusion is based shows that the "upper classes" apparently include a large number of political candidates owning less than 15 acres of land (who are either Middle or Poor Peasants according to their own categories) (1963: 147-148). Exactly 40 out of 57 candidates, or 70%, own 15 acres or less on this table. Thus, before we turn to the question of stratification and polarization in Shetipur taluka, there is some reason to doubt the sweeping statements on this subject which have been repeated so often.

We have seen that leadership positions, especially in Olegao, are closely linked to the economic stratification system. This in itself does not define the local political system as one of "class oppression." In fact, political alliances serve both to ameliorate and to maintain the economic stratification system. They ameliorate it by providing patronage benefits to the small farmers, and occasionally to the landless workers. We noted in Chapter 2 that a significant fraction of the small farmers obtain jobs in the Olegao sugar factory; and others are able to obtain patronage benefits connected with the credit cooperatives, etc.

At the same time that it ameliorates conditions for the smaller canal-village farmers, this patronage system also serves to maintain the system of economic stratification because it inhibits horizontal coalition-formation at the bottom of the patronage ladder. As Brass points out, "Factions and factional conflict . . . work against the effective expression of economic demands" (1965: 243). Potentially effective low-class leaders are apt to be co-opted in the pluralist system, as in the case of Jagganath Unde, who will probably be given an ineffectual position on the Olegao gram panchayat at the time of the next election.

Socioeconomic stratification in Olegao, from the big farmers to the landless workers, is much more extreme than in the "peasant society" of Kordegao. This stratification system and the accompanying political system are both a result of rapid economic progress, including a great expansion in local trade and industry and a multiplication of year-round employment opportunities many times over. It is the latter result, of course, which has attracted many landless immigrants to the area. It is partly their

lack of social ties, to the region and to each other, which makes it difficult for these immigrants to press any organized demands on the local political system.

The landless population is much smaller in Kordegao, and economic stratification is less extreme. But this does not appear to be a desirable situation on the whole. The greater individual and institutional power of the big farmers in Olegao is precisely what makes them able to influence the big institutions around them--the Congress party, the development institutions, the administration. In order to place some villagers closer to the regional centers of power, they must be farther from the poorest of their fellow villagers. The results are not entirely undesirable: political integration between village and state, new industries and economic development opportunities, better social welfare institutions, etc. (It can be argued, of course, that the same results could be achieved without augmenting economic stratification, through a revolutionary regime.) Undoubtedly these benefits could "trickle down" faster, even in the pluralist system, if there were more organized demands from below.

The small canal-village farmers are both benefited and divided by individual patronage favors; but they do benefit as a whole from the cooperative sugar factories and other institutions. The new dairy cooperative being set up in the Olegao and Ganpati sugar factories is expected to be more beneficial to the small farmers. Because they are tied to these institutions, the small wet farmers are unlikely to join a political movement with the landless farm workers, even though the small farmers also have to work as hired laborers themselves.

On the other hand, most of the farmers in Kordegao village correspond to "middle peasants," that is, to "independent smallholders" who live primarily off their own labor expended on their own land (Alavi, 1973: 293). Consequently, some theorists might consider the dry village farmers as potential revolutionary allies of the landless laborers (cf., Alavi, 1973: 334). This possibility is reinforced by the geographic separation of the two classes (the landless workers living mostly in the wet villages), which indicates a lack of competing interests. Furthermore, many of the dry village farmers are themselves forced to become landless laborers in the wet villages, when the area is stricken with drought.

On the other hand, the dry farmers are very clearly attached, for the present, to the Congress MLA and his irrigation projects. They can reap some of the economic benefits of pluralist patronage, even without political unity at the village level (without a chance to bargain over political issues, in other words). If the dry village farmers were to become better organized (as they may be in other villages near Kordegao), it is clear that the MLA and his allies or competitors would be eager to negotiate with the new interest groups. As of 1970, the state government was attempting to work out a new system of cooperative credit which could operate more successfully in villages like Kordegao. Thus it seems very unlikely that organized demands from these villages would go unheeded; and it is therefore also unlikely that the dry-village farmers would seek to form a common political front with the landless workers.

Thus the actual political processes at work demonstrate an increasing amount of transactional continuity between the classes. There seems to be no basis for suggesting that the medium-sized landowners in the canal



villages are weak and neglected in the political process. Some of their schools and most of their cooperatives are run efficiently. Would this efficiency be as imperative for the leaders if they were not dependent on the votes of the medium and small farmers? In Kordegao, on the other hand, the medium farmers are politically weak. But this is also true of the large farmers, such as the sarpanch who was out-manoeuvred by the village-center brokers. Are these peasants better off because they are all weak together?

#### D. The Achievements of Pluralist Machine Politics

A political machine can often be regarded as "an oligarchic response to democratic pressures" (Scott, 1972: 144). This view emphasizes machine politics as an adaptation of the elitist process. However, in some cases, machine politics seems to encompass a more pluralistic process--one in which the client-voters can join together to press their demands on negligent patrons.

A number of social scientists have discussed the positive functions of machine politics. Merton outlined the "latent functions" of the machine (1957: 71-82). Calvert has taken this argument a step further, pointing out that the planning of public utilities by 19th-century machine politicians was superior to the work done by intervening reformist regimes (1972). Thus the machine can be said to have "manifest functions" as well. Banfield has reached a similar conclusion: "Despite the presumptions of common sense, it may be that under certain circumstances the competition of forces which do not aim at a common interest produces outcomes which are more 'workable,' 'satisfactory,' or 'efficient' than any that could be contrived by a central decision-maker consciously searching for solutions in the common interest" (1961: 327). It is clear that Banfield is here referring to what I have called the "pluralist" process--which he labels the "social choice process" (1961: 331). Banfield also refers, by implication, to the common observation that centralized (that is, bureaucratic) planning is not a notoriously good substitute.

It may be that the evaluation of political machine decisions can be discussed with more clarity if we distinguish, as I have suggested, between the elitist and pluralist machine processes. The elitist machine process is typical of politics in Kordegao village in recent years. The villagers gain definite economic benefits in return for their support of the Congress and the MLA; but they are not in a position to bargain over the allocation of these benefits, nor over the political positions and party activities which the MLA controls. In this case, machine politics is economically helpful but politically regressive. The canal villages, on the other hand, are in an entirely different situation. There the leaders not only receive favors; they also have the means to retaliate against unfavorable decisions by the District Congress Committee, etc. They are engaged in a machine process which is decidedly pluralistic--in which the inherent possibilities for political progress are much greater.

Therefore, I propose to conclude this essay with a discussion of the achievements of pluralist machine politics in Shetipur taluka. It should be understood, however, that no achievements are claimed with reference to the problems of the landless agricultural workers. However, the remainder of the rural population, in this part of India, is by no means a negligible portion of the whole.

The activities of aristocrats, magnates, officials, social reformers, etc., in sponsoring development institutions are generally regarded as progressive and legitimate. Likewise for the countervailing activities of the mass movement organizers, though their legitimacy may not be conceded by the same people at the same time. Elite patronage is seen to promote social and economic progress, while support-group mobilization is seen to

stimulate political progress. Yet when these two processes overlap, as they do in pluralist machine politics, there is a widespread tendency to deny the legitimacy of the process.

In an analysis of politics in a cooperative sugar factory similar to the Olegao sugar factory, in Ahmednagar District, Baviskar discusses the "latent functions" of patronage politics (Baviskar, 1968b). In discussing district Congress party factions in a north Indian state, Brass also analyzes the "functions of factions" (Brass, 1965: 238-245). Several observations in these two works can be applied to the data in the preceding chapters.

In the first place, competitive patronage politics has stimulated political recruitment (Baviskar, 1968b: 494; Brass, 1965: 240). Competent village farmers and leaders have been drawn into the management of vital institutions, such as the cooperative sugar factory. The political and administrative connections of the factory have in turn served to draw these leaders into involvement with their regional government. This involvement has enfranchised the canal village farmers.

A related result is that the local leaders and their constituents have undergone a process of political socialization (Baviskar, 1968b: 494; Brass, 1965: 241). They have learned how to manipulate formal parliamentary and administrative procedures, as well as informal patronage channels. This has contributed to a much greater awareness and competence in dealing with such outside bodies as the DCC. Even the landless laborers in Olegao village have picked up enough knowledge of how the system works to be able to accept bribes from one leader and vote for another. In attempting to organize the landless workers, Jagganath Unde has to struggle against sophisticated village

politicians; but his own sophistication has obviously been enhanced by observation of these leaders and the Olegao factory leaders, of Maniklal Batate and the MLA.

Another related result is that political participation has spread not only to the landholding Marathas but also to a number of minority landholding castes (Baviskar, 1969: 162-163; Brass, 1965: 241-242). Factions tend to divide up castes (especially big ones, such as the Marathas), thus giving opportunities to the minority groups. This tendency toward the constant splitting and realignment of caste/kinship segments also decreases the likelihood of polarized "communal" politics, and integrates these groups in the local political system. Thus because patronage politics involves the frequent, competitive realignment of coalitions, it offers a safety valve to the grievances of any group, whether based on caste, kinship, location, class, or any combination of these factors.

Another important aspect of local machine politics is that it encourages the members of institutions, such as the Olegao sugar factory, to act as an interest group in relation to outside interests (Baviskar, 1968b: 495). Thus the factory leaders make use of their political contacts at the state level to expedite the granting of licenses to expand sugar production, or to undertake some ancillary business such as alcohol production. In 1968 a delegation of about 50 leaders from the Olegao sugar factory travelled to Delhi with the MLA in order to meet the Prime Minister and plead with her to allow the factory to sell sugar at market prices. Next year the national sugar control policies were relaxed (temporarily) and the farmers benefitted from cane prices which were more than doubled by the Olegao factory. In 1970, after controls had been tightened again, the Olegao factory filed a lawsuit

against the central government's sugar price control policy, on the grounds that it discriminated against the more efficient factories in peninsular India. (The ex-factory sugar prices were set for each factory every year according to the costs of production in that factory, plus a fixed rate of profit. Thus the ex-factory prices were lowest for the most efficient factories and highest for those, in northern India, which were least efficient.) The controls were relaxed once again in the following year, before this issue was resolved in the courts. These instances show how the Shetipur farmers struggle, with some success, to uphold their interests in the process of national policy-making. The uncertainties of national price administration, constantly changing under pressures from many sides, present the modern cane farmers with the challenge of an "administrative monsoon," which they must be able to cope with through political strength.

Further, the cooperative sugar factory provides organizational support for a number of other local improvements (Baviskar, 1968b: 495). The Olegao sugar factory has built a new high school on its premises and contributed to the Shetipur college. In collaboration with the nearby Ganpati factory, it started a new dairy cooperative in 1970; and an industrial alcohol plant was in the planning stages. In the words of a national enquiry commission:

The establishment of one agro-industry, namely, sugar, has enabled the farmer-members of the cooperative sugar factories to set up other agro-industries, such as oil processing, solvent extraction, cotton ginning, power-loom, distillery, poultry farms, etc. Further, the factory has also played a leading role in providing better educational and medical facilities not merely for its members, but for the entire area around it. The setting up of a cooperative sugar factory has, thus, acted as a nucleus for social and economic development of the area around it and has helped to develop a new class of rural entrepreneurs (Sugar Enquiry Commission, 1965: 148).

(The commission goes on to point out that this process has been most successful in Maharashtra, with less satisfactory results in other states.)

Local factionalism in India is often thought of as a zero-sum, non-productive activity. As indicated in Chapter 8, this evaluation is applicable to the pervasive factionalism in Kordegao, the dry village. However, the preceding observations indicate that competitive patronage politics in the canal villages has another side to it. It may be wondered why the positive results mentioned above are not obstructed by factionalism and patronage. Thus I propose to discuss some internal aspects of the pluralist process which help to make it productive in some instances, or at least non-obstructive. It seems that the chief mechanism of positive regulation in pluralist machine politics is competition.

This point of view has even been expressed with regard to 18th century India, in this passage by Cohn:

The integrity of the larger group, paradoxically, is usually maintained through internal conflict and competition among the groups in the society. . . . Consensus and balance are achieved through conflict and through the awareness that there are always other groups ready to step in (1962: 313).

Similarly, as Banfield suggests:

It is only necessary to establish that 'obviously wrong' reasons led to outcomes that are 'not obviously wrong' in order to raise the question: are such outcomes 'lucky accidents' or is there some principle at work--an 'invisible hand'--that leads a choice process to a result better than anyone intends?" (1961: 328).

In many ways, competition was excluded from the old elite-patronage system (based on the manipulation of administrative influence). The various local elites were complementary in function, not competitive, although there was some conflict of interest between Brahmins and non-Brahmins. What is

more to the point is that vertical patronage relationships tended to be ramified and insulated from competition. In other words, it was difficult for a dissatisfied client to find an alternative source of patronage; patrons and brokers were able to operate monopolistically. Kisan Jagtap, the original Olegao credit society chairman, was able to overcome this limitation and find an alternative source of patronage among the officials of the cooperative department, which he used to circumvent the influence of the jagirdar. We have also observed the monopolization of patronage channels in Kordegao village, past and present. Khomne, the former sarpanch, tried to open up a competitive patronage system against the power of the MLA and his brokers; but the absence of stable village-level coalitions nullified this effort.

It seems that the powerful colonial administration, which broke up the political functions of the local clans and hereditary officials, created a situation where elite patronage was temporarily the dominant process. This helps to explain the large-scale reactions which occurred in the form of the anti-Brahmin, Scheduled-Castes and nationalist movements. Since independence, local politics in Shetipur has become much more fluid and competitive; and in this respect it may bear a resemblance to local politics in the 18th century (although political participation is undoubtedly much broader today than it was then).

What prevents a dominant faction from embezzling funds and persecuting other factions? The threat of competition is the most effective restraint. The success of the cooperative sugar factories makes it clear that the canal villages have enough farmer-members who are strongly interested in having an efficient business in their hands. The economic risks and benefits are



too great to subordinate to factional interests. With coalitions as fluid and competitive as they are in the Olegao factory, any leader tainted by unusual corruption would be quickly denounced and discarded by his colleagues. This restraint is less effective in the nearby Nageshwar factory, which is completely dominated by the Batate family; but even the Batates have to worry about the growing influence of the MLA in the villages served by their factory. The Nageshwar factory is presently an enclave of elitist machine politics in a pluralist environment; no internal competition against the Batates has yet been possible there, but undoubtedly this will change in the future. In the Olegao factory, on the other hand, a host of cross-cutting interest groups have been able to test their relative strengths. For a short while, it appeared that the Marathas were going to ignore the other castes and the non-Marathas were going to spare no effort to punish the Marathas. But the results soon showed that there would be no deadlock and no efforts by one side to annihilate the other. This was caused by the fluidity of coalitions, by the tendency of groups to split apart and realign--which was itself a result of the increasing pace of competition, such that all the leaders were constantly manoeuvring to get ahead of each other as individuals, regardless of caste or any other affiliations. As Brass points out:

In most districts, the tendency in recent years has been towards increased fragmentation and fission of factions, so that multifactional competition has become the rule. Multifactional competition in the Uttar Pradesh Congress has been less disruptive and less bitter than other forms of factional struggle. . . . Under a multifactional system, several political leaders with strictly local influence may coexist, bargaining among themselves for positions and patronage and forming temporary alliances of mutual convenience (Brass, 1965: 241).

This competitive restraint does not always work in smaller, more

homogeneous arenas. For example, there is a large canal village next to Olegao which has had such bitter, long-lasting factions that the gram panchayat has ceased entirely to function for years; and needed projects, such as a dispensary, have been stymied. This situation has also hurt the interests of the leaders of that village, for they are unable to use their united influence in dealing with institutions of larger scope, in contrast to the village leaders in Olegao. There is also a medium-sized canal village near Olegao, in which the construction of a high school building was delayed, and 30,000 rupees were wasted, because of a factional deadlock. It is worth noting that these problems of delay and wastage have particularly affected the social-welfare type projects, in which individual benefits are indirect and long-term. These factions have also affected the village credit societies; but the credit cooperative system has an important safety valve: one faction can split off and form a new society (as the Dhangars did in Olegao, enabling them to ally later with the Marathas on more favorable terms). The two faction-ridden canal villages just mentioned have made use of this safety valve.

Thus one basic self-regulating mechanism in some parts of the pluralist machine system is that coalitions can constantly split up and regroup as new opportunities and pressures arise. There is an equally important vertical corrolary to this point, which is that there are multiple and competitive patronage channels reaching down to these local arenas. The most obvious example is the stiff competition between Maniklal Batate and the MLA. Many of the young Olegao leaders took advantage of this new competition in 1967 to abandon Batate and thereby become favored supporters of the MLA. Anandrao Khomne, the sarpanch of Kordegao, tried to make use of this competition himself. Undoubtedly Kordegao would have been better off if conditions had

made this possible, since at present the villagers cannot circumvent the village-center brokers nor organize collective bargaining units to put pressure on the MLA. Access to competitive patrons was rare under the pre-independence system, which is the reason that large-scale efforts were made at generating public pressure against various segments of the elite.

Because of this competition among patrons, as well as among local factions and the segments thereof, it is possible for new interest groups to form and press their demands on the local institutions. Thus, despite a conflict of interest with his clients on the Olegao factory board, the MLA brought in a Congress union organizer to try to build up his constituency among the factory workers. The MLA also attended to other constituencies and institutions which had been neglected by the party politicians: the dry villages, the technical high school, the college, and the Scheduled-Caste student hostel. Before this, Namdev Gawde had built the Dhangars up into a strong minority lobby within the cooperatives. Gawde also played a key role, along with Mugutrao Jagtap, in integrating the competitive demands of the younger generation into the local leadership process. Thus the pluralist machine process has permitted a step-by-step expansion of the constituencies served.

Brass observes that, "The most important function which factions perform for the Congress party in Uttar Pradesh is to channel conflict and hostility within the party without endangering its stability" (1965: 242). In the Shetipur canal villages, pluralist machine politics tends to bring conflicting interest groups into situations where they can bargain with each other. Strong patrons, like the MLA, seek to expand their support bases and thus to create new client-constituencies, step by step. Thus potential

union/management conflict in the Olegao factory may be channelled and bargained out through the patronage of the MLA and the Congress-affiliated union. As long as the resources of the system can withstand this progression of new demands, conflicts of interest will be channelled away from simple polarization and "unrealistic" conflict (cf., Bailey, 1969: 166, 183-184).

Finally, these multiple, competitive patronage channels lead by devious paths from Shetipur taluka to the Prime Minister's cabinet in New Delhi. This has various consequences related to national political integration. For one thing, the active leaders in Olegao village are quite sure, at any point in time, of which cabinet ministers and national party factions they support, and which they can do without. This means that national and local interests are able to interact and negotiate with each other, so that both are sustained and integrated at each end of the scale. For example, in the 1971 parliamentary by-election, the national party nominated a candidate for the Shetipur constituency who was thoroughly undesirable to the MLA group--partly because he was an ally of Maniklal Batate. Although there were some peculiar and contradictory elements in the local election campaign, the MLA group clearly worked hard to get this candidate elected, against their own personal wishes. The reason for this was that the Congress was being challenged by a "grand alliance" of opposition parties, including the faction which had broken away from the ruling Congress. The stability of the ruling party, and the authority of the Prime Minister and her cabinet members from Maharashtra, were the real issues in this election; and so the MLA and his supporters had to set aside their enmity against Batate in doing this election work. If the leaders in Olegao, for example, had not been aware of a clear chain of patronage relationships connecting them with some

members of the central cabinet, then they might have chosen instead to focus on the local conflict and defeat the Congress candidate because he was Batate's ally. (Their actual decision coordinated with the subordination of similar conflicts within the cabinet.)

Thus vertical patronage relationships can be crucial in promoting regional and national integration. Because these are multiple and competitive alliances integration is also achieved, as Cohn suggests, by continuous cross-cutting group competition at many levels.

However, there is ample agreement that the machine processes are counterproductive in some respects (cf., Banfield, 1961: 335). As Brass points out,

The politicization of caste and community groups in secular terms is clearly conducive to the stability of the political system. It is not so clearly conducive to social change. By dividing caste groups, factions prevent the articulation of the demands of the lower castes (1965: 242).

(As mentioned earlier, Brass defines factionalism as an equivalent to an aspect of the patronage machine process.)

The same critique applies to the articulation of lower-class demands. "Factions and factional conflict in the Congress also work against the effective expression of economic demands" (Brass, 1965: 243). Or as Weiner says, "Paradoxically, the distribution of local power which provides so much strength for the Congress party and ultimately for stable government in the center is a bottleneck for structural changes in rural areas . . ." (1962: 169).

Even when this bottleneck is not static, but seething with competitive political activity, desirable structural changes may be difficult to achieve.

Democratic pluralism, apart from its admitted contributions to the achievement of social equity, may so diminish the enforceability of public policy that the public interest may paradoxically be thwarted. . . . There is no question that the sanction of compartmentalized bargaining between loosely-regulated public administrative agencies and their counterpart 'interests' in the private sector must sometimes lead in India, as in the United States, to the disabling of the original intent of public legislation (Wirsing, 1973: 419-420).

Even the vertical integration which ties local factions to the central cabinet can be a detriment if the situation becomes top-heavy--that is, if the big state politicians can use the local actors exclusively as pawns in their high-level games. There is evidence that this is happening to the cooperative sugar factories in Maharashtra. A recent news report suggests that the latest series of sugar factory elections involved the competitive efforts of several state cabinet ministers to take over large geographic clusters of cooperative sugar factories, by means of their own hand-picked slates of candidates (Economic and Political Weekly, 1973: 2165-66). However, my guess is that the local politicians will retain a good deal of bargaining power and that Maharashtrian rural machine politics will not become centralized. The possibilities for local competition and support-group mobilization are too various to allow the elite patronage process to predominate.

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GLOSSARY OF INDIAN TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

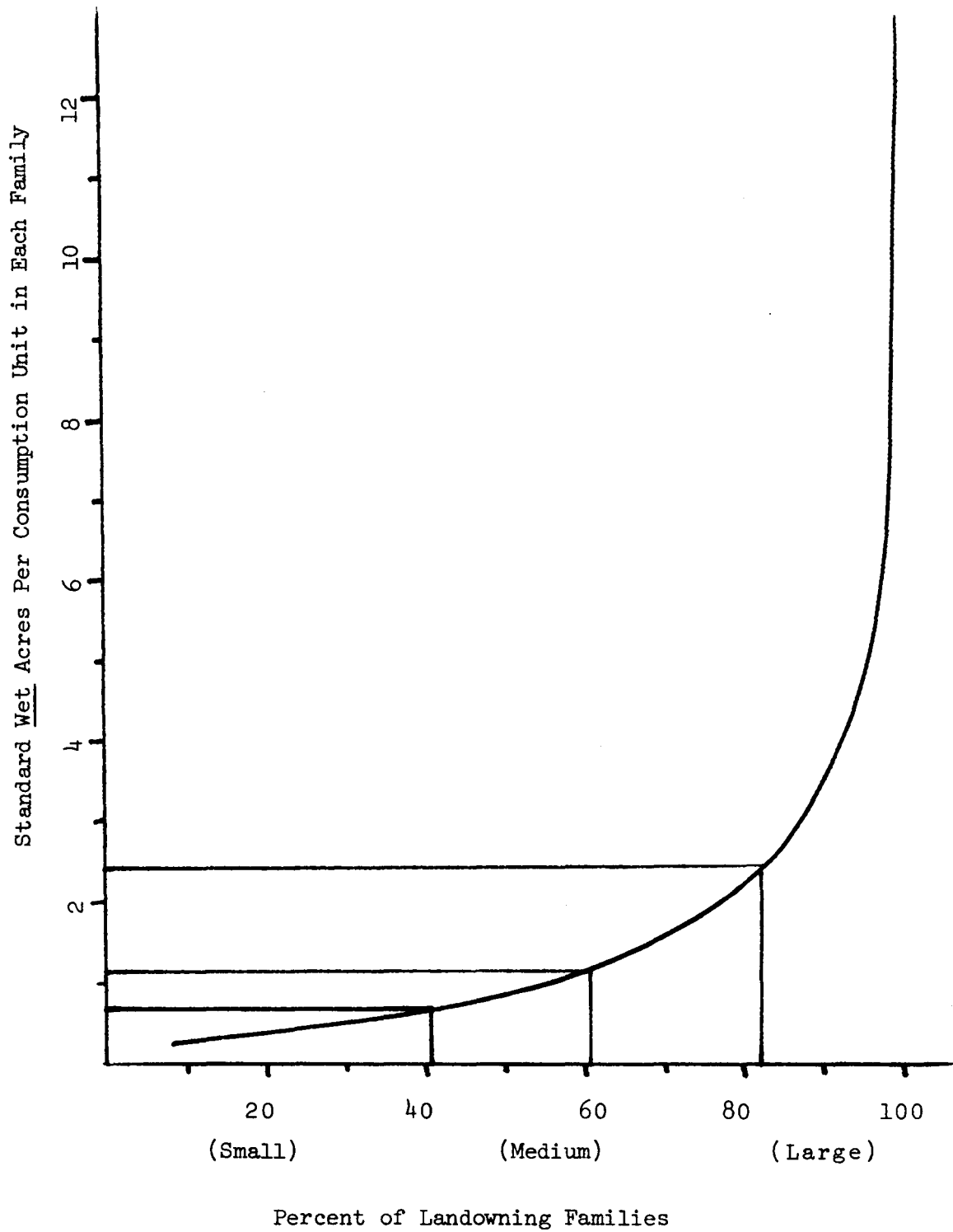
bāgāitdār	One who owns garden, or irrigated, land.
bājri	Millet, <u>Pennisetum typhoideum</u> .
bāluta	Traditional system of specialized services given to village residents, paid for partly by fixed annual shares of the harvest.
bālutedār	A person or caste which holds the right to perform baluta services and receive the customary payments.
BDO	Block Development Officer, in charge of taluka development projects.
bet	Lineage (defined by limit of death pollution); literally, a clump of shoots growing from one rootstock.
bhāuband	Agnatic relations, members of one's own lineage or clan.
bhāuki	Loosely, clan or lineage; "brotherhood."
BPCB	Bombay Provincial Cooperative Bank.
DCC	District Congress Committee.
DCCB	District Central Cooperative Bank.
deshmukh	Old hereditary revenue officer, in charge of an area roughly equivalent to a taluka.
devak	Among Marathas and some other castes, the totemic symbol which defines the exogamous agnatic kin group.
DLB	District Local Board.
DSB	District School Board.
gāon sabhā	Meeting of all village adults.



grām panchāyat	Elected village council (formerly an informal, <u>ad hoc</u> body of elders).
grām sevak	Village council secretary, a minor official administering village development projects.
gul	Raw sugar.
inām	Land partially or entirely free of revenue claimed by the state; literally, "gift."
ināmdār	One who holds inam land.
INTUC	Indian National Trade Union Congress, affiliated to the Congress party.
jāgir	Land or revenue granted by the state to military commanders, etc., conditionally or permanently.
jāgirdār	One who holds a jagir.
jajmāni	The north Indian equivalent of baluta.
jāti	An endogamous caste or "sub-caste."
jowār	Sorghum, millet; <u>Sorghum vulgare</u> .
kārbhāri	A manager, administrator.
kulkarni	Old hereditary village accountant.
mahāpujā	Solemn worship on a special occasion.
Mahārāshtra	Formerly, the region inhabited mainly by speakers of the Marathi language. Only western Maharashtra was part of the old Bombay Presidency; the whole area is now unified in one state.
māmlatdār	The revenue official in charge of a taluka.
mandal	Smallest unit of the Congress party, usually covering an area with about 20,000 people.
MLA	Member of the Legislative Assembly, the directly elected state legislature.
MLC	Member of the Legislative Council, formerly the only provincial legislature, now the indirectly elected upper house.
MP	Member of Parliament, the directly elected national legislature.

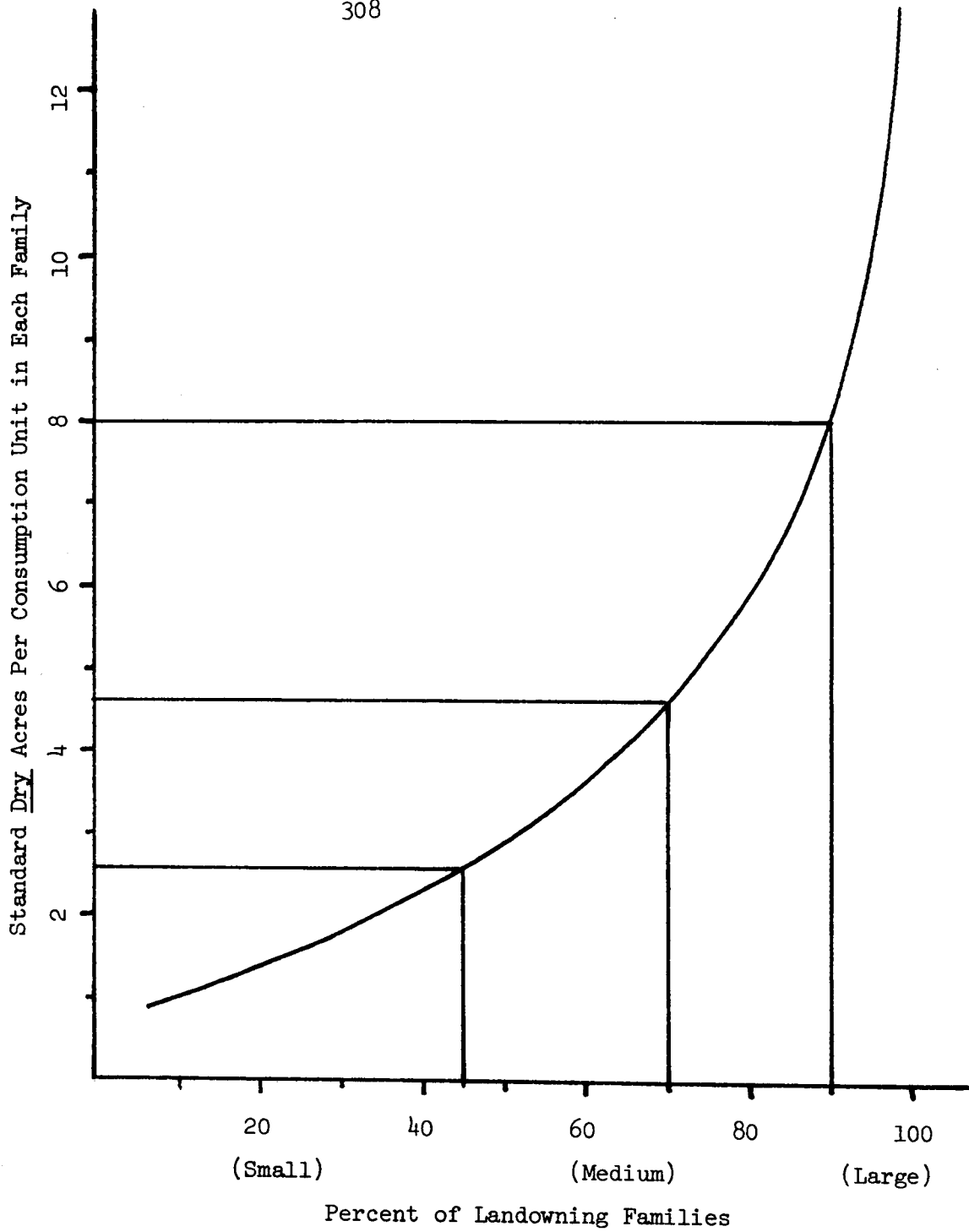
MPCC	Maharashtra Pradesh [State] Congress Committee.
mukaddam	Chief, foreman.
pāhune	In-laws, specifically wife-givers; literally, guests.
panchāyat	See gram panchayat.
panchāyat samiti	Taluka development council, indirectly elected.
panchāyati rāj	Recent system of democratic decentralization, with administration of local development projects under the elected village, taluka, and district councils.
parganā	Old administrative division, roughly equivalent to a taluka.
pātil	Hereditary village headman.
PSP	Praja Socialist Party.
PWP	Peasants and Workers Party.
RSS	Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, a militant Hindu revivalist youth organization.
ryot, rayat	A peasant.
ryotwāri	A system of land administration in which the peasant pays revenue directly to the state rather than to an intermediary landlord (as in the Bombay Presidency).
sardār	See jagirdar.
sarpanch	Chairman of the village council.
satyāgraha	An act of civil disobedience, non-violent resistance.
SMS	Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti, the movement for a united Marathi-speaking state.
sutak	Ritual restrictions related to death pollution.
tagāi	Loans advanced from the government to the cultivators, usually given as a famine-relief measure and recovered later with the collection of revenue.

talāthi	Present-day salaried village accountant.
tālūkā	Administrative subdivision of a district, containing at least one big market town, usually with a total population of 100,000 or more.
tamashā	Itinerant popular music and drama shows.
TCC	Taluka Congress Committee.
watan	Hereditary office, land, and/or other rights.
watandār, vatandār	Holder of watan rights.
zamindār	In northern India, a landlord, often the owner of a large estate; under colonial rule the zamindars were intermediary (hereditary) revenue collectors.
zillā parishad	The new type of district council, directly elected.



OLEGAO: DISTRIBUTION OF LANDOWNING FAMILIES IN TERMS OF ACRES PER CONSUMPTION UNIT IN EACH FAMILY

FIGURE 1



KORDEGAO: DISTRIBUTION OF LANDOWNING FAMILIES IN TERMS OF ACRES PER CONSUMPTION UNIT IN EACH FAMILY

FIGURE 2

TABLE 1

## OLEGAO: NUMBER OF FAMILIES PER CASTE

Caste	Traditional Occupation	No. of Families	Percent
1. Peasant Castes			
Maratha	Farmer	876	39.2
Hatkar Dhangar	Shepherd	195	9.5
Shegar Dhangar	Shepherd	17	
Mali	Gardener	193	8.6
2. Ritual Service Castes			
Brahmin <sup>a</sup>	Priest, Accountant	89	4.0
Joshi	Astrologer	28	1.3
3. Commercial Service Castes			
Lingayat Wani	Merchant	23	1.0
Gujar (Jain)	Merchant	10	0.5
4. Craft and Community Service Castes			
Sonar	Goldsmith	9	0.4
Sutar	Carpenter	18	0.8
Lohar	Blacksmith	16	0.7
Kumbhar	Potter	7	0.3
Teli	Oilpresser	8	0.4
Nhavi	Barber	15	0.7
Ramoshi	Watchman	81	3.6
Parit	Washerman	22	1.0
5. Muslims	Various Trades	130	5.8
6. Menial Service Castes (Scheduled Castes)			
Chambhar	Cobbler	24	1.5
Mahar (Buddhist)	Messenger, etc.	125	5.6
Mang	Ropemaker	135	6.0
Bhangi	Sweeper	5	0.2
7. Miscellaneous (24 Castes)		<u>197</u>	<u>8.8</u>
TOTAL		2,233	100.0%

<sup>a</sup>Includes several small, endogamous "sub-castes."

TABLE 2

## KORDEGAO: NUMBER OF FAMILIES PER CASTE

Caste	Traditional Occupation	No. of Families	Percent
1. Peasant Castes			
Maratha <sup>a</sup>	Farmer	859	59.7
Dhangar <sup>a</sup>	Shepherd	55	3.8
Mali	Gardener	136	9.4
2. Ritual Service Castes			
Brahmin <sup>a</sup>	Priest, Accountant	34	2.4
3. Commercial Service Castes			
Lingayat Wani	Merchant	5	0.4
Gujar (Jain)	Merchant	14	1.0
4. Craft and Community Service Castes			
Sonar	Goldsmith	10	0.7
Sutar	Carpenter	15	1.0
Lohar	Blacksmith	3	0.2
Kumbhar	Potter	4	0.3
Teli <sup>a</sup>	Oilpresser	40	2.8
Nhavi	Barber	11	0.8
Ramoshi	Watchman	9	0.6
Parit	Washerman	7	0.5
5. Muslims	Various Trades	44	3.1
6. Menial Service Castes (Scheduled Castes)			
Chambhar	Cobbler	32	2.2
Mahar (Buddhist)	Messenger, etc.	45	3.1
Mang	Ropemaker	55	3.8
7. Miscellaneous (17 Castes)		<u>62</u>	<u>4.3</u>
TOTAL		1,440	100.0%

<sup>a</sup>Includes several small, endogamous "sub-castes."

TABLE 3

OLEGAO AGRICULTURAL POPULATION: CLASS DISTRIBUTION OF  
SELECTED CASTES (BY FAMILIES)

Caste		Landless Agric. & Unskilled Laborers	Small Farmers	Medium Farmers	Large Farmers	Total
Maratha	No.	329	116	120	64	629
	%	52.3	18.4	19.1	10.2	100%
Dhangar	No.	132	29	19	17	197
	%	67.0	14.7	9.6	8.6	100%
Mali	No.	136	9	10	1	156
	%	87.2	5.8	6.4	0.6	100%
Brahmin	No.	0	2	13	9	24
	%		8.3	54.2	37.5	100%
Lingayat Wani	No.	0	0	9	3	12
	%			75.0	25.0	100%
Ramoshi	No.	44	17	15	0	76
	%	57.9	22.4	19.7		100%
Muslim	No.	45	10	7	0	62
	%	72.6	16.1	11.3		100%
Chambhar	No.	15	5	1	0	21
	%	71.4	23.8	4.8		100%
Mahar	No.	58	16	9	0	83
	%	69.9	19.3	10.8		100%
Mang	No.	91	1	1	0	93
	%	97.9	1.1	1.1		100%



TABLE 4

KORDEGAO AGRICULTURAL POPULATION: CLASS DISTRIBUTION OF  
SELECTED CASTES (BY FAMILIES)

Caste		Landless Agric. & Unskilled Laborers	Small Farmers	Medium Farmers	Large Farmers	Total
Maratha	No.	48	327	313	136	824
	%	5.8	39.7	37.9	16.5	100%
Dhangar	No.	4	36	9	5	54
	%	7.4	66.7	16.7	9.3	100%
Mali	No.	36	51	26	12	125
	%	28.8	40.8	20.8	9.6	100%
Brahmin	No.	0	4	4	9	17
	%		23.5	23.5	52.9	100%
Lingayat Wani	No.	0	0	1	2	3
	%			33.3	66.7	100%
Gujar	No.	0	0	1	7	8
	%			12.5	87.5	100%
Muslim	No.	3	5	6	2	16
	%	18.8	31.3	37.5	12.5	100%
Chambhar	No.	4	17	3	1	25
	%	16.0	68.0	12.0	4.0	100%
Mahar	No.	10	25	3	2	40
	%	25.0	62.5	7.5	5.0	100%
Mang	No.	33	14	1	2	50
	%	66.0	28.0	2.0	4.0	100%

TABLE 5

## OLEGAO: MAJOR MARATHA CLANS

Clan and Lineage		Location	Headmanship Rights
Jagtap	No. 1	Village center and scattered	1/2 (10 yrs in 20)
	2	Same	1/2 (10 yrs in 20)
	3	Same	None
	4	Scattered	None
	5	Near Shelke Hamlet	None
Shelke	No. 1	Shelke Hamlet	None
	2	Village Center	None

TABLE 6

KORDEGAO: MAJOR PEASANT CLANS<sup>a</sup>

Clan and Lineage	Location	Headmanship Rights
Chaugule No. 1	Hamlet C	1/2 Police Patil (10 yrs in 20)
No. 2	Hamlet D	None
No. 3	Hamlet E	None
Khalate	Hamlet G	1/2 Police Patil (10 yrs in 20)
Khomne No. 1	Hamlet K	1/2 Revenue Patil(10 yrs in 20)
No. 2	Hamlet L	None
No. 3	Hamlet M	None
No. 4	Hamlet N	None
Bhongale	Hamlet B	1/2 Revenue Patil(10 yrs in 20)
Pandhare	Hamlet P	None
Bhide	Hamlet R	None
Gade	Hamlet S	None (Dhangar caste)

<sup>a</sup>All Maratha except where noted.

TABLE 7

OLEGAO: CROP AREAS, 1969

Crops	Dry Area		Irrigated Area	
	Acres	Percent <sup>a</sup>	Acres	Percent <sup>a</sup>
1. Grains				
Jowar	1,109	17.9	1,134	18.3
Bajri	38	0.6	238	3.8
Wheat			585	9.4
Rice			170	2.7
Others			18	0.3
Total	<u>1,147</u>	<u>18.5</u>	<u>2,145</u>	<u>34.5</u>
2. Pulses				
Gram			213.3	3.4
Others	32.1	0.5	36	0.6
Total	<u>32.1</u>	<u>0.5</u>	<u>249.3</u>	<u>4.0</u>
3. Oilseeds				
Safflower			55.3	0.9
Peanut			6	0.1
Total			<u>61.3</u>	<u>1.0</u>
4. Fibers				
Cotton			499.8	8.1
Jute			11.5	0.2
Total			<u>511.3</u>	<u>8.3</u>
5. Sugar Cane			<u>1,795.2</u>	<u>28.9</u>
6. Vegetables				
Eggplant			25	0.4
Others			27.6	0.5
Total			<u>52.6</u>	<u>0.9</u>
7. Fruits				
Fruit trees			23.7	0.4
Grapes			69	1.1
Total			<u>92.7</u>	<u>1.5</u>
8. Fodder			<u>113.6</u>	<u>1.8</u>
TOTAL	<u>1,179.1</u>	<u>19.0%</u>	<u>5,022.1</u>	<u>81.0%</u>

<sup>a</sup>Percent of gross cropped area.

TABLE 8

## KORDEGAO: CROP AREAS, 1969

Crops	Dry Area		Irrigated Area	
	Acres	Percent <sup>a</sup>	Acres	Percent <sup>a</sup>
1. Grains				
Jowar	13,906	71.4	915	4.7
Bajri	620	3.2	55	0.3
Wheat			212	1.1
Rice			10	0.1
Total	<u>14,525</u>	<u>74.6</u>	<u>1,192</u>	<u>6.2</u>
2. Pulses				
Horse gram	532	2.7		
Others	<u>360</u>	<u>1.8</u>		
Total	<u>892</u>	<u>4.5</u>		
3. Oilseeds				
Safflower	<u>2,054</u>	<u>10.5</u>		
4. Fibers				
Cotton			<u>350</u>	<u>1.8</u>
5. Sugar Cane			<u>20</u>	<u>0.1</u>
6. Vegetables				
Onions			320	1.6
Others			<u>35</u>	<u>0.2</u>
Total			<u>355</u>	<u>1.8</u>
7. Fruits				
Lemons			60	0.3
Other Fruit Trees			<u>23</u>	<u>0.1</u>
Total			<u>83</u>	<u>0.4</u>
TOTAL	<u>17,471</u>	<u>89.7%</u>	<u>2,004</u>	<u>10.3%</u>

<sup>a</sup>Percent of gross cropped area.

TABLE 9

## OLEGAO: PRINCIPAL OCCUPATIONS OF HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS

Occupational Category	Total Population		Agricultural Population	
	No.	%	No.	%
1. Owner-cultivators <sup>a</sup>	535	24.0	535	34.9
2. Landless agricultural workers	762	34.1	762	49.6
3. Other unskilled workers	<u>238</u>	<u>10.7</u>	<u>238</u>	<u>15.5</u>
Total Agricultural Population	1,535	68.8%	1,535	100.0%
4. Self-employed traders and craftsmen	234	10.5		
5. Sugar factory employees	348	15.6		
6. Other salaried workers	<u>116</u>	<u>5.2</u>		
Total	<u>2,233</u>	<u>100.0%</u>		

<sup>a</sup>All other categories are landless. Some landowners also work as employees, tradesmen, etc., but they are listed only once.

TABLE 10

## KORDEGAO: PRINCIPAL OCCUPATIONS OF HEADS OF HOUSEHOLDS

Occupational Category	Total Population		Agricultural Population	
	No.	%	No.	%
1. Owner-cultivators <sup>a</sup>	1,057	73.6	1,057	85.2
2. Landless agricultural workers	132	9.1	132	10.6
3. Other unskilled workers	<u>54</u>	<u>3.7</u>	<u>54</u>	<u>4.3</u>
Total Agricultural Population	1,243	86.4	1,243	100.0%
4. Self-employed traders and craftsmen	131	9.1		
5. Salaried workers	<u>66</u>	<u>4.6</u>		
Total	<u>1,440</u>	<u>100.0%</u>		

<sup>a</sup>All other categories are landless. Some landowners also work as tradesmen, salary earners, etc., but they are listed only once.

TABLE 11

## OLEGAO SAMPLE OF LANDOWNERS: CLASS DISCRIMINATION FEATURES

Classes	% of Landed Pop.	No. in Sample	Men as Agric. Laborers	Women Work Own Fields	Raise Grapes	Jobs in Sugar Factory	Acres <sup>a</sup> per C.U. per Family	Acres per Family <sup>b</sup>
Small Farmers	41%	22	8	12		6	0 -0.7	0 -3.0
Lower Medium Farmers	20.5%	10		7		1	0.7-1.1	3.0-5.2
Upper Medium Farmers	20.5%	12		3	1	5	1.1-2.4	5.2-10.8
Large Farmers	18%	9			8	4	Over 2.4	Over 10.8

<sup>a</sup>Standard wet acres per consumption unit.

<sup>b</sup>Rough averages for the absolute sizes of holdings belonging to families of average size, in standard wet acres.



TABLE 12

## KORDEGAO SAMPLE OF LANDOWNERS: CLASS DISTRIBUTION FEATURES

Classes	% of Landed Pop.	No. in Sample	Women As Agric. Laborers	Women Work Own Fields	Men As Agric. Laborers <sup>c</sup>	Own Less Than Two Bullocks	Grow Cane or Citrus	Acres <sup>a</sup> per C.U. per Family	Acres per Family <sup>b</sup>
Small Farmers	46%	22	16	20	19	11	3	0 -2.7	0 -12
Lower Medium Farmers	22%	12	1	9	3	3	4	2.7-4.7	12-22
Upper Medium Farmers	22%	11		7	2	1	7	4.7-8.0	22-40
Large Farmers	10%	6		3			2	Over 8.0	Over 40

320

<sup>a</sup>Standard dry acres per consumption unit.

<sup>b</sup>Rough averages for the absolute sizes of holdings belonging to families of average size, in standard dry acres.

<sup>c</sup>On a normal basis in ordinary non-famine years.

TABLE 13

## OLEGAO: POLITICAL LEADERS AND POLITICAL CLASSES

Types of Leaders	Small Farmers	Lower Medium Farmers	Upper Medium Farmers	Large Farmers	Castes	Hold Sugar Factory Jobs
Active				9	8 Maratha 1 Hatkar Dhangar	1
Secondary			11	15	11 Maratha 6 Hatkar Dhangar 9 Others <sup>a</sup>	9
Placeholders	5				2 Scheduled Caste <sup>b</sup> 3 Others <sup>c</sup>	2
Hold Sugar Factory Jobs	2		5	5		

<sup>a</sup>Mali, Brahmin, Lingayat, Ramoshi, Gurav

<sup>b</sup>Mahar, Mang

<sup>c</sup>Maratha, Dhangar, Ramoshi

TABLE 14

## KORDEGAO: POLITICAL LEADERS AND POLITICAL CLASSES

Position	Landless	Small Farmers	Lower Medium Farmers	Upper Medium Farmers	Large Farmers
Sarpanch and Deputy Sarpanch					2 <sup>a</sup>
Cooperative Society Chairmen			1	1	2
Members of Cooperative Society Managing Comms.		2 (1 Mali)	6	5	1
Panchayat Members	2 (1 Teli) (1 Muslim)	1 (Lohar)	3	2	1
Panchayat Reserved Seat Members	1 (Mang)	1 (Mahar)			
Cooperative Society Secretaries				1 (Brahmin)	1
Brokers			1	1	1 (Muslim)

322

<sup>a</sup>All leaders are Maratha, except where noted.

TABLE 15

PRICES PAID PER METRIC TON OF SUGAR CANE BY THE OLEGAO  
COOPERATIVE SUGAR FACTORY TO ITS MEMBERS

Year	Rupees Per Metric Ton <sup>a</sup>
1957-1958	37.00
1958-1959	44.00
1959-1960	55.00
1960-1961	55.55
1961-1962	55.00
1962-1963	54.00
1963-1964	61.75
1964-1965	61.50
1965-1966	60.50
1966-1967	57.50
1967-1968	154.33
1968-1969	109.00
1969-1970	74.50

<sup>a</sup>After deducting non-refundable deposits.