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hiya, i am unable to submit the essay over Moodle due to tech issues.

pasted below is my essay

In this essay I am going to lay out and discuss how Childe's characteristics show the key points of social development of society in ancient Egypt and ancient China. I will include the similarities between different societies in their social evolution. I will showcase how both evolved from small, tribal communities into complex, state-level civilizations. And, how social hierarchy began to develop and take place, with leaders and laws slowly developing; including how leadership roles emerged and how laws and systems of governance slowly took shape. Throughout my essay, I shall break down the early stages of development through pre-civilisation to the beginning of agriculture and leadership dynamics which marked the beginning of civilisation, and discuss the changes made at different points in history. From tribal living to what is seen as the early developments of society, in line with the main characteristics of complex societies according to V. Gordon Childe (often called *Childe's criteria*)¹. Comparatively breaking down different parts of social evolution within both ancient Egypt and ancient China, and the effects on agriculture, politics and leadership, in addition to the development of labour throughout history. Overall, this discussion will break down the major aspects of social evolution within ancient Egypt and ancient China, showing how they align with the main characteristics of complex societies as defined by Childe in his works complex societies according to V. Gordon Childe.

Society started to develop throughout ancient Egypt slowly. It began with small farms being developed alongside the river Nile in 6000–5000 BCE. People began to practice agriculture, domesticating animals, and living in villages. Relating to Childe's characteristics of developing surplus production which would later be the farmers responsibility. However, these developments didn't begin at this early age. Society continued to develop within the Predynastic Period. Settlements began to develop and take place. Social differences appeared and a hierarchy of sorts began to develop. Trade expanded which relates back to the Childe's criteria because he writes on the expansion of trade and developing jobs of different social value. Which leads me to "surplus production". The definition of surplus agricultural production is a surplus of needs, giving farmers the ability to provide food for everyone, rather than each household hunting and growing their own food to sustain themselves.

The beginning of society in ancient China, early development. A lot like ancient Egypt the very beginning of society in ancient China started alongside the river Yellow River (Huang He) and Yangtze River. This allowed for access to water for farmland and

small farm communities that began to develop. The domestication of millet and rice began allowing for what became a staple in Chinese households. Villages and pottery culture began to develop 7000–5000 BCE. As social evolution continued they entered a new era of social development and in 5000–2000 BCE larger settlements began to develop, and a social hierarchy began to take precedence in the form of evidence of leadership and ritual practices (e.g., the Longshan culture). The Longshan culture is a key feature of what this time period looked like, including permanent settlements alongside the river with defensive structures. Social stratification occurred, which meant the development of social hierarchy. There was evidence of elites and commoners. Craft began to develop, specifically pottery, and of course the agricultural developments.

The beginning of Chinese Civilization, otherwise known as the Xia Dynasty, is known as the first dynasty in ancient China. Noticeable advances were taken in social evolution during this time. China was ruled by kings rather than tribal leaders. Central authority began to form the practice of power, and decision-making became concentrated in one main ruling centre, instead of being shared among many small village leaders. Before this, each village or clan used to make their own decisions. When central authority began to form, the ability of individual tribal choice was lost over some matters. One ruler being the king and what would have been the king's guard. Now known as a council would have ruled over a large amount of territory. So began the earliest days of government. Laws and rules were put in place across the land which segmented social hierarchy. Back then, tax collection would have been based on contribution to the king e.g.; farmers giving food, crafts men giving pottery etc. This would have helped decide who was where in the social hierarchy.

The beginning of society in ancient Egypt, around 3100 BCE, was the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt. Centralised government began to form, rather than a king, a single leader known as the pharaoh took place. Who held extreme authority over the rest of ancient Egypt. Writing began to develop, in the form of hieroglyphics. Childe's criteria describes this as the start of early civilization. These hieroglyphics were used for administration and record keeping. Social hierarchy, Pharaoh → nobles & priests → scribes → farmers → labourers/slaves.

The organized economy began to develop, a surplus of agricultural needs was developed and given out to support more than just the farmers. This period marks Egypt's transition from small communities to a complex, centralized civilization, fitting Childe's characteristics of complex societies.

The main characteristics of complex societies according to V. Gordon Childe (often called *Childe's criteria*). Within his works he provides insights into what began the development of civilization. To unpack some of these insights we begin with the developments of large communities and dense population, meaning people living closer together and the slow development of cities began. This is different from tribal

living. As far as we are aware, tribal living meant each tribe had their own way of doing things; they lived as separate groups rather than under a hierarchy and the laws of one leader. Whereas groups of people living within the king/ pharaohs (dictatorship). Leaders must follow the laws set in place for the land they find themselves on.

Specialization of labour, the start of what would now be known as jobs, was also coming into play. In the early days of civilization there was a surplus of agricultural needs, meaning that most people worked to sustain their physical needs, as they worked to develop food and meet the needs of those around them. More labour began to come into play, some people became artisans, priests, traders, officials. Religion came into play slowly with the beliefs of the kings/ pharaohs being the beliefs of their people.

Class stratification / social hierarchy

As discussed throughout, there was a development of social hierarchy in the early stages of both ancient Egypt and ancient China. While both started as communities alongside the river as society advanced, ancient Egypt developed the hierarchy of Pharaoh → nobles & priests → scribes → farmers → labourers/slaves. Allowing pharaohs to rule over ancient Egypt, nobles and priests to spread the word of the pharaohs, and be by their side. Scribes to account and capture the word of the pharaoh, and the lowest class within society, slaves, to worship and work for those above them. While in ancient China we had the development from tribal leaders to kings, and the practice of laws being decided by what would now be known as a council, rather than tribes deciding their own consequences for acts that are deemed to go against what is allowed.

State-level political organization as previously mentioned, and the development of laws and state level politics began to form, allowing the social hierarchy to take more of a stance in society. As what was, and wasn't socially acceptable, began to have clear limitations on what the lower and higher class were allowed to do. Throughout history there have been clear advances in social evolution around what is and is not socially acceptable. This helped keep early civilization in order as we began to develop what are now cities and closer living than what was previously known within tribes.

Monumental architecture developed in early China, especially during the late Neolithic and the Xia–Shang transition. Monumental architecture reflected the growing social complexity and central authority. For example, they focused on the development of defensive walls and city planning. Walls were seen as a symbol of power for the elite. Therefore, they were located around the king's palace as a statement to his power and control over the country. Centralized buildings were larger and more elaborate than common houses. This allowed a clear divide between the social classes and provided protection for those of a higher class. They also

focused on burial mounds and ritual structures, providing a suitable place for the elite after passing on. Focusing on more complex places of rest and included grave goods, such as jade, pottery and bronze objects.

Monumental architecture development in early ancient Egypt is one of the clearest indicators of their transition to a complex society. Early in their development, ancient Egyptians built mud houses to store things and live in. This progressed to mastaba tombs, however, even these early architectural achievements showcased social hierarchy. After the unification of Upper and Lower Egypt, larger state projects were undertaken. Monumental architecture reached its peak with the construction of the pyramids at Giza.

Development of exact sciences is stated in the main characteristics of complex societies by Childe, mathematics, astronomy, calendars for agriculture and administration became prominent throughout society. In the early stages of ancient Egypt and China, we saw clear advances in writing and hieroglyphics, and how they used this for accounting and capturing the word of their leader; alongside teaching religious views and spreading the word of the king/pharaoh.

As I have shown, the start of civilization marked by the advent of farming, began in ancient Egypt at around 6000 BCE, whereas within ancient China farming began around 12000 BCE. Soon after this the development of agriculture grew in both ancient Egypt and China. It always started with alongside the river, for irrigation purposes. The beginning of society in ancient Egypt, around 3100 BCE started when upper and lower Egypt merged. Relating back to Childe's criteria some key points in what would have constituted the start of civilisation include, Large, dense population centers, Specialization of labor, Class stratification i.e. social hierarchy, and many other points referenced throughout². Complex architecture came into play to help showcase the social hierarchy throughout the early stages of civilization.

Monumental architecture development in early ancient Egypt is one of the clearest indicators of their transition to a complex society. Additionally, it coincided with some of the earliest forms of governance, in hierarchical forms which could well be construed as dictatorships. In ancient Egypt leadership took the form of a pharaoh, and within ancient China, in this era the leadership role was fulfilled by a king. These leaders exhibited total power and would dictate the laws of their territories. Thus ended the tribal period and the start of what Childe's criteria in relation to class structures, leadership dynamics and agriculture as markers for the beginning of civilisation.

1. Childe, Vere Gordon; The Urban Revolution 1950, Liverpool University Press

2. Ibid