World-Systems Evolution and Global Futures

Dmitri M. Bondarenko
Stephen A. Kowalewski
David B. Small *Editors*

The Evolution of Social Institutions

Interdisciplinary Perspectives

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Springer

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Introduction

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The main aim of this volume is to present a novel approach to the study of social evolution. This approach is based on an examination and analysis of social evolution through the evolution of social institutions associated with the rise and development of social complexity. Evolution is defined as the process of structural change (Carneiro 1973; Claessen 2000). Within this framework, the society, or culture, is seen as a system composed of a great number of various social institutions that are interacting and changing. As a result, the whole structure of society is changing, that is evolving. "It had been widely believed, at least since the time of Aristotle, that things changed in accordance with an inner principle of development" (Carneiro 2003: 1). Thus, documenting the internal factors fueling changes in selected social institutions, the authors of the volume analyze the contribution of this dynamic interplay to the advent of, and changes in complex sociopolitical systems. Society should be seen as the result of the compound effect of the interactions of social institutions specific to it. Thus, the nexus of social institutions that have risen along different pathways serves as a catalyst for social change. From one society to another, the hierarchy of institutions, the principles of their interrelation and directions of change may differ, determining a specific way of transformation of the society as a whole. This means that every society may follow a specific evolutionary trajectory and pace. Thus, social evolution does not have any "general" direction, not only in a unilinear but even in a multilinear sense; for example, in the sense Marshall Sahlins (1960) used the notion of "general evolution" as opposed to "specific evolution" of a separate culture. We suggest that social evolution is nonlinear, and combination of evolving social institutions, specific in every case,

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explains its nonlinear character. Contrary to classical neoevolutionist models (e.g., Fried 1967; Service 1971[1962], 1975), the development of social complexity does not mean constant unilinear growth and societies' inevitable progression from less to more complex organizational forms. As well, the level of social complexity is not the same as the level of social hierarchization. Any significant change (i.e., transformative of the societal structure) in any direction is evolutionary. In particular, not infrequently societies transform cardinally in the level of hierarchization without a change of their overall level of complexity, apart from cases of social simplification (Bondarenko 2006; Claessen 2006; Korotayev et al. 2000). Remarkably, in the theory of biological evolution the transition from a more to less hierarchical structure is not regarded as a sign of degradation or regress if this transition does not lead to diminishing of adaptiveness to the environment (see, e.g., Futuyma 1997). "… Darwin's framework… harbors no necessary expectation of increasing complexity over the long term" (Spencer 2019: 186).

To show the nonlinear nature of social evolution, it is crucially important to discuss cases from different culture areas, historical periods including recent, and levels of overall sociocultural complexity. That is why the chapters in the volume deal with particular cases from many parts of Eurasia, Africa, the Americas and Insular Pacific, with cultures from ancient to contemporary, and from hunter-gatherer to industrial. Respectively, the chapters are based on different kinds of sources—archaeological, historical, anthropological (ethnographic) and sociological. This analysis will shed light on the various ways by which social institutions developed in different societies through time and space and on how these institutions and their interaction may have fostered their social evolution.

Therefore, this publication may enhance our understanding of social evolution via the integration of various kinds of evidence within a specific conceptual framework. As is noted above, evolution is understood in this volume as the process of structural change. This process takes place in the form of transformation of social institutions and the relations between them within separate societies and their aggregates up to world-systems. This is why it is important to describe and discuss the notion of social institution in at least some detail.

1 The Social Institution: A Brief History of the Notion and Its Conceptualizing

The term "institution" was used already in the early eighteenth century by the philosopher and progenitor of sociology Giambattista Vico (1668–1744) (Vico 2002 [1725]). With the maturing of social sciences in the nineteenth century, understanding of society as consisting of social institutions (the institutional approach) and the very notion of "the social institution" became these sciences' part and parcel. Understanding of society as an "organism" whose "organs" are different forms of social organization (the family, state and so on) characterized the first classics of sociology—Auguste Comte (1798–1857) and Herbert Spencer (1820–

1903) (Comte 1875–1877 [1851–1854]; Spencer 1890–1899, 1971). Although they did not give a definition of "social institution," Comte and Spencer became the founders of the institutional approach in sociology.

The notion of social institution established itself thanks to Karl Marx (1818–1883), who used it since his early works of the 1840s. Marx (1970 [1843–1844]: 40) defined institutions as "modes of man's social existence" whose nature and transformations were determined historically by economic modes of production and their change. In the mid-nineteenth century, the institutional approach found supporters among outstanding historians. In particular, Numa Denis Fustel de Coulanges (1830–1889) studied societies of antiquity through this approach—he looked at their history as a history of institutions birth and transformations (1877 [1864], 1964 [1875]). In the late nineteenth century, an institutional school formed in political economy due to Thorstein Veblen (1857–1929). Veblen's crucial point was that economic institutions should be analyzed not as isolated units but rather in their interaction with cultural and social institutions (Veblen 1994 [1899]). During the same years, Maurice Hauriou (1856–1929) laid the foundation for the study of institutions in jurisprudence (Hauriou 1986 [1933]).

Also in the late nineteenth century, Émile Durkheim (1858–1917) wrote about society as not a simple set but rather a system of institutions (Durkheim 1982 [1895], 1997[1893]). Durkheim and his disciples, Marcel Mauss (1872–1950) and Paul Fauconnet (1874–1938) (1969 [1901]), studied the objective social ("collective") nature of institutions and the role of subjective human agency (activities of "individuals") in their functioning. These scholars had taken stock of thinking about institutions by the beginning of the twentieth century and argued powerfully that precisely the study of institutions was the subject of sociology.

A major new contribution to the theory of social institutions was made by Max Weber (1864–1920) in the early twentieth century. His special merit is a study of the normative aspect of institutional formation and functioning. He emphasized institutions' interdependence and (contrary to Marx) argued that no institution determines others, and causes and effects of interaction between institutions are unpredictable (Weber 2011). In the 1930s, another sociologist, Talcott Parsons (1902–1979), approached social institutions within his theory of social action as kinds of actions regulated by stable and mutual expectations of interacting actors. Parsons looked at institutions as at structural components of society whose functioning provides for its existence as social system (Parsons 1968 [1937], 1982).

In the first decades of the twentieth century, study of social institutions and the society as their system started in anthropology, first by Alfred Radcliffe-Brown (1881–1955) and Bronislaw Malinowski (1884–1942). For both, societies were systems of interrelated and interdependent institutions. However, while for Radcliffe-Brown (1952, 1958) the institution is a set of written and unwritten norms that regulate relations in a social group, for Malinowski (1944) social groups themselves are institutions whose functioning is regulated by norms.

In the second half of the twentieth–early twenty-first centuries, the development of theory about social institutions continued within different disciplines and in many directions. In particular, the philosopher and economist Friedrich Hayek

(1899–1992) (1948, 1973–1979) likened institutions to living organisms struggling for survival. The inevitable winners in this struggle, Hayek argued, are the best adapted to the environment, i.e., the most adequate to the conditions in which their society exists. This is how Hayek based liberalism as ideology that reflects a "natural" move of social processes and criticized socialism as an ideology that sanctions unnecessary, destructive intrusion in it (Hayek 1988).

Also from the perspective of liberalism, the philosopher John Rawls (1921–2002) studied one of the key aspects of the social institutions theory—the ratio of collective and individual in their appearance and functioning. According to Rawls (1972, 1999), agencies and organizations that form social institutions do not promote achieving one and the same collective goal of the people involved in them, but serve these people as a common tool for achieving their individual competing agendas. People create agencies and organizations not because they ostensibly have the same desires but because it is easier to achieve individual goals through commonly created institutions.

The sociologist Erving Goffman (1922–1982) began to study social institutions of a specific kind that he called "total institutions." These institutions (the army, monastery, jail and so forth) are those in which big groups of people are cut off from the wider society for a long time and share a common life whose forms are thoroughly regulated and that cannot be hidden from other members of the group (Goffman 1961). Goffman's work gave rise to a whole body of the literature on various closed communities in different countries.

The philosopher Michel Foucault (1926–1984) also explored institutions dominated and coordinated by state power—disciplinary institutions. For him, school, asylum, prison, army barracks or the hospital are examples of such institutions, all created in their modern form in the nineteenth century with the Industrial Revolution. According to Foucault, political institutions exist to transmit and apply orders to citizens, make the citizens obey these institutions and punish those who do not obey them (Foucault 1979 [1975]). Foucault also introduced the post-structuralist concept of the "discursive fields" in attempt to trace the interrelation of institutions and discourses. Such fields, for instance the family, contain several contradictory and competing discourses with varying degrees of power to organize social institutions (Foucault 1972 [1969]).

For the sociologist Anthony Giddens (b. 1938), the central problem is that of social institutions' stability and change, and of entire social systems' creation and reproduction. Giddens' theory of structuration is based on the premise that the appearance and change of social systems (i.e., systems of social institutions of all kinds) are outcomes of social practices at the intersection of structures and agents (Giddens 1984). Giddens underlines that "institutions by definition are the more enduring features of social life" (1984: 31) but their internal characteristics are changing from one historical period to another. The most radical changes in social institutions took place at the transition from the Middle Ages to Modern Time—from the "pre-modern" to "modern" era (Giddens 1976, 1984). Giddens sees the study of society as primarily the study of social institutions. It is noteworthy that

this view that has a long tradition since the works of Durkheim and other classics of the past is shared by many contemporary social scientists.

2 Social Institutions: Main Characteristics and Functions

The most widespread view of social institutions in contemporary social sciences is the view of them as complex self-reproducing social forms in different spheres of life. In particular, according to the prominent sociologist Jonathan Turner (1997: 6), a social institution is "a complex of positions, roles, norms and values lodged in particular types of social structures and organizing relatively stable patterns of human activity with respect to fundamental problems in producing life-sustaining resources, in reproducing individuals, and in sustaining viable societal structures within a given environment."

As a rule, institutions are studied as constituent parts of separate societies seen, in their turn, as more or less closed and self-sufficient sociocultural units. However, institutions may be trans-societal (e.g., legal institutions like international tribunals or institutions of international trade) and even institutions that operate in one society can rise as a reaction to trans-societal trends and demands (e.g., political institutions of the Western type in colonial and post-colonial states). This is true for the pre-modern world (e.g., Balkansky et al. 2000; Bondarenko and Korotayev 2000; Chase-Dunn and Inoue 2017; Feinman and Neitzel 2019; Knappett 2017; Kowalewski 2003; Kristiansen 1998). It is even more so for the world of Modern Times (Baskin and Bondarenko 2014; Osterhammel 2010 [1995]) and especially obvious in the present-day world whose cultures have become so complex that the world has become a fully globalized community and the nation-state is no longer sufficient for governing the world effectively. The critical challenges people throughout our world face today—global warming, terrorism, nuclear proliferation, migration crises, pandemics, etc.—cannot be addressed effectively by nations acting separately, without some supranational political institutions (Bondarenko and Baskin 2017). So, it may be more productive to look at institutions even within a separate society as parts of trans-societal systems of institutions. However, it should also not be overlooked that, at all their interconnectedness, societies still have boundaries, and their members usually know and respect them, even if the political borders between them are blurred or lifted as it was in many pre-modern world-systems or as it is in some contemporary regional unions, for example, the European Union.

Another important point regards societies as systems of social institutions of different kinds and multi-societal networks as trans-societal systems of institutions. It should always be taken into account that the mechanism of systems of functioning institutions cannot be likened to, for example, that of the clock. In the clock, the work of all details is in harmony and just this ensures the operation of the whole mechanism. In society or a societal network, institutions may not only complement each other but also conflict with one another. Furthermore, this conflict of institutions may be a feature that gives dynamism to a whole societal or trans-societal

system, especially when different institutions are products of societies of different socioeconomic types and culture areas, for instance, when pre-industrial and industrial, originally local and Western institutions combined in colonial and post-colonial societies (Balandier 2004 [1971]; Gulbrandsen 2014; Højbjerg et al. 2013; Mamdani 2018; Niang 2018; Njoku and Bondarenko 2018; Onoma 2010; Osterhammel 2010 [1995]; Young 2012).

Institutions may not only complement or conflict with each other. It may also happen that social principles and values that rose in a particular institution and were essential for it, in the course of society's historical transformation, will transcend that particular institution and become no less fundamental for more modern institutions in a more complex society. A good example here is the principle of communality, a foundation of sub-Saharan Africa's sociocultural tradition. The local community has always—from the earliest days of history to the present—remained the basic social institution in Africa. But in complex African societies, from pre-colonial to colonial to post-colonial, the principle of communality manifests itself in the capacity of the original and essentially communal worldview, consciousness, behavioral pattern, sociopolitical norms and relations to spread far beyond community as an institution. These communal principles now play a crucial role at all levels of societal complexity and in a great variety of institutions including, though in modified or sometimes even corrupted form, sociologically supra- and non-communal formations, up to modern cities and diaspora networks (Bondarenko 2015).

The social nature of institutions is presupposed by people's aggregation in societies—by virtue of this, the forms of their organization have not an individual but collective nature. This fact explains the main characteristics of social institutions.

Firstly, social relations and behavioral models that reproduce themselves from generation to generation form within social institutions. Many institutions are systems of organizations themselves (Scott 2001). People occupy roles in organizations that become constituent parts of institutions, and individuals or their groups can create them consciously and purposefully—people create industrial corporations and universities, political parties and religious communities. So, social institutions should not be anthropomorphized—they do not rise and function on their own but are created and transformed by human agency. Outstanding persons can put an especially clear imprint on an institution's form and essence, as Peter the Great did with the political institutions of Russia or as Henry Ford did with capitalist economic institutions. However, the appearance and existence of the very phenomenon of social institutions are by no means a manifestation of someone's conscious will. Social institutions are a result of unintended social self-organization. They exist because they justify themselves as the optimal structural social unit, throughout the whole human history. By setting the rules of behavior for the people involved in them and in this way restricting their individual freedom, institutions order and regulate interpersonal and intergroup, i.e., social, relations, in this way allowing societies to exist and change. The question of why people usually voluntarily agree to accept social norms and thus limit their personal freedom of behavior was already raised in antiquity particularly by Aristotle, and it remains a matter of debates in contemporary social sciences including anthropology (e.g.,

Austin 1962; Claessen 2005). In social philosophy, the collective acceptance theory of institutions argues that people accept institutions because they always are products of joint action—people create institutions jointly and accept the limits they set on their behavior as conventionally established by themselves, not by an outside force (Searle 1995, 2010; Sintonen et al. 2003: 169–278; Tuomela 2002, 2007, 2013; Ziv and Schmid 2014). In some other social sciences, particularly in anthropology, collective action theory proposes basically the same perspective (Blanton and Fargher 2008, 2009; Blanton with Fargher 2016; Carballo 2013). It should also be noted that when people still desire to challenge and alter their social institutions, they do it through collective action, too (Francisco 2010; Melucci 1996). "… a society's fundamental institutions owe their stability to the acceptance, or at least acquiescence, they command from the citizens. If that acceptance or that acquiescence disappears, the said institutions go with it as the floodgates to collective action open up" (Medina 2007: xviii).

Secondly, the rise of social institutions and the forms they take are always historically and socioculturally determined (e.g., Mahoney and Thelen 2010; North 1990; Thelen 2004). Although human activities are not completely programmed by the historical and sociocultural conditions of their times, these conditions still set forth a fairly specific framework for the manifestations of actors' free will. For example, the university as an educational institution could not appear in an archaic society—there were no social prerequisites needed for such an institution. However, this does not mean that there were no institutions of teaching and learning in archaic societies. They were, but they were different, adequate to the realities of those societies. Training there consisted primarily in the assimilation of socially useful skills by observing the actions of senior members of society and following their instructions, learning to practice different activities.

Thirdly, the social nature of institutions manifests itself also in their rise as response to various needs of a social network, a separate society or its part. In the course of changing needs, the respective institutions transform or disappear. For example, the institution of local (village) community rose as a form of satisfying a whole complex of human needs—economic, sociocultural, etc.—in pre-industrial societies. Throughout the precapitalist history of humankind, the community acquired various forms adequate to the needs of societies of their particular period and region; for instance, the Neolithic Near Eastern community was different in many ways from that of medieval Europe. With the rise of capitalism in Western Europe, the community began to decompose, as it did not satisfy the needs of the industrial society and could only hinder the new development (e.g., Kamen 2000: 126–137). However, in most colonial and post-colonial nations, the community remained and remains a fundamental institution, as, despite imposition of many essentially capitalist institutions and relations, there still were and are important spheres and segments of life in those societies (especially in rural settings) which the community can serve adequately (Bondarenko 2015; Meillassoux 1991 [1975]). In particular, "African development must build on independent nation-states whose economic base is pre-industrial agriculture" (Hart 2011: 13). Yet, in Africa too, where capitalist developments in rural areas still take place, "depeasantization"

begins to challenge the existence of community as a social institution (Bryceson 2018; Butovskaya 2019), despite the noted above preservation of the principle of communality.

Fourthly, institutional functioning is based on norms. Some scholars even argue that social institutions are just codes of norms (social conventions, rules) rather than agencies and organizations (North 1990, 1992; Schotter 1981; Taylor 1985, 1993). Norms define the rules of people's behavior within the framework of specific institutions and the very framework of the institutions—a set of situations and spheres of life in which people must behave in accordance with a given institution's norms. Thereby, norms make impact on people's public behavior in the framework of institutions, ascribing, admitting or prohibiting their social roles and respective modes of behavior. A violation of norms can inflict sanctions. Both norms and sanctions can be enshrined in written or oral form, and institutions can be formal and non-formal, respectively. Naturally, norms and sanctions are always unwritten in nonliterate societies. However, this does not mean that they are less strict or that institutions are always more amorphous in nonliterate societies than in literate. Unwritten norms are based on customary law that manifests the sociocultural tradition of a people. The tradition is perceived as unshakable, not needing proof of its value and truth; so, behavior that contradicts it can be strictly punished and is infrequent. In literate societies, the activities of major institutions are formalized and officially (legally) regulated to a considerable degree. However, room for informal institutions (political clans, kin groups, etc.) and unwritten norms always remains. In informal institutions in contemporary societies, sanctions are based on the power of public opinion, as well as on moral condemnation, rather than formal punishment.

The process of a social institution formation (institutionalization) begins with the appearance of a public need in it and finishes with the establishment of norms based on which it will function and the elaboration of a hierarchy of statuses and roles for the individuals and groups involved in it. The systems of statuses and roles in the framework of a social institution form its internal structure. Since in the course of time, the conditions of social institutions' existence are changing, the systems of statuses and roles in them are also transforming. Thus, the structure of institutions is dynamic, and the history of transformation of the systems of their statuses and roles is the core of the history of social institutions.

A whole society—separate, "world-system," and nowadays the transnational global community—may be represented as a system of social institutions. Social institutions are the units of their organization, and their transformations take the form of institutional transformations. Every person is included in many of the institutions that constitute his or her society. In the course of social history, societies and their networks are becoming more and more complex systems, so the number and variability of the institutions in which the person is included are growing. As a member of society, a person is inevitably and constantly involved in social relations, and thereby spends all his or her life in the framework of social institutions, "moving" daily from one institution to another depending on situation.

Separate societies and world-systems consist of social institutions, but they are not just their aggregates and are more complex than a construction of individual parts fit together, like a house made of bricks. Social institutions are to a certain degree autonomous but are never isolated from each other. Significant changes in one institution invariably affect other institutions. A society is a complex dynamic system of intersecting, interdependent, constantly and multidirectionally interacting social institutions. In the final analysis, society is a system of interrelated social institutions. It is so—that is, a system—because the complex of social institutions satisfies the whole complex of society's separate needs, which in turn must be accomplished in some fashion if there is to be a continuous self-reproduction of society itself, which can be seen as an overarching need.

As a rule, social institutions have not only main but also secondary functions. For example, the main function of the contemporary institution of higher education is preparation of an intellectual labor force capable of contributing to the society's development and reproduction. However, the institution of higher education clearly has other, secondary functions, too: particularly, economic, by providing livelihood for a part of society employed in this sphere—college and university teachers. Functions of different social institutions can intersect. For example, the institutions of the family, education, culture and religion fulfill the function of socialization of the individual.

Both main and secondary functions of social institutions are manifest, i.e., declared. However, besides manifest, social institutions have latent, that is unplanned, functions as "by-products" of institutions' functioning (Helm 1971; Merton 1968: 73–138). For instance, an educational institution can fulfill a latent function of political socialization of the students.

While parts of societal systems, separate institutions are organized social systems themselves, albeit less complex. As that of any system, the structure of social institutions is both stable and variable. Therefore, the concrete forms in which institutions perform their functions in a society vary from one historical period to another. They vary even more so between societies of different culture areas. However, the very mission of certain institutions to perform certain functions to meet certain public needs through the reproduction of social practices and relations remains unchanged. At the same time, to reveal the function of a social institution does not mean to explain how it has appeared and acquired its current form: The function of an institution can change, while its form can remain generally the same.

Thus, every social institution performs functions of its own—main and secondary, manifest and latent. However, there also are functions that all institutions share as elements of a social system. One of the most important among them is the function of making social relations stable and reproducing them by establishing social control within institutional frameworks. Another institutions' common function is regulation of social relations through the elaboration and establishment (sanctioning, recognizing as right) of modes of behavior and social roles of certain members of society in certain common situations. This function is related to the communicative and socializational functions of institutions: knowledge of the accepted modes and norms of behavior, and the skills of following them, must be

effectively transmitted within and between generations. One more function common for social institutions is ensuring the cohesion of society based on the sociocultural values and norms shared by society members despite all differences between them.

It would be wrong to consider the functioning of social institutions mechanically, as a completely predetermined, unconditionally forecasted process in which one inevitable phenomenon also inevitably generates another. The possibilities for institutions' self-regulation are not limitless. As emphasized above, despite institutions' social nature, humans are acting within them, and human subjectivity cannot but manifest itself in the ways and results of institutional functioning. For example, the activities of political institutions in the Russian Empire in the early twentieth century did not pursue the goal of changing the state order; on the contrary, their aim was to keep the monarchy. However, the actions of those in power led to its collapse. A high degree of personalization of institutions—an excessive influence of individuals on their activities—is a clear manifestation of their instability, evidence of their being in crisis. At the same time, however subjective the reasons for "failures" in the functioning of institutions might seem, their dysfunction always has a fundamental objective prerequisite. Basic social needs always remain, but the forms in which they may be satisfied cannot remain the same forever. Social institutions have to change as the society demands new forms of satisfying its needs, but apologists of the old order can hinder their transformation.

So, social institutions exist throughout the whole of human history because they have and perform functions, i.e., the tasks to satisfy social needs and thus allow the society or societal network to constantly reproduce itself. In the framework of social institutions, not only the society as a whole but also groups and individuals satisfy their needs and negotiate and renegotiate their status–power relations (Kemper 2017). Social institutions do not remain unchanged: Even performing the same functions, they are transforming from generation to generation. Thereby, the society as a system of institutions is changing.

3 Overview of Chapters

The chapters in the volume fall into three parts. **Part I, "Theoretical Approaches,"** consists of general chapters, while **Parts II, "The Old World,"** and **III, "The New World,"** include case studies. The volume closes with a concluding chapter.

Part I opens with the chapter by **Stephen A. Kowalewski** and **Jennifer Birch** which central question is: How does the human past help us figure out how to solve the biggest problems facing humanity today? The discussion is based on the statement that for humans, getting things done is always social. Institutions are organized and socially reproduced ways of accomplishing objectives. Since people are always faced with multiple, different problems, they tend to create institutions that are varied, non-isomorphic and even non-congruent. The recent expansion of archaeological information now allows scholars to move beyond gross types (tribal

society, Bronze Age Culture, etc.) toward documenting the histories of institutions and assemblages of institutions. Archaeology's language (its units of analysis and how its data are packaged) can be reshaped to recognize the sociological, organizational nature of actors' responses to pressing challenges. The archaeological record provides case material regarding long-enduring institutions, times of highly creative and rapid institution building, societies that had many institutions and others that had few, and societies composed of non-isomorphic, non-centralized institutions and a few others whose institutions were more centralized. Outstanding research problems include better understanding of synchronous variation, rapid versus gradual change, internal and external causes leading to change in the relative importance or power of institutions, and the social means of limiting concentration of power. From these archaeological and historical perspectives, we suggest that if humanity makes an adequate response to contemporary global pollution and climate change, the response will be social and organizational. Existing institutions may be transformed, and new ones may be created. But totalizing, meta-institutions are less effective than multiple, crosscutting institutions.

The author of the next chapter, **Dmitri M. Bondarenko**, points out that aside from complexity measured in levels of political integration, societies as systems of social institutions have another fundamental characteristic that can be called a "basic principle of societal organization." The principle of organization a society embodies depends on the way its institutions are arranged with respect to one another. Two basic principles can be distinguished: heterarchy—"… the relation of elements to one another when they are unranked or when they possess the potential for being ranked in a number of different ways" (Crumley 1995: 3) and its opposite —a condition in society in which relationships in most contexts are ordered mainly according to one principal hierarchical relationship. This organizational principle may be called "homoarchy." The notions of heterarchy and homoarchy should be applied to societal structure in general rather than to power relations only. There have never existed non-hierarchical societies in the proper sense of this expression —hierarchy is an attribute of any social system. However, vertical and horizontal links play different parts in different societies at every concrete moment. So, the question of differences between societies from the point of view of their organization as systems of institutions is not whether institutions form hierarchies, but how these hierarchies of institutions are interrelated—if they are rigidly ranked one and only one possible way, or not. Homoarchy and heterarchy represent the most universal "ideal" (generalized) principles and basic trajectories of sociocultural organization. There are no universal evolutionary stages: cultures can be (generally) heterarchical or homoarchical having an equal level of complexity. A culture could change its basic organizational principle without transition to another complexity level. Alternativeness also exists within each of the types. So, the heterarchy–homoarchy dichotomy runs throughout the whole of human history: it is observable on all levels of social complexity in all historical periods and culture areas, including the globalized world of our time. The analysis provided in this chapter shows that transformations in the ways social institutions and their sets, societal

subsystems, are ranked (homoarchically or hetrarchically) on the one hand and changes in the overall cultural complexity on the other are two different, largely unrelated processes.

Henri J.M. Claessen discusses the evolution of sociopolitical organizations as structural change. The chapter consists of three parts. The first part presents the emergence of sociopolitical structures. The second part discusses evolutionary streams with Polynesia and Africa south of the Sahara as examples. In the third part, an explanation is sought for the similarities in the sociopolitical structures of societies found in different times and places.

Nikolay N. Kradin examines some crucial themes related to origins of the state: the factors of political centralization, stages of statehood and the role of urbanization in state formation. The chapter deals with the specificity of regional aspects of the rise of complexity and urbanization on the example of two polities of the Russian Far East and Manchuria—the Bohai Kingdom and the Jurchen Empire.

Alexander A. Nemirovsky, whose chapter opens **Part II**, deals with main institutional and conceptual aspects of transition of Assyrian polity from city-state with a quite limited power of hereditary rulers to territorial state and empire with royal autocracy and developed bureaucratic apparatus at the latter's disposal. That process took place in the mid-fourteenth–early thirteenth centuries BCE. The situations before and after that period, including their institutional dimensions, are well known from complexes of sources dated back, respectively, to the nineteenth to eighteenth and late fourteenth to eleventh centuries BCE, but the course of transition itself and its stages are more obscure. Changes in titles and epithets of the rulers in official and legal formulas, in ways of references to the rulers or their polity made by foreigners in diplomatic documents, etc., can to some degree serve as indicators of these stages. On the whole, it can be concluded that the main factor of the transition in question was successful military–territorial expansion which seems to have arisen in an explosive way under Aššur-uballit I. Apparently, the beginning of that expansion became possible due to successful usage of the unexpectedly emerged and exceptional international conjuncture. Then, the expansion developed more or less constantly and increasingly. The author of the chapter makes an attempt to reconstruct some reflection of Assyrians themselves on this process and its key figures. He also attracts attention to some analogies between the Assyrian case and transition from the republican political order of a city-state to the regime of sole rule in classic antiquity.

Andrey V. Korotayev demonstrates that in the late 1st millennium BCE a relatively strong ancient Sabaean state was transformed into the Middle Sabaean political system that may be characterized as consisting of a weak state in its center and strong chiefdoms on its periphery. In the 1st millennium CE, the North-East Yemen political system consisting of a weak state in its center and strong chiefdoms on its periphery appears to have been transformed into a system consisting of a bit stronger state in its center and true tribes (but not chiefdoms) on the periphery. Within this system, the tribes and state constituted one well-integrated whole. There does not seem to be any grounds to consider these transformations as a "degeneration," "regress" or "decline"; as there was no significant loss of the general

system complexity and elaboration, one complex political system was transformed into another one, structurally different, but no less complex, highly organized and sophisticated. In many respects, the tribe of the North Yemeni type could be regarded as a rather developed form of political organization, whose complexity could quite be compared with that of the chiefdom (and it is by no means more primitive than the chiefdom), implying first of all a very high level of development of political culture and the existence of an elaborated system of sociopolitical institutions of arbitration, mediation, search for consensus and so on, a wide developed network of intensive intercommunal links on enormous territories populated by tens and hundreds of thousands of people.

In his second contribution to this volume, **Nikolay N. Kradin** discusses the relationship between hierarchy (actually, homoarchy) and heterarchy among Eurasian pastoralists and nomads. He theorizes that in the case of pastoral nomads heterarchy and hierarchy should not necessarily be considered as two separate directions, but instead may be seen as two different levels of political centralization and two directions of evolution of political institutions. A multitude of combinations and dichotomies of both heterarchical and hierarchical polities are possible among nomads. While personal authority remains weak, nomadic societies are organized as a heterarchical tribe or chieftainship. As personal authority grows, those are transformed into a hierarchical chiefdom and nomadic empire.

Victoria Tin-bor Hui examines and deconstructs a well-known institution in China: Confucianism. China is often presumed to be different from Europe: while the Western world was simultaneously cursed by a Hobbesian state of war and blessed by a deeply ingrained tradition of constitutionalism, the East was supposed to be endowed with peace but burdened with autocracy. Confucianism, a political philosophy that emphasizes benevolence, is often taken to prescribe pacifism in China's external relations and paternalism in China's state–society relations. Yet, the author of the chapter argues Confucianism is not unlike other world philosophical thoughts in that it contains both elements that support peace and those that justify war, and components that champion freedom and those that defend autocracy. The chapter traces Confucianism's evolution from its birth in the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods (770-221 BCE) to its construction in the Imperial era (221 BCE to 1911 CE). It shows that China history had roughly equal parts of pacifism and aggression, and limited government and imperial despotism. Confucianism has continued to be reconstructed to this day to support the official line of "peaceful rise" in international relations and one-party dictatorship in state–society relations. Nevertheless, this deep historical analysis suggests that both the past and the present have suppressed alternatives truer to the Confucian legacy.

Nam C. Kim adds to ongoing scholarship and debates with a case study from Southeast Asia, examining a pathway to "state" formation in the Red River Valley of present-day northern Vietnam, also known as the Bac Bo region. Specifically, the ancient settlement known as Co Loa provides an interesting context of emergent complexity that was unprecedented in the RRV region, one that was shaped by both its geographic positioning and its interactions with societies of neighboring regions. In addition to local variables of social, economic and political change, a prominent