SETH ABRUTYN AND
JONATHAN H. TURNER

THE FIRST INSTITUTIONAL SPHERES IN HUMAN SOCIETIES

Evolution and Adaptations from Foraging to the Threshold of Modernity

Evolutionary Analysis in the Social Sciences

ROUTLEDGE

"Seth Abrutyn and Jonathan H. Turner provide a remarkable understanding of human social evolution. From the nineteenth century, the foundational question for Sociology and its derivative disciple Anthropology has been to understand social diversity and emergent complexities. Although this grand objective has been sidelined, *The First Institutional Spheres in Human Societies* refocuses on how and why human institutions developed. The authors deal with theoretical discourses from emergent biological cognitive pre-adaptions for sociability through kinship as the first human institution to the progressive creation of corporate units, from which subsequent institutional spheres formed. Novel social formations were created, they argue, to deal with survival challenges generated by population growth, unstable environments, social conflicts, and stratification – all at least in part endogenous to institutional functioning. Bringing together a vast scholarship that has often been fractured by controversy, they synthesize a convincing argument about social evolution's linkage to biological evolution, but with novel goal-seeking objectives of group behavior. I am excited by how they conceptualize the duality of institutional formations as super-organic but effectively internalized in individual minds. This is a *tour de force*, highly recommended to anyone interested in how sociological theory and anthropology's archaeological and ethnographic records seek to explain deep history and provide insight into present-day challenges."

Timothy Earle, *Northwestern University*

"A bold departure from the current fragmented vision of social organization that characterizes most of the field of sociology, *The First Institutional Spheres in Human Societies*' breadth and depth is rarely paralleled except for in the authors' previous work. This book holds the potential to be a discipline-influencing book. Abrutyn and Turner

tell the story of the emergence of institutions, in all of its complexity, to shed light on how this level of social organization emerged and how this level of social organization works. They detail how biology and social organization interact to generate the emergence of human institutions. Their historical approach to the phenomenon gives us a particular sort of insight that we could not get by only looking at current instantiations of institutions."

Erika Summers-Effler, *Notre Dame University*

"In 1973, biologist Theodosius Dobzhansky, in an essay criticizing anti-evolution creationism, wrote that 'Nothing in Biology Makes Sense Except in the Light of Evolution.' What's true for biology is certainly true also for the social sciences, particularly those dealing with socio-cultural phenomena, such as the emergence and persistence of social institutions like kinship, government, religion, the economy, and law. Humans built these institutions, but as Seth Abrutyn and Jonathan H. Turner point out in this book, they built them while facing selection pressures that often prevented them from accomplishing the goals they sought. Instead, they had to adapt to changing environmental conditions, doing as best they could, under the circumstances. The authors imply that, in the end, humans' best efforts may not be good enough to save us from the dire consequences of the very order we helped create. I highly recommend this book to anyone interested in evolutionary analyses of social institutions."

Howard Aldrich, *University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill*

THE FIRST INSTITUTIONAL SPHERES IN HUMAN SOCIETIES

Few concepts are as central to sociology as institutions. Yet, like so many sociological concepts, institutions remain vaguely defined. This book expands a foundational definition of the institution, one which locates them as the basic building blocks of human societies—as structural and cultural machines for survival that make it possible to pass precious knowledge from one generation to the next, ensuring the survival of our species. The book extends this classic tradition by, first, applying advances in biological evolution, neuroscience, and primatology to explain the origins of human societies and, in particular, the first institutional sphere: kinship. The authors incorporate insights from natural sciences often marginalized in sociology, while highlighting the limitations of purely biogenetic, Darwinian explanations. Secondly, they build a vivid conceptual model of institutions and their central dynamics as the book charts the chronological evolution of kinship, polity, religion, law, and economy, discussing the biological evidence for the ubiquity of these institutions as evolutionary adaptations themselves.

Seth Abrutyn is Associate Professor in the Sociology Department at the University of British Columbia. His research straddles two primary streams: the evolution of human institutions, like religion or polity, and the role place and place-based culture play in shaping adolescent mental health and suicide. His work has won several national awards, and can be found in outlets like *American Sociological Review*, *Sociological Theory*, and *American Journal of Public Health*.

Jonathan H. Turner was named the 38th University Professor in the history of the University of California system. He is primarily a general sociological theorist. He has authored or coauthored 43 books, and edited nine additional books. This book on the first human institutions is his fourth book on the topic, focusing on the origin of human institutional systems and their evolution to the structural and cultural base necessary for modernity.

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Published:

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The First Institutional Spheres in Human Societies

Evolution and Adaptations from Foraging to the Threshold of Modernity

Seth Abrutyn and Jonathan H. Turner

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
NEW YORK AND LONDON

Cover image: © Shutterstock

First published 2022
by Routledge
605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158

and by Routledge
4 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4RN

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Abrutyn, Seth, author. | Turner, Jonathan H., author.
Title: The first institutional spheres in human societies : evolution and adaptations from foraging to the threshold of modernity /
Seth Abrutyn and Jonathan H. Turner.
Description: New York, NY : Routledge, [2022] |
Series: Evolutionary analysis in the social sciences
Identifiers: LCCN 2021022359 |
Subjects: LCSH: Social institutions. | Social structure. | Sociology.
Classification: LCC HM826 .A37 2022 | DDC 306–dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2021022359

ISBN: 978-1-032-12413-1 (hbk)
ISBN: 978-1-032-12408-7 (pbk)
ISBN: 978-1-003-22443-3 (ebk)

DOI: 10.4324/9781003224433

Typeset in Minion
by Newgen Publishing UK

To our children,

Seth Abrutyn: To Asa and Silas Abrutyn

Jonathan H. Turner: To Patricia Turner, Donna Turner Mueller, and Jon Turner

Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

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Introduction

In the second preface to *The Rules of Sociological Method*, Émile Durkheim (1895 [1982]: 54ff.) posited that a science of society was necessarily a science of institutions—their emergence, evolution, and, perhaps, decay and death. Little did Durkheim realize that one of the central concepts of his own sociology—things he defined as *collective ways of acting and thinking*—would be, like many other cherished concepts, defined in so many different ways as to mean everything and nothing. This book is about institutions. Reasonably, one might ask why now? Why another book on institutions? In part, sociology, we believe, is at a critical juncture. Like so many of the major pendulum swings designed to rectify serious omissions in mid-century functionalism (e.g., the rise of conflict theory, constructivism, inequality studies), the "cultural turn" (Patterson 2014) has largely pushed structural accounts into the background. Likewise, the cultural turn has dominated the last several decades of institutional analysis (Friedland and Alford 1991; Jepperson and Meyer 2021), reducing the substance that consumed so many classical works, ranging from Spencer's *Principles of Sociology* to Weber's oeuvre on "social orders" to the margins of a theory of institutions. Institutions, however are more than cultural beliefs and practices patterned and enduring; they are real structural *and* cultural adaptations that demarcate physical, temporal, social, and symbolic space.

Hence, our conceptualization of institutions is not completely new, but it is synthetic and generative. It is a book that merges its authors' already shared notion of institutions, both of whom draw in different ways from very distinctive sources. The term institution is indebted to Herbert Spencer's usage in the *Principles of Sociology*, which organized a massive body of data around the ubiquitous structural units of organization that appear to be building blocks of every society—e.g., kinship, polity, and so forth. The realism staked throughout, that institutions are produced and reproduced by special collectives that work, consciously, to deal with individual and collective problems and to guard this authority stems from the "old" institutionalism of Stinchcombe (1997) and Selznick (1996), as well as Eisenstadt (1965). And, the phenomenological and social psychological

DOI: 10.4324/9781003224433-1

consequences of institutions emerges from Weber's (1978) *spheres* of social action and a loose but muscular interpretation of Durkheim refracted through Shils (1975). Our view of institutions shares some, but not much with the myriad, loosely overlapping visions of institutions most prominently promoted by *new institutionalists*. Indeed, they are environments in which fields, sectors, niches, and their constituent actors—organizations and groups—operate. But, they are *real, emergent levels of social reality;* they occupy space, and can be touched to some degree. They are not purely reducible to the organizations and roles that inhabit these spaces. They are less the specific content or manifestation (e.g., capitalism or democracy) and, instead, the general form (e.g., economy or polity).

The remainder of this introduction is organized around five myths about institutions that are perpetuated in sociology today: (1) institutions are reifications; (2) institutions are practices and/or beliefs; (3) institutions are manifest in social phenomena that inhabit their space, like organizations, or roles; (4) premodern institutions, at least those prior to capitalism or nation-states, are radically different and thereby less interesting; and, finally, (5) little can be gleaned from the analysis of the evolution of humans, human society, or our brains and bodies. In shattering these myths, we are able to not only situate our analysis and anticipate what the reader will encounter throughout, but we are hopefully able to also reclaim the terminology surrounding institutions.

Myth 1: Institutions are Reifications

One of the worst things to happen to sociology in the last half century was the movement towards methodological individualism (Hedström and Ylikoski 2010). In the search for mechanisms, out of fear that abstract social forces were impossible to measure, and in the goal of raising emic over etic knowledge, lived experience over generalizability, many sociologists have abandoned the vision of a social world with emergent levels of social reality. It is true that sociology failed to satisfyingly link the macro-micro levels of social reality, but it is no less true that linking these two levels does not a science make. It is also true that every human society that we know of has had some semblance of kinship, polity, religion, economy, and law. By that, we mean to say that we may look at the individual roles people play, like "mother", or we may look at the similarities and variation in the groups (families) that these roles are enacted daily, or we may look at the enduring structural and cultural elements that tie present families together, as well as link them to the past and an anticipated future. To be sure, the further back in human history we go, the blurrier the lines between, say, polity

and kinship become in both theory and practice. And, yet, a contemporary human would find certain actions reflective of economic-like behavior vis-à-vis religious behavior.

But, aren't institutions simply reifications, as Lukacs proposed (Parkinson 1970)? Most everything in science is a reification. We cannot see germs without special instruments, and yet we take for granted the fact that they cause illness and by targeting them we can prevent or alleviate their effects. Likewise, sociologists cannot "see" most of the things we study. The self, so personal and so tangible, is *constructed* through the acquisition of language and the neurobiological capacity to identify objects that endure in memory, affect, and cognition. But, the self is not a physical fact like gravity, nor is it visible without special instruments designed to measure and observe it. Institutions are unnatural like the self; products of human construction. But, like the self, they are tangible things, identifiable both to the naked eye (in some ways, more accurately than the self) and to instruments designed to measure them. They are enduring, more so than the individuals who populate them. And, they possess distinctive dynamics irreducible to individuals, though as we shall see in early chapters and throughout, like the self, they depend on our evolved brains and bodies. To anticipate the more abstract discussions in Chapters 3–4 and the substantive, historically rich chapters on specific institutions (e.g., Chapter 8 on polity or 10 on religion), we offer some rather broad and parsimonious thoughts on the tangibility of institutions, which, subsequently, forms the basis of our critique of the remaining four myths.

First, institutions, or what we will usually refer to as *institutional spheres*, are manifest in four dimensions of social reality: physical, temporal, social, and symbolic. The physical provides the greatest evidence of their footprint. Humans have always built houses, and houses have always been the principal center of kinship activity. A naïve observer, from contemporary China, Chile, or Canada, would easily identify a house in a foraging society's landscape regardless of the architecture or the adornment. Arguably, a native to a foraging society, given enough time to get over the shock of the scale and size of modern communities, would easily identify houses and their function in those very same countries. Even more salient are the differences between kinship space and political space. Again, this is a relative pronouncement that depends on twin processes we will describe in later chapters, differentiation and autonomy. In a chiefdom, for instance, polity is discernible to a trained eye, as the chief's hut looks very much like every other hut but is usually positioned in space differently. Over time, chiefdoms develop ways of further distinguishing politics and

political action from kinship and kinship behavior. However, the untrained eye would easily recognize a palace just as a denizen of a city-state from Mesopotamia would deduce that the White House or Buckingham Palace were sites of very different events and decisions than a neighborhood with non-descript row houses.

These tangible distinctions are buttressed by the temporal and social dimensions of institutional spheres. Time feels more natural than any other dimension, and thus its manipulation and routinization allow analysis and people alike to take for granted the powerful forces regulating the daily lives of individuals. What is real is often taken for unreal, thus forever distorting the capacity to understand the social universe. The earliest strains towards a religious sphere emerge in calendrical rituals designed to differentiate sacred emotions, attitudes, and actions from their profane counterparts (Wallace 1966). The economy has always impinged on kinship life, as seasonal migration was at the heart of foraging societies in ways echoed by the daily and seasonal rounds of agrarian life or the highly regularized, formalized pattern of industrial factory life. Ceremonial rituals great and small become deeply embedded in the fabric of social life, such as the first Tuesday of every November being Election Day in the U.S. Every four years, the U.S. builds to a fervor as campaigns and debates generate the same sort of effervescence Durkheim spoke of until the collective ritual of watching the results pour in and a winner be declared. It was, perhaps, the artificial extension of the 2020 election's resolution that made it feel so unsatisfying and helped foment the grievances that led to the eventual insurrection on January 6th of the following year. In those rituals, both big (Election Day) and small (watching the debates), our political identities are made salient and we are primed to evaluate political thoughts and behaviors by politically-based criteria. This ephemeral role-taking is many people's only tangible cognitive and affectual connection to the political sphere, but, as with any institution, there are myriad people devoted to the institutional sphere's production, reproduction, and expansion. We can see them, hear them, talk to them. They are real. And, like a professor devoted to her discipline or a hedge fund manager a slave to his clients, they tend to struggle with role compartmentalization and bleed politics, science, or economics into other encounters and interactions shaped by other institutional spheres. As long as sociologists look at outcomes of institutional activities in specific behaviors rather than examining the underlying dynamics of institutions and their relations with each other, understanding of human societies will be very limited.

Finally, it is the symbolic dimension that breaths life, or more accurately, meaning, into the physical, temporal, and social dimensions of institutional

life. Who are doctors? They are the people wearing white lab coats. Who are judges? Black robes. Institutional spheres designate or signify the objects that belong and that are foreign. That means they classify with words, in themes of discourse that become narratives about institutional activities, in texts, and in performance the people, places, and things that are political or economic. Where the lines between an object's political or economic attachment is in doubt, we find sources of tension and contestation; often the core of cautionary tales, fables, and aphorisms. Nonetheless, the carving out of physical space is also a symbolic act: buildings develop architectural styles and adopt emblems and signage that transcend functionality and double as representations. Costumes and uniforms, symbols of status achieved or ascribed, and everyday tools all become elements of meaning that uphold the expressive or interaction order. And while an object or set of interrelated objects, a space or temporal distinction, or a role may not have a firmly delineated connection to an institutional sphere, the conflict itself underscores the belief and reality that different institutional spheres exist and organize the self, encounters and interaction, informal and formal groups, and, ultimately, even communities themselves. As such, we can expect institutional spheres to have emergent properties worthy of study in their own right. What exactly those properties are, however, constitute our next two myths.

Myth 2: Institutions Are Practices and/or Beliefs

As the idea that institutions were reifications took hold, a reclamation project began across a number of disciplines, most notably sociology and economics. The goal was how to keep the popular concept *institution* and its supposed verb/process *institutionalization*, without committing the sin of treating it as a real thing. Out of this intellectual project came a loosely connected body of scholarship otherwise known as the *New Institutionalism* (Nee 2005; Powell and DiMaggio 1991). Substituting *cultural* models of institutions for structural ones, institutions remained environments in which organizations operated, but without structure *and* with the practical nature of professions (Stinchcombe 1997) abstracted away into the background. In its place, grew rationalized forms, practices, and beliefs (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; Meyer and Rowan 1977; Thornton et al. 2012), and, at times, rules and resources (Giddens 1984; North 1990). That is, the focus shifted from institutions as things to their consequences in bringing about convergence or equivalence across the units of analysis that had become far more interesting to organizational scholars: fields (Martin 2003), niches (Hannan and Freeman 1977), sectors (Scott and Meyer 1983),

and markets (Fligstein 1996; Ouchi 1980). Important and interesting, new institutionalism—which has long overemphasized the economic organization over other types of corporate units—has primarily conceptualized institutions as isomorphic forces of legal regulation (Dobbin and Sutton 1998; Edelman and Suchman 1997), normative pressures from professions (DiMaggio 1991), or Weberian-esque myths constraining organizational construction (Boli, Ramirez, and Meyer 1985; Thomas et al. 1987). The hardness or tangibility of institutions has given way to vague, but highly flexible concepts like "logics," whose primary consequence, phenomenologically, are patterning beliefs and practices. Our view is that institutions *are real things*, revealing a real character in their structure and symbol systems that needs to be treated as a powerful force in human social organization. It is not a loose name for more fundamental processes; rather, it is generative of these process and, hence, must be understood as whole.

There is some merit in the advances made by new institutionalism, specifically in the effects the economic sphere has on formal organizations. However, the institutional sphere is lost amidst these analyses, relegated to a small subset of fields or sectors, organizations, or beliefs and practices. In *The Elementary Forms*, Durkheim did not define religion by its beliefs and practices; *cults* were defined by these constituent elements. Religion was (a) the moral community who (b) shared a set of interlocking "cults" that came to (c) comprise the general way of thinking and acting in relationship to the sacred or supranatural. It is the entire system or sphere of social organization that constitutes religion. The new institutionalists have lost sight of the way systems pattern discrete types of organization and communication (Luhmann 1982, 1995), exchange (Parsons 1990), or interaction (Turner 2003). The actual arrangement of people committed to maintaining the institutional sphere's practical and theoretic reality are peripheral or relegated to economic entrepreneurs (DiMaggio 1988; Levy and Scully 2007). And the big *raision d'etre* of social organization—that is, to resolve exigencies for the sake of individual and collective survival—is replaced by the twin motivations of wealth accumulation and legitimation.

Myth 3: Institutions Can Be Organizations or Actors

As institutions disappear from plain view, they are rapidly replaced by colloquialism that makes just about any social phenomenon that endures for a period of time an institution. Social scientific concepts, of course, like "the words of everyday language, like the concepts they express, are always susceptible of more than one meaning, and the scholar employing them in their accepted use without further definition would risk serious

misunderstanding" (Durkheim 1897 [1951]: 1). To be sure, it is conventional to call a person, say Ted Kennedy, who has been around an organization for a long time an institution; to refer to a prestigious, long-standing organization, like Harvard, an institution. The latter, especially, harkens back to mid-century sociology that spent inordinate amounts of time in mental hospitals, or what were generally termed institutions, and the process by which a patient was admitted and socialized, institutionalization (Goffman 1961; Scheff 1966). But, was Goffman really interested in total institutions or the unique structural and cultural qualities of some *organizations* and their pursuit of total *commitment* (Kanter 1968)? The pervasive and lackadaisical use of institution, when Goffman likely meant the verb form institutional*ization*, led to Coser's (1974) co-optation of the term to refer to just about any type of non-formal social organization that thrust total commitment onto the individual. And, eventually, to the terms used to refer to beliefs (or myths) and practices. Once it was free of any clear system of classification, it became possible to label anything, from voting to the handshake, to a person or an organization, as an institution (Jepperson 1991). So, what is an institution? Is it a bureaucratic entity capable of processing large batches of similar others, as Goffman intends? Is it patterned relationships that demand and command undivided attention and resource mobilization as Coser intends? Are they myths, beliefs, practices, logics, or simply the taken-for-granted environment or container in which the real action, organizational dynamics, occurs? Or is it any social phenomenon capable of patterning the structure, and therefore thoughts and actions, of individual or collective actors?

In some ways, it might be better to answer these questions by refashioning a new conceptual tool and letting new institutionalism keep the term institution. After all, a social scientific consensus over the term has never existed—e.g., in anthropological literature, for instance, institutions have often been seen as synonymous with structural features of a society, like "property" or "marriage" (Evans-Pritchard et al. 1956; Hobhouse et al. 1930; Maine 1888), instead of the systems that they are usually embedded. But, we also believe sociologists should care about how we classify phenomenon, and should also care about distinguishing elements of a thing from the thing itself. People or organizations are actors whose realities are institutionalized, or patterned by the structure and culture of an institutional sphere. Some individuals (whether the person or the role) and organizations can become representational. In Durkheimian terms, we mean to say that Harvard can come to embody many cherised values of the educational sphere, but that does not make at an institution; it makes it an influential node in a network of other organizations and individuals who

are embedded in the educational sphere. Institutional spheres institute certain ritualized action events, like voting or admission rituals, as well as constitutive rules (D'Andrade 1984; Swanson 1971) that delineate what "marriage" or "property" is and is not, but to focus only on these, or call these institutons, is to ignore the actors embedded in these cognitive and structural systems—both subject to their force and purposefully engaged in maintaining, expanding, or changing the events, their meaning, and the rules (Stinchcombe 1997).

Popular, then, or not, we maintain the position that institutions, or perhaps more accurately, institutional spheres are *macro structural and cultural spaces that organize virtually all human activities that are central human concerns and a significant portion of the population*. Institutions are also *the result and fountain-head of human agency and, hence, are changed and rebuilt by acts of individual and collective agency*. This definition delimits the range of things we can legitimately call an element of an institutional sphere, but deliminated to particular forms of structure and culture, as we will emphasize in the next three introductory chapters. Institutions align nicely with many subfields in sociology that focus on a specific set of related actors, resources, and rules: family (or what we would call kinship), polity, religion, economy, law, as well as medicine, science, and media/entertainment; and this fact makes even more surprising the view that they are "not real." Empirically, this definition returns us to one virtue of now-rejected functionalism, whatever its other many faults. The evolution of societies was seen as the evolution of institutions and the corporate units and their cultures from which institutions are constructed. Indeed, when refracted through an evolutionary lens, the idea of institutions is not only salvageable but essential because institutions evolve to resolve in response to collective problems encounted by populations organizing within a given environment.

We need not drag out the long-rejected notion of functional needs or requisites; rather, we can repurpose the idea of needs or requisites to emphasize that humans always face adaptive problems in a given environment, even the sociocultural environment of their own making. Institutional analysis is thus the analysis of fundamental *human concerns* as they adapt to ever changing environments. At the individual level, our evolved cognitive and affective capacities appear to have made a set of concerns salient, like justice, power, and belongingness. At the social level, once we began organizing into larger groups, solutions to any one of these concerns could become patterned, enduring, and the core organizing principle around which divisions of labor came to be arranged. Institutional spheres, then, are the outcome of the institutionalization, through acts of

agency, of solutions to the fundamental concerns of humans as they adapt to diverse environments, both ecological and sociocultural; and these acts lead to the building up of social structural cultural formations that regulate human thought, action, and organization.

For instance, in Chapters 7 and 8 we examine the selection pressures that drove human societies 10,000 years ago, and then again 5,000 years ago, to begin carving out political space vis-à-vis kinship space. At first, the lines were enormously blurry, as chiefdom remained deeply embedded structurally and culturally within patrilineal kinship organization. Power remained a concern tied closely to loyalty, a concern closely aligned with kinship. But, as the number of exigencies grew, the conditions for distinguishing polity structurally, culturally, and phenomenologically grew concomitant. With this autonomous political sphere came the shift of power—as a concern and as a resource—from kinship to polity. That is, power came to be the central organizing principle for organizational fields, organizations, and individual role/status positions; it became a generalized currency for communication, exchange, and interaction between increasingly impersonal, generalized networks of individual and collective actors who either spent the majority of their time oriented towards politics or who sought out the goods or services the polity offered.

This example, however, points us to the truth behind our fourth myth. Economy was not the first institution; rather kinship was the first human institution with economy fully embedded in its structure and culture. Moreover, economy was not even the first institutoinal sphere to become autonomous from kinship; rather polity more autonomous before religion, economy, and law. Moreover, yet another myth is that biology is irrelevant to sociocultural evolution, but as we will argue, biological and neurobiological evolution were the driving forces making institutional systems possible in the first place, and they still are very much affected by the evolution and successive movement to relative autonomy of each institutional sphere organizing a society. Such considerations go against the grain of most sociological subfields and limitations of "the sociological imagination." In this book, however, we intend to demonstrate how insights gleaned from other sciences can inform sociological level of analysis, without sacrificing the obvious point that the sociocultural and biotic universes constitute different realities.

Myth 4: Our Biology is Neither Determining nor Relevant Today

Since Durkheim's (1895) *Rules of the Sociological Method*, sociology has continuously drawn strong boundaries between itself and the things that go on inside of the human organism.[1] Though evolutionary thought has

nearly always had a place in sociology, it is not without challenge, anxiety, and, in some corners, distaste. Given the subject matter of this book—macro structural and cultural spheres of action—one might ask why this myth and its debunking even matter. Above, we've already claimed that institutions are real, emergent social phenomena that are not reducible to the individual level. So, why are we interested in evolution? There are three answers to this question that combine to stake out one of the main goals of this book.

First, all social organization is predicated on our evolved capacities and dispositions in humans' biology. Sociologists are not unique among most humans who struggle with the practical and theoretic consequences of seeing humans as animals. It is one thing to recognize and believe in evolution, but an entirely different thing to internalize what that means for a social science. We believe it is long past time to be clear about what we can learn from our mammalian heritage and, especially, our primate and ape heritance. In Chapter 1, we dig into the evolution of social organization by way of natural selection working on our bodies and our brains. We consider what other ape societies (at least three of the four remaining Great Apes) look like and what that teaches us about the earliest human societies some 300,000 years ago. Humans are incredibly flexible animals, having been able to colonize just about every ecological niche on the planet. And, yet, what we find is there are also some delimitations to what is possible.

Second, while natural selection clearly plays a major role in the construction of the earliest human societies, we agree with an array of evolutionary scholars who emphasize the co-evolution, eventually, between genes and culture (Richerson and Boyd 2005; Richerson and Christiansen 2013), although this approach often assumes too much interaction between genes and culture. However, we also diverge from this group by proposing *two separate types of evolutionary processes*. The first is Darwinian, which recognizes some social evolution benefited the biological reproduction of humans, and still does today, but far more important are the sociocultural formations generated by humans with large brains and capacities for language and culture creation. For instance, that kinship continues to survive, as does its basic organizational unit, the family, we can be assured kinship was created in response to selection pressures for protecting the human genome and allowing for reproduction; and while such is still the case, kinship as an institution reveals emergent properties that are responses to different kinds of selection pressure emanating from adaptive problems in the organization of humans. The result is that we must shift to sociocultural evolution, which operates through selection but is still fundamentally different than biological evolution. This second type of evolution thus

shifts the focus from the individual to the social; and though just about any social unit—an organization, community, and so forth—can be a unit of evolution, we argue that institutions are one of the most important units of evolution. Both types of evolution work on selection pressures, but the latter is unique and more Lamarckian than Darwinian. One of the most important changes that occurs once an institutional sphere is created is that the human environment becomes more complex because humans are constantly creating and changing the environments to which they must adapt. Humans change not only the bio-ecology of their existence; they are also constantly changing the sociocultural environment to which they must adapt. Not only do humans have to contend with ecological change, but the environment itself becomes a self-reflexive sphere in which the second type of evolution may proceed. It is, to be sure, out of fashion to think in terms of systems (Luhmann 1995), but the fact of the matter is that as human institutions grow more differentiated and autonomous, they become the primary environments for social behavior and social change. Consequently, we outline in Chapters 2 and 3, the evolutionary process by which institutions evolve and adapt.

And this process brings us to the third point: whenever any animal congregates and whenever its population grows in size and density, it puts pressure on its ecological space, creating problems that must be resolved. Institutional spheres are, in one sense, the repositories for these solutions. In a much larger sense, however, institutions deal with some of the most basic exigencies facing human biology and culture. Some of these problems are deeply rooted in our biology, like the apparent motivation to ensure exchanges are fair and just (Decety and Howard 2013; Decety and Yoder 2017). But, when collectivized, these individual problems become group problems, as they threaten the viability and solidarity of the group, and consequently, other motivations like belongingness (Baumeister and Leary 1995). Thus, the intersection of individual concerns and problems related to collective action and organization lay at the foundations of institutional spheres. In adhering to the Goldenweiser principle (1937) that posits *specific structural problems have only limited numbers of possible solutions*, we argue that there is a historical "phasing," so to speak, by which certain individual and collective problems intersect and, thereby, certain institutions evolve towards greater differentiation and autonomy. By no means are we suggesting a stage model, as evolution can move in unpredictable ways. However, it is clear from historical, archaeological, and textual evidence that polity precedes all other institutions, besides kinship, in its strain towards greater autonomy (Chapters 7–8). Subsequently, we see religious evolution accelerate, culminating in the first autonomous religious spheres

around the middle to end of the first millennium BCE (Chapters 9–10). Finally, economy (Chapters 11 and 14) and law (Chapters 12–13) begin their evolutionary trajectories, entwined at times, and driving the other at other points.

Indeed, by looking first at the neurology and biology of institutional evolution and then teasing out unique sociocultural processes made possible by this neurology, we are able to produce a robust theory that avoids the trappings of reductionism, but gives our brains and bodies their rightful due. In addition, we add an emphasis on sociocultural evolution that eludes the biosociological ultimatum that evolution is individual, genomic, and about fitness only. This analysis also does something else unique: it challenges the final myth: the premodernity/modernity "break"—defined however the social scientist prefers—is a heuristic device that does more to distort than to improve our understanding and explanation of social change and organization.

Myth 5: Modernity Is Different From Everything Before It

Something curious happened when sociology elevated the classical canon to a hermetically sealed chamber: the widespread, taken-for-granted, and unproblematized belief that the last 150–250 years (or, perhaps since the nation-state in 1648) are radically different from the 300,000 years prior. Never mind the fact that it is unlikely that the human brain has evolved much, if at all, making our so-called stone-age predecessors cognitively and anatomically the same as modern humans. Never mind the fact that the problems facing political systems today (Fagan 1999, 2004) or the struggle between religion and other spheres are neither new nor radically different. Admittedly, the size and scale of both the problems and the potential tragedy is greater today than before, and the number and diversity of problems are, when studied in their detail and content, greater. However, floods, famines, pestilence, wars, ethnic and cultural inequality, and conflict have been around forever, and the solutions to these problems, though occasionally "new" and surprising, remain delimited. There is, as Weber, Marx, Durkheim, Spencer, and so forth argued, a lot to learn from the past. And, the needless retaining of old binaries like *Gemeinschaft* and *Gesselschaft* or premodernity and modernity do little for understanding; rather, they delimit what we should be studying.

Underneath the substantive concerns of this chapter lies a major meta-concern: to understand the rise of the West and the vast majority of major events labeled "modern," one needs to understand the general and specific evolutionary patterns of the last 10,000 years. One could,

arbitrarily, point to any number of bifurcation points, or what German philosopher Karl Jaspers (1953) termed *axial* moments. Sociology, being a science of human societies forged amidst massive economic, political, and cultural change in the 19th century, "chose" what it saw as modernity. This book challenges these ideas by reviewing the pressures that led to human settling down for good; for erecting massive political systems that began to act apart from what was in the "best" interests of significant portions of the population; for widening the conception of the moral community to which values and norms should apply; and, to reducing conflict between impersonal and depersonalized social relationships that would otherwise be impossible because of geographic, cultural, and social distances.

In so doing, we revise two classical conventions. First, we return to the social scientific preoccupation with *origins* stories. Relying on a wide variety of data sources and scientific disciplines, we posit a speculative, yet deeply informed and plausible, theory for the origins of kinship (and, thereby, human societies). As we move from one institution to the next, we return to the question of neurobiology and cognitive science, asking what are the origins of each of these spheres? From there, we ask what did economy or polity look like in the earliest foraging societies? Again, we draw from a wide range of sources, some lost in the "mists of time," others on the cutting edge of evolutionary sciences. Once established, we ask one final question: why and how did a given institutional sphere become autonomous (and, of course, what were the consequences)? Thus, we are interested in a much deeper and broader evolutionary story of the origins of human societies and each institution that we examine. We end at the cusp of modernity, having established just how much continuity there is between the supposed premodern era and the next stage. Secondly, this narrative returns to the classic question: why the West? Instead, however, of pointing to a revolutionary moment, like the Protestant Reformation, we illustrate the gradual, multi-linear, sometimes truncated path the West and the rest of the world took to get to contemporary social life. If anything, the collapse of Rome *was the most powerful moment* in Western evolution, leaving a massive hole in the structural and cultural infrastructure of Europe; a gap that presented opportunities for the religious and kinship spheres' entrepreneurs to grow autonomously in radical ways.

The Structure of an Institutional Analysis

The organization of the book can be conceptualized in three movements. The first begins with the evolution of hominids and humans (Chapter 1),

the unique nature of some types of sociocultural evolution (Chapter 2), and ends with a general theoretical model of institutions (Chapter 3) and their autonomy (Chapter 4). In this section, we examine the biogenetic roots of culture, pointing to the dispositions and characteristics that natural selection generated that provide the most purchase for institutions to emerge from and, eventually, take off as evolutionary forces in their own right. This section offers a chance to reflect on how we can synthesize insights from biological evolution without threatening a social science that studies the emergent properties and dynamics of non-biological phenomenon. Following this, we describe in great detail what institutions are, what they do, and how they too evolve. The cornerstone of this section is the functionalist argument, repurposed and rehabilitated, that institutional spheres become evolutionary forces. That is, for most of hominin evolution, it was the biotic environment that acted on our phenotypes as the Modern Synthesis supposes. But, with the first institution (kinship) becoming an external force, *sui generis*, it too became an environment in which individual and, more importantly, collective adaptation occurred. With each new layer of institutional evolution (polity, religion, law, and economy), the number of environments and unique sociocultural selection pressures grew, leading to both greater risks for human survival *and* greater opportunities for creativity and growth.

In the second movement, we shift our focus from the more abstract parts of the argument, to increasingly concrete delineations of each institution in its chronological order of autonomous evolution. We begin with kinship, describing what it is (Chapter 5) and why it evolved towards greater complexity (Chapter 6). Reaching its adaptive limits, Chapters 7 and 8 turn to the first autonomous institution besides kinship, polity. Again, we begin by thinking about the biological roots of polity, highlighting the limitations to a purely biogenetic theory of political evolution, and then describe the polity as an adaptive structural and cultural phenomenon. Following this, we turn to the evolutionary forces driving its growth in autonomy and the consequences autonomy had for other institutions, including kinship. This organizational strategy is repeated with religion (Chapters 9 and 10), and in a different sense, with law (Chapter 11 and 14) and economy (Chapter 12 and 13). This movement ends where modernity begins, arguing that much of what sociology accepts as its common historiography—whether Weber's Protestant Reformation as birth of modernity or Marx's industrial revolution—is really just a continuous process that stretches back some 10,000 years with the explosion of sedentary populations.

The book's third movement concludes with a detailed examination of the interrelationship between institutions and the other great building block

of human societies: *stratification systems*. Though we make connections throughout, we devote time to fully unlocking a modified theory of stratification that places generalized symbolic media at the core of intra-institutional stratification. In the final chapter, we turn to both summary and exposition. We review, briefly, where we've been and examine more closely the contention that modernity is an extension or continuation of the past rather than a radical break as Durkheim, Simmel, Weber, Bourdieu, and so many others infer or explicitly argue. We leave the reader with the sense that more work is necessary; work that explains how and why medicine, science, education, media, and, to a lesser degree, entertainment became autonomous institutions over the last two and a half centuries.

Note

1 Durkheim's mentors were, however, very interested in biology; and while Durkheim in his early career assumed a rather extreme sociologistic stance in order to legitimate sociology as an academic discipline, his later work on religion and ritual was much more willing to deal with human psychology and even biology. Thus, after 1895, Durkheim changed his mind about much of his earlier advocacy (see Maryanski 2018).

1
On the Origins of Human Capacities

Like any species, humans evolved over a long period of time, beginning with the split of hominins, or bipedal great apes, on the human line of evolution, from the ancestors of the three contemporary great apes: chimpanzees, gorillas, and orangutans. Some 9–12 million years ago, those great apes on the human line shared an ancestor with today's orangutans; around 8 million years ago, great apes on the human line shared a common ancestor with the ancestors of contemporary gorillas; and about 5 million years ago, hominins shared an ancestor with the common chimpanzee. We know such is the case by the genetic closeness of humans and great apes. Humans share, for example, about 97% of their genes with orangutans, 98% with gorillas, and 99% with chimpanzees, which would be expected given the estimates for speciation (see Figure 1.1). Humans are, in essence, an evolved species of great ape and, most particularly, an evolved common chimpanzee; and, arguably, humans and chimpanzees belong in the same genus, *Homo*, because they are so closely related to each other.

At this point it is reasonable to ask: Why is a book on the first institutional systems developed by humans talking about great ape and hominin ancestry that goes back millions of years? The answer is that, if we are to understand the evolution of human institutions, we need to know something about human nature as it evolved along the great ape and then hominin evolutionary lines, outlined in Figure 1.1. Too often, it is assumed that, because humans can speak and develop symbolic culture, everything that humans have created by these special capacities is to be understood by reference to the culture and social structures that humans create. Such would be particularly the case for institutional systems like kinship, religion, economy, polity, and law; and while it is true that these institutional systems are emergent sociocultural formations created and sustained by human agency, the very need to form institutional systems was an outcome of our genetic legacy inherited from the ancestors of contemporary great apes. Moreover, while it is also true that humans are very unique animals in being able to create mega societies, organized by institutional systems that allow millions and, indeed, billions of individuals to be organized, the very

 DOI: 10.4324/9781003224433-2

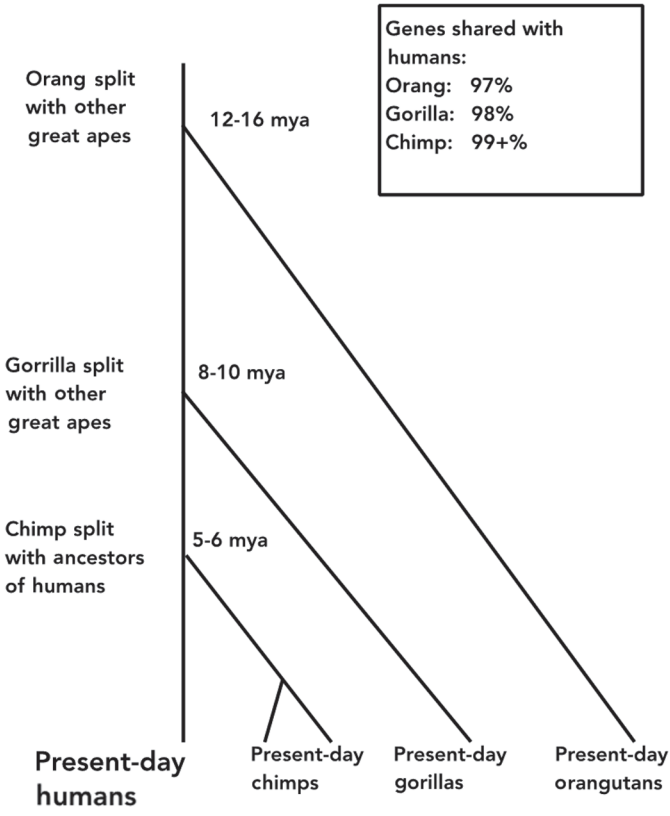


Figure 1.1 Cladogram Highlighting the Splits of the Common Ancestors of Humans and Great Apes

beginnings of institutional systems were very modest and, indeed, highly very precarious adaptations.

We tell this story because it allows us to ask and answer two fundamental questions: first, what was it about great ape societies that necessitated the evolution of institutions as adaptations for survival and, second, what were these institutions' biological and neurological roots? This story allows us to emphasize the precarious footing humans were on as they gradually colonized every arable niche on Earth and even many tenuously survivable niches as well (Fagan 2004). It was a bit of a miracle that humans survived in these habitats, and humans owe their survival to the earliest institutional systems that they were able to create, especially since humans' basic great-ape biology was not conducive to survival in open-country terrestrial habitats where humans were forced to evolve or go extinct. Without,

for instance, the first institutional system of *kinship*, our ancestors would have likely faced extinction no different than every other hominin that ever lived. But, like all institutions, kinship *had to be created* because it is not genetically programmed into humans—as it is for many other mammals. Consequently, it is imperative that we understand how natural selection rewired the human brain, thus allowing for speech and culture, in order to discover why and how these institutions were constructed in the first place.

But, we also tell this story to emphasize the lack of inevitability of the Urban Revolution 5,000 years ago transitioning into an age of Agrarian Empires (Eisenstadt 1963), and evolving over another 3,000 years to the precipice of the world in which we are all familiar. We tell this story to emphasize that, much like the first human societies, modern societies are also vulnerable to such forces as large-scale ecological disruption of the planet, global warning, potentially destructive warfare, and massive risks borne of the increasing incompatibility of technological advances and political decision making (Beck, 2008). Finally, we tell this story because, unlike our genetic cousins, the great apes, humans have continued to survive in far-flung niches and built mega societies because of the institutional spheres humans constructed across generations.

For our purposes, *institutional spheres* or domains are, ultimately, the macro structural and cultural formations that condition feeling, thinking, and doing around the most fundamental and ever-present human concerns. They are macro in so far as they endure over multiple generations and affect a significant proportion, if not all, of the population in which they are crystallized. Moreover, institutional spheres can be adaptive for society as whole but maladaptive for significant swaths of the population, at least in the short to medium-run. Nonetheless, institutions are the "survivor machines" of all humans (Dawkins 1976), allowing for the biological and cultural reproduction of large, heterogeneous societies. In this chapter, however, we go back in time to address two basic questions: (1) why were institutions necessary in the first place and (2) how did they evolve as humans' basic survival machine? By answering these questions, it becomes possible to understand why and how this most basic structure of all human societies—institutional spheres—began to evolve.

Before Humans: Looking Back in Time to the Origins of *Homo Sapiens*

The first issue that we need to deal with revolves around how and why social organization, *per se*, happened in the first place. As we will see, our ape cousins reveal extraordinarily bare-bones patterns of social organization.

Understanding why orangutans, gorillas, and chimpanzees created societies of very loosely coupled social relationships compared to all other primate societies will shed light on why late hominins and early humans created the first institutional sphere: kinship.

Something from Nothing

In biology, a methodology known as *cladistic analysis* allows for looking back in time to assess the nature of a particular species. This methodology is derived from the techniques used for the historical reconstruction analysis of lost languages, whereby present-day languages believed to derive from a common root language are compared. Those linguistic features *shared in common* by present-day languages can be assumed to have been part of the common root language of these contemporary languages. In this way, it becomes possible to get a clearer picture of what the long-lost root language was like (Maas 1958; Jeffers and Lehiste 1979). By the same logic, cladistic analysis in biology assumes that those present-day species that are closely related to each other genetically have *shared common ancestors*; and so, by examining the traits and features that these extant species have in common, it is possible to get a sense for what the *last common ancestor* (LCA) of these related species was like (Andrews and Martin 1967; Forey et al. 1992; Maryanski and Turner 1992; Maryanski 1992, 1998; McGrew 2010). Thus, because humans, chimpanzees, gorillas, and orangutans are so closely related genetically (by assessment of their respective genomes), the analysis of the common features of great apes societies can inform us about the features of early hominin and human societies. In a sense, cladistic analysis is much like the Hubbell telescope: it allows us to see back in time before hominins developed capacities for spoken language and symbolic culture. And, in the case of humans, it also allows us to see the biologically-based behavioral, cognitive, and emotional features of the LCA's that humans and the great apes share, thereby providing a glimpse of the foundations of human biological nature as it faced the problem in creating the first institutions.

Alexandra Maryanski (1986, 1987, 1992, 1993, 1995; see also Maryanski and Turner 1992) pioneered cladistic analysis in the study of primates by coding all the data from field studies of great apes in their natural habitats. By coding the behavioral data that are generally represented in such studies, she was able to compare the social ties among conspecifics across great apes, revealing striking results. For instance, great ape societies are composed mostly of *weak social ties*, which explains why great apes do

not form many permanent groups, but instead tend towards ephemeral fusion-fission gatherings in which individuals come together temporarily and then disperse. The only permanent social structure among great apes is the larger community, or "home range" of many square miles (as much as 25 square miles), in which individuals wander, often alone, and at other times in small temporary parties. Additionally, all great apes are highly promiscuous, such that the paternity of offspring is *never* known, making it difficult to construct anything resembling nuclear families or broader kinship ties. Kinship is further constrained by the fact that female apes generally leave their natal community at puberty, never to return, thus terminating one of the few strong ties found among all great apes—mother-offspring—and, thereby, the possibility of intergenerational social bonds among females and, with the exception of chimpanzees, males as well.[1] In Table 1.1, the social ties among the three great apes are delineated in each column, with the last column on the right being the cladistic reconstruction of the social ties of the LCA to all present-day great apes and humans.

As is evident by the number and location of weak or non-existent ties, it is clear that humans' great-ape ancestors evidenced few strong ties, permanent groups, or kin units beyond mother-infant bonding (which is virtually universal among mammals), nuclear family units, and kinship ties beyond those among mothers and young offspring. *This is a rather striking pattern of social organization that is very atypical of mammals*. Why did such a weak and loose pattern of social ties and lack of group structure evolve in the first place?

The simple answer to this question, documented in more detail in many places[2] is that great apes eventually lost out in competition with monkeys in the arboreal habitat around 20 million years ago. Even though great apes were larger and more intelligent than monkeys, the latter gained an advantage and took over the core and verdant areas of the forest habitat where there is enough room, structural support in branches, and food to support larger and more *permanent groups* of monkeys. Great apes were pushed to the terminal feeding areas of the forest, high up in the forest canopy, where space, structural support from branches, and food were not plentiful. The result was that any group-formation tendencies among great apes, if they had ever existed, were selected out. There was (and is today) simply not enough space, structural support, or food to support permanent groups and kin units among large animals like great apes in the terminal feeding areas of the forests in Africa, although orangutans in Asian forests are able to remain predominately arboreal in the terminal feeding areas, whereas chimpanzees and gorillas spend much time on the forest floor. And so, this weak-tie behavior propensity, the lack of nuclear family and more general

TABLE 1.1 Strength of Social Ties Among Extant Species of Great Apes

	Species of Apes			
	Chimpanzee (Pan)	**Gorilla (Gorilla)**	**Orangutan (Pongo)**	**Last Common Ancestor**
Adult-to-Adult Ties:				
Male-Male:	0/+	0	0	**0***
Female-Female	0	0	0	**0***
Male-Female	0	0/+	0	**0***
Adult-to-Adult Offspring Procreation Ties:				
Mother-Daughter	0	0	0	**0***
Father-Daughter	0	0	0	**0***
Mother-Son	+	0	0	**0***
Father-Son	0	0	0	**0***
Adult-to-Pre-Adolescent Offspring Ties:				
Mother-Daughter	+	+	+	**+***
Father-Daughter	0	0	0	**0***
Mother-Son	+	+	+	**+***
Father-Son	0	0	0	**0***

Notes:

0 = no or very weak ties
0/+ = weak to moderate ties
+ = strong ties
* is used to denote a reconstructed social structure, in this case the likely structure of the last common ancestor to humans and extant great apes. As is evident, this structure is most like that of contemporary orangutans.

kinship, and the transfer of offspring away from mothers at puberty evolved as the basic adaptation in this precarious niche in the arboreal habitat. By forcing offspring to leave their home community, low densities could be sustained at any point in the arboreal habitat, thereby making great ape survival possible for millions of years.

Eventually, however, dramatic ecological change was initiated by periodic and then ever-more chronic cooling of Africa. The cooler temperature increasingly led to the destruction of much of the arboreal habitat in Africa, and as the forests receded, many primates were pushed to the newly emerging bushlands, secondary forests, grasslands, and savanna. All of these more open-country habitats were filled with predators. For monkeys, adaptation to more open-country habitats posed less of a problem than with apes, because they were organized at the group level and thus able to fend off predators collectively. In contrast, the weak-tie and non-group

organization of great apes presented disadvantages to an animal adapting to open-country habitats with very large predators and far fewer defense capacities (e.g., speed) to avoid them. How, then, did humans' ancestors survive without tight-knit patterns of social organization that could be used in collective defense against predators in open-country habitats?

Selection pressures for increased levels of social organization were thus working on hominins, or those great apes on the human line. Yet, the weak-tie, non-group structure of great ape societies had been in place for millions of years, and selection pressures were immediate and imperative. With no bio-programmers for strong ties, groups, or families, how did hominins manage to create enough structure in their relations to coordinate food collection and, more importantly, to defend against predation? The answer to this question is that natural selection began to select on subcortical areas of the brain where emotions are generated and to enlarge these areas, thereby enhancing the emotional capacities of hominins over a several million-year period (see tables in Appendix I). And, over time selection began to work on the neocortex, increasing intelligence and eventually allowing for language and capacities for culture over the last 2 million years of hominin evolution.

Thus, humans represent a very unusual adaptation which was only possible because of the traits and capacities that hominins inherited from the common ancestors with orangutans, gorillas, and chimpanzees. For, although the weak-tie non-group basis of great ape societies worked against hominin survival, natural selection hit upon a solution by selecting on traits that all great apes, and hence their common ancestors with humans, also must have possessed, pushing humans to be more emotional and smarter and, eventually, using language and culture to forge stronger social ties and groupings. Thus, natural selection randomly found a solution to great apes' lack of sociality and social structures: selecting on existing neurological and behavioral traits of hominins inherited from their great ape ancestors to get around the problem of low sociality and lack of propensity to form groups. Consequently, all social structures among hominins and then humans—except perhaps for the sense of community evident in all great apes and their last common ancestors to hominins and humans—do *not* have a strong biological basis. They are constructed and built around the power of emotions to create social bonds and commitments to others and to sociocultural formations. Thus, the first institutions, including kinship, were not driven by biologically based drives but, rather, by other capacities, traits, and behavioral propensities that, when enhanced by emotions, allowed early hominins and then humans to get sufficiently organized to survive the rigors and dangers of open-country habitats. And these, as is

discussed in the next section are what made social structures, and eventually human institutional spheres, possible.

The Biological Roots of Institutional Spheres

Pre-Adaptations and the Evolution of Social Structure and Culture

A *pre-adaptation*[3] is a trait that evolves by chance alongside of the evolution of other fitness-enhancing traits but has no consequences for fitness itself. This kind of trait has been called a "pre-adaptation" because it has fitness-enhancing *consequences later on in the evolution* of a species. Thus, a pre-adaptation can just "sit there" for a long time, but when environmental pressures change, selection can begin to select on this long dormant trait and enhance fitness of a line of species later in time. Those traits listed in Table 1.2 are all pre-adaptations because whatever their fitness consequences for the last common ancestors of great apes and humans, these traits were critical to the survival of hominins and then humans,

TABLE 1.2 Pre-adaptations Among Humans Hominin Ancestors

1. **Comparatively large brain** consisting of all key structures of the human brain in subcortical areas, generating a large palette of primary emotions, and most neocortical structures of the human brain where thinking, decision making, and long-term memories are stored.
2. **Hard-wired capacity for language** comprehension and capacity to communicate at the level of a three-year old human child via the visual sense modality and through calls.
3. **Low levels of physical grooming**, thus increasing reliance on interpersonal means of communication by symbolic gestures carrying common meanings.
4. **High levels of play among young**, thereby increasing capacity to role-take and adjust interpersonal responses to conspecifics.
5. **Community Orientation** in the form of a hard-wired propensity to form stable communities composed of mostly weak social ties among mobile individuals, whether alone or in temporary parties, around community and sustained by defense of community against incursions by males from other communities, as well as ritualized interpersonal greetings when meeting and departing from community members. Moreover, an incipient capacity to evaluate self from the perspective of a community of others or from a community perspective.
6. **Protracted life history characteristics** that involve long periods of nurturance of offspring, thereby setting up the capacity for offspring to have even larger, immature brains with potentially years of mother nurturance.

and thereby, essential to the evolution of humans and their institutional systems.

(1) Large and Complex Brains

A larger brain (relative to body size) signals higher intelligence, and if more intelligence is suddenly required by environmental pressures, an already large great ape brain makes possible the evolution of an even larger brain. Thus, the relatively large brain (for mammals) of great apes and early hominins did not change dramatically for millions of years, but it was available for selection when natural selection favored more intelligence along the late hominin line leading to humans (see Figure 1.1 on page 17).

Therefore, hominins inherited a comparatively large brain, with clearly defined subcortical areas generating emotion, and with a similarly large (for a mammal) neocortex for remembering, thinking, and decision making (Turner 2000b; Turner and Maryanski 2008; Turner 2021a). All areas of the brain of the last common ancestors to hominins (and hence humans) were, by 1.3 million years ago, subject to intense selection from brains that were only 100 to 150 cubic centimeters (cc) larger than those of the last common ancestor of great apes and the first hominins (say, brains of about 500 to 550 cc). And then, in the million-year run up and transition to early humans, the brain tripled in size, and in the case of Neanderthals and Denisovans, it more than tripled. Only intense selection pressures could push such a complex organ to increase in size and complexity; and these intense selection pressures came from the reality of hominins and then humans having to adapt to more open-country habitats. Since there were few genetically-based bio-programmers for social structure, selection worked on the brain; and, first through the enhancement of emotions, and then through growth of the neocortex, selection eventually created an emotional, highly intelligent animal that could speak language and, thereby, build symbolic culture.

(2) The Neurological Wiring for Language

Probably as important as intelligence is the second pre-adaptation listed in Table 1.2: the existing neurological capacity in all great apes for language. All great apes evidence the capacity to learn and use human language at about the level of a three-year old child, thus constituting a pre-adaptation that could be enhanced by natural selection *if* language use would increase fitness, as it surely did since human groups and institutional systems

cannot exist without language. Language is the key to the evolution of the capacity for symbolic culture, and once present in a species, it feeds back and works to increase brain functioning of both the subcortex, where emotions are generated, and the neocortex, where memories and decision making occur. Moreover, without language and symbolic culture, cultural systems—values, beliefs, stocks of knowledge, norms, generalized symbolic media, texts, etc.—cannot be generated; and without culture, institutional systems have no guidance and hence could never have evolved.

Great apes do not use language to the extent possible because they do not have the genetic wiring for articulated speech, which requires very specialized structures such as a *Broca's area* in the brain and musculoskeletal structures of lips, mouth, tongue, larynx, and the like. They can, however, "speak" words to humans because they can learn sign languages used by the deaf or learn how to use computers to generate meaningful pictograms. They can learn human language if they grow up in language environments because they have an area equivalent to *Wernicke's area*[4] in humans that uploads all sensory inputs into "brain thinking" and because the brain is large enough to create a capacity for symbolization. Thus, much of the critical wiring of the brain was in place as a pre-adaptation for speech; natural selection thus had to select on the brain to produce a Broca's area to download "brain thinking" into sequential speech and to rework the muscles, tissues, and juxtaposition of speech centers for fine-tuned vocalization. If this pre-adaption for language had not existed, then, it is unlikely that late hominins would have survived or that humans could have evolved to build up institutional systems as "survivor machines" (Dawkins 1976).

(3) Low Levels of Physical Grooming

Monkeys and prosimians, as well as non-great apes, can engage in considerable grooming activities as a means of communication and formation of stronger bonds supporting groups. Great apes, however, do not form permanent groups and, as a result, they do not engage in as much grooming as other primates.[5] Instead, they rely more on mutual reading of body gestures, especially gestures signaling emotional states, and they often coordinate activities through visual cues. Moreover, they form a sense of their larger community not so much through grooming activities with community, but more cognitively by mapping the boundaries of a community and cognitively remembering the demography of who belongs and does not belong to a community. The more cognitive gaze is critical to forming institutional systems because individuals must develop attachments not so much to specific others, but rather to sociocultural formations. Social structure and

culture of institutional systems become larger and more remote to persons; and the capacity to attach to more remote structures already existed with great apes who can cognitively reckon communities that can be many square miles, and the 150 inhabitants of these communities—both of which are rather advanced cognitive capacities that, in many ways, are a pre-adaptation to institutional evolution.

(4) High Levels of Play Among Young

Virtually all mammals play when young, with play activities being, in essence, practice for more complex interactions among conspecifics. Since great apes can role-take or read the dispositions of others to behave in certain ways, they can engage in more complex interactions that are more nuanced both cognitively and emotionally. Indeed, they are not driven by powerful bio-programmers to form groups, kinship units, and many other facets of a mammalian organization; rather, like humans, they construct social relations, remembering how past interactions have proceeded and invoking these memories when interacting with these others again. Young great apes, like most mammals, engage in extensive play involving role-switching and, in so doing, learn many of the turn-taking aspects of interaction among conspecifics (Lents, 2016). By switching roles in play, reading gestures to determine emotional moods, and otherwise coordinating action during episodes of play, a foundation for more complex interactions with conspecifics in adulthood is neurologically imprinted. For animals with weak ties, this ability to be interpersonally attuned and flexible is the key to sustaining great ape, and human, communities. All of which is to say this suite of pre-adaptations supported the evolved capacity to "*take the role of other*," in George Herbert Mead's (1934) terms (or in the vocabulary of primatologists and biologists, the capacity for a "Theory of Mind" [Mitchell 2011]). It is through constant play that young great apes "learn" how to play roles, role-take, remember what occurred in the past, reckon who is a playmate, and many other details of ongoing face-to-face interaction. Indeed, although great apes cannot "speak" to each other, they communicate by other body, hand, eye, and emotional gestures with common meanings that allow them to interact much like humans (or in reality, that allow humans to interact much like greats apes, which of course, we humans are—evolved great apes who share a high proportion of our genes with the other great apes). Thus, play hones many of the skills needed to create and sustain relations among individuals who do not see each other on a daily basis. Institutional systems among humans are much the same in that individuals learn how to play roles and interact in them,

episodically, and in the human case often with strangers, which a weak-tie animal like a great ape will not find difficult, compared to a strong-tied, group-oriented animal. Play of the young in great apes is much like play in humans (in reality, vice versa) and it hones interpersonal skills necessary to move about larger scale social structures and meet expectations of many different kinds of "others."

(5) Community Orientation

Social life among great apes revolves around (a) community as the only stable unit of social organization; (b) cognitive mapping of community boundaries and its members; (c) free movement, whether alone or in temporary parties, around community; (d) defense of community against incursions by males from other communities; (e) ritualized interpersonal greetings when meeting and departing from community members; and (f) incipient capacity to evaluate self from the perspective of a community of others. There appears to be a bio-programmer driving the orientation to community rather than to local groups; and this orientation can only be sustained by cognitive mapping, memory of past interactions, and interpersonal skills to pick up and engage in interactions with individuals whom one does not see every day, since individuals move about larger home ranges, meet up, interpersonally engage, and then depart (Goodall 1986; Maryanski and Turner 1992; Turner and Maryanski 2008).

This whole complex of capacities listed above can be seen as critical to the evolution of institutions. Communities are large units in which individuals know who belongs and, apparently, who also see themselves as members obligated to use ritualized interpersonal skills to create and sustain episodic social relations. It is this capacity to see and move about a more remote social structure that is critical to forming an institutional order among larger human populations; and indeed, institutions among humans probably could have evolved without this capacity to have and sustain a community orientation.

(6) Protracted Life History Characteristics

The final pre-adaptation, *protracted life history characteristics*, refers to complexities related to biological reproduction unique to the great apes: the length of gestation of future offspring in the female womb, the length of infancy, juvenile and adolescent periods of development, and longevity. These life history characteristics appear to have evolved among great apes

many millions of years ago when they were the dominant arboreal species and were under no pressures to rapidly reproduce. But this genetically controlled trait would become essential to human reproduction, especially as the selection pushed for a larger brain which could only occur in a long gestation period in the womb and, then, with bio-programmers on females to care for offspring for long periods of infancy and childhood through juvenile growth to young adulthood. The reason for this is that large brains must pass through the limitation of the female cervix, and as the brain grew, it had to pass through the cervix when not quite fully formed, thus requiring long periods of parental care, which are genetically controlled among mammals. Consequently, without the protracted life history characteristics among great apes, with natural selection working to create a larger brain and all that such a brain generates—enhanced emotions, intelligence, language and culture—humans probably would not have evolved in the first place, nor would human institutions ever have come into existence.

Evolved Behavioral Traits and Institutional Systems

When we add the behavioral propensities listed in Table 1.3 to the list of pre-adaptations inherited from apes, we get a clearer picture of the basis of humans as a species capable of eventually creating complex patterns of institutional organization among millions and even billions of inhabitants (Turner et al. 2018: 127–130; Turner and Machalek 2018: 349–364). The list in Table 1.3 does not need to be elaborated at this point because it is clear what humans inherited from the last common ancestors: the capacity to interact in complex ways through mutual reading of gestures marking emotions and cognitive states. At first, it may be surprising how many traits great apes share with humans, but we need to turn this logic around: Humans *inherited* these capacities from the LCA's that hominins shared with the ancestors of present-day great apes (see cladogram in Figure 1.1 on page 17). To be sure, many of these capacities are "supercharged" in humans, such as a more extensive ability to role-take (Tomasello 2019), the employment of third-party reinforcement in exchanges (Brosnan and Beran 2009), greater capacity to collaborate and stabilize reciprocal exchanges (Hamann et al. 2011), and far more extensive linguistic capacities (Yang 2013).[6]

As such, the list in Table 1.3 is sufficient to emphasize that great apes interact in a highly sophisticated manner. At first glance, it may seem like a contradiction that a weak-tie, non-group forming mammal would have such refined capacities, but a moment's reflection would indicate just the opposite. Great apes do not, like most mammals, have bio-programmers

TABLE 1.3 Inferred Behavioral Propensities of Hominins

1. **Propensity to cognitively map** the boundaries, membership, and social relations among members within larger, more inclusive communities rather than to form permanent local groupings.
2. **Propensity to focus on face and eyes of conspecifics** for assessing emotions during episodes of interaction.
3. **Capacity to mimic emotional gestures in face and body** of conspecifics (through activation of mirror neurons).
4. **Capacity to role-take (invoke Theory of Mind**) to assess the dispositions of conspecifics to act in particular ways.
5. **Capacity to achieve emotional empathy** with others during role-taking.
6. Propensity to **mimic responses of others** while, at the same time, engage in **role-switching, in play activities among the young**.
7. **Propensity to fall into rhythmic synchronization of bodies and vocal gestures** during interactions, especially when larger numbers of conspecifics are in propinquity.
8. **Propensity for collective emotional arousal** during periodic gatherings of larger numbers of community members and to emit emotionally-charged, ritual-like behaviors.
9. **Propensity to assess reciprocities in exchanges** of resources with others.
10. **Propensity to calculate fairness and justice of exchanges** with others and to sanction (positively or negatively) with emotional intensity those exchanges deemed to be fair or unfair.
11. **Capacity to see self as an object in interactions with others** and to emit gestures expressing conceptions of self and to evaluate self by role-taking with others.
12. **Capacity to reckon the respective status of self and others** and, thereby, to respond to status differences, particularly those differences marking hierarchy but also those marking distinctive social categories such as age, gender, and community membership.
13. **Capacity of males** (only among chimpanzees) to **form friendships** with other males and, occasionally, with favored females as well.

Note: By the logic of cladistic analysis, those behavioral propensities and tendencies among great apes provide a good indicator of the behaviors of the hominins, which humans share with great apes. We thus get a glimpse at "human nature" by viewing the behaviors of great apes. This nature is not what is often hypothesized because great apes do not form strong ties, kinship systems, or even permanent groupings; rather they are weak-tie animals oriented to larger communities than local groups. At humans' ape core, then, we are far less social than is normally hypothesized, and this fact gives us purchase in understanding how selection pressures worked to increase sociality and groupness and, in so doing, to create a proto-language of emotions that eventually was blended to a gesture language and that would evolve into an auditory language as enhanced emotionality allowed the neocortex of late hominins to evolve to the human measure.

for forming social bonds and patterns of group organization. Indeed, they do not even have bio-programmers for the nuclear family, only mother-offspring bonds (virtually universal among mammals) that are broken at puberty (for all great apes except male chimpanzees).[7] Thus, human institutions from the very first beginnings had to be created by agency: the capacity to think about ways to organize in new ways; and this ability was already part of the hominin genome, subject to further selection at the biological level for more intelligence and at the organization level for institutional systems.

There is an additional point to be made: by the logic of cladistics analysis (Andrews and Martin 1987; Forey et al. 1992), the two lists in Tables 1.2 and 1.3 can be seen as a reasonable proxy for humans' *biologically-derived nature* (Turner 2021a; Turner et al. 2018; Turner and Machalek 2018). Great apes represent an opportunity to look at the distant past and see what "humans" were probably like but *without* bigger brains, language, or culture. What we see in these tables, especially Table 1.3 where we lay out the rather sophisticated processes involved in great ape interpersonal behaviors, is that humans may not be quite as unique as is often supposed. Humans are simply evolved great apes in their fundamental nature. But this nature does gets changed, mostly intensified, by the growth of the brain that led to the evolution of language and culture. Yet, even with this needed qualification, human nature at its most biological level is great ape nature.

The evolved nature of humans is outlined in Appendix II, and as is evident, it is simply an extension of great ape nature as modified by brain growth, language, and culture. This modification or elaboration of human nature through language and culture is, of course, what enabled late hominins and early humans to create the first institutional system: kinship. It is also what enabled humans to continue to develop institutional systems for adaptation to new environments, often environments created by humans themselves. Yet, without the rather developed interpersonal capacities of the ancestors of today's great apes and humans, the elaboration of human nature leading to institutional evolution would never have occurred.[8] Earth is indeed, for better or worse, a planet of the evolved apes and their institutional systems.

Planet of the Apes

In the movie *Planet of the Apes*, the writers and viewers fail to see that the world the chimps come to colonize *is a planet already dominated by apes*! We are the one ape that evolved to possess the capacity for spoken language and symbolic culture. Nonetheless, the apes in these movies that

revolt against corrupt humans must also develop the ability to talk and wield symbolic culture, or it would ruin the magic of movies. But, how did these apes learn how to talk? To answer this question, however, we would need to understand why and how speech and external culture evolved; and such change would require an enormous amount of genetic change (Scott-Phillips 2015). This genetic change would likely be premised on the intensification of affectual systems in the brain (Damasio and Geschwind 1984), and this would mean that the apes who conquer humans would have to undergo the process of elaboration that humans underwent, ending in the development of human nature (see Figure 1.3 on page 32),[9] which in the end is an elaborated great ape nature. The movie story has, of course, different goals, but it would be interesting to see the story of how the rebellious apes learned to talk and organize in ways that would outdo corrupt humans. This would have to be a long story, running a few million years. This story for humans has indeed been elaborated elsewhere in great detail (see endnote 2), and thus, we provide some of the key highlights to understand how emotions were the final link in the chain from being another hominin to building mega societies.

The Evolved Brain

For several million years after the last split of hominins from the ancestors of great apes, the brain did not grow much beyond the great ape's 375–400 cubic centimeter (cc) brain. The brain would grow quite slowly: 2 million years before the present (CE), it was about the same size as today's great apes, while by 800–700,000 CE, it had reached the bottom range of modern humans (1050 cc) among some species of *Homo erectus* and *Homo ergaster*. The point being that early hominins did not rely on intelligence or culture to survive. So, what exactly did they use to survive? Comparative neuroanatomy can provide an answer, as great ape and human brains are very similar, which should not be surprising given that the human brain is an elaborated great ape brain. Figure 1.2 outlines the cross-section of the human brain to highlight neocortical and subcortical areas. The subcortex is the older part of the brain that was inherited from amphibians, which set into motion the evolution of distinctive mammalian and reptilian lines. This somewhat divergent evolution of the brains contains similar structures but located in somewhat different places. In the mammalian line, the *subcortex*, where emotions are generated, is below (cingulate gyrus) and just above the *corpus collosum* (see Figure 1.2). Of particular interest are the key centers for the production of the primary emotions that all mammals evidence: anger and fear (amygdala), and happiness

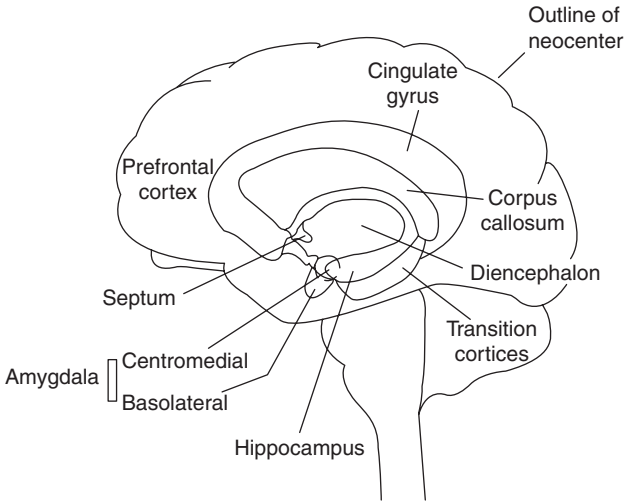


Figure 1.2 Cross-section of the Human Brain

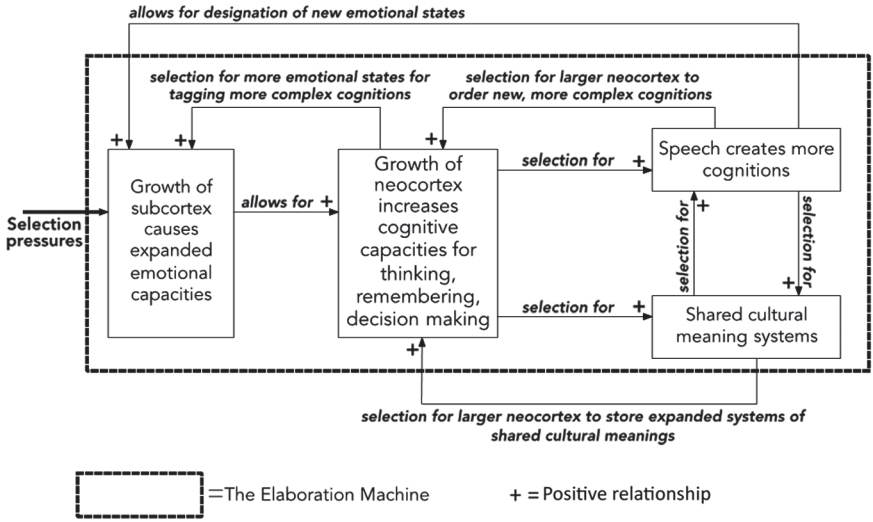


Figure 1.3 Selection Effects among Subcortical Grows, Neocortical Growth, Speech, and Culture

and sadness, probably in the cingulate gyrus (anterior for happiness, posterior for sadness). Consequently, the evolution of the subcortex is key to understanding the acceleration of the elaboration model outlined in Figure 1.3. Why are emotions so critical?

If we turn briefly to modern humans, the glue that holds social relationships together is emotions (Turner 2000b, 2007; Cozoline 2014). Through mundane and stereotyped ritual interactions and encounters, we develop affectual attachment to the self (Goffman 1967), to each other, to groups and social categories (e.g., race, sex, occupation) (Collins 2004), and to abstract systems (Lawler et al. 2016, Lawler et al. 2009). Therefore, if we ask how humans form and maintain stronger social bonds and group solidarities in the present, then the first big change in the hominin brain inherited from the ancestors of great apes was likely *enhancing emotions*, because this is how humans create strong bonds and group solidarities today.[10] Recall that the earliest hominin brains grew modestly (from the 400 cc great ape brain to 500 cc), and thus that growth very likely occurred in the subcortical areas to enhance emotions that could increase social bonds among hominins.[11] In turn, this growth would allow them to form more stable groupings, which would be fitness enhancing as they were increasingly forced to move to the open-country habitats of Africa and, later, Eurasia. Additionally, with the prior enhancement of emotion centers increasing the variety and nuance of emotions, growth of the neocortex could be fitness enhancing. If the neocortex had grown before emotions had been enhanced, this growth would not be fitness enhancing—indeed the opposite because it would be a large but empty warehouse consuming calories and protein. For, without a complex set of emotions, it is not possible to produce the complex cognitions for memory and decision making (Conway 2005, Damasio 1994, LeDoux 2000) or language (Damasio and Geschwind 1984).

In short, without intense selection to grow the emotion centers of the brain, enduring ties to each other, the group, and its rules and norms, would have been impossible, and humans would have likely gone the way of most other hominins and apes—to extinction. The ability to externalize culture such that patterns of feeling, thinking, and acting could calcify and act back upon its creators would have never occurred, and consequently, the erection of institutional systems would have been stymied. The enhancement of emotions, then, was *the fuel driving the elaboration process* (Figure 1.3), working with the pre-adaptations and behavioral propensities inherited from our ape cousins.

Externalizing Structure and Culture

Our inherited pre-adaptations (Table 1.2) and behavioral capacities (Table 1.3) were also subject to natural selection for stronger social ties and group formations, which initially led to the growth of subcortical areas of

the brain as the fastest route to enhancing social ties (Turner 2000b). With the expansion of emotions with variations in their variety, intensity, and nuance (see Appendix II), selection growing the neocortex would be fitness enhancing, since a larger number of diverse cognitions could be tagged with emotions, stored in the hippocampus and, when remembered, eventually moved to the frontal lobe of the neocortex for longer-term storage. The more memories and the more complex the memories stored, the more information could be rapidly downloaded as a memory and used to develop fitness-enhancing behaviors. Subsequently, as more knowledge and information was stored, selection for discrete and easily communicated symbols marking more complex meanings would be fitness enhancing. Thus, the already existing neurological capacity for language inherited from the ancestors that humans shared with great apes could be subjected to further selection for speech production. In particular, as noted earlier, this selection would have revolved around (a) creating a *Broca's area* by selection on the node evident among great apes (termed *Broca's hump*) for downloading the brain's way of thinking and processing information into sequential speech and (b) the structures and muscles in and around the mouth (lips, larynx, tongue) allowing for the more rapid and precise modulation of sounds generating human speech. With speech comes symbolic culture because more complex meanings can be rapidly communicated and collectively remembered. Moreover, each of these evolved traits has reverse causal effects, as is outlined in Figure 1.3.

Turner's (2021a) analysis of human nature and its evolution, this feed forward and back among emotions, cognitions, speech, and symbolic culture, constitutes "an elaboration machine" that enhances all of the preadaptations and behavioral capacities/and propensities inherited from the LCA of early hominins/humans and extant great apes. These dynamics are outlined in Figure 1.3. Thus, growth of subcortical areas pushes for growth of the neocortex, which, reciprocally, provides more cognitions to be tagged with ever-more nuanced emotions. Growth of the neocortex allows for more cognitions to be generated that, if articulated as speech and stored collectively in humans' prefrontal cortex, allows for common culture; and as speech and culture develop, they feedback and make further growth of the neocortex fitness enhancing. Based on the best evidence available, this self-escalating set of feedforward and feedback began to grow the brain from 500 cc to over 1000 cc among some hominin populations probably during the last 700,000 years. With the transition to early humans, the brain grew even further up to the limits of what the female cervix could bear during childbirth. As this last big push of biological or Darwinian natural

selection operated, it created an animal that could potentially engage in high levels of "niche construction," although this was only a potential that would not accelerate dramatically for several hundred thousand years more. Still, the critical selection pressures working on hominins—get better organized or die!—had been met, creating an animal capable of building institutional systems regulated by culture, organizing a population not by bio-programmers but by sociocultural formations. These were at first rather modest, but once the first institutional system (kinship) had been created, a base for the elaboration of more institutions was laid down waiting for new selection pressures to activate the elaboration machine of human emotions, cognitions, speech, and culture to create new institutions as needed to meet these new selection pressures.

As later chapters will show, once an externalized macro structural and cultural sphere had emerged, selection processes shifted from biological to sociocultural, as the complexity humans increasingly dealt with was predicated on the structural and cultural environments they had created. As we will see in the next chapter, this new selection arose from changes in (a) the ecology of human populations trying to survive in particular habitats, (b) the ecology of relations with other populations competing for resources, (c) demography (such as population growth and diversity) pushing for new sociocultural formations, and (d) problems in the structures and cultures organizing a population in a particular ecology.

Final Note on the Anatomy of Humans and Institutional Evolution

We have emphasized humans' unique capacities for higher cognitive functioning, language facility, and symbolic capacities as creating a very unique, though overly emotional, animal that could create and build out complex institutional systems. We are emphasizing how this building of institutions began, and we will trace the evolution of the first institutions as they created the institutional base for the dramatic growth and institutional elaboration of human societies over the last 10,000 years. Notably, for at least 350,000 years of human evolution, institutional systems remained simple because societies were small, and, as a result, humans were vulnerable to dramatic ecological changes. In this last section of this chapter, we should pause and at least mention something that is obvious but rarely addressed in any detail: the anatomy of humans as an evolved primate. Though humans tend to celebrate their big brains, we should also emphasize that most animals, no matter how intelligent (as are elephants, whales, dolphins, even pigs, and some species of birds), are dramatically *limited by their bodies* compared to humans. To be sure, we use our brains and culture

to do much of this building up of institutional systems, but much of the social world would be impossible without our evolved anatomy, which is perhaps best illustrated by science fiction writers being severely delimited in the imagination of other-species societies. Beavers can build dams, creating lakes in which they operate, insects can create colonies in the ground housing millions, if not billions, of tiny genetically controlled bodies, birds can build nests in which they reproduce themselves, and so on for many animals. But, to build out institutional systems requires not only culture, efficient communication, and intelligence; it also *requires a body can that build complex things* and the machines to build even more complex things.

First, by evolving not only in the trees, but the terminal feeding areas of the trees, great apes have some unique capacities: They can brachiate by rotating their arm 360 degrees; very few animals on earth can do this. They have very strong shoulder joints, wrists, fingers, and arms (a 150 lb male chimpanzee, for example, could easily, tear a 280 lb NFL linebacker apart). They have incredibly sensitive fingers tips, with finger ridges (fingerprints) for grasping and increased sensitivity; and, they have both high dexterity and great strength in their fingers. They also have strong and dexterous feet that can grasp branches. They can, when necessary, walk and stand upright, freeing their arms and hands for detailed work. They can throw things with their arms and hands. They have a highly generalized skeleton for locomotion, are able to walk and run on all fours, swing through branches, or walk upright, plus climb almost anything. There are few, if any, habitats where this combination of physical abilities would evolve. Most habitats require high degrees of specialization, and while the arboreal habitat also required specialization (horses cannot climb trees or throw a ball), the forced adaptation to the terminal feeding areas created an animal with very high flexibility, dexterity, and strength that can be used, if elaborated upon with a big brain and speech, to build almost anything.

Indeed, it would be difficult to find any animal on earth that has the features of a great ape that evolved in the forests of Africa. With elaboration by dynamic relations among emotions, cognitions, speech, and culture outlined in Figure 1.3, this animal would be able to live in mega societies of millions of people and build out the physical infrastructures that accompany institutional systems of contemporary societies. Yet, as will be evident, all of these generalized physical capacities, even with a big brain, speech, and culture, did not result in physically complex structures for most of human history. Humans could hunt, gather, garden, keep livestock, and engage in warfare with modest weapons. They often could build huts, platforms, canoes, and even modest temples, but the scale and scope of society was limited by technologies, or knowledge about how to

manipulate the environment, including the social environment. Thus, not until cultural beliefs and advancing technologies were more developed could complex physical structures be built and, moreover, not until the size of populations generated selection pressures to the point where such structures were fitness enhancing, did the scale of human institutions change. Population growth, density, and warfare began to unleash the creative capacities of a culture-using animal, but also the physical ability of this animal to build more monumental structures and infrastructures. Thus, while we will often talk about our evolved brains and, subsequently, structures and culture, we should not lose sight of how much we owe to our evolved anatomy. The embodiment of structure and culture is as much a function of being bipedal and having dexterous arms and hands as our ability to think and plan.

Institutional evolution was tremendously slow for as much as 95% of human life on earth, but then with the first institutional order sufficiently built out, our brains and bodies could be harnessed in ways that accelerated and escalated the institutional scaffolding surrounding us. In the following chapter, then, we outline the general process by which institutions evolve.

Appendices

The two appendices here are intended to offer a bit more detail that can be consulted in filling in the story of human evolution, with the first big change being the elaboration of hominin emotions that, in turn, allowed for the elaboration of the human neocortex and, then, the evolution of speech and symbolic culture, as modeled in Figure 1.3. The second appendix outlines briefly the five complexes that J. H. Turner (2021b), in his *On Human Nature: The Biology and Sociology of What Made Us Human*, outlined as the outcome of the elaboration processes outlined in Figure 1.3. We will have cause to reference these materials as the evolution of the first institutional systems is documented.

Appendix I: The Elaboration of Human Emotions and Emotional Capacities

The tables below suggest one sequence to how emotions became elaborated as the subcortical areas of the hominin brain evolved, and then, as this evolution of the subcortex occurred, the growth of the hominin neocortex could begin to evolve, thus setting up the reciprocal effects of emotions on cognitions and then the evolution of cognitions on emotional capacities outlined in Figure 1.3. First, there was probably an expansion of the range and intensity of primary emotions outlined in the first table. Then,

TABLE 1.4 Variants of Primary Emotions

Primary Emotions:	Low Intensity	Medium Intensity	High Intensity
SATISFACTION-HAPPINESS	content sanguine serenity gratified	cheerful buoyant friendly amiable enjoyment	love joy bliss rapture jubilant gaiety elation delight thrilled exhilarated
AVERSION-FEAR	concern hesitant reluctance shyness	misgivings trepidation anxiety scared alarmed unnerved panic	terror horror high anxiety
ASSERTION-ANGER	annoyed agitated irritated vexed perturbed nettled rankled piqued	displeased frustrated belligerent contentious hostility ire animosity offended consternation	dislike loathing disgust hate despise detest hatred seething wrath furious inflamed incensed outrage
DISAPPOINTMENT-SADNESS	discouraged downcast dispirited	dismayed disheartened glum resigned gloomy woeful pained	sorrow heartsick despondent anguished crestfallen dejected

TABLE 1.5 Combinations of Primary Emotions

Primary Emotions		First-Order Elaborations
SATISFACTION-HAPPINESS		
Satisfaction-happiness + *aversion-fear*	*generate*	wonder, hopeful, relief, gratitude, pride, reverence
Satisfaction-happiness + *assertion-anger*	*generate*	vengeance, appeased, calmed, soothed, relish, triumphant, bemused
Satisfaction-happiness + *disappointment-sadness*	*generate*	nostalgia, yearning, hope
AVERSION-FEAR		
Aversion-fear + *satisfaction-happiness*	*generate*	awe, reverence, veneration
Aversion-fear + *assertion-anger*	*generate*	revolted, repulsed, antagonism, dislike, envy
Aversion-fear + *disappointment-sadness*	*generate*	dread, wariness
ASSERTION-ANGER		
Assertion-anger + *satisfaction-happiness*	*generate*	condescension, mollified, rudeness, placated, righteousness
Assertion-anger + *aversion-fear*	*generate*	abhorrence, jealousy, suspiciousness
Assertion-anger + *disappointment-sadness*	*generate*	bitterness, depression, betrayed
DISAPPOINTMENT-SADNESS		
Disappointment-sadness + *satisfaction-happiness*	*generate*	acceptance, moroseness, solace, melancholy
Disappointment-sadness + *aversion-fear*	*generate*	regret, forlornness, remorseful, misery
Disappointment-sadness + *assertion-anger*	*generate*	aggrieved, discontent, dissatisfied, unfulfilled boredom, grief, envy, sullenness

emotions were further elaborated by mixing (in some unknown neurological way) a greater amount of one primary emotion with a lesser amount of another—what is termed *first-order elaborations*. Then, emotions that are probably unique to humans—shame and guilt—evolved by mixing three of the negative primary emotions, producing emotions like shame

TABLE 1.6 The Structure of Shame and Guilt

Emotion	Rank-ordering of Constituent Primary Emotions		
	1	2	3
Shame	Disappointment-sadness (at self)	Assertion-anger (at self)	Aversion-fear (at consequences for self)
Guilt	Disappointment-sadness (at self)	Aversion-fear (at consequences for self)	Assertion-anger (at self)

TABLE 1.7 Repression, Defense, Transmutation, and Targeting of Emotions

Repressed Emotions	Defense Mechanism	Transmutation to:	Target of:
anger, sadness, fear shame, guilt, and alienation	displacement	anger	others, corporate units* and categoric units**
anger, sadness, fear, shame, guilt, and alienation	projection	little, but some anger	imputation of anger, sadness, fear, shame, or guilt to dispositional states of others
anger, sadness, fear, shame, guilt, and alienation	reaction formation	positive emotions	others, corporate units, categoric units
anger, sadness, fear shame, guilt, and alienation	sublimation	positive emotions	tasks in corporate units
anger, sadness, fear shame, guilt, and alienation	attribution	anger	others, corporate units, or categoric units

Source: J. H. Turner, *Human Emotions: A Sociological Theory* (2007)

* Corporate units are structures revealing a division of labor geared toward achieving goals.

** Categoric units are social categories which are differentially evaluated and to which differential responses are given. Members of categoric units often hold a social identity.

and guilt that are painful to humans and hence lead them to engage in self-control so as not to experience this pain. We denote these emotions as *second-order elaborations* because they are built from combinations of three primary emotions. Then, finally the last table outlines another emotional dynamic: the activation of *repression* and other *defense mechanisms* to protect individuals from the pain of negative emotions, especially shame and guilt. Of course, such activation creates its own set of pathologies ranging from neurotic to psychotic behaviors. Emotions are what made humans and human societies possible, especially the evolution of human institutional systems, but they are a powerful in damaging both humans and their institutional creations.

Appendix II: The Five Complexes of Humans' Evolved Nature

The complexes outlined below are the outputs of the pre-adaptations and behavioral capacities and propensities of the Last Common Ancestors of great apes and hominins listed in Tables 1.2 and 1.3 on, respectively, pages 23 and 29. As natural selection began to work on these, it first created a more emotional animal that led to growth of the neocortex and, then, to language and symbolic culture. And, once in place, there were synergies and feedforward as well as feedback effects among these unique capacities of humans, creating a complex of what we can call human nature. Still, these complexes are based on the evolutionary biology of humans that was inherited from their common ancestors of contemporary great apes. Thus, inhering in human genes are the same genetically regulated behaviors as outlined in Tables 1.2 and 1.3, but they are elaborated by the biology of emotions, cognitions, speech, and symbolic culture. And once these features of human nature evolve, they place constraints, and even operate as selection pressures, on the evolution of human institutional systems—as we will periodically point out in later chapters.

1. The Evolved Cognitive Complex and Human Nature

1. Large neocortex, fueled by subcortex, creating the capacity to store and order information and experiences tagged with emotions into large stocks of knowledge at hand, thereby making information available for retrieval by the prefrontal cortex.
2. Language and symbolization of all experiences, accelerating and expanding the capacities in (1) above and allowing for further creation, accumulation, use, and transmission of shared cultural meanings as

memories and stocks of knowledge, increase fitness and adaptation to both the bio-ecological and sociocultural environments.

3. Formation and ordering of stocks of knowledge through cognitive capacities for: *abstraction*, *attributions* (as to sources, causes and origins) *of events*, *salience to identities*, *consistency and congruence among cognitions and emotion*s, *contrast-conceptions*, *cultural coding of prescriptions and proscription*s, *cognitive partitioning of inconsistent information and emotions*, *expectations states*, and *activation of defense mechanisms*.
4. Formation of moral cultural codes through speech, while the capacity for identity formations leads to moral evaluations of self and self-sanctioning by activating *shame* and *guilt* as emotions of social control.
5. Prefrontal cortex in interaction with hippocampus and memories stored in the frontal lobe allows for repression of cognitions tagged with emotions directed toward self and for activation of defense mechanisms—*displacement, projection, reaction formation, sublimation, and attribution*—that protect self and transmute (a) the nature of the emotions experienced and (b) the targets of these emotions.
6. Capacities to read the gestures of others to determine their dispositions and the likely courses of action during an interaction, while at the same time, using speech and non-verbal gestures to communicate internal states and likely courses of action, in a process of "taking" account of others' internal states and likely paths of action and, simultaneously, presenting self and "making" others aware of internal states and likely courses of action in a process of mutual (a) r*ole-taking and making*, (b) *status-taking and making*, (c) *identity-taking and making*, (d) *emotion-taking and making*, (e) c*ulture-taking and makin*g, (f) s*tructure-taking and making*, (g) s*ituation-taking and making*.
7. Through (6) above, retrieval of emotionally-tagged cognitions in order to mutually (a) categorize others, self, situation, cultural expectations, structural constraints, and situational expectations; (b) use appropriate speech forms and expressive gestures in opening, forming, and closing the flow of interaction; (c) invoke appropriate keys and rekey the frames during interaction; (d) assess which need-states of self and other can and/or should be met or not met in the situation; (e) assess resources to be exchanged and invoke norms of fair exchange.

2. The Evolved Emotions Complex and Human Nature

1. Dramatically expanded palette of emotions with which (a) to tag ever-more complex cognitions stored in short-term and longer-term

memory and (b) to access alternatives in decision making, thereby making growth of the neocortex more fitness enhancing.
2. Propensity to tag with emotions all cognitions about self, others, situations, structures (and status and roles therein), social categories of persons, cultural norms, beliefs, and values, thereby, *moralizing* virtually all dimensions of the social universe.
3. Propensity to create variants, as well as first-order and second-order elaborations (combinations), of primary emotions, with second-order variants of *shame* and *guilt* allowing for self-control as a central mechanisms of social control driving human conduct.
4. Propensity to order emotions into "sentences" communicating common meanings, as a quasi "language of emotions," built up from gestures of face, eyes, body-countenance, voice inflections, and other cues communicating emotional states of individuals in interaction.
5. Propensity to use speech and cultural labels in reflexive self-talk to denote new kinds of emotional states idiosyncratic to an individual, but often collectively communicated within subpopulations and subcultures within a population. Such reflexive self-talk, when used to communicate emotional states to others, leads to the codification of an emotion culture among subpopulations in societies which, in turn, leads to further talk and self-talk about emotions and moral codes.
6. Use of the "language of emotions" as the basis for fine-tuning efforts in assessing the dispositions of others, while asserting one's own dispositions, in a process of mutual *role-taking and making, status-taking and making, identity taking and making, structure taking and* making*, cultural taking and making, situation taking and making, and emotion taking and making.*
7. The propensity to build up a series of identities from mutual efforts of "taking" and "making" described in (6) above, with these identities unfolding at four levels: core- or person-level identities, categoric unit-identities, corporate-unit identities, role-identities. These identities consist of cognitions, interlaced to varying degrees with emotions experienced during interactions with others over time, and they become powerful need-states for individuals to verify in interactions with others.
8. Capacity and propensity to repress negative emotions about self and identities from full cognitive awareness and to invoke defense mechanisms, including *displacement*, *projection*, *reaction-formation*, *sublimation*, and a*ttribution* that (a) transmute the emotions experienced by individuals and that (b) target others, objects, categories, and structures rather than self.

9. Capacity and propensity to recognize different levels of social structure and to experience emotions related to experiences during interactions in these structures, with these emotional experiences having large effects on identity formation and on commitments to the culture at different levels of structural organization—from groups to organizations and communities, to larger institutional systems, to stratification systems, and to societies as a whole.

3. The Evolved Psychology Complex and Human Nature

1. Propensity to develop identities forming at least four levels: (a) core- or *person-level identities*, (b) *categoric-unit identities*, (c) *corporate-unit identities*, and (d) *role-identities*. These identities generate motivational need-states, with person-level being the most powerful of these need-states.
2. Clarity of cognitions, intensity of emotions, and operation of dense mechanisms vary across types of identity. Core- or person-identities are the most emotionally loaded and conflated with the operation of defense mechanisms, and hence, the least subject to conscious awareness. Categoric-unit identities are the next most conflated. Corporate-unit identities and role-identities are less emotionally infused, less subject to operation of defense mechanisms, and most subject to cognitive awareness.
3. Person-level and categoric-unit identities are the most stable over time, while corporate-unit and role-identities can change over the life course.
4. Identities that are not verified by others, or that are negatively evaluated by cultural beliefs, arouse *anger* and other negative emotions toward others or, alternatively, arouse *shame* and/or *guilt* leading activating defense mechanisms. Humans can often selectively present only those identities that can be verified in a positive way in order to avoid the negative emotions and potential activation of defense mechanisms.
5. Humans have needs to experience (a) receipt of resources more valued than the costs in interaction with others to receive these resources, and (b) receipt of resources that meets or exceeds cultural and personal standards of justice. Failure to experience (a) or (b) arouses intense negative emotions and will lessen commitments to others, situations, and structures in which this failure has occurred. Conversely, profitable and just exchange payoffs lead individuals to experience positive emotions and increase their commitments to others, situations, and structures.
6. Humans have needs to experience is a *sense of efficacy* in behaviors and the outcomes of behaviors, with failure to realize this need arousing

negative emotions, with the intensity of negative emotions increasing if efficacy is tied to identity verification, and with meeting this need likely to arouse positive emotions and commitments to others and the structure in which efficacy is experienced.

7. Humans have need for a *sense for group inclusion* or being part of the ongoing interaction, and especially so if an identity is on the line, with individuals experiencing positive emotions and commitments to others and social structures when this need is met, and negative emotions and lowered commitments when this need is not met.
8. Humans seek, when they can, to experience balance, congruence, and consistency among cognitions and emotions which, if associated with cognitions and emotions about identities arouse the same dynamics as outlined in (4) above; if not conflated with identities, the emotional reaction, whether positive or negative, will be significantly muted in light of the nearly impossible task of achieving balance and congruence among all cognitions and emotional states.
9. Humans seek *a sense of trust* in all interaction, revolving around a sense that (a) others are being sincere and honest, (b) others are respecting one's key identities, and (c) current situations are as it seems; and individuals will experience positive emotions and commitments to others and the situation when this sense can be sustained, and negative emotions when it cannot or when any of (a), (b), or (c) is not realized.
10. Humans always seek to experience positive emotions and avoid negative emotion arousal in virtually all situations, with arousal of positive emotions leading to commitment to (a) others and (b) the social unit and its culture in which positive emotions are experienced, and with arousal of negative emotions leading to the reverse of (a) and (b), and potentially, activating the operation of defense mechanisms.

4. The Evolved Interaction Complex and Human Nature

1. Activation of all complexes of human nature can only be achieved by exposure of the very young to interactions with other humans, which is facilitated at birth by infants' biological drives to seek out interaction and physical contact with humans.
2. By virtue of interaction with others, and by emotionally responding to the gestures of others, humans develop a series of identities—minimally, *person-level identities*, *categoric-unit identities*, *corporate-unit identities*, and *role-identities*—that they then seek to verify in virtually all interactions in order to have positive feelings about self.

3. In all interactions, to varying degrees and extents, humans read the gestures of others and the context of the interaction to determine the: (a) *identities* being presented for verification by others; (b) the *roles* that others are trying to play; (c) the *status* locations and memberships that others seek to occupy; (d) the *structure* that others seek as relevant to the interaction; (e) the *situational features* within these structures that others see as the most relevant and important; (f) the *cultural symbols*, texts, totems, codes, and frames that others see as guiding the flow of interaction; (g) the *emotion*s that others are experiencing and that others see as appropriate; (h) the *frames* guiding the flow of interaction. These efforts to "take on" the perspective of others in an interaction can be labelled: *identity- taking*, *role-taking*, *status-taking*, *structure-taking*, *situation-taking*, *culture-taking*, *emotion-taking* and *frame-taking*.
4. In all interactions, to varying degrees and extents, humans always seek to "make" for themselves by presentation to others of both conscious and unconscious gestures communicating (a) one or more of their *identities*; (b) *roles* that they seek to play; (c) *status* locations and memberships that they want others to see as relevant; (d) structures that they see as relevant; (e) *situational features* that they see as relevant; (f) *cultural symbols*, texts, totems, codes, and frames that they see as appropriate for the interaction; and (g) *emotions* that they are experiencing, as well as emotions that they see as appropriate. These "making" processes of self-presentations can be labelled: *identity-making*, *role-making*, *status-making*, *structure-making*, *situation-making*, *cultural-making*, *emotion-making*, and *frame-making*.
5. Human nature is thus driven and constrained by a continuous, mutual effort to exchange both extrinsic and intrinsic resources with others in which individuals receive more resources than the costs incurred in receiving them, with successful exchanges creating a new resource—positive emotions—that is added to whatever else is being exchanged, thereby increasing positive emotions and commitments to the exchange.
6. Humans are motivated to engage in both *shorter-term* and *protracted ritual* activities to create and sustain interactions promoting the exchange of positive emotions, while enhancing social ties and collective solidarities.
    a. *Short-term* rituals revolve around stereotypical behaviors that open, close, and structure the interaction among individuals during greetings and closings of interaction, and at strategic points while in engaging in 1–5 above and 7 below.

b. *Longer-term interaction rituals* revolve around building upon short-term rituals to raise the level of positive emotional flow, to increase solidarities, and to sustain the positive emotional flow and solidarity in iterated encounters strung together over time through fair exchanges of resources leading to the exchange of positive emotions that, in turn, lead to totemizing the interaction with symbols toward which emotion-arousing short-term rituals are enacted to sustain collective solidarity over time.

7. Humans in all interactions are motivated to experience positive emotions about self through the activation of the dynamics outlined in 1–6 above; and as positive emotions are experienced, individuals develop commitments to others and the structures and cultures within which an interaction occurs.

5. The Evolved Community Complex and Human Nature

1. Propensity of individuals to reckon and orient themselves to multiple levels of sociocultural formations, ranging from episodes of interaction in temporary encounters through groups within organizations and communities and, potentially, to larger institutional domains, stratifications systems, societies and inter-societal systems.
2. Capacity and propensity of individuals to see self from the structural locations and relevant culture to which they orient themselves, with identities most likely to be attached to (a) particular roles in corporate units and potentially the institutional domains in which they are embedded; (b) memberships in categoric units particularly gender, ethnicity, and class, but others as well; and (c) inhabitants of communities as well as memberships of particular groups and organizations within these communities.
3. Emotions generated by verifications of identities attached to various levels of social and cultural organization generate positive emotions that are rewarding, *per se*, but also generate attachments and commitments to these various levels of organization as long as identities continue to be verified.
4. Capacity and propensity to role-take and make and status-take and make in efforts to verify self but also to understand expectations from locations in particular social structures for self and others, which in turn, lead to structure-taking and making, culture-taking and making, and to emotion-taking and making. All of these interpersonal practices help specify the most relevant levels of sociocultural organization that are relevant to meeting psychological needs-states of individuals, with

meeting need-states' increasingly emotional attachments to various levels of social organization.
5. Ability and, at times, the preference to use the capacities outlined in (4) above to be among strangers and to engage them in necessary interactions at various levels of sociocultural organization.
6. The capacity and, at times, the preference made possible by (4) and (5) above to be mobile across several levels of social organization, particularly diverse types of corporate units (groups, organizations, and communities) in various institutional domains (e.g., kinship, economy, education, religion).

Fully understanding these complexes at this point may not be easy because of the technical vocabulary used to keep each element of the various complexes succinct. But, there is a connotative value in just reading the words and concepts denoted. Throughout the book, we will return to these as a side commentary for the simple reason that these complexes of human nature are what drive and constrain human behavior and, ultimately, human social organization, including the evolution of institutional systems. In many ways, these complexes reveal capacities for certain types of behavior, emotional arousal, and interaction that lead to the building up of institutional systems and their cultures. Moreover, any or all of these elements in the complexes can also put selection pressures on populations for certain types of social structures and culture; and to the degree that existing sociocultural formations are not consistent with human nature as outlined in these complexes, these selection pressures will continue for reorganization in a society. Thus, even as the majesty and complexity of social structures and their cultures increase in the long run of evolution, the biological basis of humans as evolved great apes still exerts subtle but consistent pressure on the direction that sociocultural evolution takes. And while we cannot fully explore all of the nuances of these dynamics, it will prove useful to keep a side commentary on the relation between the evolved nature of humans and the sociocultural formations that they create. These often stand in tension, and when such is the case, pressures for evolution of societies will increase.

Notes

1 The exception to this pattern is chimpanzee males who never leave their natal community and develop a moderate to strong tie with their mothers over their lifetime, although these sons never live in a permanent grouping with their mother. Rather, they periodically visit her.

2 See, for example, summaries of the literature: Maryanski and Turner, 1992; Turner and Maryanski, 2005, 2008; Turner et al., 2018; Turner, 2021.

3 The term *pre-adaptation* is now generally replaced by the term *exaptation*, but we use the older term because it better connotes what is involved.

4 See Table 1.2 on page 23 for a schematic of key brain structures in humans.

5 Some have argued that there was a basic limit cognitively (e.g., Dunbar 1992) and emotionally (e.g., Hammond, 1983) to how big societies could become, but these conclusions are, we feel, overdrawn. Dunbar's notion that language evolved in order to overcome the limitations of grooming when populations exceeded 150 conspecifics in a community ignores that the fact that great apes do not groom very much to begin with. Rather, like humans today, they have no trouble cognitively or emotionally in remembering what transpired last time they interacted with conspecifics. Institutions evolved because they were needed, not because great apes have cognitive and emotional limitations as groups get larger; instead, institutions solve adaptive problems of larger communities but great apes, even with their relatively small brains at 375-400 cc, have little trouble cognitively envisioning larger social structures and the demography of this structure. Indeed, the brains of great apes can be seen, as noted in Table 1.2, as a pre-adaptation that facilitated the evolution of institutions.

6 Indeed, some have argued that the brain grew some 50–70,000 years ago, as evidenced by the appearance of the first cultural artifacts (Klein and Edgar, 2002), although such artifacts may be more the result of institutional rather than neurological evolution. While the brain of early *Homo* varied from large (Neanderthal and Denisovans) to very small (*Homo nadeli*), with *Homo sapiens* less large than Neanderthals' brains, the evidence for a sudden jump in brain size as late as 50,000 years is not convincing.

7 Except for the moderate to strong ties between chimpanzee males and their mothers. All other inter-generational ties among great apes are broken with male and female transfer from their natal community at puberty.

8 For more extensive reading about neuroanatomical evolution and the origins of human societies, see Turner 1996, 1997a, 1997b, 1999a,1999b, 2000b, 2005, 2007, 2010a, 2013, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c, 2018b, 2021a, 2021b; Turner and Maryanski 2012, 2015, 2018, 2021.

9 In Appendix II of this chapter, using the data from cladistic analysis and comparative neuroanatomy, we offer informed speculations, on ***evolved nature*** of humans (see also Turner 2021a).

10 In Appendix I, we outline the sequence of emotional enhancement (Turner 2000b, 2007).

11 The amygdala and hippocampus doubles, approximately, between apes (1.85 and 2.99 cc, respectively) and humans (4.48 and 4.87) (Eccles 1989).

2
Selection as the Force Driving Institutional Evolution

The Biology and Sociology of Institutional Evolution

In the biological universe, evolution is driven by natural selection working on variations in the phenotypes (and hence, the underlying genotype) of a life form (Mayr 2001). In addition to natural selection, three other forces shape biological evolution: (1) mutations on genes, though generally neutral or maladaptive, may be beneficial to an organism's survival and reproductive efforts; (2) gene flow in which members from one population carry genes to another population; and, finally, (3) genetic drift, or changes in gene frequencies due to random sampling of organisms in, typically, a small, delimited gene pool. Ultimately, though, natural selection is the force that "selects" variants (and the underlying genes and alleles generating these variants) of individuals that increase their fitness in a given environment, or the ability of individual organisms to survive and reproduce in a particular ecological niche within a habitat.

In the Modern Synthesis of biology, Darwin's analysis of natural selection was combined with the rediscovery of Gregor Mendel's analysis of the genetic basis of inheritance. In this synthesis, natural selection is seen as working only on the phenotypic traits of individuals, both their physical traits as well as their behavioral propensities. Those traits that allow individuals to survive are passed onto the next generation during reproduction, whereas those traits that do not favor survival and reproduction will be "selected out" of the population as less-fit individuals die and fail to reproduce. Thus, for most biologists, selection works on individuals (their phenotypes and underlying genotypes) and, thereby, determines *which* individuals will survive and reproduce. However, in the Modern Synthesis in biology, individuals are *not the unit of evolution*; rather, it is the *population* of individuals and, more specially, their genes conceptualized as a *gene pool* that is evolving.

This is an important point because when analysis turns to *superorganisms*, or the organization of organisms, problems with this line of emphasis in the Modern Synthesis in biology emerge, especially for societies of humans built from their sociocultural creations. The Modern Synthesis can only hold as

 DOI: 10.4324/9781003224433-3

long as the behaviors of individuals in non-human superorganisms, such as societies of insects, are under *genetic control* and, hence, are part of their phenotype and underlying genotype. It is still the individual that is subject to selection, but it is *the pool of genes* among surviving and reproducing individuals that evolves. For humans, however, collective behavior extends beyond its individual members' phenotypes and genotypes to the emergent superorganism's externalized structure and culture. Whether ephemeral or enduring (Borch 2020, Borch and Schiermer 2021), superorganisms are shaped less by natural selection and more by sociocultural processes (Turner and Abrutyn 2017). For one thing, the more successful institutional structures and cultures become, the more central they are for future adaptation. The biotic environment is always a potential source of pressure, but over time institutions become the sites of dynamic evolution. Secondly, the intelligence generated by their big brains leads humans to select by their own conscious actions which phenotypes are "fit," and which are not. In the modern post-industrial world, this has culminated with medical ethics and knowledge that allow phenotypes once deemed unfit to be fit, thus shifting the burden onto social selection which is conscious and agentic, rather than "blind" natural selection, which randomly selects on phenotypes. Finally, the actions driving sociocultural evolution increasingly shift to the group or clusters of groups, where carrying capacities can be greatly expanded and intentional collective action can negate the importance of phenotypes while elevating strictly sociological forces inhering in culture and social structure.

The story of human evolution, then, shifts gradually at first and then with increasing frequency from Darwinian selection on individuals and the evolution of gene pools to sociocultural selection on the structural and cultural formations, such as groups and all of the structures built from groups and their cultures. We suggest that structural and cultural elements of institutional spheres are the equivalent to the gene pool in biological evolution in that they evolve as a result of selection pressures and guided human agency. They are, to use Richard Dawkins' (1976) famous phrase, "the survivor machines" built from sets of cultural instructions and structural elements that organize human actions and, in so doing, protect not only the human body and its precious cargo, the genome, but also the connective tissue between and within corporate units like groups, communities, and organizations and their individual actors. Like genes, they are repositories of current and previous cultural elements and structural patterns, as well as the constraints on human behaviors, interactions, and potential cultural and structural formations now and the future.[1] They reflect a suite of solutions to small and big problems, accumulated over

time, and thus reflect successes and can portend to future failures. Most importantly, institutions either range in their ability to integrate and regulate individual members, channeling self-interest towards collective goals seamlessly, or engendering conflict that threatens to dissolve the necessary social bonds for superorganisms to act collectively.

We are emphasizing these differences between evolution in the biotic and sociocultural universes because a great deal of effort in biology seeks to explain sociocultural formations among humans in terms of human behavior that is considered to be genetically driven, thereby making the unit that is evolving the gene pool of individuals organized in societies. This emphasis can be sustained with some credibility as long as emphasis is only on behaviors as phenotypes that are genetically driven. Too often evolutionary explanations that rely on biological evolution are just-so stories with very little evidence to support claims (Gould and Lewontin 1979; Richardson 2007); and Richard Dawkins' idea of cultural memes as the counterpart for human societies as the notion of genes is for the human body simply fails the evidentiary standards of biological evolution (Atran 2001). Therefore, many behaviors that create and sustain, or change, sociocultural formations *are not* under genetic control but, in fact, are an outcome of some traits that have a genetic basis but *many more that do not* (see Tables 1.2 and 1.3 on pages 23 and 29 in Chapter 1 listing the biologically driven traits of great apes that, as humans evolved, were increasingly mixed with cultural and structural traits of societies via the elaboration process presented in Figure 1.3). Thus, even those traits that are clearly part of humans' evolved biology become intertwined with sociocultural forces arising from human acts of agency as they organize into institutional systems that crease fitness not only for individuals but also for the sociocultural formations organizing individuals.

Indeed, over the long run of human history, it is sociocultural systems that constrain much of the behavior producing, reproducing, or changing the structure and culture of these systems. While it is possible individual phenotypes are also under selection, as when individuals go to war and can live to reproduce or die and fail to do so, it is also the structure and culture of the military forces as a whole, as well as the politics and economics of the society mobilizing for warfare that is also under selection and are probably more relevant in understanding who is to live and die, and which army or society is likely to survive.

Furthermore, because culture can be stored and easily repurposed centuries and millennia after it was first put to use, it is durable, fungible, and

divisible in ways that genes are not. The conquest of a tribe, for instance, may see the individual carriers die (and, in extreme cases, perhaps their genetic traits too), while some cultural elements are absorbed by the conqueror. The invention of writing explodes this unique facet of culture, as is illustrated by the creation of the Hebrew Bible that has been written, edited, glossed, and redacted by generations of scribes and priests for purposes specific to each "authors'" time and place, and has continuously been used to fuel new emergent religious institutional spheres, as well as speciation within those spheres (e.g., sectarianism). Finally, evolution of structure and culture is not always or even primarily driven by competition; many other forces affect the evolution of social structures and their cultures in a more Lamarckian-like process of innovation rather than by Darwinian natural selection (Abrutyn 2014a; Turner et al. 2018). Consciousness allows humans to innovate not only in the face of extreme existential disasters, but also to express creativity, to engage in self-aggrandizement, or to perceive exigencies that may or may not be real (or diagnosed accurately).

Hence, in examining the evolution of institutional systems, we will need to remain vigilant to these differences in evolution as conceptualized by the Modern Synthesis and evolutionary sociology (Turner and Machalek 2018). As will become evident, the early emergence of the first institutions in humans societies was influenced by the nature of humans outlined in Appendix II to Chapter 1, which is partially the result of biological evolution that was eventually "elaborated" by emotions, cognitions, speech, and culture which were deployed to construct sociocultural formations regulating individual behaviors. Yet, since we are addressing the first and earliest forms of what will eventually become full-blown institutional formations, which reveal a certain degree of autonomy, there is still a great deal of interplay between biological and sociocultural dynamics influencing the initial emergence and later evolution of institutional systems. Selection can be on *both* the individual and genetically influenced behaviors and existing sociocultural formations, but over time, as institutional systems evolve, it is not so much the genome that evolves but the sociocultural formations from which full-fledged institutional systems evolve. For in the end, humans have only survived by virtue of their capacity to create institutional systems as their survival machines, with these institutional systems constituting a survivor machine protecting the original survival machine, the human body and its genome. These institutional systems thus protect a very precious cargo—humans and their genotypes—but it is not the genotype or even biological phenotype as much as *the sociocultural formation operating as a survival machine that is evolving*.

Sources of Selection Pressures and Institutional Evolution

Biological organisms and superorganisms organizing biological organisms are both subject to selection, but as we will see, the nature of selection differs when analyzing individual *biological organisms* and *superorganisms* built up by constructed social structures and their cultures. Selection pressures on organisms and superorganisms build when adaptive problems arise between the organisms or superorganisms and their respective environments (biotic versus sociocultural). Therein lies the crux of our argument: foraging societies, isolated on the Savanna or in an ecological niche of one sort or another, are likely to experience Darwinian pressures. However, once inter-societal contact occurs, pressures that defy biological selection arise related to the basic Simmelian (Simmel 1971) forms of sociality like exchange and competition. The environment is fundamentally altered too: no longer is the lone foraging society adapting to the biotic environment, but it now must contend with other conscious beings, organized into collectives too, whose interests may or may not align, and whose interests can be intentionally mobilized in collective action. And so, increasingly, selection is on the viability of the sociocultural formations organizing individuals in societies rather than on variabilities in their biological phenotypes and underlying genotypes (Turner and Maryanski 2008).

This line of argument has long been promoted, at least implicitly, by structural functionalism, but it has also long been poorly conceptualized with cumbersome explanatory logic (Luhmann 1977, 1982; Parsons and Smelser 1956). Thus, let us take the hypothetical one step further: if geographic and/or social circumscription arise—e.g., the two hypothetical tribes cannot or do not want to leave their respective territorial niches—contact between groups eventually crystallizes into patterns of interacting, exchanging, and communicating that regulates members feelings, thoughts, and actions and integrates the two groups. The shell of a Durkheimian organizing principle that keeps the two groups distinct yet forges a common shared system of beliefs and practices emerges, and now, once again, the environment has fundamentally changed a second time. Now, adaptation pressures shift from the bio-ecology of their niche and habitat to selection pressures generated by their new sociocultural niches, those of their own societies and those created by the sociocultural formations used to construct inter-societal relations. In turn, structure and culture forces that generated a constructed environment now create new sets of selection pressures that demand adaptive responses to these pressures. Individuals are adapting to the sociocultural environments of their own creation as much as adapting to their bio-ecological environment; and moreover, the structure of the

bio-ecological environment is often changed by the actions of sociocultural formations. And, in the end, as sociocultural formations expand into full blown institutional systems, the environments to which humans must increasingly adapt are environments of humans' own creation.

Consequently, sociocultural pressures can build up from a number of interrelated sources. First, the most basic pressures arise from: (1) problems in securing sufficient resources to sustain the organism biologically or superorganism operating as a survival machine in its environment; (2) changes in the ecological niches and habitats in which organisms and superorganisms secure resources, with these changes related to geophysical changes in availability of sources of energy or with changes in distribution of other organisms or superorganisms invading a particular niche; (3) failures of individual organisms to fulfill motive and/or psychological/biological need-states, whether genetically or socioculturally generated, that are necessary for psychological well-being; and (4) failures of existing structures, whether built from genetic or cultural coding, to provide for [a] the production of sufficient resources, [b] the distribution of these resources to relevant units, [c] the regulation and social control of actions of and relations among the units being organized in a given environment, and [d] the reproduction of units within the organism or superorganism. Each of these overlapping sources of selection pressure is examined in more detail below.

(1) Problems in Securing Resources

Individual biological organisms, as well as superorganisms organizing individual organisms, both need to secure resources necessary to sustain organic life, as well sociocultural life in the case of humans. If organic bodies cannot receive necessary calories and nutrients to sustain organic life, then they will be less likely to survive and reproduce. Similarly, if superorganisms—whether those of insects that are genetically programmed to behave in ways creating and sustaining an insect society, or those of humans that are composed of social structures regulated by culture—cannot secure sufficient resources to support organic life, individual organisms will be selected out, while sociocultural formations may eventually collapse. Unlike biological competition, which is usually a combination of fitness plus luck or chance, sociocultural competition for resources adds a unique wrinkle: stratification and inequality. In this sense, adequate resources for all members may exist, but structural and cultural formations generate inequalities in the distribution of resources to various subpopulations in a society. Societies that severely restrict access of some

to resources risk collapse, as those unfairly become too weak to contribute meaningfully, or die. Also, they can mobilize for conflict and not only kill others but potentially destroy institutional systems on which humans depend for their survival. Indeed, the dustbin of history is a graveyard of failed societies that were unwilling or unable to limit inequalities, making them vulnerable to internal collapse or conquest from without (Collins 1981a; Turchin 2003, 2006, 2013; Turner 2021a).

Importantly, humans, like other mammals, are programmed to seek out resources for subsistence (Panskepp 1998). Without the usual defensive measures against predators, however, humans had to cooperate to hunt big game and forage for sustenance (Bowles and Gintis 2011). As Marx (1845–6 [1972]) noted, the act of producing subsistence was the first social act, and thus the kinship sphere that first crystallized collective ways of thinking and acting around biological reproduction, was also instrumental in production and distribution (Sahlins 1972). It was nuclear families and bands, along with a set of culture proscriptions and prescriptions, that allowed humans to survive (Service 1962).[2] Thus, the human organism was initially dependent upon the viability of small superorganisms like nuclear families and bands organizing most activities. And, as other institutional systems evolved from kinship, this dependence on such systems only increased.

(2) Ecological Changes in the Environment

All life forms secure resources and reproduce within an environment or ecosystem composed of animal and plant life forms, minerals and other inorganic compounds, and at times superorganic resources. All life forms are dependent upon a certain stability in the ecosystems to which they must adapt, but the physical, organic, and social universe are not themselves stable, with the result being that the ecological habitats and niches to which organic and superorganic life forms must adapt are, themselves, constantly changing under a variety of forces (Goldschmidt 1966).

At the core of Darwin's theory is the notion that ecological change accelerates competition for sexual reproduction, rewarding some phenotypic expressions over others. The evolution of prosocial and altruistic behavior, for example, was reinforced by the willingness of humans to punish, expel, and, in many cases, kill overly aggressive and self-interested actors (Boehm 2018), leading those groups with more members predisposed to altruistic behavior and attitudes to be more successful than those that failed to sanction self-interested actors (Boehm 2008). However, once a relatively stable set of structural and cultural formations is in place,

ecological changes do not simply put pressure on individual-level behavior traits; they also put pressure on the capacity of existing social structures and their cultures to solve both individual and collective problems and, moreover, to facilitate the creation of new structures and cultures as selection pressures mount.

Two big differences between Darwinian selection and sociocultural selection are notable. First, in contrast to Darwinian selection, which is usually "blind" because it simply selects on the variants evident in the population, sociocultural selection is often purposive, involving agency and creativity to perceive the nature of the selection pressures, to plan and, then, to build up new social structures and cultures so as to adapt to these selection pressures (Abrutyn and Van Ness 2015). Second, ecological change is usually associated with the biotic world "causing" one phenotype to be more fit than another, whereas in a theory of sociocultural selection, the biotic world is not the only form of selection with which humans reckon (Verkamp 1991). Change can also come in the form of structure or culture in one sphere changing in ways that create new exigencies in other spheres. The collapse of a sector in the economy, for instance, causes pressures for other sectors to adapt.

When we combine these two differences we get a third one: purposeful creation of new structural or cultural solutions inevitably must be integrated into existing structure and culture, otherwise new problems are likely to arise on a higher order of magnitude (Durkheim 1893 [1997]). While hunting and gathering sociocultural formations were relatively stable for hundreds of thousands of years, evolution over the last 12,000 years has accelerated because changes in patterns of sociocultural organization generate bio-ecological pressures that feedback and require further changes in social structures and cultures. Equally important, as patterns of sociocultural organization change, these changes generate selection pressures on all other patterns of sociocultural organization directly, or indirectly through their effects on the bio-ecology of a population. Indeed, once institutional and stratification systems evolve and then change, they inevitably exert selection pressures on all other institutional domains and force changes in the stratification system as well. And so, as societal macro structures—institutional systems and stratification systems—are altered, they become change-inducing machines that change the nature of human societies.

Thus, whether ecological changes are due to geophysical processes, biological changes in the distribution of organic life, or changes in the population and societal ecology of a niche and habitat, selection pressures generated by such changes push actors in sociocultural systems to alter their institutional systems, if they can. To be sure, culture is sometimes too

conservative, vested interests control key structures, or other inert sociocultural forces will send the superorganism organizing a human population into extinction or, alternatively, make a superorganism so vulnerable that it is conquered by another society or superorganism. Indeed, the current trend for global warming is an example of major change in the ecology of the world, with considerable discourse over its ultimate effects, and yet, institutional inertia continues to slow down and inhibit efforts to restructure human societies (Beck 2008).

(3) Selection Pressures from Psychological Need-States

Most organisms have need-states that, if not met or realized, create discordance between the organism and its environment; and often these can generate selection pressures. There are, of course, universal need-states among mammals, such as the need for sex, for breathing, and for many genetically controlled needs that sustain organic life; and among various species of organisms, there are genetically controlled needs for kinship relations, reciprocity, sociality, dominance, etc. As outlined in the last chapter, biologically controlled behavioral propensities among hominins and ancestors of present-day great apes were very different than those among most mammals; and, moreover, these differences were elaborated upon by the evolution of enhanced emotions that led to a larger neocortex and, then, to spoken language and symbolic culture.

The elaboration of emotions would, *per se*, increase the salience of any genetically controlled behavioral needs, but the enlargement of the neocortex and the ability to "talk about" needs and to enshrine them in cultural beliefs, ideologies, and norms significantly increased the range of need-states and motive-states among humans that can generate entirely new kinds of selection pressures (Maslow 1967). Some possible examples of common needs are as follows: (a) *verifying* various *levels of identity*; (b) *receiving "profits"* in the exchange of resources; (c) experiencing a sense of *group inclusion* to feel part of the ongoing flow of interaction; (d) attaining *balance, congruence, and consistency* among cognitions; (e) achieving a *sense of trust* that others are sincere, honest, respectful of others' identities, and that their behaviors are *authentic* and the *situation is as it seems*; and (f) *receiving positive emotions* and *avoiding negative emotions*. All of the need-states in the psychology complex (see Appendix II to Chapter 1 on pages 41 to 48) are elaborations of biologically based needs of humans' hominin ancestors. However, humans can experience, think about, talk about, and symbolize almost any need or desire that they experience, whether lodged in human biology or purely

manufactured by humans' capacities for emotions, cognitions, speech, and culture. Consequently, the more complex a society and its culture become, the more numerous are the potential need-states that can be generated.

Because humans can generate many need-states as individuals or as collectively mobilized needs enshrined in cultural beliefs, ideologies, and norms, the greater is the potential for human frustration over the failure to meet some combination of need-states. The more pervasive is this sense of frustration among subpopulations in a society, the more these need-states operate like selection pressures for altering social structures and their culture (Wallace 1956). Sometimes these needs erupt into explicit social movements, which are emotionally charged up instrumental actions to change sociocultural formations in order to better meet some combination of need-states (Jasper and Poulsen 1995). Often these movements are driven by charismatic leaders or groups that are capable of articulating and framing these needs in ways that draw human and material resources into their orbit. Using these resources, they are capable of prying open windows of opportunity to reconfigure institutional spheres (Abrutyn 2015a, Colomy and Rhoades 1994, Eisenstadt 1990). At other times, need-states exert a quiet, but nonetheless persistent pressure to bring need-states into line with the resources available within sociocultural formations, particularly the groups and organizations that make up institutional systems or what we will call *institutional spheres and domains*.

(4) Key Selection Pressures or Pressure Points in Human Superorganisms

The final source of selection pressures come from what we call the *pressure points* of all structural and cultural formations. What human history reveals is a common set of problems that arise around a common set of causal processes (Goldschmidt 1966) and, ultimately, a delimited set of solutions (Goldenweiser 1937). Five obvious pressure points identified by classical theorists but amplified by Turner (1995) are (1) *production*, (2) *distribution*, (3) *regulation*, (4) *integration*, and (5) *reproduction* (Turner 1995, 2003, 2010a). Pressures for (1) production (e.g., gathering and producing goods and resources) and (2) distribution of resources (across a population) eventually generate the institutional domain of the economy. Economies can be effective for a significant portion of the population or, alternatively, they can generate myriad problems, thereby generating further pressures for social change. Inherent in any patterns of social organization, like the economy that evolves in response to pressure points like production and distribution, is also the likelihood that the economy itself

will prove not completely effective, with the result that new pressures points around production and distribution emerge, especially if distribution of resources has created high levels of inequality and stratification.

Likewise, institutional spheres must regulate individual and corporate bodies through mechanisms for dealing with selection pressure (3) to *control and/or coordinate individuals and corporate units* through the mobilization of *power and authority* in polity as an institutional domain. This power is used to coordinate and control relations among institutional domains and their constituent corporate units. Often, as societies get large, polity then selectively franchises to actors in institutional domains authority to coordinate and control relations *within* each institutional domain. As populations get larger and institutional systems evolve and differentiate, this pressure for coordination and control only increases. This pressure point becomes increasingly salient as populations grow heterogeneous across numerous categories beyond sex and age; and yet, power itself is a potentially intense pressure point in a society if it is not seen as legitimate by large sectors of a population.

Yet another pressure point has to do with institutions (4) *creating attachments and commitments* to the institution and to the diverse array of moral anchors that act as intermediaries between individuals and the institution itself. Yet, if cultural values and ideologies are not seen as legitimate by sectors of a society, or are inconsistent and contradictory, they too generate intensification of the pressure point requiring individuals and the corporate units organizing their activities to generate attachments and commitments among their incumbents to cultural values and ideologies.

Finally, institutional spheres must (5) *sustain and reproduce members of the population* as well as *the social structures, and the cultures that organize their daily activities* (reproduction). If individuals cannot reproduce themselves, or if corporate units from which institutional domains are constructed cannot be sustained and reproduced, then a society is in a death spiral of disintegration and collapse, or alternatively, conquest by another, better-organized society.

To these five, we might add *legitimation*: social systems must make plausible (Berger 1969) and ontologically secure (Giddens 1984) the phenomenological experience of individuals, although legitimation might also been seen as part of the process of creating attachments of actors in a society to institutional domains and the society as a whole.

In human superorganic systems, selection pressures build up along these six axes—*production*, *distribution*, *regulation*, *integration*, *reproduction,* and perhaps *legitimation*— and push individuals and the units organizing their

activities to find new solutions to these problems. Solutions usually involve normative, symbolic, organizational, and/or technological responses (Abrutyn 2014b; Abrutyn and Van Ness 2015), often using affectual and moral framing to justify their innovations (Benford and Snow 2000). Thus, again, sociocultural selection is usually *not blind*, and moreover, selection works more directly on the structures and cultures of human sociocultural systems than on the biological phenotypes of individuals, although selection could be on both. In either case, both individuals and the corporate units organizing their activities will be activated in concerted efforts to find solutions to selection pressures. Indeed, as institutional systems evolve, they create a sociocultural environment generating new sets of selection pressures to sustain the survivor machine that becomes increasing important: the sociocultural universe that humans create. And this survivor machine houses and, indeed, protects the survivor machine subject to Darwinian selection, the human body and its precious cargo, the human genotype.

In addition to adding purpose and creativity to a theory of sociocultural selection, this approach allows us to revisit functionalism in ways that can reclaim some of the useful aspects while avoiding the typical pitfalls of functionalism. Of course, it is fair to ask why we even need to revisit functionalism if we have already moved beyond it in our identification of pressure points. The short answer, for now, is that functionalist analyses—especially from the British anthropological school—provided key insights into what the earliest institutional spheres looked like, as well as the generic problems that all human societies faced as they evolved into increasingly permanent, sedentary settlements (Service 1962) and the unique, albeit delimited, solutions they developed (Steward 1955 [1972]).

The Fruits of Functionalism

In the 19th Century, much early sociological theory engaged in functional analysis that, in the 20th Century, has been rejected (see Schutt and Turner 2019; Turner et al. 2020; Turner and Machalek 2018). The basic argument of functionalism was that there are imperatives and sociological need-states that must be met by sociocultural arrangements, lest the social system reveal pathologies and potentially disintegrate. Of course, functionalism was borne of a more general biological analogy between organisms and societies (Levine 1995). It was assumed that organisms had functions that must be met by biological structures and processes; and since societies are a kind of "social organism," they too would have such functions that had to

be met if the social organism was to survive and endure (Comte 1830–42 [1896]; Spencer 1874–96 [1898]).

In biology, this functionalism did not generate the conceptual crisis as it eventually did in sociology. Indeed, doctors have little trouble outlining the processes embodied in lungs and hearts in terms of their "functions" for getting oxygen to the cells of the body, while carrying away carbon dioxide as individuals exhale (as well as other functions). What is always left unsaid in these descriptions of biological "functioning" is the evolutionary history of the lungs and circulatory system of larger animals in terms of selection pressures on biological phenotypes. That is, as bodies grew in volume, natural selection worked to create a means for inhaling oxygen and distributing it to cells now far from the organism's skin, while at the same time exporting carbon dioxide as spent and harmful byproducts of aeration of the cells. Moreover, in biological systems, it was possible to determine what is "normal" functioning of the human body (by simple measures like temperature but also by the normal operation of organs). The organs and processes connecting organs into an organic whole are solutions to selection pressures and blind "natural selection" during the evolution of larger animals.

Sociological functionalism has not fared as well, despite not being falsified by any systematic empirical evidence (Wilson 2001). Yet, functionalism did indeed fail at explaining how structures and cultures evolved in superorganisms—as we are doing in this book. In place of identifying selection pressures, functionalist generated a kind of cross-tabulation of fundamental requisites of sociocultural formations alongside the substructures that had 'evolved' to meet the need. Without the longer discussion of how societal growth generates sociocultural selection pressures, these requisites fall prey to the typical critiques (e.g., Lockwood 1956) directed at sociological and anthropological functionalism. Still, a chastened functionalism, translated into a selectionist argument, can be very useful in understanding why social structures and their cultures evolve and de-evolve. By focusing on the limited number of selection pressures that arise in sociocultural formations, seeing them as focal points of adaptive problems that if a population is to survive must be addressed in some minimal way, we can convert functionalisms into a powerful analytical tool for understanding the evolution of the first human institutions. In Table 2.1, we have listed a number of prominent theorists from the very beginnings of sociology to more recent decades, listing their "functional requisites."

Despite the somewhat different labels, it is striking that the actual number of axes around which selection pressures arise in sociocultural systems *is relatively small*. And, if we abandon the idea of functional needs

TABLE 2.1 Functional Requisites and Need-States as Conceptualized by Representative Functionalists

Theorists:*	**Functional Needs or Requisites**
Herbert Spencer	Production, reproduction, distribution, and regulation
Talcott Parsons	Adaptation, latency, goal attainment, and integration
Bronislaw Malinowski	Production and distribution, social control, authority, reproduction
Émile Durkheim	Integration, social solidarity
A. R. Radcliffe-Brown	Integration

Note: Some functionalists emphasized one master function—integration or the coordination of units making up a social system (e.g., Durkheim and Radcliffe-Brown). The others (Spencer, Parsons, Malinowski) added additional "functions" but these all converge: ***production*** of what is necessary to survive; ***reproduction*** of individuals and the social units organizing their activities; ***distribution*** of information, products, and people through infrastructures and markets; ***regulation*** through the consolidation of power (authority) and by cultural ideologies; setting and ***achieving goals*** for members of a population; and ***integrating*** social structures and their cultures.. The labels are all a bit different, but they end up denoting a very limited range of functions. And if, as Spencer clearly intended, we view these functional needs as selection pressures from the environment, including human' evolved psychology and humans' creation of patterns of socio-cultural organization as part of the environment, we can convert functionalism into a more viable ecological analysis emphasizing that there is a relatively small package of fundamental pressures always on humans and their creations: patterns of sociocultural organization. All other functionalist schemes in sociology and anthropology posited pretty much the same needs or requisites, seeing implicitly that these were the points where selection pressures push on humans and societies. We will add to this list, but much of what we add still falls under these generic labels.

Spencer (1874–96) [1898]; Parsons (1951); Parsons et al. (1953); Parsons and Smelser (1956); Malinowski (1944); Durkheim (1893 [1997]; Radcliffe-Brown (1952).

or requisites and, instead, see these labels as loci or points of selection pressures, functionalism can be useful, as we will demonstrate in analyzing the selection pressures that led to the emergence and evolution of the first human institutions.

Selection and Adaptation as Key Social Forces in the Social Universe

One of the big points of debate in efforts to use ideas from the Modern Synthesis to explain sociocultural dynamics is the degree to which fidelity to the dictates of this synthesis need to be followed by social scientists. Our view is that if we stay too close to the Modern Synthesis, analysis will

miss just about everything that is unique and important about the evolutionary dynamics of the social universe. Instead, we need to recognize some very simple points. First, much evolution in sociocultural systems is teleological; humans and the corporate units that they build are always taking in information about the environment, thinking about solutions to environmental problems of adaptation that may arise, and trying to affect solutions to these problems. Any notion that natural selection is "blind" when working on sociocultural formations simply misses just about everything that is important about being human, and about how sociocultural systems organizing human behaviors evolve.

Second, the units on which selection operates are diverse. Selection can work on human body phenotypes, as is the case with diseases of all sorts (McNeill 1976), including the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020 and 2021 (Turner 2020). Individuals and their immune systems are being selected upon, with those revealing stronger immune systems surviving and others with comprised immune systems dying. At one level this is "blind" natural selection, but a moment's reflection indicates that this was *not* the only level of selection operating. The coronavirus is also selecting on just about every layer of social structure and culture. The political domain, or more accurately cross-national variation in political structure and culture, is being selected upon with regards to how rapidly and effectively it could mobilize resources to meet the selective challenges posed by the pandemic. Likewise, medical and scientific institutions across societies are also being selected upon in terms of their capacities and capabilities of mobilizing to fight the virus, and to coordinate services to shield patients' immune systems. Indeed, just about every institutional system in modern societies have been put under pressure to address the response to the pandemic, with variation in positivity rates, efficacy and consistency of public health measures, and resource mobilization to dampen the impact of concomitant economic recession. All of which underscores just how adaptive one nation's *institutional complex*—or, the structural and cultural arrangement of each institution and the ways they interlock vis-à-vis another—is (Abrutyn 2021b). Institutional spheres, then, encase the human phenotype and its genome within a series of nested levels of social reality including groups, organizations, and communities. Hence, institutional spheres as well as other corporate units are being selected on just as powerfully as the gene pool of a given region or nation.

Thus, it is useful to conceptualize the sociocultural universe, as it has evolved into more complex forms, as a multi-level series of embedded social structures and their cultures. Individuals, and their genetic material,

are always embedded in groups, and groups are embedded in larger social units like communities. In turn, these corporate units are embedded in the institutional spheres we are focused on throughout this book, and these institutions are embedded in societies and inter-societal systems (see Figure 2.1). This discussion does not even begin to address the other massive system that shapes organization: stratification (see Chapter 14). Nonetheless, the end result of this successive embedding and capacity for agency is that the sociocultural universe is unique; it can by actions involving agency re-create the structures and their cultures that organize humans.

Figure 2.1 underscores the fact that an analysis of the emergence of the first human institutions is, in many ways, a creation story of how a special animal with the capacities outlined in Appendix II in Chapter 1 (pages 41 to 48) could begin to create the sociocultural universe outlined in Figure 2.1. In this analysis, then, we start not at the end but at the juncture where the human genotypes was largely formed, and at *the very beginnings* when the sociocultural phenotypes that allowed humans to survive were being created.

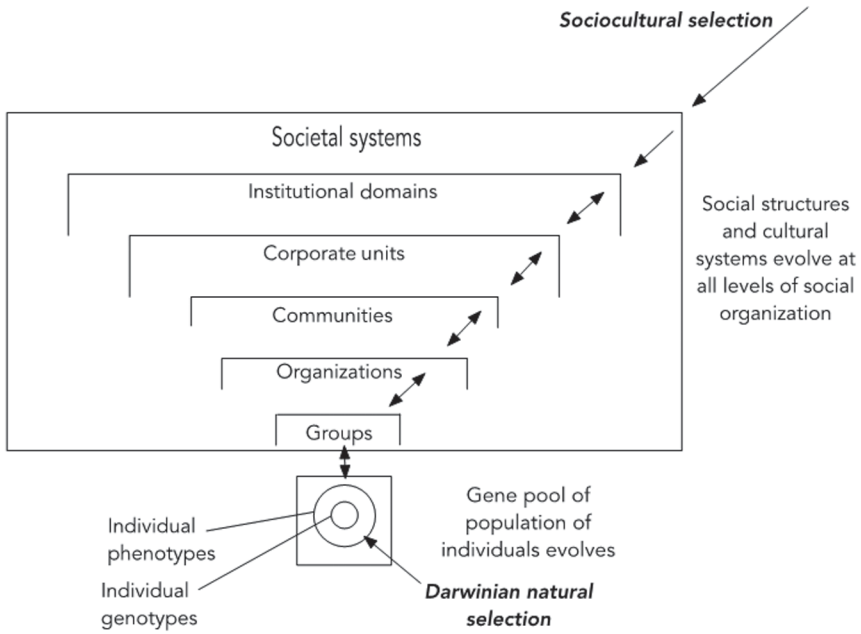


Figure 2.1 Selection Operating Across All Levels of Social Structure

Moreover, because of the role of agency and the multi-level nature of collectives, the story of sociocultural evolution is different from the evolution of biological organisms. Hence, it is not possible to maintain high fidelity to the Modern Synthesis because this synthesis is designed to explain the evolution of species; sociology was created to explain the evolution of societies, which literally is a very different "animal" than, well, an animal. The founders of the discipline all recognized that there were parallels and affinities in organic and superorganic structures, but they also identified key divergences (Turner and Abrutyn 2017).

In the next chapter, we will outline in more detail just what an institution is, and also outline a generalized analytical model for understanding the organization of societies. While our goal in this book is to tell the creation story of how societies could house millions, if not billions, of inhabitants, we will begin in the next chapter by outlining institutional systems in their more evolved form, just to gain some perspective on how simple but fundamental the first institutions were, beginning in Chapter 5. This set of institutions allowed humans to survive for hundreds of thousands of years, even as climatological and ecological forces put them constantly under threat of extinction (Fagan 2004). However, once this first cluster of institutional systems was built up, it would provide *a take off point* for dramatic increases in the scale of human societies. We will follow each institution for a time leading up to this take off point. There is, however, no "end of history" because institutions and humans are inherently dynamic, but, more importantly, human social and cultural formations generate many of the selection pressures that threaten human societies, directly or indirectly, by the effects of eight (soon to be ten) billion people organized into societies that are dramatically altering the ecology to which humans and their societies must adapt, or suffer the consequences of Malthus' horsemen.

A Preliminary Note on the Nature of Stratification Systems

We will return to the analysis of stratification after outlining in more detail the nature of social structures and culture in human societal systems. For the present, let us simply point out that societies are, ultimately, built from two macrostructures: (1) institutional domains and (2) systems of stratification. And, inter-societal systems are almost always built from exchanges between key institutional domains, such as polity, economy, or religion, of two or more societies and, at times, their respective

stratification systems. Our main topic in this book is the first institutional systems to evolve in human societies, but the topic of stratification cannot be ignored because it is institutional systems that generate inequalities. As we will see in the next chapter, all institutional domains are constructed structurally from relations among corporate units revealing divisions of labor directed at realizing goals, with valued resources—money, prestige, power, education, piety, love-loyalty and the like—being unequally distributed within the division of labor of corporate units and between different types of corporate units. It is the corporate unit within each institutional domain that distributes its own valued resources; and these units do so unequally. When individuals receive similar shares of resources, one can say that a stratification system begins to evolve, with those sharing approximately the same level of resources having similar lifestyle and cultures. And while a stratification system rarely looks like a neat layered cake, stratification in human societies is vertical: those at the bottom receive the fewest resources, those at the top the most resources, and those in between receiving varying levels of resources. Once people are located within any given strata or "class," their access to positions in resource-bestowing corporate units (e.g., higher education, high technology corporate units in the economy, power positions in government or polity, etc.) will vary dramatically, always favoring those at the top and some at the middle, with few chances for those at the bottom. The evolution of institutional systems or domains thus has worked to increase stratification among humans; and once stratification exists, it affects people's access to various types and quantities of what humans' value. Many of the critical dynamics in any society revolve around the tensions and strain that this unequal distribution generates among subpopulations in a society. And these tensions and strains become a selection pressure on institutional systems in a society, often leading to mobilizations of counter-power, conflict, and inevitably change in a society—sometimes for the better but often for the worse, thereby generating new selection pressures. Thus, institutional evolution is affected by stratification because it is corporate units within institutional domains that generate stratification; and it is the tensions so generated that often lead members of deprived classes to challenge the legitimacy of particular corporate units within specific institutional domains. Thus, societal evolution is often driven by the institutional domains that have evolved to resolve one set of selection pressures, only to create another set of internal selection pressures by generating and sustaining a stratification system that can, potentially, tear a society apart.

Notes

1 There are many ways in which sociocultural evolution is different from its biological evolution. For instance, unlike genes, culture rarely is reproduced with high fidelity. Cultural storage techniques like writing certainly improve accuracy, but do not change the fact that culture is always interpreted by observers and their structural and cultural milieu (see Turner and Maryanski 2008)

2 This is why the analysis of the evolution of human social institutions begins in Chapter 4, with an analysis of the kinship systems.

3
Building Human Institutions

Our goal in this book is to look back in time to the origins and subsequent evolution of human institutional systems and spheres. We can use rich paleontological, archaeological, ethnographic, and historical data on early human societies and their developmental history as a telescope to see the evolution of the first human institutions—from which all of the mega societies of today evolved. The first institutions provided the structural and cultural base for later societal development, but they did more than provide a base. They also allowed humans to survive their first 350,000 years on Earth, when their survival was by no means guaranteed, as numerous bottlenecks and declines in the human population periodically occurred. Today, humans are the only great ape on earth that is prospering, though the prognosis for longer-term survival and continued societal evolution is far from clear. All of Malthus' horsemen are riding through societies; and it is conceivable that the large societies that humans have created could one day vanish, from many sources such as war, terrorism, pandemics, and ecological disruptions, such as global warming and the destruction of resource niches on which humans and much life on earth depend. Our story, however, is a happier story not about the potential end of human societies but, rather, about the very beginnings and early evolution of human superorganisms. And that potential resides in the success human institutions have had in sustaining life across diverse ecological niches, myriad collapses, and in the face of immense risks.

To summarize our argument, society is built from two basic structures: (1) institutional spheres and (2) stratification systems. Both are structural systems that also evidence a cultural system. They are both macro-level systems, encompassing a variety of lower-order, smaller, more localized social units that are often more tangible to the experiences of humans. For instance, institutions are populated by various organizations and groups, while stratification systems are comprised of categoric units (e.g., social classes, race, gender, occupation). Yet, we will show in this chapter and the following chapter that institutions are *real* and not handy heuristic devices or reifications of their constituent units and cultures. The principal problem we face in the story of institutional evolution is the

DOI: 10.4324/9781003224433-4

relative "flatness" of these first human societies. What is macro, in terms used today, was simultaneously meso and micro in these societies. A single institutional pattern (kinship) and two segmented organizational units (nuclear families and bands) constituted nearly all social organization in early foraging society (Maryanski and Turner 1992); and, most roles and statuses were kin-based. For sociologists today, these are more micro social units, but they were dedicated to housing the first human institution: kinship. And for over 300,000 years, at the very least, this was the basic pattern of human social organization. And so, to a great extent, the story of institutional evolution begins with the creations of something that is not natural for an evolved great ape—nuclear families—organized into bands of nomadic hunter-gatherers. We will explore in depth this controversial conclusion (see Chapter 5), but we mention the issue here because, if late hominins and early humans had not been able to invent the nuclear family, none of us would exist today. While there were varying patterns of this simple form of organization that would emerge and recede, the story of human institutions begins with the forging of kinship ties and with the use of kinship to organize societies for hundreds of thousands of years. For, it is rather late in humans' time on earth, say around 12,000 years ago, that the other institutional systems, particularly political and religious spheres, began to evolve within, and then increasingly outside, kinship; stories we will tell through the theoretical lens presented herein, but importantly, through a panoply of historical examples of political (e.g., Chapter 8), religious (e.g., Chapter 10), economic (e.g., Chapter 14), and legal (e.g., Chapter 13) evolution. Thus, the structural template organizing humans was very simple for most of human history, but once the simple template of these early societies was broken, institutional evolution accelerated dramatically, making for an interesting story about how the base was laid for what were to become mega human societies.

Importantly, there is a careful interplay between Durkheim's (1912 [1995]) assertion that the *kernel* of later patterns of social organization can be found in preliterate societies. For instance, members of some of the "simplest" societies could intellectually discriminate between kin and legal action (Hoebel (1954 [1973]; Malinowski 1959), but the social logic of law was dominated by the cultural system of kinship. Legal action was ephemeral and, at most, would authorize a third-party arbiter to act on behalf of individuals within bands of nomadic hunter-gatherers, and even when new structures like community began to evolve, the profile of law was not much changed.

Much of this discussion can be applied to the stratification systems. The earliest human societies were, generally speaking, egalitarian (Gintis

et al. 2015). There were no "caste-like" strata, because there were few resources and virtually no property to be unevenly distributed in the first place. Sex and age were the only two discernible categoric distinctions; and these were not seen as unequal. Indeed, women provided a majority of the food for hunter-gathering societies and, hence, were highly valued and esteemed. Sexual inequality, however, did not take off until property relations emerged in chiefdoms (Flannery and Marcus 2012) that began to emerge after 300,000 years of relative equality, accelerating steeply when animal labor replaced human labor in agricultural societies. Women for the most of human history produced a significant amount of the subsistence calories and had some control over the productive process (Blumberg 1984). With agriculture, as we shall see more clearly in Chapters 7 and 8, inequality and stratification became a pillar—often somewhat unsteady—on which societies were constructed, permeating every institutional sphere and conditioning the distribution of valued resources within and between institutional spheres (Nolan and Lenski 2010).

In fact, inequality and stratification began with the differentiation of new institutional domains, which of course, are the story of this book. Thus, the pillar of stratification was built from the inequalities in the distribution of valued resources by each of the evolving institutional domains. Power from polity, legal rights from law, economic power from economy, symbolic legitimation from religion, and authority from kinship are all highly valued resources that in the first simple societies were distributed ever-more unequally. And so, as new institutional domains emerged and as kinship became elaborated beyond the nuclear family, inequality and stratification began to evolve along with institutional evolution. The first pillar of human societies—institutional spheres—would thus create and build the second pillar of human societies—stratification. Indeed, near the end of this book, we will document this increase in stratification and emphasize that inequality becomes yet another selection pressure on human societies because it can generate conflict and tensions that cause societal disintegration. For once stratification becomes an environment to humans living in societies, it becomes one of the most volatile and potentially destructive forces facing humans.

In what follows, then, we seek to give flesh to the bones of an institutional theory. Institutional spheres, in our estimation, are *distinct* social phenomena, not reducible to a laundry list of patterned things (Jepperson 1991) or easily taken for granted as environments filled with rules and resources for organizational action (North 1990). They are the survivor machines, the repositories, that come to *think and act* for humans (Douglas 1986), allowing for societies to endure. If what we offer feels descriptive

or even static, it is by design; Chapter 4 elucidates the dynamics of institutional evolution. Moreover, if institutions were not real, they could not generate things that are very real in human societies—inequality and stratification—that pose a real threat to the viability of societies.

Human Institutional Spheres: Basic Properties

Anyone that takes even the most cursory look at modern nation-states or compares empires like Rome, any of the Egyptian kingdoms, or studies chiefdoms cannot help but notice that there are some generic features about all of them. All of these types of societies have governments or, more broadly, *polities* that encompass far more than the principal organizer of power. Additionally, all of these societies have economies, legal systems or law, kinship, and religion. These are five of the most obvious and ubiquitous institutional spheres. If one were to take a closer look at preliterate societies, they might also see the presence of other spheres of social action "hidden" in the beliefs and practices of these institutions, such as the essence of what will eventually comprise the cultural and structural reality of *education*.[1] In addition, medicine and *health*—the sphere of the earliest religious actors, shamans (Wallace 1966), and of medical professionals in most contemporary societies (Starr 1982)—and *truth*—the sphere of science today—may be found in every society, albeit deeply embedded in the logic of kinship and religion. Put differently, the beliefs and practices that embody becoming and being a doctor or a scientist as well as the physical, temporal, social, and symbolic space demarcating medical and scientific activities from other types were simply not distinct from other more prominent and visible spheres of social behavior. But, once these incipient institutions began to create new social structures and their own distinct cultures, the nature of human society changed forever.

What is an Institution?

For our purposes, institutional spheres *are macro-level structural and cultural spheres conditioning feeling, thinking, and acting by integrating and regulating corporate units, legitimating categoric units, and patterning interaction, exchange, and communication*. Though what this means will become clearer as we look more closely at specific institutions, a few quick words can be said to help unpack this definition. To begin, institutions are both outside of individuals (Durkheim 1895 [1982]: 45; Spencer 1874–96 [1898]) and inside their heads (Friedland 2014; Weber 1946b). What

this means is that institutional spheres can endure far longer than the life of an individual or cohort of individuals, even if many of the elements within change. As the repository of lines of feeling, thinking, and doing, they pattern human experience. As systems of authority, they dominate human experience, too, enforcing and reinforcing inequalities (and, in many cases, also becoming the structural and cultural supports to change these inequalities). But, they are also in our heads, or at least come to be in our heads. Though we acquire a concept of real groups and their culture, these groups are *always embedded in larger social units*, which make their home within the physical and cognitive space of an institutional sphere; or, at the intersecting, overlapping boundaries of two or more spheres. Consequently, the economy or polity is both real in a tangible sense and also in the fact that it organizes our emotional and cognitive dynamics (Douglas 1986), while also integrating and regulating lower-order social units of social organization (Abrutyn 2014b).

For example, generalized role sets (parent-child; doctor-patient) for interpersonal behaviors provide structural and cultural vehicles by which a diverse array of incumbents internalize the basic values, beliefs, and norms, while also being sufficiently flexible for idiosyncratic and even innovative behaviors. However, the real fulcrum between the external social world and the subjective experience of individuals emerges in interaction, exchange, and communication. All three require the application of embodied practices, spoken language, props or expressive equipment, and some sort of standardized medium of exchange or placeholder of value for generating common meanings and emotional states in order to coordinate not only the actions but also the mental states of individuals (see the cognitive, interpersonal, and emotions complexes in Appendix II of Chapter 1). Consequently, the tone, timbre, texture, and hue of each interaction, exchange, and communication are usually *shaped by the institutional sphere in which they are embedded*. For instance, legal interactions and exchanges are rooted in the practical nature of conflict resolution and abstract values and beliefs about justice (Luhmann 1981, 2004). The textbooks in economic classes or guides to realizing one's material dreams, as well as the themes of discourse in media and everyday discussions, revolve around subsistence, production/distribution, and *money* (not simply dollars and cents, but about money as a generalized medium (Simmel 1907 [1978]). In short, institutional spheres shape the emotions, beliefs, and practices most people access when doing one of the major social activities found in all societies, like religion or kinship (Friedland 2013, 2014; Friedland et al. 2014).

However, how distinct the emotions, attitudes, and actions reflected in interactions, exchanges, and communication are vis-à-vis other institutional spheres depends, greatly, on the degree to which *the institutional sphere has evolved autonomously* (Abrutyn 2009); and autonomy depends on entrepreneurship and their success in identifying selection pressures and seizing opportunities to "solve" them (Abrutyn and Van Ness 2015).[2] Prior to the evolution of other spheres, though, kinship evolved first in response to selection pressures revolving around such basic exigencies (Abrutyn 2016: 213–14; Turner 2003) as (a) securing life-sustaining resources (*production*), (b) distributing these resources to the members of a population (*distribution*), (c) protecting and nurturing new members into a population and sustaining the organizational arrangement necessary for their survival (*reproduction*), (d) coordinating activities within corporate units and between such units (*integration*), (e) regulating activities of individuals and the corporate units organizing their activities (*regulation*), and, eventually, (f) eliciting a sense of intersubjectivity about the basic grounds of social and moral life (*legitimation*). Though much of this list is drawn from the overlapping requisites or needs most functionalists delineated (see Table 2.1 on page 63), we identify these as the principles axes or pressure points that *all* collectives face —whether we are talking about ants or informal college social clubs—when their ecological niche is disturbed and/or their populations grow rapidly. We will offer more concrete examples of what these selection pressures look like in real life in the substantive chapters that follow, but for now, we turn to delineating some of the key dimension of institutions.

Institutional Ecology

As emotional and symbolic creatures, humans are conditioned to anchor themselves to social objects. One of Durkheim's (1912 [1995]) enduring ideas rests on the fact that "group-ness" resides not only in our personal commitment to other people, but in external representational objects that draw mutual attention and emotional arousal (Caillois 1959). People, places or things can *entrain* members of a group (Collins 2004), raising the stakes of a given interaction, exchange, or communication. These objects, ultimately, represent the *center* or *core* of a collective in so far as they have a gravitational pull (Shils 1975) or centripetal force. Institutional spheres—being something physical, cognitive, and emotional—also develop a core, especially as they grow increasingly autonomous (see Chapter 4 for more detail) (Abrutyn 2016). In literal terms, they become "focal points of transportation, travel, and communication [as they] integrate and dominate

movement" of an individual through their daily lives (Hughes 1936: 184), but they also draw our cognitive and affectual attention, act as "hitching posts" to which we can attach and from which we feel obligations and expectations to commit, and they can be be transformed into portable objects that re-orient us when we feel adrift.

That is, as a physical site, the core is believed to be the place where the main activities and knowledge of the institutional sphere resides. Buildings and geographic space more generally affects the literal movements of people, acting as a centripetal force for some and centrifugal force for others. In turn, this space increases the likelihood that actors will enter into interaction, exchange, and communication with institutional actors and objects. In few cases is the core a single site. In Western Christendom, at the height of the medieval Church, Rome was *the* core, but throughout Christendom were structural and cultural formations that operated as miniature cores (e.g., parishes, monasteries, and the like). In this way, adherents could orient themselves to a distant place, perhaps even pilgrimaging there one day, while more practically orienting themselves to a physical place with real people doing "real" religion. In more pluralist religious spheres, like the U.S., instead of embedding and inclusion being the structural principle linking the central core to the mini-cores, competitive exclusion predicated on structural and cultural differentiation is the organizing principle (Berger 1969; Finke and Stark 1988). Nonetheless, each congregation becomes the physical and cognitive core for its members, and in some cases, like Episcopalians or Presbyterians, embedding and differentiation may be working simultaneously.

Additionally, the core acts as the center of institutional domination. It is the "home" of an institution's elites, or the institutional entrepreneurs responsible for carving out the institution's structural and cultural independence, maintaining this independence, and expanding its influence. Again, entrepreneurs are the motor of evolution (Abrutyn 2014a, 2014b; Abrutyn and Van Ness 2015). They are the actors that respond to selection pressures, usually innovating technologically, normatively, symbolically, and/or organizationally and, when successful, leverage their innovations to build a core that protects their interests. In chiefdoms, as we will see in Chapter 7, the kinship and political cores, which overlapped in important ways, were usually externalized in real space. At the center of the group was the chief's hut or huts, along with ritual space in many cases, and storage for surplus produce. The closest domiciles to his hut represented the closest relatives and, thereby, the most privileged members outside of the chief. Each circle of houses reflected greater distance from the seat of power and prestige. Today, we still see the use of physical space to demarcate the

core. Washington D.C. is the political seat of the U.S., while every capital of every state has an area marked off for its own center of power. Likewise, Jerusalem or Mecca act as cognitive and physical cores for Judaism and Islam, respectively. Jews and Muslims in the West continue to pray, facing east, as an implicit recognition of the core of the religious institution's actual location.

Thus, the institution's environment is characterized by various lower-order structural units. Below the level of the institution are clusters of corporate units (see Figure 3.1). Sociologists have referred to these as fields (Bourdieu 1984; DiMaggio and Powell 1983), sectors (Scott and Meyer 1983), or niches (Aldrich and Ruef 2006). Within these spaces are corporate units like organizations and groups.

As Figure 3.1 indicates, there are structural linkages, or networks, between the core and these clusters (and, in some cases, specific corporate actors within a cluster), as well as structural ties linking clusters and organizations within. As we will see below, these linkages highlight the way institutions integrate and regulate disparate actors, as well as highlight pathways through which culture "travels" (Abrutyn 2016).

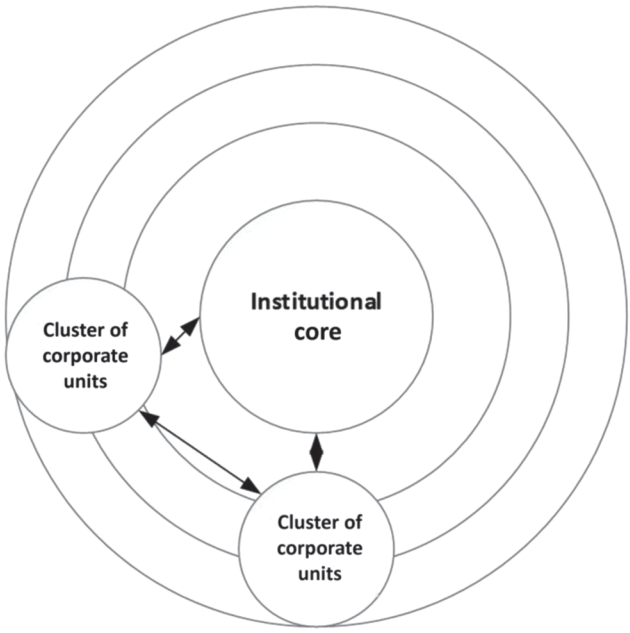


Figure 3.1 Institutional Core and Environment

Institutional Structure and Culture

The most common types of differentiation in sociology are structural and social (Abrutyn 2021a). The former refers to the process by which social units, such as groups and organizations, grow distinct from each other in function and in structure. The easiest way to describe this is to look at a modern economic organization. Different tasks are bundled together within a set of distinct departments (e.g., sales, marketing, research), with distinct hierarchies governing them. The processes associated with the bundle of tasks, as well as the normative and practical uniqueness of the staff concerned with these tasks, leads to structural differences on top of the functional differences. The other form of differentiation, social differentiation, refers to the latter point: as groups grow larger, they also grow heterogeneous. Some heterogeneity is nominal, or tied to various markers that have no natural rank ordering like sex, race, or occupation. Other forms of heterogeneity form along a graduated axis in which rank is natural: income, education, or age. Social differentiation occurs as classes or categories of people cluster along one axis or another, transforming into rank, then stratification, and inequality, when nominal and graduated parameters objectively or intersubjectively come to correlate with each other (e.g., white men are wealthy as opposed to black men being poor).

Institutional spheres also differentiate socially. As roles and organizations differentiate from each other in structure and function, they also constitute new forms of social differentiation. The more differentiated the polity, for instance, the more political actors, whether chiefs or administrative units, do qualitatively different things according to different social logics and evaluate success by different criteria than, say, their kinship counterparts (parents or families). Differentiation, however, rarely implies sharp institutional distinctions. Rather, it underscores the initial process by which institutional cores may develop. It is only when institutions evolve towards autonomy that cores and environments become relatively discrete life worlds or cultural realities.

Institutional autonomy is the process by which institutions differentiate physically, temporally, and socially in addition to *symbolically* and *normatively*. Put differently, it is more common in history to see differentiated roles, like chief or shaman, but until about 5,000 years ago, uncommon to see the spheres of political and religious knowledge and activity, of political or religious values and norms, interests and motives, of political or religious interactions, exchanges, and communication as physically and temporally distinct from, say, kinship. To be sure, many of the symbolic

elements of polity are present in chiefdoms: The chief's hut is adorned more garishly and is separate from other houses. But, polity in chiefdoms are deeply embedded in kinship structure and culture (Gailey 1987; Paige 1974). As we will see in Chapter 8 and again in 10, polities like those found in ancient Mesopotamia or Egypt and religious spheres like ancient Judaism or Buddhism evolved to become autonomous from kinship and from each other. Distinct physical and temporal space sets aside the activities of actors, and by cordoning off space, the routine movements of everyone are rerouted. Public spaces create private spaces, and vice versa. But, again, many of the same points can be made regarding structural and social differentiation more generally.

All of which is to say that symbolic differentiation matters a lot more to autonomy than anything. When roles or organizations, physical space, and temporal sequences become saturated in symbols wholly distinct from other symbols, an institutional sphere can be deemed autonomous. Chiefs begin the long evolution towards political autonomy by using their privilege to secure identity equipment—e.g., headdresses, gem necklaces, etc.—that visibly distinguish their role from that of the head of an ordinary household. Buildings, spaces, and just about any physical object can come to symbolically represent the core or some set of actors. Rather than belabor the point, it is safe to say symbolic differentiation comes to be the central link between the realities of entrepreneurs and other elites and their efforts to make the core a true center of gravity that holds non-entrepreneurs within the orbit of the institution. And, as such, ensure the flow of material and human resources towards the center. We will return to the idea of autonomy more extensively in the next chapter when we take up the question of institutional evolution more explicitly. For now, we have conceptualized differentiation and autonomy enough to return to the ecology of institutional spheres; specifically the institution's environment and its relationship to the core.

Institutional Spheres and Their Environments

Returning to Figure 3.1 above, actors are closer or further from the core, with structural and cultural linkages tying these actors to the core. Additionally, the arrows signify the flow of human, material, and symbolic resources from one space to another. Sometimes the flows are continuous and sometimes discrete, and the flow of resources in relationships may be defined as inequitable or fair and reciprocal flows. The closer are actors to the core of an institution, the greater is their visibility and access to institutional resources and authority systems and, therefore, the more likely they

are to act, set goals, make decisions, and use strategies sanctioned by the institutional domain (Abrutyn 2014b).

Distance can be measured in two interrelated ways: physically and cognitively. Actors may be physically close to the core, but not cognitively oriented towards the symbolic elements of the institution; conversely, people may find themselves far from a core, while cognitively close. A U.S. judge may be physically sitting in court, but be strongly oriented towards the religious or political cores that she attaches herself. Likewise, she may be strongly committed to her legal identity and enact it outside as much as inside of her robes. Of course, the more physical and cognitive proximity converge in a single actor, the more predictable will be the actions, goals, and decisions of this actor in a given interaction, exchange, and communication. Where people are physically close and cognitively far, or vice versa, predictability will be governed by situational and structural factors. Finally, as both physical and cognitive distance increases, predictability decreases. Four mechanisms undergird the dynamics of physical proximity: (1) *the extensivity of networks ties*, (2) *the level of formality*, (3) *the visibility of tangible resources*, and (4) *the visibility of mechanisms of social control*. Likewise, three mechanisms related to cognitive proximity seem to generate greater levels of role or organizational predictability: (1) *the intensity of network ties*, (2) *the degree of access to symbolic capital*, and (3) *the degree to which an actor has internalized the mechanisms of control.*

Physical Proximity

Sheldon Stryker (1980) posited that as the number of people who know a person and interact with this person in ways that activate their identities goes up, then the level of their commitment to this identity will increase. That is, a role which is routinely and frequently activated, vis-à-vis any other role, is likely to be more salient and prominent to a person. Furthermore, the actor is likely to derive greater extrinsic rewards (and perhaps intrinsic rewards as well) in roles that are frequently activated; the punishments for inappropriate behavior in this role will be more obvious and their consequences more problematic. To be sure, corporate actors found in dense niches, cooperating and competing against *extensive* networks of other, similarly situated corporate actors will face pressures to conform and look and act appropriately. And, the more closely to the core institutionalized roles are enacted, the greater will be the expected compliance to institutional norms, and the greater will be the rewards or punishments for compliance or non-compliance. Hence, entrepreneurial actors working to build an institutional sphere will be strongly committed

to the institutional domain, likely to conform to expectations, and likely to ideally represent the institutional domain beyond its physical boundaries.

Extensive commitment is simply a function of their daily rounds and routines required to participate in an institutional sphere. Those located further away from the core will be less likely to interact frequently with institutional actors, and therefore, less likely to have an institutionally based identity activated and rewarded. For others, such as consumers who are "guests" or temporary incumbents in the roles of an institution, commitment is temporal or conditional depending upon how close they are to mechanisms of social control. In these cases, then, it is the nearness to the mechanisms of control that are more important for conformity than the extensivity of network ties. For example, a visitor to a church or synagogue will look around and gather data as quickly as possible regarding how to act appropriately in order to prevent embarrassment, disruption of activities, or other potentially harmful sanctions. The larger the crowd and the denser their distribution, the greater is the force exerted on outsiders for conformity. Moreover, greater numbers of people make outsiders aware of their performance such that they attempt to maintain a consistent performance for the duration of the situation, if only to demonstrate one's competence at playing roles. In either case, the extensivity of network ties and, therefore, role commitment is positively related to physical proximity.

Additionally, the physical space within the core and the closest physical regions surrounding the core are typically *formalized*: ecological arrangements, temporality, power-relations, interaction rituals, and other situational elements are embedded in the arrangement of space constraining action. To be sure, random and unpredictable things occur because humans do not always act in ways we would expect, but formal settings offer very clear cues to actors about what is expected in terms of emotion and impression management. Put another way, greater situational certainty induces stronger levels of trust in and commitment to other actors and one's role performance. A person familiar with being a consumer in one institutional setting will be comfortable as a consumer in a novel setting. Hence, high levels of certainty produced by settings being formal reduces the level of ambiguity associated with impersonal interactions since expectations and obligations are relatively known to both the novice and the gate keepers. Of course, formalization decreases with physical distance from the core. A professor may refer to themselves as "Dr." outside of the classroom at a bar or supermarket, but it is not guaranteed that the "others" will treat them with the deference received in their formal milieu (e.g., the classroom).

Third, the closer one gets to the core, the more *visible* are resources are. Power, prestige, and wealth are obvious resources, but core areas also offers other valued resources, such as verification, gratitude, affection/attention, and so on (Turner 2003). In addition to these general social resources, the core produces and distributes institutionally specific resources. While entrepreneurs directly benefit from monopolizing the productive process, they are not the only actors who benefit from the core. The core, for instance, can produce strong collective emotions, and humans will generally be drawn to institutional sites to gain access to them. As one gets physically closer to the core, then, these resources become more visible and often induce individuals and corporate actors to figure out the terms of exchange, the path(s) of mobility, and secrets of entrepreneurship within an institutional domain. Conversely, being further away means some resources are obfuscated by distance alone. The outlines of what power or prestige can be seen when at a distance are often too far or obscured, with the result that they offer no immediate inducement to conformity because the likelihood of receiving the resources declines with distance from the core. Moreover, there are often institutional resources that are close to actors and, hence, offer stronger inducements to conform to expectations in order to receive these resources, thus pushing more remote resources further away from individual and corporate actors. Indeed, actors tend to seek resources that are in reach rather than those that may be more valuable but also more difficult to secure.

Finally, by mechanisms of *social control*, we refer to the entire system of authority which includes agents who can monitor behavior, explicit and implicit rules dictating expectations and obligations, and finally, sanctions for appropriate or inappropriate behavior. For now, we are referring to the external, regulatory/coercive forms of control. The closer individual or collective actors get to the physical location of the core, the greater the degree of social control exerted on them. Sanctions can come from a wider array of sources once actors get near the core because monitoring of behaviors and actions is more intense by other actors as well as formal agents of social control. And the more autonomous an institutional domain becomes other domains, the greater the interest of all actors in securing resources and the more likely are they to sanction inappropriate actors, and the more likely are there to be formal systems of authority and control.

In sum, *the effects of physical proximity on an individual, corporate, or cluster of corporate actors, is a positive function of: (a) the level of extensive ties; (b) the degree to which institutional situations are pre-defined, certain, and formalized; (c) the visibility of desired or desirable resources; and (d) the*

degree to which external mechanisms of control are visible and salient. These four variables operate independently of each other, but function additively on producing greater or lesser predictability in individual and corporate actions, goal setting, and decision making. But, proximity also varies cognitively, the dimensions of which we turn to now.

Cognitive Proximity

If people can be physically closer or further from the institutional core, they certainly can be cognitively closer or further away. As we will see shortly, the cognitive dimensions of the core relates to its differentiation of time, social relationships, and symbols. Temporal differentiation plays a subtle, yet powerful role. As Hughes notes: "The calendar is the warp of the fabric of [a collective], running lengthwise through time, and carrying and preserving the woof, which is the structure of social relations among [humans], and the things we call institutions" (Hughes 1971: 129). The carving up of physical space is abetted by the carving up of time; some patterns are regular, some semi-regular, and others infrequent. Social relationships, or more accurately, the social phenomena associated with commitments or attachments to these relationships, contribute to the process of internalizing expectations of the social world. And, finally, symbols come to saturate the physical, the temporal, and the social, giving both external, public signs of the institution's distinctness and its function as well as becoming the meanings that actors invoke when feeling, thinking, and when engaged in roles in institutional spheres like kinship, economy, or religion. Cognitive proximity is measured by the *intensivity of an actor's network ties*, *the degree of access to symbolic capital,* and *the degree to which an actor has internalized mechanisms of self-control.*

First, roles and organizations will be more salient and prominent, and therefore more prone to high levels of commitment, if the others that frequently activate it are *significant* others (Stryker 1980). Commitment is predicated on the strength of and reward from the emotional exchange with significant others (Lawler 2001), as well as the shared history and multiplex nature of the exchange relationship. Additionally, Burke (1991) has argued that significant others' evaluation and verification of identity is the cornerstone to role performance and interaction in general as lack of verification generates negative affect on individual commitments. Where institutions are autonomous and their roles clearly defined in relationship to other types of roles, it becomes possible for an individual to be known or thought of by their significant others as that role. Unlike

individuals, corporate actors do not "commit" to a role, but they can be situated in more advantageous locations in an institutional domain, which leads to a particular cultural pattern that emphasizes the prestige of being a member.

Second, there may be no dimension more important to cognitive proximity than how much access a role player has to the most *valued symbolic resources*, their development, application, dissemination, and consumption. Autonomous institutional cores become the storehouses, factories, and markets for a particular kind of resource: *generalized symbolic media of exchange* (Abrutyn, 2009; Abrutyn and Turner 2011). Symbolic resources are not quite like tangible things such as status goods because the pursuit of generalized symbolic media of exchange such as *love/loyalty*, *power*, or *money* implies the internalization of a whole set of values, ideologies, beliefs, and norms associated with obtaining, storing, investing, and using these symbolic resources (Abrutyn and Turner, 2011). Symbolic media, then, are bundles of institutional codes, motives, justifications, ideologies, and strategies; they are resources that can be saved, invested, transferred across boundaries for other institutional media of exchange (Parsons and Smelser 1956; Turner 1997, 2015d); and they can be hoarded by some groups over others. Where persons or corporate units are oriented towards getting more of a particular institution's symbolic medium, they are likely to be committed to the prescribed paths to resource attainment. Additionally, the more they desire these resources, the more they internalize particular symbolic elements of an institutional sphere, such as its ideologies and normative structures. Thus, a professor who seeks *knowledge* and *applied truth*, an artist who pursues *beauty*, a religious actor seeking *piety/morality*, or a kinship actor seeking *love/loyalty* will pursue these resources in relatively predictable, prescribed patterns as defined by a particular institutional sphere because of commitments to the broader cultural norms and ideologies of an institutional sphere.

Finally, while some mechanisms of control are purely external to the actor, others are instilled through socialization or enculturation. *Cultural-cognitive* mechanisms are those rules, sanctions, and systems of authority which become taken-for-granted aspects of the everyday life of the individual, while *normative* mechanisms become imbued with ethical and/or moral imperatives compelling "voluntary" action. Greater internalization means a number of different things. For institutional entrepreneurs, it means reduced monitoring costs because it implies conformity beyond the physical boundaries of an institution is more probable: actors carry the norms and values of those roles with which they most identify with, which, in turn, generate commitments to social structures since roles are the

behavioral enactment of expectations inhering in status positions making up social structures. Some of these norms and values translate across situations and institutional boundaries, while others are institutionally specific and can cause some disruptions in non-institutional encounters. Either way, the internalization of the "rules of the game" carries consequences for action and attitudes. The interpretation of societal events or others' motives, the interaction strategies and binding themes of discourse within an encounter, and the justification an actor uses for their behavior all are tied to how constrained they are by the institutional rules they have internalized as commitments to thought and action.

In short, cognitive proximity can tell us a great deal about an actor's orientation to structure and culture, allowing us to explain why some actors organize their goals and actions in stereotyped ways while others are labeled "erratic", "corrupt", "self-serving", or whatever other labels are adopted to define deviance. Those who find themselves close to the core are likely to exhibit strong tendencies towards patterned actions and goal-setting, while those further from the core will vary in their tendencies. Taken together, then, *cognitive proximity is a positive function of (a) the level of intensive ties; (b) the degree to which an actor can see, pursue, obtain, and use institutionally specific symbolic resources; and (c) the degree to which normative and/or taken-for-granted mechanisms of social control are internalized and enforced.*

Environmental Actors

Based on the rule of proximity, there are categories of predictable actors inhabiting institutional environments. *Support actors* are those who are not able to occupy an elite position in the core but who are imbued with the some degree of authority derived from the core. Their primary function is in support of entrepreneurs, such as the case with actors in the bureaucracies of an autonomous polity. Their everyday activities are invaluable to the reproduction of the institutional core as well as boundary maintenance, but they are less privileged and lower in status than those in the entrepreneurial units. In a sense, they are middle managers whose ideological commitment is often very high because they derive relatively high rewards and are therefore dependent up the actions and decisions of institutional entrepreneurs. Part of the pressure to conform derives from their relationship to consumers or extra-institutional actors. In many cases, they are the face or representatives of the institution, as those in the core are often removed from the mundane aspects of institutional life. Being considered

the representative puts pressure on individuals to act in stereotyped ways, for fear of losing face, not being considered authentic, or tarnishing the institution's perceived reputation. And while it is always possible that challenges to the core and its entrepreneurs may come from this sector, it is unlikely since these actors have the most to gain from institutional stability.

Consumers are those that pursue the resources the institutional core offers (e.g., clients, patients, religious adherents). Calling those pursuing what the institutional core offers consumers may appear economically biased, but it is a fitting analogy for those more specific roles like "client" or "patient." It is the most accessible and generalized role in any autonomous institutional domain because it has simple membership criteria, even if access may be restricted by categoric distinction. Consumers are vital to sustaining an institution's autonomy: the greater the proportion of the population willing and able to be a consumer, the greater will be the diversity of resources available to entrepreneurial actors and their organizations because a more diverse resource base means less dependence on a single source and, therefore, greater structural/symbolic independence. For example, a person may never go to court ever, or perhaps only once. Despite this fact, most adults within a society with a relatively autonomous legal institution understand what it means to be a "client" and, to some extent, know what to expect when acting within the legal institution. Consumers can be latently oriented towards an institution's core because it becomes "normal" for most people to assume that justice is obtained in the legal institution, which offers the only "sanctioned" or "legitimate" mechanisms of conflict resolution.

Institutional Interpenetration

To better visualize the institutional environment and some of its dynamics, Figure 3.2 presents two hypothetical spheres with relatively high levels of autonomy. Notably, both cores have attained a degree of autonomy from each other, such that the physical, temporal, social, and symbolic reality of the institutional core and environment are discrete *from* other.

Complete autonomy would, of course, be impossible because institutional spheres can overlap and, equally fundamental, they often exchange resources and evidence movement of individual and corporate units back and forth across boundaries. Each institution's environment overlaps at the edge or margins of their respective environments. Indeed, *interpenetration*, to borrow a term from Parsons and Smelser (1956), is a common feature,

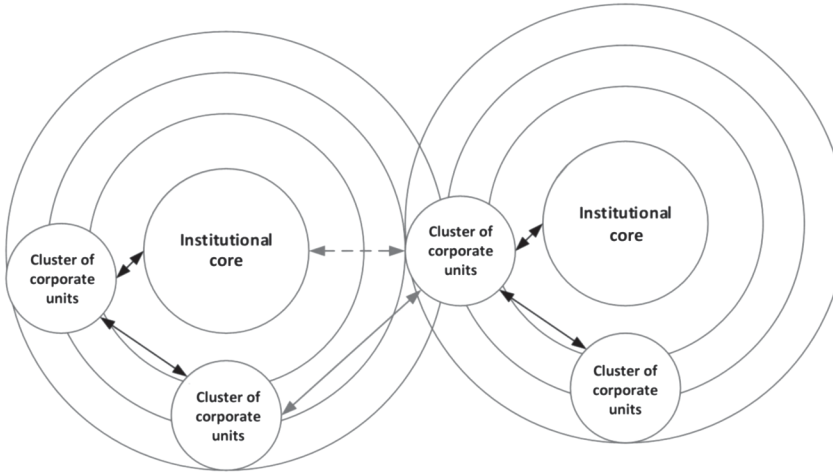


Figure 3.2 Institutional Interpenetration

but not directly from core-to-core. Rather, interpenetration is mediated by actors that move from one place to another (e.g., law school to a law firm) or through "liaisons" who find themselves positioned in the intersection of two or more spheres and who carry, through structural linkages, material and symbolic resources. These resource flows, of course, may be regular or irregular, equitable or inequitable.

Figure 3.2 adds another set of important dynamics to institutional environments, perhaps most clearly marked by two additional actors: *liaisons* and *extra-institutional* actors. *Liaison* actors are a special case of support actors, but their overall commitment and level of predictability is often much lower. They are found in the interstices of two or more autonomous institutional environments in positions akin to Burt's (2004) *structural holes*. Their primary function is to translate the symbolic code of the institution that they belong to into a language the consumer or extra-institutional entrepreneur can understand, translate the symbolic language of other institutional domains into a language the entrepreneurs they serve can understand, and, ultimately, facilitate consumer or extra-institutional entrepreneurial access to their institutional domain's core. For instance, law schools often reside between two realities: the educational and legal spheres. On the one hand, law schools are often embedded within corporate units devoted more generally to education. To be sure, the law school is often a separate entity with its own dean, but it remains firmly ensconced in the educational sphere. The goals of the unit are educational too, that is

the production and dissemination of knowledge. Yet, these goals rest side-by-side with the professionalization of legal actors who, once matriculated, will transfer from the educational to the legal sphere. Hence, on the other hand, law schools are also oriented towards the legal sphere. The knowledge they mobilize comes from legal beliefs and practices; law professors are often former jurists or lawyers; and, the central concerns of a law education are conflict resolution and justice. Thus, the grey arrows connecting the legal sphere to the law school indicate interpenetration and resource flows, material, symbolic, human, from the one to the other. The dotted line indicates the often indirect impact the core has on a legal school or cluster of legal schools, while the unbroken line from the law school to another cluster of corporate actors, highlights the direct flow of resources (say, newly graduated lawyers to law firms or clerking positions in the judicial system).

The second type of actor are best termed *extra-institutional* actors. This type of actor poses both a threat and a safeguard to an autonomous institution's core and its entrepreneurs' independence. On the one hand, entrepreneurs depend on each other as both consumers as well as sources of legitimacy. For instance, political entrepreneurs in the U.S. depend on a relatively autonomous legal institution for their own authority, while legal entrepreneurs need power, as franchised authority from the polity, to enforce their decisions and make them binding**.** Often, entrepreneurs share similar class positions, life chances, and opportunities, which can lead to status-group formation within an elite network. On the other hand, entrepreneurs are always striving to expand the influence of their core, often at the expense of other autonomous institutional domains. Thus, where the first states emerged in Mesopotamia, Egypt, or China, polity and kinship existed in a tenuous relationship in which their respective entrepreneurs at least bolstered each other's claims to legitimacy (Abrutyn and Lawrence, 2010). This relationship was characterized by efforts to sustain and expand each party's respective institution's autonomy. Polity, which is the central locus of the symbolic medium of power and which is backed by the legitimate use of force, has been far more successful in eroding kinship entrepreneurs' efficacy.

With this view of the ecology of institutional spheres, the structural basic elements of an institutional sphere can be more clearly seen. For actors can be individuals but much of the time, actors are corporate units—groups, organizations, and even communities. And so, when looking inside of an institutional sphere, it is the structure and culture of corporate units that becomes the basic building block of all institutions.

Inside the Institutional Sphere

Types of Corporate Units

Groups

The great challenge for hominins on the evolutionary clade leading to early humans was to find ways to create *permanent groups revealing higher levels of solidarity* than was typical of the LCAs of hominins and present-day great apes. As was outlined in Chapter 1, and in the appendices, the enhancement of emotions was the vehicle by which low-sociality animals could become more group oriented. It should be emphasized that when there are few powerful bio-programmers pushing group formation at the genetic level, *groups must then be created and sustained by interpersonal processes that heighten and intensify emotions among conspecifics* that, in turn, allow strong bonds to form creating solidarities that are codified into cultural beliefs and norms, symbolized by physical totems, reinforced by greeting and departing rituals, and emotionally charged rituals directed at totems symbolizing the group and its culture. Thus, human groups *must be actively created each and every time individuals are co-present* and interact. Since the group is the most elemental structure of a society, the sociocultural equivalent of the "atom," or fundamental unit from which societies are built up, they have even greater explosive potential in an interpersonal sense than the atoms from which the physical universe is constructed. There will always be a potential in human groupings for emotional overload, conflict, and disruption; and since a good portion of the structures and their cultures in human societies are built from groups, there is always the potential for a very shaky foundation for larger structures constructed from groups.

As we will see in Chapter 5, the evolution of kinship was the critical group structure and culture that evolved under intense selection pressures for regulating and coordinating production and reproduction, if early humans were to survive in more open-country ecologies. With the nuclear family, it became possible to create yet another larger group unit: the nomadic hunting and gathering band composed of a number of nuclear families. But, larger groups with denser, recurring social ties put pressure on groups along almost every pressure point delineated in Chapter 2. Hence, these pressures could be mitigated with the evolution of institutional systems with larger structures and cultures capable of constraining group dynamics at the interpersonal level. And, such had to be the case as populations grew to ever-larger numbers over the last 10,000 years; institutional differentiation allowed for groups dealing with different kinds of

selection pressures to be organized by the culture and structure of the first institutions examined in this book as they became more differentiated and autonomous, and then later, as additional institutions evolved in human societies.

Organizations

Selection pressures on early human societies eventually led to the formation of what can be termed organizations. The first organizations, as we will see in Chapter 5, were larger, more inclusive kinship organizations that could coordinate and control thousands of individuals. Eventually, organizations resembling what today are often seen as bureaucratic organizations would begin to evolve as polity and economy differentiated out and became more autonomous from kinship. Concomitantly, kinship would de-evolve back to stand-alone nuclear family units as the quasi-bureaucratic structures built up from kinship ties *among* nuclear families were increasingly replaced by non-kin corporate groups organized into hierarchies of authority among non-kinship groups within emerging institutional spheres, particularly religion, economy, and polity.

Organizational corporate units separated from kinship were, however, very late arrivals in societal evolution (*c.* 8,000–5,000 years ago); and until humans could figure out how to construct organizations into elaborate divisions of labor coordinated by authority, the scale of human society was limited. By remaining so structurally and culturally limited, society would continue to be vulnerable to rapid changes in the ecology of a population because, without organizations, larger numbers of individuals cannot be mobilized or coordinated to meet intense selection pressures.

Once organizations began to evolve, they could assemble groups of individuals into larger units that could coordinate divisions of labor to varied goals, from communicating with the supernatural through organizing production and distribution of resources to maintaining control and enforcing rules and cultural codes. Thus, while the capacity to form group solidarities allowed humans to survive for the lion's share of human existence, it was the evolution of organizations that greatly expanded the capacity to survive in changing and diverse environments, while also growing to a size and scale unimaginable to hunter-gatherers and simple horticulturalists.

Communities

The third basic type of corporate unit in human societies are clusters of corporate actors, sometimes manifest in the more conventional sense

of the term—a body politic bound by geography and some shared culture—and, other times, manifest in a series of meso-level phenomena like fields, sectors, or niches. Rather than pick from this array of terminology, we employ the broader term *community*, which is flexible enough to refer to dense clusters of individual, group, and organizational actors who share geographic space (Brint 2001) as well as clusters of actors who share cultural space, though perhaps not always physical space (Weber 1978). This is the only unit which is permanent in great apes societies; and there appears to be hard-wiring in the genome of great apes to reckon community boundaries and demography. For great apes, community is a home range that can be as large as 25 square miles. The point: groups and organizations almost always occupy ecological space, and most of the time, groups within organizations occupy space within a defined community, which organizes many different kinds of groups and organizations in ecological and sociocultural space. Among early humans, seasonal migration around the band's home range was the earliest type of human community, although several bands may have shared the same ecological space fusing together when resources were scarcest (Lee 1979). Yet, among early humans, population densities were so low that there was easily enough space on the planet to accommodate the estimated less than 6 million humans who were engaged in hunting and gathering. Research shows, however, that human communities, if left to their own devices, always approach carrying capacity (Cohen 1977), which meant periodic conflict between groups could become endemic warfare as well (Gat 2006; Otterbein 1970).

Groups and organizations will almost always be located in a larger community organizing a subpopulation of families and individuals. However, all three types of corporate units are embedded within specific institutional spheres. As the corporate units differentiated in structure, function, physical and temporal reality, the outlines of the earliest institutional differentiation became evident. At first, it was a matter of families being embedded in lineages that were embedded in communities organized around residential and descent rules, particularly rules of endogamy. But, with the differentiation of chiefs and chiefly lineages, new interlocking networks of chiefs were laid on top of the old communities, giving way to the earliest outlines of political society (Earle 2002). As populations began to grow, communities were transformed into more stable urban spaces devoted to accommodating organizations engaged in various institutional activities.

The left side of Figure 3.3 outlines the basic relations among these three levels of corporate units from which institutional spheres are constructed.

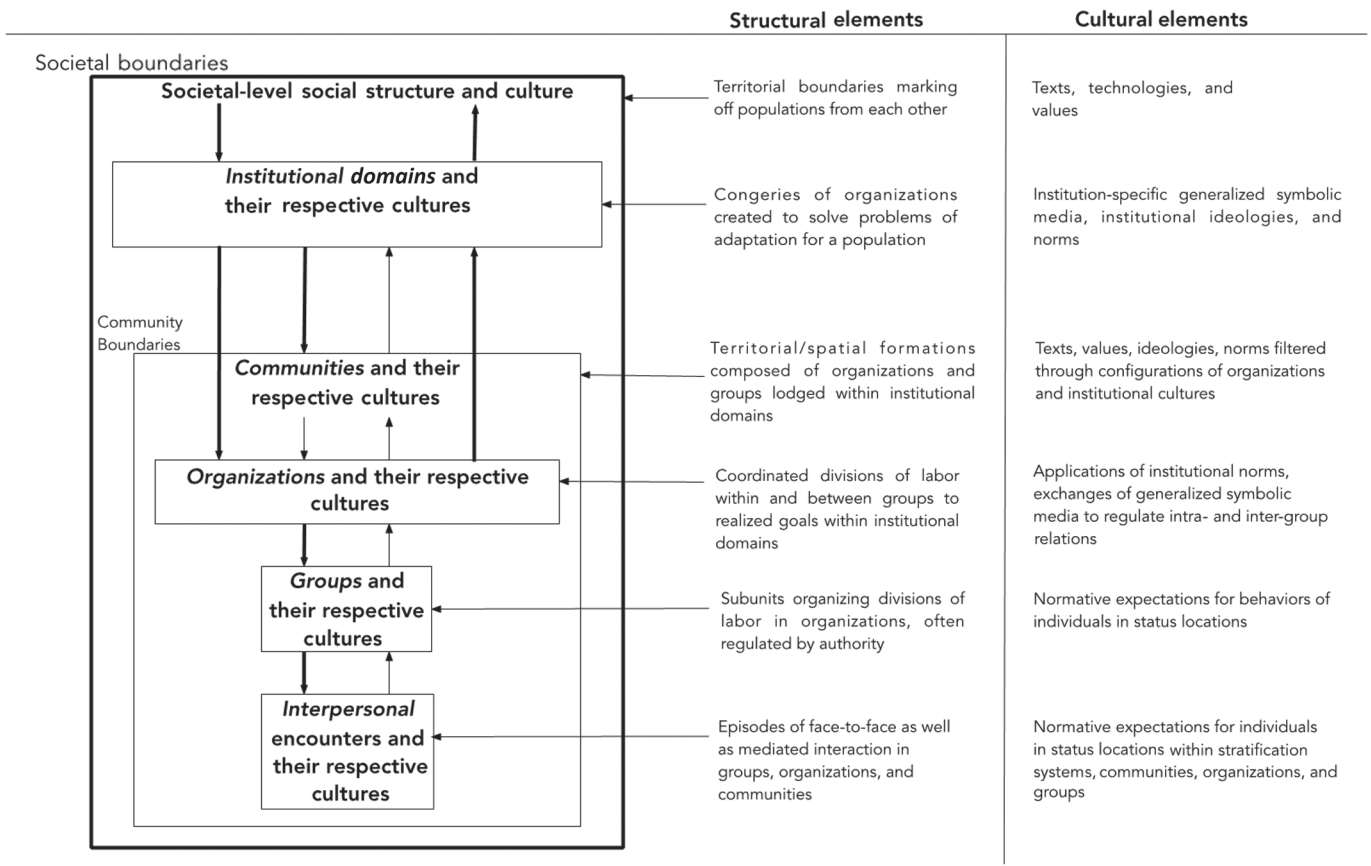


Figure 3.3 The Culture and Structure of Institutional Systems within Societies

The column to the right of the figure emphasizes structural elements that make up corporate units, with the structure of an institutional sphere being society-wide congeries of organizations (build from groups) that address selection pressures facing a population (and foreshadows our discussion of the cultural side of institutions and their lower-order social units).

What Figure 3.3 highlights is the way in which structure trickles down and flows up across different meso-level actors, and between macro- and meso/micro-levels of reality. The evolution of institutional spheres begins, then, in those lower levels as the seeds of differentiation and autonomy take root in encounters that crystallize into recurring groups and, then, organizations that purposefully work to secure their own structural and cultural independence. It is in this emergence and evolution that the nature and basic dimensions of all institutional systems and spheres were becoming evident, as is examined shortly. As noted above, differentiation occurs along four basic axes (Abrutyn 2016): physical, temporal, social/structural, and symbolic.

Structural Dimensions of Corporate Units in Institutional Spheres

Corporate units can be of three basic types: groups, organizations (and quasi organizations like extended kinship systems), and communities of varying size and population density. Any institutional sphere is built from some mixture of these corporate units. For example, the modern family, like the very first human families (see Chapter 5), is generally organized a the group level as the "nuclear family" consisting of mother, father, and offspring that is housed in physical structures (homes, apartments) within a community that also organizes access to infrastructures connecting family members to corporate units in all other institutional spheres (e.g., polity, law, education, economy, religion). Importantly, the first institutional spheres began as organized groupings, and as they evolved, the number and diversity of groups increased and eventually became the building blocks of organizational systems that occupied a locale within diverse communities and their infrastructures. Thus, the overall structure of an institutional sphere reveals a variety of potential *structural relationships among corporate units*, with some of the most generic relations outlined in Table 3.1 and discussed below.

Segmentation and Equivalence

The most elementary one is *segmentation*, which is the production and reproduction of similar social structures and, typically, their cultures

TABLE 3.1 The Organization of Corporate Units Within Institutional Spheres

1. **Segmentation and equivalence:** The reproduction of similar social structures and cultures among corporate units, thereby given structural and cultural equivalence among corporate units within an institutional sphere.
2. **Structural differentiation:** The creation of new types of corporate units within an institutional sphere, with somewhat different patterns in their divisions of labor, goals, and cultures.

2a. **Structural interdependence:** The formation of regularized exchange relations among corporate units within an institutional sphere with mechanisms for human, symbolic, and material resources across corporate units with similar or differentiated structures and/or cultures.

2b. **Structural inclusion:** The successive embedding of smaller corporate units within larger corporate units within an institutional sphere, and at times across spheres, with the structure and culture of the more inclusive units constraining the embedded units, and at times, with the embedded units generating pressures for change in the structure and culture of more embedded units.

2c. **Structural overlap:** The intersection of at least portions of one corporate unit with another or several other corporate units, thereby generating intersections among structural and cultural features of multiple corporate units that work to reduce salience of differences among the categories of incumbents in their respective divisions of labor and cultures attached to the memberships in diverse categories and divisions of labor (thus, increasing pressures for *segmentation* and structural and cult ural equivalences among overlapping corporate units).

2d. **Structural mobility:** The movement within and between corporate units within and between institutional spheres, thereby increasing rates of interaction, creating many of the same pressures for segmentation generated by structural overlap.

3. **Structural segregation:** The separation in time and space of corporate units, with clear entrance and exit rules about who can enter or leave the corporate unit, and when, thereby insulating structural and cultural features of segregated corporate units from other corporate units within an institutional sphere.
4. **Structural domination:** The mobilization and use of power within one corporate unit or a coalition of corporate units to control other corporate units within and, at times, across institutional spheres, thereby imposing structural and cultural features of dominant corporate units on subordinate corporate units.

as well. For example, in the simple hunting and gathering societies that dominated human societal organization for most of humans' time on earth, the basic structure of the society was a number of nuclear families organized by a band consisting of six to perhaps as many as 20 nuclear families, each pretty much a copy of the other. A fact that shaped Durkheim's (1893 [1997]) insistence on labeling these societies "mechanical." When structures and their cultures are similar, this similarity is usually the result of structural and cultural equivalence where individuals experience the same social and cultural universe and, as a result, act and interact in similar ways in carrying out necessary activities for adaptation to their environments. Segmentation provides *a basis for integration and regulation of members of a population* because the structure and cultures of the units organizing these small societies are built around the same response to adaptive problems in the environment. Even when the structures of corporate units become differentiated, there can still be segmentation among the various types of groups, organizations, or communities, providing differentiated subpopulation incumbency in similar types of corporate units with what is called *regular equivalence* in the network literature (Kadushin 2012). Even in large, differentiated societies, segmentation will always be evidenced in and between clusters of corporate actors because of isomorphic pressures (DiMaggio and Powell 1983) and cultural forms of legitimacy (Meyer and Rowan 1977). A university, for instance, is very different than a technology company, but there are many equivalences in the nature of their structure and goals (innovation and production of knowledge), which makes relations between the two relatively easy to effect, with individuals often capable of moving seamlessly from one to the other.

Structural Differentiation

This form of corporate unit integration is a source of difference in the organization of corporate units within institutional spheres, but again, equivalences often allow segmentation to provide some integrative forces connecting differentiated organizations. Moreover, as organizations within an institutional sphere, or between spheres, differentiate, they generate selection pressures revolving around their coordination with each other, leading to new integrative structures such as markets, infrastructures for resource exchanges, and new institutional spheres, such as polity and law, to coordinate and regulate relations among differentiated corporate units. Structural differentiation, then, generally generates selection pressures for integration among differentiated structures, if the differentiation is to persist and solve the adaptive problems that cause this differentiation.

The following four structural relations arise in response to integrating differentiated structural units.

Structural Interdependence. Structural differentiation immediately generates selection pressures for structural interdependencies among at least some structurally and culturally differentiated corporate units. Without regularized exchange relationships among differentiated structures within and between corporate units in diverse institutional spheres, differentiation cannot persist and solve adaptive problems for a society. Consequently, the most common form of integration arises as corporate actors specialize in ways that other corporate actors depend. In a single formal organization, for instance, departments become indispensable because they do things other departments do not have the time, resources, or human capital to accomplish (e.g., sales versus operations). But, the same interdependencies can emerge outside of a given corporate actor as fields become specialized (e.g., car manufacturers rely on fields of dealers, as well as specialized producers of tires and other parts). To be sure, the same forces can lead to new institutional spheres being differentiated and even autonomous. Our discussion of polity (Chapter 7 and 8) illustrates this, as control and coordination are shifted from decentralized corporate actors (e.g., lineages) to increasingly centralized corporate actors (e.g., chiefs and their lieutenants).

Structural Inclusion and Embedding. Another pattern of structural integration among corporate units, particularly within institutional spheres is structural inclusion, whereby one type of corporate unit is embedded or nested in another. The most basic pattern of structural inclusion in institutional spheres is the successive embedding of groups inside organizations and of an organization within a community, with the total population of embedded structures constituting an institutional sphere such as an economy or polity.

Structural Overlap. Related to structural embedding is structural overlap, where at least portions of one corporate unit overlap with part of another, often larger corporate unit. Recall the example above of law schools that are both embedded within the educational sphere and the legal sphere. We can illustrate this with another legal example: the law-making portion of many legal systems is, in fact, the legislative branch of polity; moreover, the court systems in most societies also overlap with polity because, either by appointment or election in a democratic polity, judges in the judicial part of a legal systems are secured through the polity. Overlaps force a certain

amount of structural equivalences, but they also create selection pressures for new normative systems and mechanisms for moving people, information, and resources across differentiated corporate units in differentiated institutional spheres.

Structural Mobility. Individuals and, at times, even groups of individuals often move across corporate units within and even between institutional spheres. This kind of mobility generates new selection pressures to ease such transition so that the movement leads to some degree of integration between the two corporate units. For example, universities produce students who enter labor markets in order to move to varying types of corporates units in diverse institutional spheres. In recent years, entire teams of workers have moved structurally, back and forth, between university research laboratories and other types of corporate units, such as laboratories of drug companies and high technology businesses in many diverse sectors of a post-industrial economy. By what DiMaggio and Powell (1983) termed normative isomorphism, actors carry with them cultural elements and practices from one sphere and impose a form of homogeneity and, thereby, integration from another. The same process can also occur within an institutional sphere, as some actors with higher institutional status (say, for example, Ivy League PhDs) disproportionately access tenure-track positions in other educational clusters like state universities or community colleges. Consequently, the culture—both beliefs and practices—from elite corporate units travel with these actors and pattern the way those universities look and feel, while also reinforcing the extant status order.

Structural Segregation

Though integration and regulation are analytically distinct concepts, they are two sides of the same coin (Abrutyn and Mueller 2016; Perry et al. 2018; Umberson et al. 2010). Thus, one structural relationship that emphasizes regulation in the service of integration is structural segregation. Goffman (1961) illustrated examples of this mechanism where physical, social, and cultural boundaries between communities of similar others, subject to singular systems of authority, and the "outside" world generate intense integration. To be sure, prisons or psychiatric wards could just as well overregulate individuals, creating resistance and self-destructive behavior, yet segregation of social units can be effective. Cults as well as caste systems have long used language of purity versus pollution (Douglas 1966 [2002]), as the outside world represents danger to the inside world, or, vice versa.

Structural Domination

Besides segregation, institutional spheres can use more overt tools of domination. There are two ways in which structural domination works: intra- and inter-institutionally. Returning to the education example in the structural mobility, the dominance of elite higher education universities does not simply rest on the diffusion of its own human resources, but also their structural advantages in resources more generally; and, a willingness to use those both in the service of competing against each other for prestige and for sustaining and broadening their influence. Larger endowments, the lure of greater status and visibility, the interlocking nature of academia and think tanks, and so forth allow universities like Harvard or Stanford to use soft power to regulate lower-status universities. The second form of domination comes once the polity has attained some semblance of autonomy: the monopoly of power can be "franchised" in the form of legitimate authority backed by state regulations to certain corporate actors or clusters of corporate actors. The major league sports organizations, for instance, are protected from anti-trust laws by the fiat of the federal government, as is the tech industry (though, as we write this, the latter's foothold seems to be eroding quickly).

Integration and its Discontents

These eight types of structural forces organizing corporate units within and between institutional spheres can all operate at the same time, but generally societies or, more accurately, individual institutional spheres, reveal significant differences in their particular configuration of these structural forces. These appear to be what humans have used to address selection problems that inevitably arise with population growth and institutional differentiation. They are, at best, only stop gap "solutions" to selection pressures; they work for a time, but eventually these pressures build up leading to the collapse of a society, its conquest by a better organized society, or its restructuring as a result of internal revolt or disintegration of key institutional spheres. When we remember that the foundation of all institutional spheres is groups held together by positive emotions in a palette of human emotions that evidences more negative than positive emotions, there will always be problems in meeting selection pressures arising from negative emotions among individuals and groupings of individuals within institutional spheres, or from the stratification systems generated by the unequal distribution of resources by corporate units. The structural foundations of institutions are built on a weak foundation of corporate units, which forces

a constant battle with sustained institutional systems. Yet, the creation of organizations that use power and authority to control their constituent groups has provided, for better or worse, a stabilizing force in institutional spheres.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we have sought to emphasize what we see as the critical "building blocks" of human institutional systems. We began by identifying the ecological dynamics of institutions, paying special attention to the core-environment relationship, the rule of proximity that conditions the way actors orient themselves to the institutional sphere, and the types of positions we find based on this rule. Following that, we examined the evolution of institutional differentiation, especially corporate units and the structural dimensions that connect them to each other within and between institutional environments. In the next chapter, we add the last theoretical piece: an explanatory model of how and why institutions become autonomous and the role entrepreneurs play in this process. Once conceptualized, we can turn to the substantive section of the book (Chapters 5–14) in which we examine the archaeological, ethnographic, and historical record to look at the specific evolutionary dynamics of each institution and then its strain toward autonomy.

Notes

1 Education, according to the one of the authors (J. Turner), is the sixth universal human institution (Turner 2003). However, it is omitted herein because it shares much with other 'secondary' institutional spheres like medicine or science. Its autonomy comes rather late and remains exceedingly incomplete vis-à-vis the five this book deals with, in part, because its primary concern—cultural reproduction—is deeply embedded inside the structure and culture of *all* institutional spheres, at least until public education and, more likely, widespread higher education.

2 Chapter 4 will return to these two themes, autonomy and entrepreneurship. For now, however, we are interested in a more descriptive analysis of institutional spheres.

4
The Dynamics of Institutional Autonomy

While the structural evolution of institutions allows for organizing, regulating, and integrating larger, denser, more diversely populated societies, the evolutionary potential of institutions is reached when they attain a degree of autonomy (Abrutyn 2009, 2014b, 2016). Institutional autonomy is the process by which a sphere becomes symbolically and culturally distinct vis-à-vis other institutions. Autonomy can be measured by the degree to which a range of human activities and knowledge become predominantly tied to one sphere and not others. Patterns of emotions, thoughts, and actions are immersed in interactions, exchanges, and communication governed by the structural and cultural reality of the institutional sphere. Ultimate ends come to shape chains of intermediate means-ends actions (Parsons 1990). Beliefs and practices become meaningfully discrete (Friedland 2013; Friedland et al. 2014), shaped by the generalized symbolic medium that mediates impersonal and depersonalized relationships. At the macro-level, we find physically and temporally demarcated space saturated in the symbolic codes produced and distributed in the core. Texts and themes of discourse allow the sphere to be self-reflexive (Luhmann 1982, 1995). And, finally, an intra-institutional system of stratification shaped, in part, by the global stratification system, but distinct in its organization around access to generalized symbolic media arises and becomes central to those who find themselves in the orbit of the sphere (see Chapter 15). Most of all, carving out autonomous space expands the number and diversity of places and actors capable of responding to selection pressures. Institutional autonomy makes the society more flexible, dynamic, and creative. In what follows, we examine first the agentic side of institutional evolution and then provide a more detailed discussion of symbolic differentiation. The final sections of the chapter examine the downsides of institutional autonomy, for independent, autonomous human-apes, revealing the elements of their biological nature outlined in Appendix II in Chapter 1. Individualistic great apes, like humans, will change at greater domination from evermore sources of structural and cultural constraint.

DOI: 10.4324/9781003224433-5

The Motor of Sociocultural Evolution

Selection and Human Responses

As was outlined in Chapters 2 and 3, sociocultural evolution is not "blind" as is evolution of the biotic universe. This means that selection pressures from the environment and alterations in sociocultural phenotypes, as well as the nature of the selection pressures themselves, are different than in biological evolution. Biological evolution on humans, as outlined in Chapter 1, created an animal with complex emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and interpersonal capacities, many of which were inherited from humans' hominin ancestors, but elaborated by speech, culture, and high levels of intelligence (made possible by highly complex and nuanced emotional capacities). What emerged was an animal that, to a very great extent, creates much of its environment—physically, ecologically, psychologically, and socio-culturally—to which it must then adapt. Selection pressures can be generated by not only changes in the external ecology of a population (physical, biotic, and sociocultural), but also by humans' evolved psychology, by humans' constructed social and physical structures and infrastructures, and by human creation of new systems of cultural codes. Most importantly, humans have the capacity to recognize, strategize, and thereby respond to these selection pressures and to reconstruct social structures and their cultures. True, sociocultural formations have inertial tendencies, often making social change, and hence increased adaptiveness, difficult, if not impossible. Yet, human capacities for thought and innovation can also come into play, allowing rapid changes in behaviors, social structural systems, or cultural systems when these prove mal-adaptive or when the broader ecology of a population changes and exerts new selection pressures.

The organization of corporate units and their cultures into institutional spheres have historically been responses to selection pressures, stemming primarily from population growth and changes in the ecology of a population, but as institutional systems emerge, differentiate, and to varying degrees, display autonomy, these constructions of humans also become major sources of selection pressures, as do humans' evolved psychologies and heightened emotions. We will never know how the first institutional systems were built up, because that story is lost to archeology and to the distant past where there is no record to tell us what happened. What will be evident is that institutional evolution at later stages of societal development was influenced by *institutional entrepreneurs* who managed to mobilize members of a population and to construct new sociocultural formations in the face of selection pressures. Indeed, it is the unique feature

of sociocultural evolution that once structural and cultural formations are crystallized, some evolution is in response to the human-made environment *and not* the biotic environment. Hence, entrepreneurship, and purposive configuration or reconfiguration of structure and culture, comes *after* the first kinship systems are built.

Institutional Entrepreneurs and Agents

As noted above, it is impossible to know exactly what transpired in human societies as the first kinship, economic, religious, political, and legal institutional systems emerged. Yet, given the nature of humans outlined in Appendix II in Chapter 1, individuals and groups began to recognize that they faced adaptive problems from the ecological environment, the psychological environment created by humans' need-states, the inadequacies of their social systems, or the symbolic environment of cultural ideologies, symbolic media, and normative systems. There have been efforts in recent years in analyzing historical changes where there are records to consult to explain changes in institutional systems by what S. N. Eisenstadt (1964, 1971, 1980) termed *institutional entrepreneurs*. Such acts of agency can be made by individuals but, in the end, will involve corporate units mobilized to make alternations to institutional structures and their cultures in response to what are perceived as selection pressures disrupting patterns of sociocultural organization. Entrepreneurs pursue institutional projects that "seek to crystallize broad symbolic orientations in new ways, articulate specific goals, and construct normative and organizational frameworks to pursue [entrepreneurial] ends" (Colomy and Rhoades, 1994: 554), while also working to monopolize key material and symbolic resources, secure legitimacy from elites and other strata, find independent bases of resources, and struggle for power-dependency and power-sharing relationships (Abrutyn, 2009: 455–57).

Every project is defined by four pragmatic goals, and how much weight and emphasis an entrepreneur gives to each goal (Abrutyn and Van Ness 2015: 57–58). First, projects focus on real, imagined, or manufactured problems. Sometimes these problems are directly tied to real selection pressures, while other times they are aimed at proxies of those pressures. In either case, entrepreneurship emerges when the problem and the solution or set of solutions tap into one or more central human concerns. Second, entrepreneurs must find alternative bases of resources, lest they become too dependent on one strata and, thereby, constrained in their activities. This means articulating a "frame" that is general enough to appeal to a significant portion of the population without losing the connection to

the ultimate grounds. Third, entrepreneurs are also concerned with their own members and adherents, seeking to generate commitment and control that allows these human resources to be mobilized and to sustain a stable flow of material resources. Fourth, entrepreneurs work to find power-sharing agreements with extant elites or leverage their positions to subjugate elites.

In short, then, entrepreneurs perceive a "crisis" and seek to mobilize cultural symbols and corporate groups to create new types of sociocultural formations (corporate units and their cultures linked together by a common set of goals), normative bases of regulation and integration, and/or symbolic systems of legitimation by way of technological innovation—either knowledge/practices or instruments. Though there is often a certain self-interest in such efforts, those individuals and corporate units that are successful in pushing changes that do, in fact, reduce selection pressures become the core of a new institutional formation, or alteration of an existing institutional formation. In so doing, entrepreneurs develop new orientations and frameworks for understanding a perceived crisis, begin to construct new organizational structures and their inter-relations (see Table 3.1 on page 93), and justify such efforts by mobilizing cultural resources as they seek additional material resources and political power to influence the broader population, particularly existing centers of power and a range of members in different strata of the stratification system. If successful, these efforts can lead to more institutional autonomy and, among early human societies, to the differentiation of new institutional spheres. Kinship, religion, economy, polity, and law all evolved by such efforts of entrepreneurs mobilizing their evolved nature to articulate the need for new structural and cultural arrangements. Like those engaged in any social movement, they were able to reframe cultural symbols—terms of discourse, texts, themes, norms, ideologies, and symbolic media—as they also secured needed material and organizational resources.

There is now a number of sophisticated theories about these dynamics (e.g., Colomy and Rhoades 1994; Abrutyn 2009; Abrutyn and Van Ness 2015; Richerson and Henrich 2012), as well as empirical studies on the transformation of specific institutional structures by entrepreneurs (e.g., Starr 1982; Colomy 1990; Eisenstadt 1963, 1980; Ertman 1997; Abrutyn 2014a, 2015a, 2015b; Abrutyn and Lawrence 2010). At this point, we need not outline the specific dynamics of institutional entrepreneurs in greater detail since, as we follow the subsequent evolution of the first human institutions, the dynamics of entrepreneurship will become more evident. The key point is that evolution of sociocultural systems is not blind, as it

is in the evolution of biotic systems; it is driven by agency inherent in the evolved nature of humans (see Appendix II in Chapter 1).

Carving up the World

Physical and Temporal Dimensions of Institutional Spheres

As evidence of the realness of institutional spheres, the beginnings of kinship and human society emerge in the inherent need to demarcate *social space* from biotic space. Durkheim's (1912 [1995]) treatise on the sociology of knowledge emphasized the fact that externally projecting collective ways of (feeling), thinking, and doing onto the physical terrain was natural and a mode of classification and sense-making. The bigger a population becomes, the more difficult affectual ties to all members become, and, thus, the more we need to offline affectual attachments to physical (transformed into social) objects (Hammond 1983; Lawler et al. 2009). Place, therefore, matters to humans and the construction of a collective identity which, in turn, infuses their individual identity with meaning (Gieryn 2000). To be sure, the very disparate nature of kinship in nomadic hunting and gathering reflected the lack of necessity for infrastructures beyond simple pathways around a territory, temporary shelters when settling for a short time, and other basically disposable structures that provide some insulation from the environment. Hunter-gatherers left artifacts and their bones in the archeological record but no infrastructures. Yet, once populations began to settle down into more permanent communities, infrastructures became more permanent, especially those built from stones.

As institutional spheres were differentiating among settled populations, buildings housing actors in diverse spheres became ever-more evident in the form of religious temples, governmental "palaces," market squares, roadways, ports, domestic housing, and other physical structures related to institutional activities. A good many of these structures also carried symbolic meanings about the power of political leaders or the rights of the priesthood to control access to supernatural powers; and thus, they often had striking artistic value because they were symbols of power and the ideologies surrounding those institutional spheres where wealth and power would accumulate. Even today, several rather spectacular factory buildings have become enshrined as monuments and symbols of early (and very dirty and polluting) industrialism (for example, the 19th Century steel mill in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania in the U.S, which, despite the pollution and exploitation of workers involved, is indeed a rather spectacular-looking structure in the downtown area, now a museum and place for tourist

commerce). Indeed, dominant institutional systems in societies often construct infrastructures for both instrumental and symbolic purposes, thus organizing members in corporate units while symbolizing the importance of activities within institutional spheres. For instance, the Covid-19 pandemic has made clear that institutional spheres and their autonomy have real effects, as the once clear delineation between home and work suddenly collapsed, causing actors—particularly working mothers—to experience just how powerful physical differentiation is in shaping experience. This feeling also was rooted in the sudden blurring of temporal distinctions between work and play.

Even in very simple societies with less institutional differentiation, there are temporal routines and demands of institutional activities, such as family time, economic time (gathering, hunting, tending domesticated animals), and religion time (where and when rituals to the supernatural are to be emitted). As Niklas Luhmann (1995) argued, for more contemporary societies there are *entrance and exit rules* for corporate units, and rules when occupying a position in a corporate unit; and most of these entrance and exit rules specify the time that one enters and leaves a particular corporate unit—as factory workers know too well, but what hunters and gatherers also understood. By separating activities by time and by locale in a corporate unit, movements across differentiated corporate units in diverse institutional spheres are integrated by time and place, invoking different normative and ideological cultural codes, and using different generalized symbolic media for discourse and exchanges of resources.

Symbolic Dimensions of Corporate Units in Institutional Spheres

Humans are probably unique in the animal world on Earth in their ability to use spoken language, coupled with a large neocortex, to create symbolic cultural systems in which arbitrary sounds and marks on surfaces (paper, tablets, or any physical surface) can communicate common meanings among members of very large populations. This kind of culture is inherently cumulative because, eventually, information can be stored outside the human brain in many types of storehouses from libraries of books to racks of machines that constitute "the cloud" which is anything but a cloud but rather a big warehouse, often hidden somewhere more likely in the ground than up in the air, filled with memory banks attached to computers. Every corporate unit within an institutional sphere, every sphere, and every society, and even most inter-societal systems that humans have created reveal symbolic systems that orient, guide, regulate, inspire, and in so many

ways provide solutions to the selection pressures of organizing humans in both sociocultural and ecological space. The far-right column in Figure 3.3 on page 91 outlines the levels at which culture is found in complex societies, but the same forces also operate even in the simplest of human societies. At the level of the society, culture revolves around several basic types of general cultural codes: (1) texts (embodied, spoken, and written practices/traditions about the collective, its history, shared destiny, and rightful existence); (2) technologies (collective knowledge about how to manipulate the environment); and (3) values (abstract moral codes about proper and good forms of conduct or organization). These constrain the nature of culture within given institutional spheres, as evinced in a set of institutional cultural elements listed in Figure 3.3 on page 91 and Table 4.1 on page 109 and include (i) *ideologies* (moral application of societal level values to the sphere of activity of an institutional system), (ii) the generalized *institutional norms* for corporate units and their divisions of labor within an institutional system, and (iii) *generalized symbolic media* that both (a) mediate communication among actors within an institutional sphere and (b) represent a highly valued resource resources in exchanges within and between spheres. Each of these cultural elements is outlined below.

Institutional Ideologies. Highly generalized value premises at the societal level of culture are "translated" into ideologies at the institutional level. Ideologies adopt and adapt general values to moral codes about proper, right, correct, and appropriate orientations and actions to a particular institutional sphere and the corporate units from which this sphere is built. If, for example, general societal level values emphasize *individualism*, *achievement*, *hard work*, and *loyalty*, the ideologies of specific spheres translate these abstract notions into more specific moral codes rooted in the activities that characterize the institutional sphere. The ideology of kinship, for instance, might emphasize *loyalty* (to family members) in the service of the family, be it hard work for subsistence or sacrificing one's life to protect the family's territory. Where kinship is surrounded by other autonomous institutional spheres *loyalty* may become at odds with the *individualism* and *moral utilitarianism* that actors learn in the economy and bring into the family. Not only does this shift lead to an emphasis on romantic *love* over loyalty (Luhmann 1998), but it also leads to massive contradictions in the social logic of kinship as free from the moral utilitarianism of the economy (Hochschild 2013; Pugh 2005; Zelizer 1994, 2011). To be sure, similar contradictions arise in quasi-feudal and full-blown feudal societies, where political ideologies

permeate the kinship sphere (Gies and Gies 1986; Goody 2000)—at least, that is, among elite networks.

Institutional Norms. Just as generalized beliefs are refracted through the specific activities of institutional elites and other corporate units, so too are generalized practices or norms. Generalized roles, by definition, stereotype certain behavioral repertoires so that they coordinate interaction and exchange, communication and performance across a series of situations (Turner 2001). Thus, expectations about our performance, influence, and reward vis-à-vis another role, regardless of the incumbent, typifies structural arrangements (Berger and Luckmann 1966) and reflects the status beliefs people share (or are believed to be shared) by others in the group (Ridgeway 2019). Institution-specific norms, then, not only draw from the general reservoir of norms (e.g., deference performances are demanded whether standing in front of a judge or visiting a doctor), but also craft prescribed and proscribed norms around the specific activities of the institution to which all actors accessing a specific role adhere. In kinship spheres, these may refer to norms of residence (where newly married couples are expected to live) or sexual division of labor. In this way, the general values of a society filter down into the expectations on individuals in interpersonal encounters occurring among individuals at positions in the divisions of labor of corporate units.

While ideologies and norms remain central to the symbolic differentiation and subsequent integration/regulation of autonomous institutional spheres, it is the emergence of one or more generalized symbolic media that achieves the twin Weberian processes of routinizing and rationalizing a given social order.

Generalized Symbolic Media. In *The Philosophy of Money*, Simmel (1907 [1978]) observed that money had powerful phenomenological consequences for European society. Backed by the state, and as a durable, divisible, quantifiable, and portable generalized medium of economic exchange, great geographic, cultural, and social distances could be shrunk, cognitively. It routinized and rationalized the way people felt, thought about, and did economics. Decades later, Parsons (1963a, 1963b, 1968) would revisit the concept, arguing that *power*, or the generalization of political exchanges, was also a symbolic medium of exchange; an idea that Luhmann (1976, 1982) extended into other realms (e.g., science/truth). Though the idea suffered from the same issues befalling many concepts associated with functionalism, a small body of disparate scholarship

continued to think about the idea (Abrutyn and Turner 2011; Baldwin 1971; Chernilo 2002; Habermas 1973 [1976]; Lidz 2001, 2009). Building from these ideas, we offer a more expansive view of generalized symbolic media, arguing they are at the very core of the intra-institutional culture and its ability to integrate and regulate.

First, we expand the use of media to incorporate the Simmel/Parsons and Luhmann threads, extricating media from the example of money and expanding it to include generalized communication (whether in embodied practice, as well as non-verbal, verbal, or written language) *and* we add the Durkheimian dimension of (ritualized) interaction. Thus, generalized symbolic media facilitate and constrain interactions, exchanges, and communication by routinizing performances, the meaning and value of (social) objects, and standardizing (and tagging them with moral and/or affectual meaning) texts and themes of discourse. On the one hand, generalized media allow the average audience member of a play to *know* that the play is about kinship and not polity or religion, or that the play is about the boundaries between two spheres and the potential for pollution (which may be tragic or comedic depending on its presentation). It is also what invites moral indignation when we observe one sphere being polluted (Alexander 1988) or, worse, colonized (Zelizer 2011) by another. On the other hand, generalized media allow for actors themselves to coordinate and control their own and others' actions. Students expect a class on economics to be about *money*—that is, not dollars and cents only or primarily, but in the production and distribution of goods and services for subsistence, investment, consumption, and so forth. Money is, ultimately, the symbolic placeholder for all things that can be commodified, and therefore, have use- and exchange-value (Marx 1867 [1990]). Or, kinship institutions depend on the media of loyalty (Levi-Strauss 1969) and/or love (Friedland et al. 2014; Luhmann 1998), both of which can also be embodied, objectified, and thematicized in texts and other types of language.

In short, then, generalized symbolic media can be tangibly seen in three forms: language, embodied practices, and social objects. Luhmann (1982, 1995) was perhaps the first to make the point about language. Though we need not wander too far into system theory, the point is simple: in the effort to reduce complexity, systems come to develop themes that both shape interaction and organizations while also making systems self-reflexive. One of his great insights was that as systems (or what we adopt as institutional spheres) grow differentiated, a group of actors become wholly devoted to a self-reflexive project. Law professors and theologians, for instance, spend inordinate amounts of time thinking about (legal or religious) thinking, and opining about their thoughts. They codify the themes

in texts and discourses that become standards for training, socializing, and enculturating others. They, in essence, ensure a monopoly over the means of mental production. When we read novels about courtrooms and law, the themes of conflict resolution and justice foreground and background the dramas, as do the boundaries between legal/non-legal.

Routinization of interactions and exchanges, however, depend on embodiment and objectification. The former refers to the behavioral dispositions acquired both through training and subsequent practice in real or imaginary worlds. The dress, posture, interests, and so forth of lawyers become distinguished from athletes and doctors, just as the dress, posture, and interests of certain types of lawyers (e.g., corporate versus environmental) or athletes (baseball versus tennis) further refract based on physical, temporal, and social differentiation at the corporate unit level. Objectification means the externalization of meaning and value into actual objects. Money, most obviously, is objectified in actual currency, but also in bank statements and status goods that signify wealth and economic value. Religion may be objectified in obvious things too, like buildings or books, or, for purposes of comparison and status distinction, named buildings or wings donated by "*more pious*" congregants (Belk and Wallendorf 1990; Mundey et al. 2011). Likewise, sport and its medium of *competitiveness* can be objectified in wins and losses, but also in statistics and qualitative distinctions that create and reinforce comparative hierarchies between good and bad (Abrutyn 2018). In Table 4.1, we provide a list of institutional spheres and the generalized symbolic media associated with them once they have obtained a certain level of autonomy.

Though it will become clearer in later chapters, one further wrinkle must be added. Building from Habermas' (1973 [1976]) concern that "lifeworlds" were being colonized, our theoretical extension adds a benign element while retaining his theoretical insight. In short, media, like other resources, circulate across institutional boundaries. Education may produce people committed to being teachers and professors, but most people carry their educational media with them into other spheres in order to gain access to other media. And while an institutional sphere, ultimately, is only as autonomous as the vast majority of interactions, exchanges, and communications are discrete to that institution, some media, however, are more ubiquitous, as can be seen currently as *power* and *money* are the most free-circulating in most Western democratic capitalist societies. Consequently, any given institutional sphere will see thoughts and actions that are not "pure" or indigenous to the sphere, but rather are questionable in their motive. Science or education can be

TABLE 4.1 Generalized Symbolic Media

Institutional Sphere	Generalized Symbolic Medium
Kinship	**Loyalty and/or love:** *Language, embodied practices, and social objects* facilitating the routinization of interactions, exchanges, and communication via intense positive affective states that forge/mark commitment to others
Polity	**Power and/or authority:** Routinization of interactions, exchanges, and communication concerning the legitimate right to make collectively binding decisions in order to coordinate or control social action
Religion	**Sacredness and/or piety:** Routinization of interactions, exchanges, and communication with respect to the supranatural realm
Law	**Justice and/or conflict resolution:** Routinization of interactions, exchanges, and communication concerning the rights and duties of individual and corporate actors as well as invoking norms of fairness, trust, and morality
Economy	**Money:** Routinization of interactions, exchanges, and communication regarding the production, distribution, and consumption of subsistence, luxury, and leisure goods and services
Education	**Knowledge and/or intelligence:** Routinization of interactions, exchanges, and communication regarding the production and reproduction of practical, intellectual, aesthetic, and moral culture
Science	**Truth and/or applied knowledge:** Routinizaiton of interactions, exchanges, and communication invoking standards for the production and reproduction of *verified* knowledge about the physical, biotic, and social universes
Medicine	**Health and/or well-being:** Routinization of interactions, exchanges, and communication with regard to sustaining the normal functioning of the body and mind
Sport	**Competitiveness:** Routinization of interactions, exchanges, and communication in regulated competitions that determine winners and losers based on respective efforts of individuals and teams
Art	**Aesthetics:** Routinization of interaction, exchanges, and communication in the externalization of knowledge about meaning, beauty, pleasure, and affect

about money, and for many students, the instrumentality of a degree supersedes the pursuit of knowledge or intelligence. For purists, like professors who have devoted their whole life to a subject, this may be discomforting or, even, revolting. If widespread enough, it can pervert and pollute the institutional core's integrity. Of course, when academia itself revolves around the pursuit of external grants because of budget cuts, then knowledge and intelligence may be secondary to money even among the entrepreneurial class. Some themes, like cautionary tales, circulate about corruption and pollution, but may not be strong enough safeguards against media like money.

The expansion of a theory of generalized symbolic media opens the door to two final discussion points. The first adds some contours to the theory of institutional spheres laid out above, turning from institutional ecology to institutional *geography*. The second concludes the chapter and turns towards the interlocking relationship between institutions and stratification.

Institutional Geography

At this point, we can finally address one of functionalism's great weaknesses: the assumption of homogeneity and consensus. For Parsons (1951), there was a society and everything smaller was simply a microcosm of that society, even if he, and later Luhmann (1995), recognized that those smaller units never looked like the larger one because they were composed of only selected elements instead of all possible elements. We agree on the idea that mega societies have an institutional complex, or the arrangement of institutional spheres and their relative autonomy vis-à-vis each other, with myriad institutional spheres (see, for instance, Figures 3.1 and 3.2). Some of those spheres are more dominant and autonomous than others, with media more readily circulating and fungible than others. This complex is what gives society "A" its characteristic ethos and *tendencies* vis-à-vis society "B". A highly autonomous economy, moderate-to-highly autonomous polity and legal sphere, and a struggle between religious and scientific spheres, for instance, dominate the U.S. The tensions between the latter two shape the interpenetration of economy and polity/law. In the former Soviet Union, a more pyramidal complex was in place: polity dominated every institutional sphere, with law and economy as its handmaidens.

Our theoretical model, however, also can account for variation across and between communities. For instance, there is a clear difference in structure, culture, and phenomenological experience in U.S. metropolises and

in small towns. The former tend to hew more closely to Parsons' vision of nested Russian dolls, as urban spaces tend to differentiate institutional space physically and temporally, building political, legal, economic, and residential/kinship zones. In smaller-town America, however, there is a very different institutional arrangement. For one thing, space itself is at a premium: either the classic small town model where Main Street contains the seat of government alongside the police station, jail, and courthouse, and the Chamber of Commerce, the oldest and most prominent Church (probably Protestant), and a ring of old Victorian-style residential neighborhoods that once featured the most important members of the community or the new exburb model surrounding a megachurch that provides the majority of the community's needs. In both cases, physical and temporal boundedness is blurred, as are the lines of social differentiation. Stratification also hews closer to older patterns, calcified in local intergenerational distributions of wealth, prestige, and power. In these places, what sticks out to the careful observer is the construction of a powerful local institutional complex that sees kinship/religion as the dominant spheres directing how people feel, think, and act (Baker et al. 2020; Whitehead and Perry 2020). In part, these are the most tangible, most rewarding spheres of activity for these humans. In places where the center is directly and indirectly accessible in daily and spectacular interaction and communication, the local *is* the U.S. (Wuthnow 2018). Conversely, threats to these small towns are perceived by locals and framed by religious and political elites as emanating from the cold, distant, impersonal global economy and liberal polity (Hochschild 2016). Thus, the phenomenological reality of these places is shaped and shapes the structural and cultural milieu in ways that are not unique to the U.S., but in fact, reflect a pattern played out since at least Mesopotamia's earliest city-states 5,000 years ago (Pollock 1999; Yoffee 2005): the tensions between town and country.

Undergirding this perennial story is a story about the distribution of resources and the construction of rank, stratification, and inequality. As polities grew increasingly differentiated from kin units, more autonomous forms of domination emerged alongside a new centripetal force drawing human and material resources from the average family, lineage, and residential unit toward the polity. The consequences cannot be sugarcoated: the growth of human misery and exploitation was unimaginable a few thousand years prior. Thus, for the remainder of this chapter, we examine the process by which institutional evolution drives stratification and how autonomy is synonymous with the erection of intra-institutional status hierarchies.

Institutions and the Evolution of Stratification

Corporate Units and the Unequal Distribution of Resources

The corporate units from which institutional spheres are constructed also distribute valued resources, often unequally to individuals in different places within the division of labor of a corporate unit. Consequently, this uneven distribution was both cause and consequence of growing populations and the selection pressures to resolve basic problems endemic to the group (Flannery and Marcus 2012; Lenski 1966). In some cases, it is likely an upstart individual took advantage of these pressures, or manufactured them, or simply had more loyal men and, more generally, followers to self-aggrandize and then put in place symbolic and organizational innovations to sustain his and his family's claims to a surplus (Fried 1967). However, in other cases, rank, stratification, and then inequality were caused by initially benign efforts to resolve problems and subsequent opportunities and support for reproducing rank and stratification and, eventually, inequality (Service 1975). In either case, inequities existed alongside some form of discrimination in pre-agricultural societies without chiefs (as we shall see in Chapter 7), and grew exponentially with the evolution of political economies distinct from kin economies (Johnson and Earle 2000). We turn first to the downsides of stratification with a particular focus on the relationship between institutions and inequality. We conclude this section by thinking about the evolutionary advantages, however, that is often hidden in the human misery.

Moreover, discrimination against certain categories of individuals in gaining access to resource-distributing corporate units or to the high positions within corporate units that distribute high levels of resources, aggravates inequality. Indeed, stratification systems are built from discrimination against certain categories of persons—typically by ethnicity, age, gender, and other categoric-unit distinctions (e.g., religious affiliation, national origins, sexuality, and so forth). Such individuals are systematically denied full access to resource-giving positions and/or resource-rich positions in the divisions of labor of the corporate unit, thereby creating inequalities by class as well as other categoric-unit distinctions, most typically ethnicity, especially if categorized by "race,"[1] or any other distinction that is stigmatized.

Figure 4.1 outlines the dynamics involved in creating inequality. As noted earlier, each institutional sphere produces and distributes a generalized symbolic media, which denotes value both in command over language, internalization and expression of embodied dispositions, and control over objects with which one might display. For example, *love/loyalty* is a highly

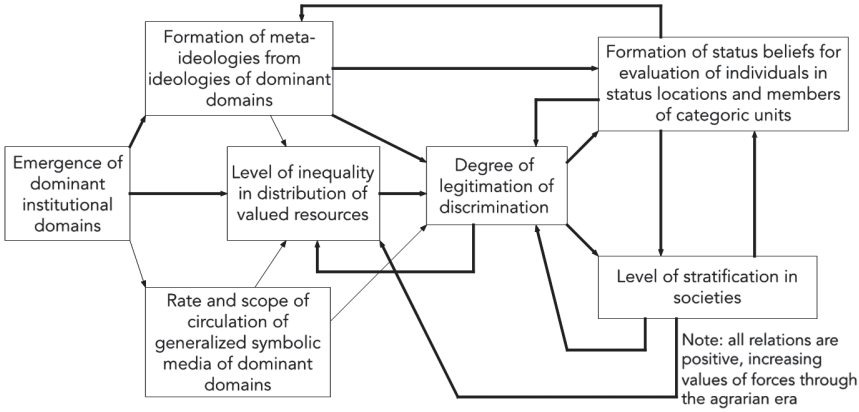


Figure 4.1 Institutional Dominance, Meta-ideologies, Legitimation of Stratification, and Status Beliefs

valued resource distributed by kinship; *power* is distributed by polity which, in turn, franchises *authority* to bureaucracies in each institutional sphere, which is a kind of power and hence a highly valued resource. Of course, many organizations distribute *money*, which is always valued because "while money is not everything, what it is not, it can usually buy," as cynics often point out. *Money* is the medium of economic interaction, exchange, and communication, but it too is franchised out to almost every corporate unit that needs to pay people to occupy positions in its division of labor (moreover the use of money across different institutional spheres creates an equivalence of symbolic media across diverse institutional spheres). Similarly, *intelligence* and *knowledge* distributed by the educational institutional sphere is a valued resource, *per se*, but also in modern societies, a key to access positions in corporate units distributing money and authority. *Health/well-being* are very valuable resources distributed by access to corporate units in the institution of health and medicine. And, the same is true for other generalized symbolic media listed in Table 4.1—*justice*, *verified knowledge*, *competitiveness*, *beauty*.

Sociology has often focused on just three valued resources in societies—prestige, wealth (money), and power (authority)—but this is a very limited view of stratification. Many other resources are distributed unequally, and some highly generalized resources, such as *positive emotions*, are unequally distributed by institutional spheres among categories of persons, as are punishing generalized resources as negative emotions such as shame, alienation, and anger also distributed unequally, and disproportionately to members of devalued categoric units.

The corporate units of institutional spheres distribute their generalized symbolic media, and at times the media of other spheres such as money (economy) and authority (polity), unequally to individuals who are placed into categories of worth and who are, thereby, subject to discrimination in gaining full access to all symbolic generalized media. Members of these devalued categories are stigmatized by codified "status beliefs" about their characteristics; and these status beliefs have great power because they often incorporate the value premises of the ideologies of institutional spheres to valorize or stigmatize individual members of categoric units in the stratification system. Thus, persons seen to have not "measured up" to the evaluative tenets of institutional ideologies are stigmatized as not fully worthy of access to the valued resources distributed by corporate units in various institutional spheres, while those with power, money, and prestige are valorized and deserving of all other valued generalized symbolic media.

These processes are outlined in Figure 4.1. Domination of particular institutional domains gives them the power to appropriate the distributed valued resources, including the generalized symbolic media of their domains, as well as less dominant domains. Such discrimination is legitimated by the formation of a *meta-ideology* drawing evaluative tenets from the institutional ideologies of dominant domains, and this ideology legitimates stratification in general but, equally important, it penetrates to the meso- and micro-level by stigmatizing some positions within corporate units of institutional domains and memberships in categories units (while valorizing those who get most of the resources). Thus, strata and classes evolve, with those who enjoy privilege enjoying valorization while those stigmatized are seen as legitimate objects of discrimination—thus increasing inequalities and hardening class divisions within a population. Thus, those who are stigmatized are considered morally disqualified from having access to the valued resources, thus creating a culture of discrimination and a set of powerful beliefs about the appropriateness of inequality and stratification. The vicious cycles outlined in Figure 4.1 began slowly to emerge in horticulture and then accelerated in the agrarian era, with the industrial and post-industrial era breaking some of the power of meta-ideologies.

These stratifying processes increase as societies grow and differentiate institutional spheres; and as stratification emerges out of institutional growth and differentiation, it generates new sets of intense selection pressures on societies for finding ways to mitigate the collective tension among the stigmatized categories that generally make up any stratification system. Intra-societal conflict at many levels is the inevitable result of stratification, and the potential for or actual conflict generates intense

selection pressures on existing institutional spheres to manage this conflict. Yet, since it is the spheres that are generating and ideologically justifying stratification, it is often difficult to effect change in institutional spheres. If polity is pulled in, it often simply represses the potential conflict, thereby letting it intensify; if law is brought in, it may institutionalize discrimination or, at times, new laws may de-legitimate discrimination even as political centers resist fully enforcing the law. How these dynamics play out in the history of a society varies, but they are the inevitable consequence of institutional evolution which, inevitably, increases inequalities. The first human societies—hunting and gathering—and the first human institution to evolve—the nuclear family—generated the least inequality because they resisted allowing family and band members to seek to elevate themselves above the rest of the population. The result was that everyone received about the same level of resources—*love/loyalty/commitment* from family and the same basic share of resources from hunting and gathering—with the result that there was little to fight over. And there were powerful norms against any individual seeking to garner power and authority over others, with these norms often being coercively enforced by expelling difficult individuals from bands or systematically killing them. And, while nomadic hunting and gatherer bands filled with nuclear families revealing equality among adults was humans' longest-lasting mode of adaptation to the environment, once humans began to settle, the dynamics outlined in Figure 4.1 began to make themselves evident and became intrinsically connected to the subsequent evolution of human institutions.

Thus, the shift from foraging to sedentary, permanent settlements inevitably made humans less free, independent, and autonomous. And so, in one sense, the story of institutional evolution is comprised of domination, exploitation, inequality, stratification, and human misery. More contemporary societies revealing highly differentiated institutional domains have made mega societies possible, although the continuation of stratification does not mean that they have made life better or more fit for significant proportions of the population. Yet, as Simmel (and Weber) observed, money was the most important generalized symbolic medium this side of power, as it was one of the final blows to dependence on ascriptive sources of reward that severely delimited mobility. So, there was hope for institutional change. With money came the rapid (by evolutionary standards) evolution of several new institutional spheres (medicine, science) and the solidification of others' autonomy (law, education, polity). With the growth of myriad autonomous institutional spheres came, to be sure, more domination. The modern bureaucratic polity is ruthlessly efficient and callous in its application of generalized administrative domination

(Collins 1981a); indeed, so are many other bureaucratized corporate units across many institutional spheres. In short, the mega societies are colder (Simmel 1959), less enchanted and humanizing (Weber 1978) places as the classical theorists feared. And, while having more institutional spheres does not necessarily mean better societies, if one could time travel to any period in the last 10,000 years to live for the rest of their life, the modern world would look pretty good by comparison. In fact, if we compare what humans can do now with what was possible in most societies after hunting and gathering, the full complex of institutional systems mediated by dynamic markets and somewhat reduced levels of stratification are far more compatible with the complex comprising human nature outlined in Appendix II of Chapter 1.

Conclusion

We can conclude this chapter by emphasizing several key points outlined not only here but also in Chapter 3:

1. Human institutional systems are adaptive responses to selection pressures on populations from a number of different environmental sources: (a) the bio-ecology of the habitat in which members of a society occupy; (b) the socio-ecology (other populations and their societies) in this habitat; (c) the existing structural arrangements organizing a population that may no longer be fitness enhancing; (d) the cultural systems attached to the structural arrangements organizing a population that may no longer provide adequate support; (e) the evolved psychology of humans possessing a series of need-states that may no longer be served by existing sociocultural arrangements. Thus, human evolution is like biotic evolution in that it is driven by selection pressures on existing variants of human institutional systems.
2. Evolution of human societies and their institutional systems is not blind because of humans' capacity for agency, revolving around the ability to conceptualize adaptive problems, formulate new adaptive options to these problems, and mobilize members of a population to create and accept new, more adaptive structural and cultural elements for institutional systems.
3. Population growth has been one of the key driving forces of human societal and institutional evolution because a larger population puts

greater pressure on environmental resources or the bio-ecological habitat, alters the socio-ecology among populations in a habitat, and perhaps just as important, generates selection pressures for new, more complex institutional systems to organize the larger population.

4. The result of these population pressures is that human societal evolution has, by episodic development and collapse, been typified by cumulative increases, over the long run, in the complexity of human societies. Such complexity is only possible by the alteration of existing institutional systems and by the differentiation of new institutional systems, which solve some adaptive problems but inevitably generate new kinds of adaptive problems. In all likelihood, then, there will be no "end of history" in human societal evolution, unless it is the end of humanity. Rather, *constant* change by an emotional and very intelligent animal that can speak and accumulate culture is the more likely future of *Homo sapiens*. Indeed, it is even possible that the institutional systems that have been built up over the last 10,000 years will collapse or be destroyed by one or more of Malthus' horsemen, causing de-evolution of human societies or even the end of humans and great apes. Except for humans, great apes are not a great evolutionary success story after the forests in Africa began to recede, when humans started to elaborate the structural and cultural basis of social organization, but the verdict is still out on how long *Homo sapiens* will live.
5. Indeed, intelligence and the capacity to elaborate social structure and culture may, in the end, be the undoing of humans who have overpopulated the planet, caused profound bio-ecological changes in the earth's ecosystem, and increased the likelihood that all four of Mathus' horsemen will starting riding through human institutional systems. Thus, there may be an end of history to human societies—as noted above, their extinction. If such comes to pass, it will be the inability of entrepreneurs within key institutional spheres to alter their structure and culture in ways that increase fitness of large mega societies to the obvious limitations of the ecology of Planet Earth.

Thus, we are now in a position to delineate the evolution of the first human institutions, beginning with kinship, which allowed species of hominins culminating in humans to survive in new environments, and in the end, to build up the institutional order so that humans societies could organize millions and, in a couple of cases, billions of people.

Note

1 We put quotes around "race" because this is purely a social construction implying biological differences among individuals. In fact, "racial" distinctions such as skin color or eye fold are minor differences involving a few alleles on perhaps only one or a small handful of genes.

5
The First Human Institution: The Evolution of the Nuclear Family and Kinship

How Did Great Apes Who Became Hominins Survive?

Africa experienced a series of periods of cooling beginning about 12 million years ago, leading to episodic retreat of the forests in which great apes had evolved. Indeed, some primates migrated to Eurasia to the warmer climate and denser forests, only to come back when Eurasia cooled and Africa warmed up for a period. In the end, the total amount of forest in Africa declined significantly, and indeed, the great deserts of the Sahara and northern Africa expanded as did open-country habitats of bushlands, secondary forests, and savanna conditions. The result is that many primates needed to begin living on the ground under the forest canopy, and increasingly, outside the protection of the forests in bushlands, secondary forests, and savanna habitats without the protection of the forests. For monkeys, the decline in the total forest was not a disaster since monkeys are organized at the group level by matrilines among related females and hierarchies among males who had migrated into the group to replace those males who had left their natal group at puberty (Shively 1985). A troop of monkeys can march across the savanna or bushlands in military-like formations with larger males encircling smaller females and offspring, ready to attack any predator or pack of predators that would challenge the troop. Thus, group organization that was directed genetically by bio-programmers allowed species of monkeys to survive when forced into the open country. Indeed, monkeys are the "coyotes" of the primate world because their tight-knit group organization allows them to adapt to many diverse habitats, even the bustling cities of south Asia today (Elliot 2020).

In contrast, great apes are not group oriented; indeed, they rarely form stable groupings, except when defending the boundaries of their territory. Since great apes are promiscuous, paternity is never known, thus making it difficult to form nuclear families of father, mother, and offspring (Nakahashi and Horiuchi 2012). This lack of group formation was not a problem for primates living in the remote terminal feeding areas of the forests, where predators could not easily reach them and where the lack of permanent groups did not reduce fitness. Rather, it would have enhanced

DOI: 10.4324/9781003224433-6

fitness because male and female transfer from their natal community at puberty would be sustainable in low density areas of the forest that could not otherwise support large permanent groupings of big primates like great apes. In Asia, orangutans could continue to live the life high in the forests, as they do today, and hence are probably the most like the LCA of contemporary great apes and humans in their weak ties, lack of group formation, promiscuity, and male and female transfer from their mother's community at puberty. Other species of non-great apes such as gibbon and siamangs also can live in these forests as well, but in Africa, species of great apes were being forced to the ground where predators were plentiful and, thus, the lack of group organization would pose a challenge to survival.

Selection appears to have taken two routes to increase the fitness of great apes. One was to increase the size of great apes, with the gorilla being the only surviving great ape that resulted from these selection pressures. But, other larger species of great apes did live well into the late hominin era at 2.0 to 1.5 million years ago. For example, *gigantopithecus* was an Asian ape that was at least eight feet tall and enormous even in relation to gorillas; these large great apes survived for millions of years in open country (and some argue that they still exist as Big Foot!). Chimpanzees are larger apes than their arboreal ancestors and spend much time on the ground under the forest canopy, but they can move rapidly into the trees to avoid most predators; and, moreover, they always sleep in the trees at night, as do most gorillas—thereby out of reach of predators at a vulnerable time.

The other strategy of blind natural selection and, later, increasingly cultural selection on hominins and then early humans was increasing the permanence and solidarity of groups in the face of selection pressures for tighter-knit group-level social organization, which was difficult because of the lack of bio-programmers for kinship and group structures in general that runs through the great ape line. How, then, was this handicap overcome? In part, the selection pressures would have had to have been fairly intense. As evidence of how intense, consider, for example, an interesting natural experiment currently occurring in west Senegal, Africa, where some chimpanzees have been able to survive in more open-country savanna conditions. To survive, they have been able to overcome the lack of bio-programmers by forming what appear to be more permanent groups that engage in hunting, scavenging, and gathering necessary food. They are able to do so, it appears, because there are enough trees dotting the savanna-like habitat so that they can sleep in the trees and thereby avoid predators.[1] Yet, without this ability to do what chimpanzees always do—bed down for the night in the trees—it is doubtful if a great ape could survive in more open-country habitats. To be sure, these adaptations are

critically supported by the bio-programmer for chimpanzees to form patrols in monitoring their community boundaries. While it is males who normally patrol the parameter, the patrols on the savanna in west Senegal also can include females; and so, during the day, the troop maintains high solidarity and is able to secure just enough food to sustain this small population, as long as they can retreat to the trees at night. Thus, this unique adaptation shows the power of what group organization can accomplish—if somehow activated.

However, as we outlined in Chapter 1, the solution to building permanent groups was more indirect, with selection initially working on emotion centers of the brain. For instance, the human subcortex, where emotions are generated, is on average twice as large in humans as it is in the great apes, roughly controlling for body size. This appears to have been the route that natural selection took to increase group solidarities and, eventually, strong social ties between what were highly promiscuous primates (a pattern still evident among humans who are also still highly promiscuous). As one example, the septum, which is the area for pleasure associated with sex, is twice as large in humans, and it is likely that these additional nuclei are less devoted to sexual pleasure than to enhancing the emotional experience associated with sexual relations, thereby creating bonds of affection between sexual partners. Moreover, the enhancement of all emotion centers would lead to an overall propensity to form social bonds among conspecifics, thereby moving hominins to be more social, more likely to develop emotional attachments, and, eventually, to develop the one structure that was critical to hominin survival: the nuclear family. Creating the family through emotional ties (rather than genetically controlled bio-programmers) was perhaps the only route that selection could take because great apes do not have any bio-programmer for kinship, except mother-offspring ties which are broken at puberty when male and female offspring transfer away from their mothers for the rest of their life. The only exception is male chimpanzees who remain in their mother's community after puberty but do not form a group with her. Selecting on emotion centers turned out to be a viable a solution because it created stronger ties among males and females, as well as between the children of bonded males and females. In so doing, group organization allowed for production and reproduction that would enhance species fitness. And so, if selection had not been able to create the nuclear family, it is unlikely that humans would exist today.

In short, the selection that led to the ability to form stronger social ties, more permanent groups, and nuclear families were the result of Darwinian natural selection working blindly on great ape neuroanatomy

and physiology. Darwinian selection on individual phenotypes was also responsible for the conversion of great ape knuckle-walkers into bipeds, thereby freeing up strong and dexterous hands, fingers, arms, and shoulder joints for defense, hunting and gathering; and for elaborate body language, which preceded verbal language (Damasio and Geschwind 1984; Witkower and Tracy 2018) and which was predicated on the full exposure of our underbellies (Turner 2007). Indeed, once bipedal, the chances of still relatively small-brained great apes' survival dramatically increased, although present-day chimpanzees often throw rocks in self-defense; to have a bipedal platform that is more stable and that can be sustained full-time was a major evolutionary breakthrough. Coupled with the neurological changes allowing for more permanent social ties and group solidarities, biological selection bought hominins time. Permanent social ties, however, had important feedback loops driving Darwinian evolution. Cooperative hunting, tool making and usage, and the need to both keep track of one's own reputation, others' reputations, and care for increasingly complex social relationships "rewarded" subcortical evolution—pushing it further along—while also expanding the neocortex and connections between the neocortex and subcortex (Boehm 2018). Cooperative hunting, in particular, was important as it put pressure on group solidarity and communication to manage complex plans to capture megafauna, while also increasing the caloric intake necessary for growing big, complex brains (Bowles and Gintis 2011).

The emergence of language only intensified these processes (Cavalli-Sforza 2000; Richerson and Christiansen 2013), while also adding sociocultural selection processes to the mix. Language allows individuals to externalize their subjective affective states and their thoughts and cognitions, objectify them in ways that make for intersubjective communication (Berger and Luckmann 1966), and then, internalize them in ways that allow for humans to develop a fully functioning Theory of Mind (Mitchell 2011) or realize what George Herbert Mead (1934) termed the behavioral capacities for *role-taking*, *mind*, and *self*. Because humans are capable of attaching themselves not only to specific others, but also group "others" *and* the abstract rules or norms of the group, language (and the affectual base upon which permanent social groups could be built) allowed for the construction of external structure and culture that could solve basic problems as well as address new problems related to collective action. That is, language and affectual ties to communities and rules produced institutions that calcified evolutionary solutions for the whole group (Richerson and Boyd 2001; Richerson and Henrich 2012), and thus, reduced much of the cognitive work necessary for everyday life (Douglas

1986). For a significant portion of time, culture and genetic evolution were working reciprocally (Richerson and Boyd 2001) and still do (Runciman 2009), at least to some extent. However, as we will see in later chapters, sociocultural evolution would gradually outpace and, then, come to dominate as cultural and structural scaffolding grew ever-more elaborate and became the primary environment to which individual and corporate actors adapt. We are, however, getting ahead of our story, which turns now, to the evolution of kinship out of a hominin "horde."

The "Horde" and the Transition to the Nuclear Family

Many early kinship theorists in sociology and anthropology posited that there must have been an earlier pattern of group organization, before kinship emerged. And, many gave it the label "the horde" (Bachofen 1861 [1931]; McLennan 1896; Morgan 1871 [1997]; Durkheim 1893 [1997]). For Durkheim, "nothing precedes nothing" but something like nuclear family and the beginnings of more elaborate kinship systems linking nuclear families together had to exist at some point in hominin evolution; and from this primitive "horde" came the nuclear family, which would allow for the elaboration of kinship systems. As fanciful as this idea sounds, the cladistic analysis in Chapter 1 suggests that it is basically correct because kinship is not something that great apes reveal, especially when compared to other higher mammals (Maryanski 2018). From the cladistic analysis on the structure of the LCA of great apes and humans, the only strong ties in this common ancestor to great apes and hominins were mother-offspring ties, which were broken at puberty when adolescent offspring moved away from their mothers, forever. Coupled with male-female promiscuity (Chapais 2013), and transfer of male and female young away from their unknown fathers and mothers (Hill et al. 2011), kinship could not exist; and there were clearly no bio-programmers for kin relations, beyond the almost universal mammalian propensity for mothers to nurture their young children.

If selection was pushing for increased social organization, what behavioral propensities were there to select upon? If we examine the human clade back to the last known common ancestor, there are few behavioral traits that might be under genetic control and hence selected upon. Among orangutans and their ancestors, there might have been the behavioral propensity of males to stay around for several weeks with females who are pregnant—not a universal trait but one observed in various field studies. Females with offspring among gorillas often form a relationship with the lead silverback of a troop to help care for her offspring, even though this male is unlikely to be the father (given promiscuity); and indeed, the

female often uses the lead silverbacks for babysitting while sneaking of to have sexual liaisons with males hanging around the troop. This relation with the lead silverback males normally ends as soon as offspring are ready to transfer away from their mothers at puberty. Chimpanzees do not show pair-bonding between males and females (given their high promiscuity), but occasionally a male and female form what appears to be a friendship, in which they periodically "hang out" together. The most consistent traits, however, are among humans' closest primate relative: chimpanzees. Unlike orangutan and gorilla males, sons in chimpanzee communities do not transfer away from their mother's home community; they stay and form moderate to strong ties with their mothers, visiting but never living with them. Also, this relationship appears to have led to selection for a biologically based incest avoidance with mothers, since sons are never seen to line up to engage in sex when their mothers are receptive to other males in the community. Sons also tend to form friendships with their brothers among chimpanzees, and they form even stronger attachments to male friends. Thus, among chimpanzees, there was something to select upon and enhance. We can use these data to suggest what the structure of the primal horde that preceded kinship might have looked like. The left side of Figure 5.1 outlines how selection could have enhanced ties among those evident in great ape communities, especially common chimpanzee communities.[2]

The box on the far left of Figure 5.1 summarizes the stronger ties among common chimpanzees and, presumably, their shared ancestors with hominins. If these were strengthened, then the horde could begin to form around brothers born in the same community, male friendship ties of brothers with non-kin males, and mothers of sons, with the apparent bio-programmer for incest avoidance serving to prevent inbreeding between mothers and sons. And, in the transition to the nuclear family, females migrating into a community could join the horde, providing sexual partners for the sons of mothers in the horde and, of course, for their brothers and male friends. Moreover, many mothers in the horde could also provide sexual partners for their son's friends. Thus, promiscuity could remain, regulated by the incest avoidance programmer for mothers and sons; and with female transfer at puberty away from the horde at puberty to decrease the chances of inbreeding of fathers and their daughters. The key here was not so much having a family, but *a stable unit of organization* in which production and reproduction could occur, thereby increasing fitness of hominins that were increasingly exposed to open-country habitats.

With the transformation of the hominin subcortex to be more emotional and to experience emotional ties with sexual partners (as a result

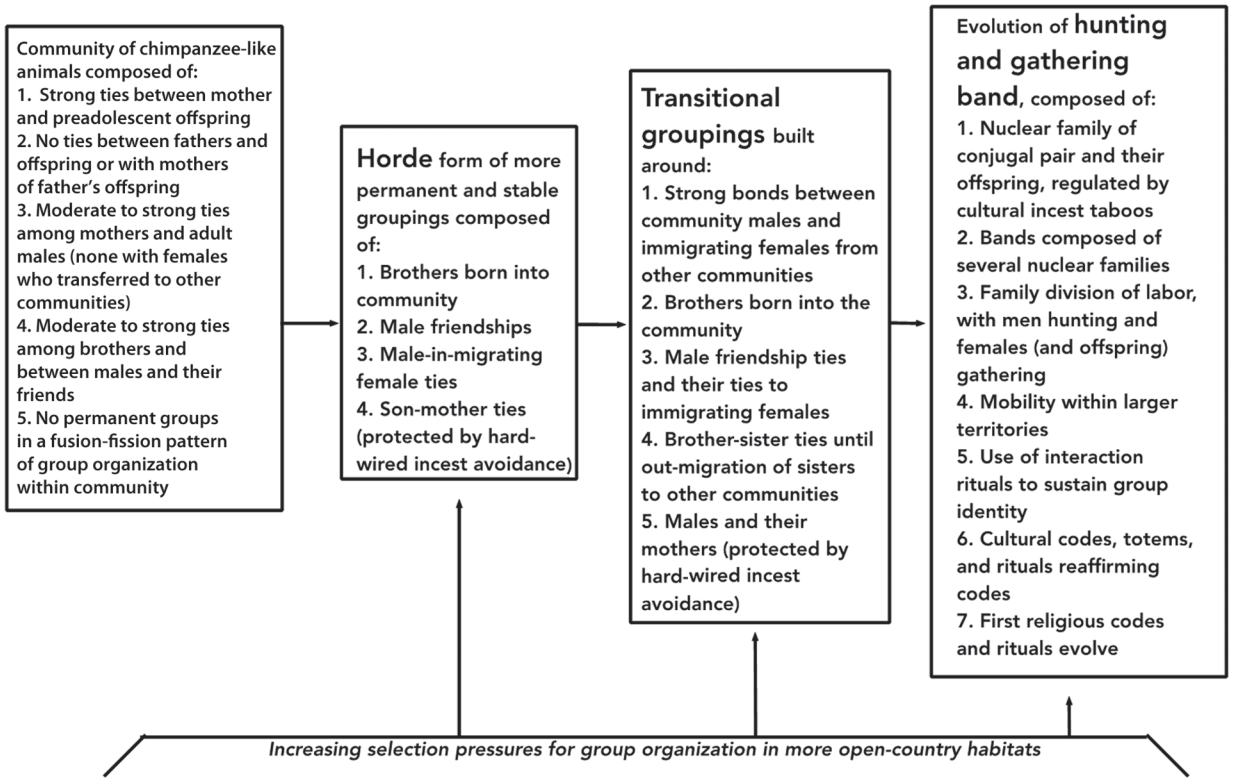


Figure 5.1 The Transition from Weak-tie Community Organization to the Stronger Social-tie Groupings of The Hunting and Gathering Band

of the septum's dramatic growth), something like a nuclear family could begin to evolve inside the horde and eventually break out from the horde as a cohesive group that was linked to other nuclear families in a band, as opposed to the horde. These neurological changes, when coupled with the length of gestation and maturation of human babies (*life history* characteristics of all great apes), would have created the template to shift from promiscuity to pair-bonding; and pair-bonding, like hunting, would have supercharged the evolution of the language and culture as similar pressures for cooperation and social intelligence would have emerged from domestic bonds (Fletcher et al. 2015). Thereby, the band composed of nuclear families would feature two layers of coordination and cooperation, as the smaller unit was embedded in the larger unit, with both depending on each other for productive and reproductive success. Just whether this transition was made with *Homo erectus* and *Homo ergaster*—the most immediate ancestors of early humans—cannot be known, but it is likely that this transition was far along because these ancestors to humans were able to migrate out of Africa to Europe and Asia, adapting to a wide variety of habitats (Derricourt 2005). Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that they had stability in their patterns of organization; and the nuclear family operating inside of a nomadic band would be the most efficient means of meeting selection pressures to become organized by strong social ties and groupings revealing high levels of solidarity.

With humans, though, it is plausible to presume things accelerated as the brain continued to grow and the emergence of speech and culture could moralize these relations, transforming subjective states into intersubjective and even objective realities for the group. Self-conscious emotions, like *shame* or *guilt*, would have further tagged these externalized representations with the affective force necessary to drive self-regulation even further (Tracy and Robins 2007). Eventually, these morals could be externalized into a supranatural world, where the weight of an enduring mythic history could add another layer of authority to justifying social organization and patterns of kinship. Finally, the length of gestation and maturation of humans would have further structured emergent kinship patterns, as the division of labor with men hunting and women gathering would have formed the most efficient way to allocate productive labor. Though recent evidence suggests that a strict sexual division of labor may be more of an empirical question than the old anthropological conventional wisdom suggests (Haas et al. 2020), it is safe to say that pregnant women and women with children would have been disproportionately likely to be gatherers in most foraging societies.

In any case, the kinship sphere evolved and was quite successful in evolutionary terms. Humans not only outlasted all of their hominin cousins, but during the various interstadial periods of the last ice age, they rapidly fanned out across the Earth, colonizing just about every piece of arable land possible. These groups maintained the basic kinship unit so far as we can tell: bands consisting of nuclear families. Though we cannot know as much about these groups, we can identify the universal features or characteristics of kinship systems based on the ethnographic record and on contemporary kinship. To be sure, the detailed analysis of kinship systems no longer occurs in sociology or even in anthropology, but even the most urban, individuated societies like the U.S. reveal kinship patterns (Parsons 1954; Stone 2004). In the remainder of this chapter, then, we examine the basic elements of kinship, so that we can return to the evolutionary narrative and the elaboration of kinship in Chapter 6 which would allow humans to create and sustain larger societies.

The Elements of Kinship Systems

All kinship systems have rules that affect just how the system is organized (see Fox 1967). There are variations in these rules with respect to how explicitly they are known and followed. Among hunter-gatherers the rules were simple and implicitly understood and generally followed as custom and convention. Table 5.1 lists the most typical rules that affect how a kinship system becomes structured. These rules allow for the very simple system of nuclear families in hunting and gathering bands, but as we will see in the next chapter, they allow for the dramatic expansion of kinship systems that allow for the organization of hundreds, and potentially many thousands, of individuals.

Indeed, these rules are what allowed human societies to grow in size initially and, at the same time, regulate the emergence of the other early institutional spheres: economy, polity, religion, and law during the evolution of human societies from foraging to advanced agriculture (Nolan and Lenski 2010). Moreover, as new institutions differentiated and gained autonomy from each other, these kinship rules guided the evolution of the complex kinships of horticulture and early agrarianism; and equally important, allowed for the "devolution" of kinship *back* to the nuclear family system that had been the original "survival machine" of early humans as new institutional survival machines allowed for societal growth and further differentiation. The categories of rules listed in Table 5.1 always carried the

TABLE 5.1 Elements of All Kinship Systems

1. **Marriage rules:** These rules specify who can marry whom under what conditions and under what specified ritual procedures.
2. **Rules of Family Size and Composition:** These rules specify who is to be part of the family unit, with prominent variations being (a) nuclear (father, mother, offspring); (b) extended or a family unit including additional relatives; and (c) polygamous or a family unit created by plural marriage, either polygyny (multiple wives) or polyandry (multiple husbands).
3. **Rules of residence:** These rules specify where a married couple is to take up residence, with three basic alternatives (a) neolocal or where they wish, (b) patrilocal or with or near the husband's relatives, or (c) matrilocal or with or near the wife's relatives.
4. **Rules of family activity:** These rules generally specify (a) household labor inside family, (b) labor outside of the family household, (c) child care, and (d) socialization of young.
5. **Rules of authority:** These rules specify which parent has authority over which activities within the family, with three general profiles: (a) egalitarian or equal sharing of authority by husbands and wives, (b) patrilineal or authority on the husband's side of the family, and (c) matrilineal or authority on the wife's side of the family.
5. **Rules of dissolution:** These rules specify (a) the conditions under which marriages can be dissolved and (b) the procedures for dissolving a marriage.
6. **Rules of descent:** These rules specify which side, if any, of the family (wife's or father's) is to be considered more important and relevant, as well as which blood line (wife's or father's) property and authority, if any, are to follow.
7. **Rules of incest:** These rules prohibit sexual relations and often marriage between members of a family or related families of collateral kin or kin on descent lines.

rules for organizing nuclear families and thus could serve as a template to de-evolve larger kinships systems (to isolated nuclear families) as the complex kin formations of horticulture and early agrarianism were being dismantled to, in essence, make room for the evolution of new, full-blown institutional systems.

Using the rules outlined in Table 5.1, the first kinship system was, in essence, built from one corporate unit: the nuclear family that would, as we see in the next chapter, become the first building block of very large kinship systems. The size of this nuclear family was relatively small, usually a father, mother, and small number of children, often spaced in their birth to assure adequate care of very young offspring by mothers who also had

to shoulder the main burden of gathering food for the family. The rule of residence were *neolocal* in that the married couple could typically choose the band to which they would belong, but the options of bands within a territory were very limited. Of course, while, the choice was the couple's to make, informal pressures were placed on the couple by their parents and other kin to settle close by. Furthermore, within the general understanding of the potential inbreeding consequences of relations with close relatives (Turner and Maryanski 2005), individuals likely could choose their partners as a matter of preference.

The rule of *family activity* corresponded to the division of economic labor, with men hunting and women (often with children in tow) gathering, though women without children appear to have contributed to hunting in some societies and, perhaps, may have been even more widespread (Haas et al. 2020) than once thought. Since households were simple and indeed had to be mobile across territories as the band moved about its home range seeking food, *household divisions of labor* were not particularly difficult or burdensome, even when the cooking of meat occurred after a kill. The relationships between husbands and wives were generally *equal*, especially where women brought in about 70 to 80% of the food consumed by the family (Sahlins 1972), and women's control over economic resources have been strongly correlated with gender equality (Blumberg 1984; Collins et al. 1993). It is worth noting, as an aside, big game hunting and the caloric protein bang that it provided were not merely critical to the health of all members, but to the evolution of the brain (Baltic and Boskovic 2015; Leroy and Praet 2015) and, hence, was a significant resource in most hunter-gatherer societies (Cordain et al. 2000). And, the more animals became important, especially with the transition to agriculture using animal labor, the more gender inequality took hold.

Descent was *bilateral,* with both sides of the family being considered equally important; and since little or no property or authority from older kin existed, descent was not highly constraining as it would become when larger and more complex kinship systems began to evolve with horticulture. Relations with other family members were voluntary, revolving mostly around love and friendship with parents, grandparents, grandchildren, uncles and aunts.

Dissolution of the family was generally very simple, basically with one or both partners deciding to end the marriage which could be accomplished with such simple ritual acts as moving to another band, or placing the few possessions of a spouse outside the temporary shelter used for sleeping. Thus, neither marriage rules nor descent systems worked against freedom to leave a marriage among hunter-gathering populations.

While some hunting and gathering bands and, in some cases, communities lived in harsh climates (e.g., Inuit in Alaska, and aboriginals in harsh deserts), hunting and gathering was not a rigorous life. Individuals normally did not work more than 15 hours per week procuring food; children often played with each other and learned by watching how to hunt or gather; and most members of the band spent a great deal of time sitting around socializing. Hunting and gathering was described by the anthropologist, Marshall Sahlins (1972), as "the original affluent society," at least in the sense that it was not all that much work, except in extreme ecologies. Importantly, hunting and gathering bands generally had a powerful set of rules about individuals proclaiming their superiority or seeking to use coercive power to control others (Boehm 2018). Indeed, individuals were sanctioned for trying to appear better than others, and moreover, murder by relatives or by other band members (with the consent of relatives) was one means for eliminating those who sought power and who were violent or mentally ill. Thus, polity did not exist among nomadic hunter-gatherers; these societies were the most egalitarian of all the societal formations created by humans in their evolutionary history (Gintis et al. 2015).

A Sociocultural Niche

In a sense, these earliest societies were the Garden of Eden compared to what was to come in the first several millennia of permanent settled life (Maryanski and Turner 1992). Bands of nuclear families generally wandered in a circular pattern around a home range, which could overlap with other bands in the same language group. There might have even been a sense of a larger territory of bands sharing language and culture that was *their* home range. Of course, conflict may have occurred between bands and, on a larger scale, between sets of bands over territories. Yet, since population densities were generally very low, conflict and inter-band warfare was probably not chronic as it would become once humans left this Garden of Eden of foraging for settled communities.

Why settle down? Evidence has increasingly pointed to the fact humans knew how to domesticate animals and crops for millennia before doing so. Ultimately, settling down is a story of selection pressures making populations move away from hunting and gathering to support larger populations. And why did populations begin to get larger? There is no clear answer but one route to settling was for hunter-gatherers to settle near water and fish as much as hunt, creating a food surplus that could reliability support a larger population which, if population growth continued, would begin to force members of a population to adopt horticulture or gardening

with simple tools. But we should remember that hunting and gathering was the principal form of economic activity for at least 300,000 years of human life on the planet. And, while hunter-gatherers might have periodically settled for a time, there is little evidence of more permanent horticultural settlements prior to the last 12,000 years. As a consequence, the nuclear family and band were the structural core of humans' adaptation for most of the time humans have existed.

Consequently, as humans migrated to ecologically constrained places, like islands, or their populations outstripped the carrying capacity of the ecological niche within which they sought to live, new selection pressures began to force the elaboration of social structures and their cultures. The very structures that manage one set of selection pressures for most of human history were no longer adequate as survivor machines, ultimately leading to institutional differentiation and growing inequalities and stratification that generated additional selection pressures on populations. Coupled with warfare with other societies, the internal disintegrative potential of all settled societies meant that humans had created the very selection pressures to which they now had to respond through acts of agency. In short, the construction of a sociocultural niche came to create a second environment to which humans had to adapt; this sociocultural habitat thus produced new selection pressures from disintegrative tendencies in larger, more complex societies revealing inequalities and increasingly living in areas also claimed by other societies. What is more, the act of creating this niche improved humans' ability to extract resources from the environment, subsequently intensifying and amplifying selection pressures from the biotic environment.

Finally, we should emphasize again that the basic unit of human social organization, group-level corporate units, are not a hard-wired, genetically controlled behavioral propensity, as is the case with most mammals. Groups *are created and sustained* by the arousal of positive emotions and, hence, are viable only if they can keep the ratio of positive to negative emotions high through ritual acts and other interpersonal skills that they inherited from their great-ape ancestors. Among nomadic hunter-gatherers, it is likely that it was relatively easy to sustain the flow of positive emotions and hence make viable this simple form of society. However, the first institutional systems that began to evolve beyond kinship revealed integrative problems and, most importantly, inequalities that generate even more integrative problems and hence selection pressures. But they do more, they generate negative emotions, often experienced collectively, thereby creating ever-more powerful disintegrative pressures in human societies. Thus, human societies were increasingly under a deluge of

selection pressures of their own making; and the verdict is still out over whether or not human agency can continue to stave off the consequences of these pressures, as they build up negative emotions in the very humans needed to deal with these pressures. These new kinds of selection pressures could only emerge because of the kinship rules outlined in Table 5.1 on page 128 allowed humans to begin to elaborate the kinship system to create a structural and cultural template that allowed human populations to grow significantly when they settled down. This flexibility and adaptability of rules governing nuclear families not only allowed for humans to survive as hunter-gatherers, it also allowed for the initial elaboration of human societies and rapid population growth which, over time, generated the selection pressures for the evolution of polity, religion, economy, and law. And once these institutions began to evolve, and once population size and densities increased even more, this same flexibility in kinship rules allowed for the de-evolution of kinship back to its original nucleated form.

Conclusion

With the creation of the nuclear family—a rather remarkable accomplishment for an animal with no bio-programmers for such a construction—the evolution of human societies began. The first human institution was born, and, as we will see in the next chapter, it expanded and elaborated to become one of the principle structural scaffolds on which all subsequent evolution of the other first institutions was initially built. And, this scaffold was often rife with tension because the kinship systems built from unilineal descent rules would link nuclear families together into hierarchies of relations that could organize a whole society, but with the added pressures of increasing inequality within and outside the nuclear family radiating around the kinship system made possible by the invention of *unilineal descent*. The result was a system that was always under great tension because of the emotions aroused and repressed and because of the violation of many aspects of human nature outlined in Appendix II at the end of Chapter 1.

Yet, until technological knowledge increased, there was no other way to build up a large society for several hundred thousand years. It had to be done within kinship and then eventually with polity—both of which created more stratification and inequality that would generate new selection pressures that could not often be quelled. The result was a dramatic increase in the instability of human societies, even as an ever-larger set of institutions were constructed. And, humans now live with this legacy of

never-ending selection pressures today, generated by the very construction of sociocultural systems intended to reduce selection pressures. The irony of this fact should not go unnoticed.

Notes

1 See: Baldwin 1979; Baldwin et al. 1982; McGrew 1981, 1983, 1992; McGrew, et al. 1981; Tutin et al. 1982; Pruetz and Bertolani 2007, 2009; Stanford 1990; Pruetz and Lindshield 2010; Mitani and Watts 2004, 2005; Mitani and Rodman 1979; Hunt and McGrew 2002; Pruetz 2006; Moore et al. 2015; Hernandez-Aguilar et al. 2007; Langergraber et al. 2011.

2 Bonobo chimpanzees do form closer ties, although these are filled with tension, because they must live in a smaller and more confined habitat. And these relations probably evolved long after the split of the ancestors of the common chimpanzee from early hominins about five million years ago. So it is the patterns of behavior among common chimpanzees that are relevant to understanding what hominins may have carried forth along the human clade.

6
The Elaboration of Kinship

Kinship and Nomadic Hunting and Gathering

For a variety of reasons, nomadic foraging societies consisting of nuclear families folded into bands were the basic mode of human adaptation for several hundred thousand years. Even as humans began to radiate out of Africa in rhythmic patterns of fusion and fission, hunting-gathering remained the preeminent mode of production. Of course, the nuclear family inside of the nomadic hunting and gathering band was a very efficient form of social organization that met humans' basic biological, psychological, and sociological needs, coupled with meeting selection pressures for production, reproduction, and regulation without resorting to power and inequality.

A series of evolutionary events, however, seemed to change the long-term viability of these simple forms of social organization. First, it is around this period that the first known signs of humans transforming physical, natural objects into cultural objects have been found, although it is not clear whether such symbolic efforts had occurred much earlier[1]. The ability to project meaning and self onto the external world also meant being able to express one's internal subjective states and to represent those feelings in external objects. Second, about 35,000 years later, humans had likely made it to almost every habitable ecological niche on the globe, having crossed the Bering Sea one way or another by 20,000 years ago and rapidly diffusing throughout the Americas (Fagan 2004). Finally, the last ice age receded along with the Pleistocene epoch around 12,000 years ago. With the ice age, so went the megafauna around which human societies had evolved, robbing these foraging societies of significant sources of calories (Müller et al. 2011; Sandom et al. 2014); particularly fats. For the previous 2 million years, an average of one mammal went extinct for every 40,000 years. Between 12,000 and 10,000 years ago, this number exploded as 57 large animals went extinct in the Americas alone (1 every 30 years). Though an open question, paleontologists have coalesced around the idea that human overkill was responsible for the rapid decline large animals (Alroy 2001). The decline in big game may have forced those populations

 DOI: 10.4324/9781003224433-7

of hunter-gatherers, which had grown because of such easy access to large sources of calories and protein, to engage in horticulture. And of course, as the population of hunter-gatherers spread to all niches, some such as fishing niches would have led to hunter-gatherers settling, as was the case with the aboriginals who settled by the coastal waters in western Canada, and with more food, populations grew. Hunter-gatherers in anthropological ethnographies consistently report an understanding of seeds, planting, and "crops." Indeed, ethnographies reveal patterns of spreading seeds when leaving an encampment with the hope and expectation that they will have grown a "crop" in the next season when this campsite would be visited again. And, there is evidence that some populations of hunter-gatherers adopted gardening for limited periods not as a permanent adaptation but episodically when required. Such would increasingly be the case, of course, if fishing or hunting were no longer easy pickings. Increased food supplies almost always lead to population growth; and once the population has begun to grow and traditional forms of birth control relax, population growth would begin putting its inexorable pressure to increase production and distribution of life-sustaining resources, a pressure that inevitably lead to the spread of horticulture and the movement to agriculture (revolving around the use of new technologies such as the plow).

The most immediate effects came from a decline in mobility, the increase in settlement permanence, population growth, and a growing concern with property or territory as the primary means of subsistence and survival. Settling down would not be wholly novel to evolved great apes because, as emphasized in Chapter 2, community rather than groups is the natural (i.e., genetically driven) orientation of great apes and, hence, their common ancestors with great apes, hominins, and humans (see "community" complex in Appendix II on pages 41 to 48). Thus, permanent *communities* would have been more natural to humans than even kinship organization which, as we emphasized in the previous chapter, had to be invented. Yet, settled communities were not a viable option for early humans because they inevitably tend to lead to population growth; and moreover, humans, with their large brains, needed access to protein which is more difficult to obtain in settled horticultural ecologies.

Yet, the humans that eventually settled at the end of the Pleistocene were extraordinarily different animals than the last common ancestors they shared with chimpanzees (Chapais 2013, Hill et al. 2011). They had already developed elaborate structural and cultural scaffolding to adapt to a diverse array of ecological niches and had become adept at not only extracting resources from the environment but also in creating quasi-kin structures to

allow for reproduction. Still, producing more resources in more permanent settlements leads to population growth and density, thereby creating new selection pressures (Cohen 1975; Polgar 1975). Populations will tend to grow and, thereby, generate all of the problems of production, reproduction, distribution, and regulation that come with population growth and the increasing differentiation of economic, political, and religious activities (Bronson 1975; Harner 1975). Moreover, physical infrastructures need to be built for more permanent housing, storage of food, and transportation across a larger territory—thus jacking up selection pressures even more (Johnson and Earle 2000).

Most likely, where geographic circumscription was at its greatest, these pressures were at their sharpest (Carneiro 1970). Island communities like the Trobrianders famously studied by Malinowski or the Tlinglit in the Pacific Northwest could not easily move if they had a dispute with a neighbor. As such, each family's land and property, as well as each bands' community structure, were vital sources. And, as anyone who has owned a house knows, the longer one stays, the more possessions one acquires and the harder it becomes to move. Indeed, as noted, these locations were also resource rich; fish were abundant and ecological niches diverse and encouraging to trade (like the famous Kula ring). However, if people are to stay, and property is to become a real thing, conflict between individuals and corporate units increases simply because of proximity, and new problems arise surrounding property rights and new forms of social organization that new selection pressures engender.

What is clear is that populations that had settled and grown with horticulture began to use the implicit rules (see Table 5.1 on page 128) of the nuclear family, and these were used to construct a system of hierarchical relations among nuclear kin units which solved many adaptive problems but raised new ones because of constraints on human individualism in unilineal kinship systems (Maryanski and Turner 1992). Moreover, using existing kinship systems to build up social structures that can organize more members of a population would also create selection pressures for the evolution of other institutional spheres. These new spheres would be restricted by the rules of the unilineal descent system, but once these new institutions emerge and expand within kinship, they begin to dismantle the "cage" of kinship in horticultural and early agrarian societies and, thereby, begin to differentiate toward more autonomous institutional spheres. Still, without the evolution of unilineal kinship systems organizing large numbers of nuclear family units to ever large kin-based corporate units, there may never have been a sufficient structural basis for institutional evolution.

Both early anthropologists (e.g., Bachofen 1861 [1931]; Tyler 1865, 1871, 1889; Morgan 1871 [1997], 1877 [1985]; Rivers 1907,1914, 1914 [1968]; Krober, 1909) and sociologists (Spencer 1874–96 [1898]; Durkheim 1888 [1978]; Westermark 1891) were fascinated by kinship because it was clearly the dominant institution of preliterate populations. What is less well known is that early sociologists also engaged in detailed analysis of kinship systems (Engels 1844 [1972] Spencer 1874–1896 [1898]: v1: 603–777; Westermarck 1891; Durkheim 1888 [1978]; Davis 1936 [1980]; Davis and Warner 1937; Murdock 1949). Both disciplines eventually reduced analysis of kinship systems, as preliterate populations died off for anthropological study and as evolution of kinship back to the nuclear family led sociologists to study family more than kinship systems organizing societies. Still there are some more contemporary sociologists who have studied kinship system (e.g., White 1963; Fox 1967, 1980; Goode 1964; Turner 2003; Maryanski 2021). An evolutionary analysis of institutions must, however, begin with the analysis of kinship since it was humans' first institutional system (for contemporary analyses of kinship systems see: Parkin 1997; Pasterack 1976; Bohannan and Middleton 1968, Schusky 1983; Howell 1988; Knight 2008).[2]

Building up Kinship Systems Through Unilineal Descent

In Table 5.1 on page 128, the elements of all kinship are listed. Among foragers, as well as in most modern societies today, this kinship system is very simple. It consists of nuclear families that stand alone, with connections to other kin units being voluntary, although binding emotional attachments obviously exist. But formally, the system is one where the nuclear family is paramount, with rules of decent being *bilateral* (both sides of the family are equally important) and residence tends towards neolocal.

By 75–50,000 years ago selection pressures were forcing some human populations to begin efforts to build stronger ties among nuclear families in order to create a more adaptive kinship system, as some populations experimented with settled communities engaged in new modes of production, like horticulture. The *descent rule* is what these early populations used to build what are termed *unilineal descent systems*, or systems that recognize direct ties to relatives on only one parent's side, creating rules around inheritance, residence, and endogamy (Murdock 1959). Undoubtedly, there were recurring efforts to maintain bilateral descent, but it would have been exceedingly difficult to revert to that structure, in part because it would invite conflicting obligations and expectations from both sides

of the family. Indeed, even in modern Western societies where voluntary and loose relations exist with other kin units, members of a given nuclear family often find that they struggle to serve two "masters," as both partner's parents have different ideas about weddings, child rearing, lifestyle, and so forth.

Hence, in a bilateral system, then, kinship has to be *truncated* with the norms indicating that neither side is supposed to dominate over the other, and in fact, neither side is to impose demands on the nuclear family of parents and offspring.

Once the descent rule shifts, however, to a unilineal rather than "bilateral" profile, one side of the family comes to dominate the structural relations that the nuclear unit has with other nuclear family units. In a *matrilineal* system, it is the mother's side that is paramount, whereas in a *patrilineal* system, it is the father's family that is to be more important.[3] According to the descent rule, the other rules listed in Table 5.1 in Chapter 5 on page 128 fall into place. The *residence rule* will generally specify with which side of the larger kinship system—mother's or father's—the married couple is to live with, or at least near. Likewise, *family activity* rules will be adjusted to coordinate with activities of the mother's or father's side of the family, as will *authority rules* within the nuclear family be guided by either kin on the mother's or father's side. Descent even shapes *family size and composition* rules (Fox 1967). Of special note, marriage rules become important, as permanent settlements must biologically reproduce while also obeying the incest rule: cross-cousin marriage, or patterns of marriage that identify which relatives are not, in fact, relatives become key to structuring kinship and building/maintaining alliances (Levi-Strauss 1969).

Thus, the decent rule narrows the range of options for all other rules in the system in ways that creates something that looks very much like an organizational chart of a bureaucratic organization today. In a sense, this is exactly what a unilineal descent system is doing: creating a hierarchy of kin units carrying authority and other resources, as well as a system of collateral relations with relatives of one side of the family. Such a kinship system can coordinate and regulate thousands of individuals in a preliterate society; and even during more advanced agrarianism, remnants of this system remain, especially among the upper classes holding wealth and power.

The Basic Structure of a Unilineal Descent System

In Figure 6.1 we have drawn the structure of a unilineal descent system, in somewhat simplified form. In many ways, this is a system that is built

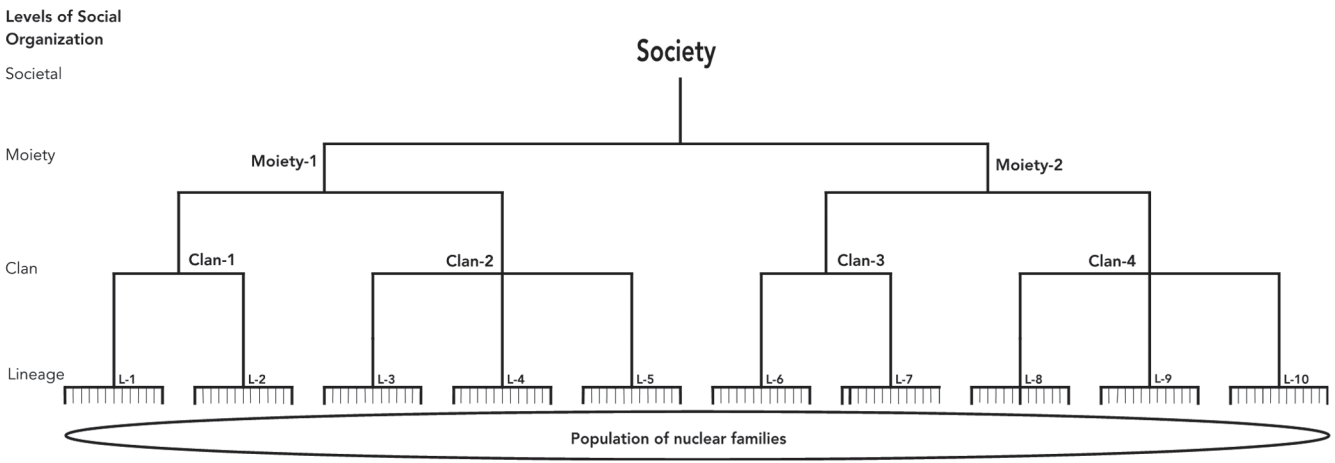


Figure 6.1 Kinship and Societal Organization

from the ground up, beginning with a pool of nuclear families of parents and children. An initial step is to use the descent rule to construct lineages among nuclear families. For example, in a patrilineal descent system, the lineage would include, at a minimum, the male relatives of a father, most likely the father of the father, the grandfather of the father, the male uncles, and male cousins; others could also be included, but the basic structure is to *link male relatives in a social structure* that is larger than any nuclear family. Often, kinship will not develop beyond this level of social organization because the population is not large or extensive.

The next level of structure in such a descent system is the *clan*, although there can also be an intermediate step of sub-clans that are part of one clan or another in a population, especially as populations get large. A sub-clan and clan link together lineages in a larger corporate unit, built around either the mother's or father's kin. Again, the structure may not evolve beyond this point, but a viable clan system can organize many families, specifying the kinship rules that are to govern their activities into a relatively cohesive and coordinated unit, often revealing differences in power between heads of each family. At times there is another unit inserted between clans and moieties. This is the *phratry* which is unit connecting two or more clans, with members of the clans seeing themselves as bonded with normatively specific obligations. After phratry comes the *moiety* which divides a society in half, with half the members in one moiety with its constituent nuclear families, lineages, sub-clans (if any), clans, phratries (if any), and the other half of the population in another moiety. Again, kinships systems do not have to evolve to this level, but each level adds an additional capacity *to organize larger numbers of individuals in a society*. Typically one moiety is dominant, with the result that the leader of the dominant moiety becomes the leader of the society as a whole, with elites in both moieties becoming the elites and advisors to the leader of the society. Together, these elite leaders form a kind of polity that remains embedded in the social structure and culture of kinship, but which may begin to enact laws, adjudicate disputes, and enforce laws and adjudicated decisions.

Building up a kinship system thus allows a population to engage in more diverse types of activity, some of which will evolve into autonomous institutional domains. The kinship provides the structural space for organizing more individuals in a more differentiated set of activities. Although the organization reflects a proto-bureaucracy, horticultural and agrarian kinship systems were significantly more constraining because individuals lived their daily lives inside of the system, were closely governed by kin rules, were closely linked in and subject to, hierarchies of authority and power, and were expected to meet all normative expectations for all

activities. Furthermore, one cannot simply "quit" their kin unit, as expulsion or exclusion is a death sentence. For example, in a *matrilineal system* with a *matrilocal residence rule*, a husband will move to his wife's community and be under observation by, and even authority of, the male relatives of his mother-in-law and, perhaps, informally of his mother-in-law as well. Of course, this husband will have relations with his own kin, but it is those of his wife's lineage within a clan or phratry that dictate much of his daily life in his role as father, husband, worker, or any other roles that he might play. The converse would be true in a *patrilineal system* which, generally, will have a *patrilocal residence rule* forcing the wife to live among the husband's relatives and, potentially, be under the authority of the husband's kindred.[4]

For an evolved great ape (or the modern reader), a unilineal descent system probably sounds like a living hell of constraint for animals that are highly individualist at their great-ape core and that evidence the traits outlined in the cognitive, psychological, emotional, and interpersonal complexes (Appendix II on pages 41 to 48) . Naturally, there are ways that individuals learn to avoid observations and sanctions and, moreover, to find gratifications, but still, the system is highly constraining. Moreover, alternative choices are few, as surviving on one's own was not possible. So, why was such a system built?

The answer is that there were simply no viable alternatives as selection pressures mounted. More organization was needed to regulate and control larger numbers of individuals, and the result was the six basic kin systems that have been studied by anthropologists. There are variants of these six, and rarely is any of these types exactly the same, but they reveal distinctive terminologies which specify the nature of relationships among family members inside these systems. Indeed, the terminology reveals how these kin systems integrate populations.

Relations among Corporate Units in Kinship Systems: The Underlying Dynamics of Integration

In Table 3.1 in Chapter 3 on page 93, we delineated eight patterns for organizing corporate units within institutional domains.[5] If we examine unilineal descent in terms of these patterns, it immediately becomes evident why unilineal descent evolved. We can begin with *segmentation* and sociocultural *equivalence*, or what is termed "regular equivalence" in the network literature (Kadushin 2012). At each level of organization, from the nuclear family to moiety, individuals are in basically *the same structures*, bearing the same relationships to each other. Regular equivalence creates

common experiences for individuals, even as their roles differ in unilineal descent systems. Moreover, much kinship terminology in unilineal descent increases this sense of regular equivalence by categorizing what are actually different locations in the system with the same name, thereby generating normative expectations implied by this name, with the results that some of the complexity of the system is reduced. For example, offspring within a nuclear family in a lineage and clan will designate their father's brothers (uncles) by the same kin term as they address their actual father; and this lumping can go up the lineage to their father's grandfather or great uncle because they too will be called by the term for "father." This is a very common way terminology is used and, at first, it was baffling to early researchers (Radcliffe-Brown 1941 [1952]). It became apparent, though, that offspring know the difference between the men they call father, having special affections for their actual fathers. The shared name, however, signifies the equivalence in status and role despite different incumbents, and therefore, the same normative expectations. It goes without saying that the same would be the case for how they address their mothers, aunts, and great aunts by the same terminology, thereby kicking in equivalent expectations which, again, simplifies the interactions and emphasizes the strength of these lineal bonds in lineages and clans. This practice, embedded in segmented kinship, facilitates structural and cultural integration and regulation, which, in turn, increases solidarity.

Structural differentiation is the second ordering mechanism in institution domains in Table 3.1, which also works to integrate elaborated kinship systems. The structural differentiation of nuclear families, lineages, subclans, clans, phratries, and moieties is, in essence, a combining of similar units in which individuals hold similar relationships with kin. Thus, even though a lineage is a corporate structure created by a descent rule connecting males and females in different relations, the relations remain the same, but are just expanded as one move up to a clan or to a phratry or moiety. As such, differentiation is created by consolidating similar units into different units—that is, nuclear families into lineages, lineages into sub-clans, sub-clans into clans, clans into phratries, and phratries into moieties. Thus, even though each level of organization is "different," it is built from the exact same components, consolidated at each level into larger but structurally and culturally equivalent units (Sarmela 1975). And moreover, even though each unit is considered different because the lineages, sub-clans, clans, phratries, and moieties have distinctive names and totems symbolizing their differences, their actual structure and culture is pretty much the same, as are the terms of address to others within any of these units. Thus, while differentiation of segmented units revealing

equivalences allows for different kinds of activities to occur, the overall structures at each level are the same, as are key relations among individuals in these structures. Indeed, the use of common names for different statuses in these structures emphasized the commonality of their relations.

One way differentiation enhances integration and regulation is through *structural inclusion*. Structural inclusion tends to promote integration even if the units being subsumed by a larger unit are different, because exchange relations, normative systems, movements, and other processes blend the structures and cultures into a meta structure and culture. In the case of unilineal descent, however, the units included are all the same basic type of unit, all the way up and through the moiety to society. Successive structural inclusion of segmented structures at each level of inclusion thus reveals equivalences that generate a very high level of integration, and particularly so when the units and equivalences are the same moving up from the nuclear family through to the moiety and society as a whole.

Unilineal descent systems also regulate corporate units through structural *segmentation*. A very unusual kind of segregation occurs in unilineal descent in that, for purposes of descent, a society is divided and, to some extent segregated, at least in critical functions such as where the nuclear family lives, what line of the adult members of the nuclear family will inherit, down what line will authority flow, and so on. A husband in a matrilineal system will be segregated from his blood (except his children during their formative years), where he lived, whom he must take account of, to whom he must cede authority, and so on. Rules of endogamy, eventually, become the lynchpin in early chiefdoms and underscore political evolution, as marriage becomes increasingly less about incest—indeed, in some Polynesian societies, ruling elite bent incest rules (Flannery and Marcus 2012)—and more about distinction and stratification. However, in unilineal societies, segregation underscored the emerging differentiation of domestic, economic, political, and religious affairs, giving it an organizational base along which these different spheres of activity could begin peeking out of the veil of kinship. In this way, institutional activities are well organized, thereby increasing a populations' fitness, while at the same time, relations across the society still remain to provide a more generalized sense of being in the same population by having access socially to one's blood kin.

Segregation of social units also led to structural overlaps and mobility-enhancing integration and regulation. In terms of the former, while unilineal descent systems divide a society into two lines of relationships, they also allow for overlaps between the two sides, especially at the personal

level of emotions: relations with one's family of birth. It is the rare case that a spouse living with their partner's family would be unable to spend time with their own biological kin. To be sure, it is sometimes the case that this interaction is delimited to recurring annual rituals, but there are rarely rules excluding all forms of interaction.

Visiting blood relatives in the same or other communities can occur, even as instrumental obligations are carried out within the kin network of one's spouse's family network. In terms of the latter, segregation and differentiation encourage mobility through obvious paths: social movements across the descent lines to one's blood (genetic) relatives. Additionally, when offspring get married, given the specific descent rule, one gender will move back to blood relatives of the father or mother, thus creating strong relations across the divide created by the descent rule.

The final mechanisms for ordering corporate units within institutional domains—*structural domination*—also develops within kinship systems which house early political systems before they eventually differentiate out from kinship. As the population grows, regulation is a powerful selection pressure, eventually causing the emergence of polity as an institutional domain (Netting 1972). Among many preliterate populations, but especially horticulturalists (gardening without the plow) along with husbandry, structural domination is often achieved initially within the hierarchy created by the embedding of nuclear families in lineages, lineages in clans, and clans in moieties—a process reflected in the evolution of religious cosmologies rooted in ancestor worship. Eventually, some elders and/or leaders of a lineage become leaders of clans or moieties, and, potentially, of the entire tribe itself. This kind of polity can be very effective, even if it lacks large coercive or administrative bases because *the hierarchy is built into the structure of the whole society*, down the descent lines from societal-level leaders through moieties to phratries, to clans, to sub-clans, to lineages, and then finally to nuclear families. The relative physical closeness of actors and the shortness of hierarchical ties encourage information flows rapidly up and down the hierarchy as well (Friedkin 2001). Ultimately, the norms that flow off the descent rule do much of the "heavy lifting" in keeping order of a larger population, although there are always possibilities of large sectors of the descent system rebelling or breaking away from a society if polity is considered abusive.

In short, the organization of corporate units within an elaborate kinship system is what allowed humans, as they settled down, to survive. Not all populations had these systems, nor were all unilineal descent systems fully built out as implied by Figure 6.1. Settled hunter-gatherers, especially those in fishing societies did not always have such systems, but if they engaged in

horticulture it is likely that they did, as was found in the Pacific Northwest among the Tlinglit and Nootka (Service 1971). And, where agricultural production evolved in any level of complexity, such as in the Polynesian societies, descent systems were firmly in place, ranking different lineages in the simplest of cases, like Samoa, while giving way to political differentiation ranging from stratified chiefdoms (Tonga) to true paramount chiefdoms (Hawaii) (Flannery and Marcus 2012). In either case, it is a fact that human societies would never have grown larger than 50–150 members without these elaborated kinship systems. They not only provided the structural platform for, first of all, population growth, they also generated selection pressures for new institutional systems that could integrate and regulate personal and, later, depersonalized interactions, exchanges, and communication.

Constraint, Flexibility, Accommodation, and New Problems

There can be little doubt that unilineal descent systems create a "cage of kinship" in that they tightly order and structure social relations (Maryanski and Turner 1992); and indeed, they carry very clear and constraining normative imperatives on action, interaction, and relations with others in this all-encompassing network. This seeming rigidity of social structure and its culture is, of course, likely to generate negative emotions for an evolved ape with an exceptionally large subcortex. Yet, at the same time, unilineal kinship systems increased fitness in often difficult environments by coordinating human actions in ways that increase production, assure reproduction of the species, distribute resources across a population, and of course, regulate human actions by specifying structural locations in a larger set of corporate units and by providing cultural instructions for appropriate behaviors.

Perhaps this is what Durkheim (1895 [1982])[6] meant when he remarked that humans need and embrace constraint; without it, *Homo sapiens* likely would have gone the way of every other hominin and nearly every other ape. Thus, despite the regulation of humans' biological nature, unilineal descent reveals a remarkable capacity to expand by simply adding more units to a given level with very little need for extra-kin mechanisms of integration or regulation. So, much like a modern bureaucracy, kinships systems can expand the entire system to accommodate population growth, at least up to a point. Indeed, the corporate units of a unilineal kinship system are very much like large corporations in contemporary societies.

Moreover, if there is sufficient land and territory, the system can easily accommodate more corporate community structures across which the kin system can operate. Not only can it accommodate more communities, it can also accommodate larger communities. Like any system, it has its upper limits in size, scale, and extensivity, but unilineal descent can even unify communities across relatively large geographic spaces because it provides a homogeneous cultural blueprint and structural base for how the rounds of everyday life are to be conducted. In fact, the existence of a meta social order provided by a kinship system can encourage segmentation of communities, and growth of territories to accommodate population growth, thereby increasing fitness as basic fitness-enhancing activities are carried out within the geography of each community and its lands for gardening, husbandry, hunting, and other critical subsistence activities. Thus, unilineal kinship systems order groups into a quasi-bureaucracy, while at the same time setting up selection pressures for community growth through segmentation and, eventually, differentiation, especially if particular communities become the places where political, religious, and economic elite reside.

Adaptation

As will become a key point in Chapters 7 and 8, one of the often-ignored or taken-for-granted forces driving structural and cultural change is male aggression. Though ape societies can reveal hierarchies, as chimpanzees sometimes do, there is a corrective force against use of hierarchy to regulate others' action. For example, chimpanzees will not tolerate males who constantly display aggressive, aggrandizing behavior and, as a result, other males may gang up and kill abusive "leaders" (Boehm 1999, 2018). Altruistic behavior, whether genetic or learned, appears to promote the survival of groups more readily than selfish behavior, which is at the base of many theories explaining the egalitarian nature of foraging societies (Gintis et al. 2015) and is, from a sociological view, not credible. At all times, however, aggressive males are a factor. And, when combined with the ape's propensity toward independence and autonomy, unilineal descent systems once again provide evidence of adaptive accommodations that clearly were designed to control male aggression or, at the very least, channel it.

Consider, for instance, an example discussed in Endnote 2, the Trobriander's *avunculocal* system. To summarize, an avunculocal system is a matrilineal system that sees women migrate to their husband's residence, and children raised in these nuclear families, but who then move to their mother's natal residence at puberty as they belong to the mother's group

and not the father's (Malinowski 1922). In a matrilocal system, where a husband moves to his wife's group, he would be under the authority—technically—of her male relatives, but without the same rights and duties of a blood relative. As such, the Trobriander's system is designed to mitigate potential male conflict generated by a residence rule that takes husbands away from their brothers, fathers, and other male blood (genetic) relatives. As previously noted, the solution does produce points of other strain, particularly as mothers and fathers essentially see their adolescent male children leave the home to join other groups (yet, that also is consistent with the transfer patterns of adolescents in great apes societies from their mothers at puberty). Thus, accommodative strategies, like most adaptive strategies, usually plug one hole in a dam while sometimes shifting the pressure to other weak points; and, these weak points, ultimately, become so pronounced when certain population sizes are reached and, especially, heterogeneity becomes impossibly salient.

Of course, patrilineal systems are not necessarily better alternatives. On the one hand, in a patrilineal system, the tensions often found in matrilineal systems are non-existent, since descent and residence rule are almost always *patri*, with resources being passed down through the father's side of the family and with sons' living near or with their father and his relatives. It is this reduced tension that may explain why patrilineal systems were more common in the ethnographic record. On the other hand, pooling men invites aggrandizing behavior. Most preliterate societies on record had or have informal mechanisms of control, such as gossip or shame. In a famous example, after living with the sub-Saharan !Kung for years, Richard Lee (1979) gave his closest confidants a very nice cow. Cattle are the central source of status in !Kung life, and in his very Western way, Lee intended to show his gratitude, but the tribe interpreted his behavior as efforts to gain status and publicly degraded the cow, calling what was otherwise a healthy animal scrawny and so forth. Eventually, these mechanisms no longer work, especially once some distinctions in prestige have emerged between men. Furthermore, corporate units defined by male relatives leave open all sorts of events, like accidental deaths, that may be met in kind, sparking a series of revenge killings or even warfare. In short, patrilineal systems are very flexible, but also become potential forces of sociocultural selection in ways previously impossible given the egalitarian nature of foraging societies.

We might ask, then, if matrilineal systems generate this tension of married males, why did they ever exist in the first place? The answer appears to be that under certain conditions, structural cohesion works better along the female's side of the family. The most common condition

is under conditions of endemic warfare, where males are either away from home too often to contribute to key subsistence activities or where deaths are significantly high. Matrilines and matrilocal systems make sense, such as those found among some of the Southwestern Native American tribes, like the Apache and Navajo (collectively denoted as Apacheans). Under these conditions, fitness is enhanced by having property and authority extend through males on the female's side of the family because they remain in the community. It is important to note, however, that ethnographic evidence is not a moving picture, but rather a snapshot. In some cases, we have data collected at different points in time that reflect the enduring nature of social structure as well as the change wrought by outside contact. Moreover, some have argued that the matrilineal clans are not as significant to daily routines as is often suggested by descent rules. However, it is a critical point to remember that kinship is an incredibly flexible system, as it can always dissolve to loosely structure relations between nuclear families embedded within a village or neighborhood. While there were things lost during industrialization, in many ways, urban societies allowed kinship systems to dedifferentiate back into bilateral, neolocal systems that probably approximated the earliest forms of human societies—that is, without the extraordinarily large, dense environs in which these modern versions currently operate. In part, the freedom the modern world offers many Westerners appears to fit more closely with our inherited ape propensities, which foreshadows the last question we ask: if unilineal descent systems were so flexible and adaptive, why did they decline?

The Decline of Descent

Some of the obvious weaknesses in both forms of unilineal systems have been mentioned above, but there are other reasons for the gradual decline of descent systems. Some will be discussed in greater detail in later chapters, beginning, of course, with our discussion of the differentiation of polity in the next chapter. However, a few words may be said about these systems. First, unilineal systems point to a major point of contradiction: what is good for the group, in this case extended familial obligations that exact what Maryanski and Turner (1992) called a "social cage," may be squarely against what is emotionally and psychologically satisfying for the individual. To be sure, this tension can certainly be managed for quite a long time, but eventually, under the right conditions, it can no longer suffice. Population-generated pressures, like resource scarcity, can exacerbate cleavages managed by informal sanctioning mechanisms.

The most problematic issue, however, is one that *all groups* in all times and places face as they grow in size: making important decisions in ways that are binding on all members. Who is authorized to make decisions that affect all members, by what process are decisions ratified, and by what process are they enforced and the like increasingly emerge as groups grow in size. For one thing, the probability of disagreement increases, as does the possibilities for outright conflict between families or heads of households. In many unilineal descent systems, one solution to these problems was to routinize fusion-fission seasonally. During times of abundance, smaller kin units would go off to their own territory, while in times of scarcity, they would come together around a source of water and provide each other with support. But for groups that could not fission so easily for one reason or another, new solutions to conflicts—especially extra-kin conflicts—were demanded to prevent the group de-evolving into endemic violence. These and other problems generated selection pressures which, as we will see in the next two chapters, caused the first polities to begin the process of evolution of differentiation and movement toward autonomy. And as this processes ensued, kinship began to de-evolve back to a profile more in turn with humans' evolved nature.

Conclusion

Within kinship systems, other institutional activities were occurring and being normatively regulated by kinship rules. Economic labor varied depending upon the settled population, whether settled hunter-gatherers, or early horticulturalists, or pastorals, or some combination of these. As we will see in tracing the evolution of polity, settled hunter-gatherers often developed what became known as a Big Man system where one entrepreneurial person would gather allies to assume political leadership of a community and to negotiate relations with neighboring communities. And, if there was tension, conflict, or warfare with neighboring populations, the Big Man would assume more powers. Thus, we have the early emergence of polity which, as noted above, will be examined in the next two chapters. More typical, however, polity remained within the kinship system of those engaged in gardening without the plow, or horticulture, with variants created by whether or not, or to what degree, hunting and/or fishing also occurred. Slowly nuclear families were collated into lineages, organized by descent and residence rules; and as the population grew, so did the scale of the unilineal descent systems, and system of communities across which this system operated; and it was inside the kinship system that economic, kinship, political, religious, and legal activities occurred.

With large horticultural societies, polity and religion were differentiated from kinship, as were new economic roles. Still, these overlapped with, and were often coextensive with, kinship roles and the status hierarchies of a well developed kinship system, as outlined in Figure 6.1 on page 139.

With the emergence of agrarian societies using the plow and even in some advanced horticultural societies, like early China but also in societies in Africa, Middle East and Eurasia, the other first institutions were differentiating and moving toward greater autonomy from kinship and from each other. Moreover, the earlier spread of populations to islands of the Pacific and south Asia, and then to the Americas, dramatically increased the mix of societal types dotting the earth, ranging from nomadic hunter-gatherers through settled hunter-gatherers and early horticulture to advanced horticulture, early agriculture and then advanced agrarian societies of the Middle East and Europe. And, a new force was emerging: the creation of "geo-political" and "geo-economic" empires linking societies of varying levels of development in a *system of societies*. Such systems of societies had existed with hunter-gathers in most parts of the world, but now political and economic control by conquest or cooptation was changing the nature of societies; and warfare as a result was dramatically increasing, generating many new selection pressures on all societies.

New technologies, new systems for distribution (markets and infrastructures like roads and ports), new services such as insuring and accounting, new productive units outside of kinship such as crafts, arts, metal work, manorial estates, and new types of communities (market towns, urban centers, and rural villages, etc.) were creating new selection pressures that could not be fully met, especially as populations grew. New institutional systems were needed to meet the fundamental pressures for production, reproduction, distribution, and regulation. Polity, economy, religion, and law all differentiated and were increasingly autonomous, developing their own systems of social organization among corporate units, cultures, and physical infrastructures, and temporal rhythms and time scales. Yet, ecological changes in the densities of societies, and changes in climate as well as utilization of resources by diverse populations, were generating selection pressures associated with inter-societal relations (warfare, trade, conquest) and with alterations in the biospheres of societies. The first institutions met these environmental challenges, but the scale of societies and their populations, coupled with new technologies, led to further differentiation of institutions over the long term, although evolution was punctuated with constant reversals and stagnation. But, once the original core institutions existed, de-evolution to less complex societal formations was never complete; these differentiated institutions would persist and

block de-evolution back to simple horticulture and hunting and gathering, although such societies did persist in the world well into the 20th century and even today in a few places on the globe. The invention of writing and the initial stages in the evolution of science, art, and medicine provided further resistance to a complete "dark ages" although the history of Europe after the collapse of the Roman Empire, and the de-evolution of the advanced societies of the Middle East and Classical Greece did usher in a de-evolution that took six to seven hundred years to begin the rebuilding of institutional systems that would eventually lead to the modern era.

Yet, with the original invention that saved humans from certain extinction—the nuclear family—and then the use of this type of corporate unit to build up elaborated kinships systems that could house and allow for expanded economic, religious, political, and legal activity, the build out of the first institution might never have been completed, with the result that humans may have disappeared under the hoofs of Malthusian horsemen. But with this original core set of institutions, humans were able to build out the remaining institutional systems, even with periodic collapses and population bottlenecks as Malthus' horsemen periodically rode through societies around the entire globe—just as the horsemen are still doing today.

Notes

1 Some have argued that this symbolization represented a growth in the brain (Klein and Edgar 2002), but it is equally possible that such artifacts existed much earlier. Cave art also emerges in this time frame, but such efforts my simply reflect new ways to make paints and perhaps new symbol systems that had been evolving for a long time were finally being expressed. Still, the capacity to express symbolic meaning through artifacts is an important step in sociocultural evolution, whether or not it is tied to hypothesized increases in brain size.

2 The dates indicate that formal analysis of kinship was winding down by the 1970s, but these and other older analyses are still quite powerful. For readable analysis of kinship as opposed to family, *per se*, see: Fox 1967; Goode 1964; Komarovsky and Waller 1945; Murdock 1949; White 1963; Kuper 2018).

3 Though most sociologists are unfamiliar with these terms, it is worth noting that *matri*lineal societies do not refer to which sex controls property, but rather, through which sex this property is transferred.

4 There are many variations on this basic set of patterns. One of the more famous, because of its "exoticness" relative to Western societies was Malinowski's (1922) Trobrianders. A matrilineal, avunculocal system had evolved meaning that descent, ultimately, passed through the mother, who went to live with her husband's family. As is typical, her brothers, uncles, and father tended to the land and property. When the mother's children—particularly males—reached a certain age, they would go to live with their mother's male relatives, since the land would pass into his hands. Because promiscuity

was not regulated, paternity was extraordinarily difficult to discern, and, consequently, there was a cultural narrative of the mother being impregnated by the spirit of her ancestors and thus the son belonged to that lineage and not to the father or nuclear family. Interestingly, this case underscores the contradictions between kinship theory and practice, and may even resonate with contemporary readers. In short, having one's child leave at puberty to live with a relative was emotionally distressful, but remained the rule. Malinowski (1959) was fortunate to observe a chief's son being taken from him and replaced with his nephew, which was prescribed by custom but not without protest and negative affect.

5 There are alternative ways to address the structure of unilineal kinship; see, for example: Krober 1909; Ember and Ember 1983; Eggan 1965; Loyn 1974; Malinowski 1930a, 1930b; 1945; Radcliffe-Brown (1924) [1952]; Redfield (1950); Davis 1936; White 1963; Sweetser 1970). We are emphasizing that human institutions are built up by relations among corporate units; and so, we are emphasizing various patterns by which they become linked in various institutional domains.

6 In the context of kinship, see Durkheim's analyses analyzed by: Lamanna 2002; Bynder (1969); Traugott (1978). See also Durkheim's "Introduction to the Sociology of the Family" in Traugott (1978).

7
The Emergence of Polity in Human Societies

Human Nature and Polity

Several decades ago, human nature was often portrayed as highly aggressive in a variety of ways. Such best-selling books as Robert Ardrey's portrayal of humans possessing a "killing instinct" in his *African Genesis* (1961) and, later as aggressively territorial in his *The Territorial Imperative* (1966), were followed by equally intense propensities to dominate in Desmond Morris' portrayal of *The Naked Ape* (1966), Lionel Tiger's and Robin Fox's (1971) "imperial animal," and by sociologist Pierre van den Berge's (1973, 1987) view of "domination" as one of the driving forces of human behavior and organization. More recent scholarly works like Boehm's analysis in *Hierarchy in the Forest* (1999; see also, 2018) explain the relationship between killing of aggressive males and political democracy, or similarly emphasize the aggressive nature of humans that was inherited from humans' hominin ancestors shared with the ancestors of great apes (Peterson and Wrangham 1997). The data make clear that, indeed, chimpanzees *can* become highly aggressive; and Boehm (2018) has provided data on the killing of dominant or aggressive chimps by those who have been subject to their abuse, followed up by accounts how similar patterns of "capital punishment" often await abusive human leaders or overly aggressive individuals in general. Such has also been the case with humans, even in the relative peace and tranquility of hunting and gathering societies. The very large literature of warfare and revolutions within many diverse types of societies underscores that humans can become very aggressive and willing to kill in collective mobilizations (Otterbein 1970; Gat 2006). So, it is obvious that humans can be aggressive, violent, and nasty, but is this really in human nature, or a capacity only activated under certain social conditions? Moreover, did polity evolve to tame the "beast" in humans as Hobbes (1651 [1982]) suggested long ago?

If we look at the data on great ape behaviors, some genetically driven propensities supporting some of the above arguments are evident. First, chimpanzees and gorillas evidence muted hierarchies, as is the case when the lead silverback of a gorilla regulates some activities and movements of

DOI: 10.4324/9781003224433-8

his local community or when chimpanzees sometimes compete for dominance (Wright et al. 2014). This hierarchy and the power implied by it are, however, muted by the fact that great apes can be mobile and simply move away from oppressive leaders or, alternatively, gang up in killing or injuring abusive leaders. Thus, hierarchy among great apes cannot easily lead to stable patterns of coercive abuse of community inhabitants. Second, chimpanzees do organize "patrols" monitoring the boundaries of their communities (Mitani and Watts 2005), preventing all outside males from entering the community (through intimidation or actually killing), while at the same time, allowing females to enter the community to replace those adolescent females who are leaving their natal community (see Chapter 1). Third, leadership often appears among chimpanzees, especially among males, when engaged in a collective action such as coordinating the hunt for meat (de Waal 1996), as is the case when chimps will develop a plan to kill a monkey walking around in the lower forest habitat.

All of these behavioral propensities could be subject to further selection and provide a basis for the consolidation of power and influence to regulate and coordinate actions of conspecifics. Moreover, if language, culture, enhanced emotions, and intelligence enhance these rather muted tendencies for hierarchy, they could easily be elaborated by normative expectations. Still, the fact that chimpanzees will kill off abusers of power and, moreover, always have the option of migrating away from such abusers in large home ranges indicates that "hierarchy in the forest" was limited because there were genetically driven counter responses whereby individualistic and mobile great apes could move away from centers of abusive power or mobilize counter-power to kill off over-use of power. At the genetic level, then, do humans really have "killing instincts," needs as fundamental as sex for "dominance" or for control of territories of others, or, are these behaviors reactions to aberrant patterns of behaviors by conspecifics or patterns of sociocultural organization? Consequently, is there a biology behind polity, or the mobilization of power, to regulate and control human behaviors and patterns of social organization, or, is it polity that creates this apparent need to be aggressive and dominant?

The answer to these questions does not reside, we believe, in powerful instincts to dominate and control at the species as opposed to individual level. Situationally and historically, violence remains rare (Collins 2009). Indeed, the near universal normative prohibitions on efforts of individuals in hunting and gathering societies to dominate and to present themselves as "above" others suggests that such efforts go against the innate propensities of the great ape for weak ties, individualism, and freedom of mobility within defined territories. To be sure, humans, like any individualistic ape,

will resist, often with counter violence, aggressive acts of conspecifics; and if power and control are institutionalized in polity and abusive forms of government, humans can indeed be mobilized for counter violence. That is to say, an ape whose behavioral propensities are amplified by human emotional, cognitive, and psychological states, may come to be *more* violent and more intent on dominating where structures and culture are built up to channel that sort of behavior (Chagnon 1977).

But, have we not argued that polity is a universal institutional sphere of action? And have nary a society existed over the last 8,000 years *sans* a polity? Why did it evolve if it was not to control endemic violence? Were there other selection pressures pushing on human populations that forced the evolution of polity and, with polity, the ability to mobilize power to control and regulate others?

Below we would argue this is, in fact, the case because even as the first leaders of bands and kin units emerged, emphasis was on *persuasion* rather than on brute use of coercive power. That even as polity began to emerge in early human populations, it was restrained; and only when selection pressures increased did the institutionalization of power involve heavy reliance on coercion as well as on other bases of power. Thus, to fully appreciate how power evolved, we need to first outline the bases of power that humans have used to regulate and control behaviors and patterns of social organization; and then, we can backtrack to the very beginnings of polity to see what forces were responsible for to the emergence, institutionalization, and increasing autonomy of polity in human societies.

The Bases of Power and the Institutionalization of Polity

Polity evolves under selection pressures to regulate and control behaviors and patterns of relationships among individuals in societies. We will examine many of the specifics of these selection pressures, but for the present, let us simply emphasize what the emergence of polity accomplishes: the consolidation and, to varying degrees, the concentration of power (or the capacity to control and regulate others) into the hands of particular individuals and governmental social structures. While not fully evident until more complex societies evolved, there are four fundamental bases of power: (1) coercive, (2) symbolic, (3) administrative, and (4) incentive (Turner 1972, 1995, 2003). These can be interrelated but they each operate in a somewhat different way to control human behaviors and to regulate social relations among individuals and the structures organizing their lives. Each of these is briefly defined below.

The Coercive Basis of Power

Coercion is the use of physical force. In its simplest form, coercion involves an individual imposing physical force on another in order to control and regulate conduct. Sometimes, only the threat of physical force is sufficient, but nonetheless, the power of force resides in its potential use. One individual killing or seriously hurting another through coercion does not make a polity, but it is one of the underlying forces that becomes institutionalized as a polity evolves. Although it is initially an individual's use or control of superior force that matters, eventually, coercion is collective, mobilizing and organizing individuals and corporate units and their activities, to force other individuals and units of organization to act and operate in desired ways. Over time, incumbents of polity increasingly seek to sustain a disproportionate coercive capacity, relative to other social units within a society. Yet, such was not the case in most early human societies; coercion could be mobilized but, more often, efforts at influence and interpersonal sanctions were more typically employed before individuals would resort to physical coercion. Coercion, then, was not the automatic response but, rather, a response that occurred only *after* various efforts at persuasion had proved ineffective. Yet, as societies became larger, more complex, and more stratified, coercion was increasingly mobilized, although in the long-run, coercion often begets counter coercion. As Edmund Burke once quipped: "A society cannot be controlled if it must constantly be conquered."

The Symbolic Basis of Power

Humans are emotional, highly cognitive, and cultural animals (see Appendix II in Chapter 1); and together, these combine into what can be viewed as the *symbolic base* of power. Humans can respond emotionally to symbols denoting and marking almost anything—a person, a text, a physical structure, a natural phenomenon, a set of relationships, or social structures. Because humans constantly engage in symbolization, symbols can be used to regulate and control others, whether as texts, cultural beliefs and mythologies, religious beliefs, physical structures, laws, and social structures, such as polity, church, family, workplace, etc. By manipulating symbols in ways that arouse emotionally charged commitments, individuals and segments of a population can be controlled and regulated. And, if used effectively, symbols of polity—flags, offices, individuals, bodies of decision making, armies, and even bureaucrats—can be employed to gain conformity to political decision makers. Of course, these same symbolic

capacities can, under certain conditions, lead to mobilization against polity if the actions of political decision makers are not seen as legitimate.

The Administrative Basis of Polity

The very first evidence of an emerging polity was often just a willingness to follow an individual, with little administrative structure to organize decision making and implementation of decisions. However, the institutionalization of polity inevitably leads to the building of an administrative structure over the long term, culminating in bureaucratic state structures evident in the world today (Weber 1978). Long before legal-rational bureaucratic domination, administrative structures could be groups of kin elders, particularly lineages in a kinship system, allies of leaders who are willing to implement and even enforce decisions, councils of elders from diverse kin units, and potentially other configurations whereby leaders and decision-makers coordinate the actions of others to implement and enforce decisions (Gluckman 1965). The larger a population becomes, the larger will be the administrative structures organizing polity. Even where administrators do not have high levels of coercive power, their control of information and their ability to mete out resources becomes a *de facto* source of power and control (Scott 1998).

The Incentive Basis of Polity

Many early political leaders used *incentives* to coordinate and control. In simple societies, leaders giving individuals, and even corporate units (e.g., families), valued resources for conformity and appropriate behaviors can often be the only way to regulate, especially if the coercive and administrative bases of power are not developed (Flannery and Marcus 2012). Yet, as polity evolves, incentives become ever-more a part of all other bases of power. There is an incentive not to go against the wishes of those possessing power; administrative structures are often set up to mete out and then monitor the effectiveness of incentives for certain types of behavior and action among members of a society and the units organizing their activities. Many incentives also involve use of symbols or access to certain symbols to entice behaviors and actions of the corporate units organizing their activities. Eventually, with the expansion of market systems, the social world becomes incentivized in so many ways that individuals constantly seek incentives in ways that give polity the capacity to use incentives rather than coercion to regulate and control, as is the case, for example,

when the tax system give incentives to individuals and corporate units proscribing and prescribing particular activities. Such incentive systems can often decrease reliance on all other bases of power.

Polity and Power

In essence, polity is the mobilization of these four bases of power in response to selection pressures for *regulation*, *control*, and *coordination* among actors in a society. Where each is mobilized, political decisions and action, domination and subjugation, are involved; when the production and distribution of each base is consolidated and centralized, then polity becomes differentiated from other spheres of social action. To be sure, just which of these bases of power is mobilized depends on the nature of the selection pressures and on the nature of the society and its environment. Small societies do not need a polity to any great extent, just emergent leaders in times of difficulty; large societies must have a large polity if they are to be viable. Thus, as we will see, population growth, *per se*, will generate selection pressures for polity (Hassan 1975). For regulating, coordinating, and controlling a larger population, and an increased number of differentiated corporate units, organizing their activities demands the consolidation of the four bases of power into a coherent institutional system that, increasingly, becomes autonomous. Generally speaking, this process is started and accelerated as population growth puts pressure on subsistence resources and intensification of resources (Abrutyn and Lawrence 2010), and the process is intensified as societies successful at supporting larger populations incur greater (1) production risks, (2) raiding and warfare, (3) inefficient resource use, and (4) resource deficiencies (Johnson and Earle 2000). Surrounding these basic forces are diverse conditions affecting the shape and tempo of political evolution related to trade within and between populations, environmental change, circumscription by neighboring societies, and many other selection pressures that increase the need for more regulation, coordination, and control for a society to remain viable in its environment.

Patterns of Early Polity: Formation in Human Societies

The Dynamics of Leadership

Why would weak-tie, individualistic, and evolved great apes like humans accept even modest leadership, to say nothing of more institutionalized power in the form of a polity? The only answer is that they were *forced to do so in the face of selection pressures*, but this begs the question of the mechanisms by which leadership emerges and is accepted and, later, by

which polity becomes institutionalized in social structures. Fortunately, there are models on collective action that specify some of the key dynamics behind the formation of leadership and, ultimately, institutionalized polity (e.g., Glowacki and von Ruden 2015).[1] Within general rational choice theories in economics and sociology (Hechter 1987), leaders provide a "joint good" (the capacity to coordinate efforts) in the face of potential "negative externalities" (e.g., inability to adapt to environmental conditions). Subsequently, under additional conditions—size of the grouping, capacity to monitor and sanction free-riders, and dependence of group members on the group itself—leaders can be given rights to provide direction for coordinating the actions of others (Coleman 1990). In anthropological models, this basic argument is made but generally in the context of explaining leadership and the rise of polity in simple societies. Furthermore, once polity is institutionalized in some form, often within the system of unilineal kinship of horticulturalists and pastoralists, an early template for the further elaboration of polity is laid down, ultimately allowing for the evolution of the bureaucratized state as populations grew and engaged in inter-societal warfare and exchange.

But, focusing on the earliest signs of episodic leadership in human societies of nomadic and then more settled hunter-gatherers, *leaders* emerge because a small population is subject to selection pressures beyond the organizational capacities of band organization and its nuclear families, outlined in Chapter 4 (Johnson and Earle 2000). These negative externalities generate pressures for a leader or leaders to emerge. Based on data from many simple societies evidencing leaders, these individuals tend to be more knowledgeable for their age, larger in body size, noted for their social connections, charismatic, and able to secure, within the limits of the mode of subsistence, more resources than others (Younger 2010; Glowacki and von Rueden, 2015). What leaders provide is a capacity to exert *influence* (more than authority) in establishing goals, laying out the logistics of needed cooperative action, monitoring of individuals' efforts, rewarding appropriate effort while negatively sanctioning free-riding, and in general using incentives to reward or punish actions. Moreover, by using their capacity to influence others or to draw upon collective support, leaders limit intra-band or community conflict, feuds, and acts of retaliation. If such leadership proves effective, then prestige, honor, and commitment are given to a leader and, if this leadership begins to become institutionalized within existing sociocultural formations—settled bands, kindred, communities, lineages, clans, moieties, or any structural formation—then the giving of power and authority to leaders will soon ensue, with leadership potentially becoming hereditary.

Thus, leadership can vary along a number of dimensions (Glowack and von Reuden 2015), including: (1) mobilizing collective efforts, (2) distributing leadership responsibilities, or (3) directing communities and kin units of a unilineal descent organizing members of a population. For most of human history, leadership was episodic, exercised through charisma or competence, with leadership emerging and receding as adaptive problems requiring extra mobilization of collective actions arose and, then, receded (Gintis et al. 2015). Powerful norms of inequality would work against permanent leadership in nomadic hunting and gathering bands through most of the Pleistocene right up until the transition to the Holocene at around 12,000 years before the present.

With the institutionalization of the first tentative polities, leaders were given power and control over more productive resources that could be used as incentives and disincentives on members, kin units, and communities in a society. The result was, of course, the beginning of inequality and eventually the stratification of individuals, communities, and kin units as societies began to grow and become more productive. With this transformation of leadership, many of the more prominent features of "state" control of societies began to emerge: the power to bias the benefits of leadership to the leader and his kin units, create ideological and normative systems legitimating the benefits of leadership, command commitments of individuals and the corporate units organizing their activities to the leader and his allies, and mobilize populations for various collective efforts, from infrastructural development through sharing of productive outputs with leaders, to going to war against other societies. Yet, even as inequalities increased with more concentrated power of leaders, the data on early forms of human societies suggests that there were counter-pressures against giving too much, if any, power to leaders. Or, at the very least, limiting the powers and demanding that power is only given in order for leaders to achieve prestige by being generous to the general population. We can see these counter-pressures in the Big Man systems that evolved in the later Pleistocene.

"Big Man" Political Systems

Leadership has, no doubt, emerged in all small societies under selection pressures exceeding the capacities of nuclear kin units in leaderless foraging bands to deal with these pressures. Typically, these leaders would emerge and then recede, although these leaders likely were accorded great respect, honor, and prestige. At times, however, these egalitarian bands had members who were excessively aggressive, thereby disrupting for a time

the smooth flow of daily routines. As noted, under these conditions, it is likely that this individual will have to be expelled from the band or killed by a relative designated by other band members or by a selected group of individuals, just as can be seen the case of rogue chimpanzees (Boehm et al. 1993). This is not leadership or polity, but instead, raw coercion mobilized for a delimited purpose so that the band can go back to its more tranquil routines of hunting and gathering. But these episodes of "capital punishment" have probably existed since the beginnings of bands organizing late hominin and early human nuclear kinship units (Boehm 2018).

The first real step toward a more institutionalized polity in human societies was what are often termed "Big Man" societies, although other terms for this leadership have also been used (e.g., headman, centreman, strongman, director, and manager). Marshall Sahlins (1963) was perhaps the most instrumental in making the label, Big Man, a prominent label for this type of early polity. Sahlins was drawing mainly from ethnographic accounts from the Bougainville Islands and Papua New Guinea political systems but the phenomenon can be found across the Pacific Islands and anywhere where relatively small populations in low technology societies must meet environmental selection pressures requiring coordination and control of individual and family activities. Big Men can be found not only in somewhat settled hunting and gathering societies, but also in simple horticulture, pastoral, and fishing societies composed of comparatively small numbers of individuals—a few dozen to several hundred and, at times, a bit larger. Notably, Big Man societies achieve some of the control capacity of what are often termed *chiefdoms*, but the latter are generally hereditary and often built within the structure of a unilineal descent system, whereas the Big Man is an *achieved status* of a man who accumulates enough allies, as well as both subsistence goods and prestige goods, such as pigs, shell money, yams, wives, in addition to different types of symbolic objects marking prestige. The Big Man is both a hustler and politician who acquires "wealth" in order to give it away in prestige-building ritual acts, thereby achieving status that allows him to direct, coordinate, and control actions by individuals and kin units in a small-scale society. Of course, this phenomenon can be seen in the halls of power in contemporary societies, but the "wheeler-dealer" antics of politicians in present-day governments are no more dramatic than those of a successful Big Man who, in essence, is the benign, though still self-interested, ruler of his small society.

In most small societies, exchanges of resources involve equivalences in which one good is exchanged for another related good. In short, inhabitants of a small society are offered the resources that the Big Man

has accumulated, which include a mix of hard and less easily quantified capacities such as critical knowledge, oratorical abilities, emotion arousing rituals, support from his allies and extensive social networks, among other things, in exchange for *commitments* to the Big Man. As long as a Big Man can sustain perceptions of the value of his presence to members of a society, he can remain the social and political leader of a small society. This kind of achieved leadership is very different from other forms of leadership that also arise in small, simple societies: leadership that is inherited, typically in relation to kinship rankings. It is the Big Man's capacity to "*persuade*" others to do his bidding that is more critical than overt coercion. Characteristically, there is no structural base in egalitarian kinship systems for sustained rule over generations, and thus Big Men live and die by their charisma and ability to articulate ideas and beliefs about their generosity (an implicit symbolic base of power) in providing resources to others, and in organizing collective rituals and festivals that demonstrate the Big Man's generosity and right to direct, coordinate, and control much activity of individuals and their kin. Of course, Big Men systems are also vulnerable to myriad selection pressures: if they cannot manage selection pressures, they soon find that they are replaced, or, they may work to transfer and consolidate their power in their kin group, giving power a structural base in the organization of the kinship system. Such systems can often evolve into *chiefdoms*, leading to further institutionalization of power.

Just when such transformations occur is very much related to the selection pressures from both the physical, organic, and social ecologies of small populations. If the population can remain isolated, as in the case of living on an island with no close neighbors, such a system could persist. Yet, once the environment demands drastic changes—e.g., encroachment and circumscription by better organized neighbors, warfare with neighboring societies, rapid environmental degradation, the need to migrate to new territories—selection pressures can be sufficient to overwhelm the population, causing its degeneration or, short of this disastrous outcome, to further institutionalization of polity leading to chiefdoms, and, at times, even early versions of representative government in which kin heads (often seen as "chiefs") meet as a kind of "congress" to make decisions for all kin units and communities in a society (Kirch 1984; Earle 1991; Carneiro 1981; Abrutyn and Lawrence 2010). Ultimately, once institutionalization beyond the charisma of a Big Man ensures, then polity will continue to grow and consolidate power in the hands of leaders who now rely upon all bases of power: coercive, administrative, incentive, and symbolic. Leaders who we would call chiefs.

The Big Divide: Late Pleistocene and Early Holocene

What distinguished most of human polities from trends that likely began at the end of the Pleistocene (*c.* 12,000 years before the present) and accelerated through the early Holocene (11,000–5,000 BCE) was the lack of an institutionalized pattern of succession. Big Men relied fully on their charisma, but the ascent to power for their children or other family members was by no means assured. In Weberian terms, the break from Big Men societies to chiefdoms can be characterized by the evolution of an "office," or formalized role or set of roles with formal duties, rights, and expectations. Why 12,000 years ago? As the last ice age receded, humans began to spread throughout the world at an increasingly rapid rate (Fagan 2004). With climates improving, food and survival became easier, and groups began to grow larger. In most cases, these groups would fission when they reached a certain size, but eventually, by about 12,000 years ago, most of arable land was occupied. Additionally, with the end of the ice age, the Megafauna (e.g., Mastodons) went extinct—perhaps because of overhunting—which put pressure on groups to find suitable alternatives to the missing calories (Sandom et al. 2014). Domestication of animals and plants were known for several millennia prior, but now, sedentary life had appeal. Thus, a confluence of factors intersected, making political evolution very likely to occur: groups were increasingly tied to a territory, and as they grew larger, they needed new ways to feed more mouths. Moreover, thereby increasing the likelihood they would bump into other groups, which meant diplomacy, warfare, and defensive measures created opportunities for centralizing authority. Additionally, larger groups meant diversity and specialization which, in turn, increased selection pressure for new mechanisms of regulation and new forms of integration among corporate units, as these units developed increasingly discrete cultural systems predicated on their distinct practices and knowledge. All this to say that risks grew concomitant to population growth, density, and heterogeneity, both presenting real selection pressures on groups for their survival and prying open structural windows for political entrepreneurship. And, political entrepreneurship brought with it a radical transformation in the structure and culture of those societies.

In particular, the shift from tribe to chiefdom meant the evolution of a political economy for the first time. Second, subsistence economies were driven by household needs, whereas political economies are driven by the needs articulated by a nascent ruling elite. These needs range from risk management in the event of famine or droughts to self-aggrandizement. Part of the political entrepreneurial project is symbolic, which

meant that chiefs had to not only create practices and beliefs that upheld and embodied their distinctiveness, but they also needed to manage the impression that they were different. Luxury or prestige markets were overlaid upon foreign and long-distance trade to ensure chiefs could possess goods with no use-value, but with clear status consequences. Third, fundamental concerns of polities, and most organizations, is rooted in the internal goal of maintaining and expanding the resources and reach of the organization. Producing sufficient surplus production was not simply to benefit the collective or facilitate luxury good markets, but also to finance public works and war making (offensive and/or defensive) that further circumscribed subjects socially and militaristically. Finally, whereas subsistence economies can be sustained for as long as the environment produces food, political economies are marked by cycles of unyielding growth followed by internal conflict and collapse, and their expansion again through new elites or through absorption into a larger, neighboring political economy.

In the following discussion, we first answer the question "why polity first?" Certainly, religion or law or economy were present and could have been the first institutions to evolve apart from kinship, but it was polity in every case we know of. Once answered, we turn to a descriptive analysis of chiefdoms and then conclude with the explanatory framework for why they evolved in the first place and how they continued to evolve, with some, like Hawaii, approximating nascent kingdoms. We leave the evolution of the state and full-blown political autonomy for the ensuing chapter (8).

Why Political Evolution?

When we ask the question "why polity?" we are faced with perhaps the simplest answer possible: because all immediate problems related to population growth, both in size and density, are *political problems*. If politics are the sphere of social life concerned with who gets to make collective-binding decisions**,** usually related to the mobilization of resources and their appropriation, then it makes sense that the number, complexity, and existential nature of exigencies increases concomitant to the size of group. This principle is further supported by the fact that a second set of problems societies face relate to inter-societal contact. The collective must elevate someone, even if temporarily, to represent the collective in interactions with other groups. To be sure, this may be a council that does the representing, but eventually, two negotiators of trade and peace with advisors makes more sense when making decisions. The second principle

driving political evolution is related to the four bases of power discussed above—coercive, administrative, incentive, and symbolic. Physical force is always at the heart of the other three bases, though they function to help soften the edges of this fact as well as prevent the need for force in the first place. For better or worse, the archaeological and anthropological record reveals the role force plays in consolidating and, most importantly, retaining other bases of power. Especially in the early Holocene where Carneiro (1970) observed that groups rarely gave up autonomy willingly. To be sure, the story is not as simple as the strongest or cruelest men won, but that the tempo of political evolution was conditioned by the aggression and ingenuity of men who either saw opportunity or pried windows open. And, it is not without some irony, that the brutish nature of political evolution also lead to increasing efforts to pare back the instability of hereditary succession and the seemingly constant threat of fratricide (Flannery and Marcus 2012).

It may be these facts that led Spencer (1874–96 [1898]) to posit his warfare theory of political evolution. Recognizing myriad pathways to differentiation, Spencer ultimately settled on warfare as the fastest and most effective mechanism for chiefdom formation. Amidst hostile threats—real, imagined, or manufactured—four factors interest. First, defensive measures become a necessity, which means coordinating labor *and* artificially circumscribing people to a space. Second, wars demand centralized command for efficacious communication and movement, as well as planning. Third, wars breed or intensify loyalty to men, especially when those men reward soldiers in ways that make armed conflict the only or most appetizing path to upward social mobility. Fourth, war leads to a rapid increase in logistical problems of all sorts. If the enemy is not vanquished, diplomacy, peace negotiations, and defensive measures become pressing issues. If the enemy is vanquished, the divvying up of "treasure" requires organization, and the new territory needs management. These merely scratch the surface of issues facing a group when it wins, not to mention as it gets larger it becomes a target for raids, usurpers, and any enemies who were not captured.

The Further Institutionalization of Polity

Chiefdoms are extraordinarily "more complex and more organized… distinguished from tribes by the presence of centers which coordinate economic, social, and religious activities" (Service 1962: 133). Reciprocal exchange economies are overlaid with redistributive systems in which the simplest chiefs appropriate surplus as a means to centralize risk and

to facilitate coordinating increasingly complex divisions of labor (Earle 1991), and in the most complex chiefdoms, such as those found throughout Polynesia, they extract tribute in kind and/or coerce labor (Goldman 1970). Finally, chiefdoms are distinct in their vertical differentiation, as a chiefdom usually consists of at least two, but usually three or more levels of authority.

Chiefly authority is, to be sure, distinguishable from state-infused power in so far as chiefs do not monopolize the legitimate right to force, but rather build their power on three basic sources (Flannery and Marcus 2012: 208–9). The first, which approximates Durkheim's *esprit de corps*—or, the common spirit of the group—was referred to by many names, such as *mana*, but which may be roughly translated as *life force*. The religious sphere during the early Holocene is not a source of legitimacy in the same way as it would become with the rise of the state (see Chapter 8; Eliade 1978), but the idea that the chief embodied the essence or represented the spirit of the group was at the base of his claims to authority. Usually the life force was grounded in the supranatural as well as in the structural and cultural logic of unilineal kinship in which a pyramid formed around lineages (with the chief's lineage resting at the apex), and the chief could lay claim to an extensive genealogy. A second base of power stemmed from what Polynesians called *tohunga*, or "expertise." If *mana* captures the moral side of a Weberian notion of charismatic leadership, *tohunga* was the practical side. Being skilled at war making, like Shaka of the Zulu clan (Gluckman 1940), or political expertise, as in the Samoan chiefs (Kirch 1984), could ground authority alongside or paramount to life force. Finally, a third source was *toa*, or embodiment of key masculine traits like bravery and toughness. The Tongan and Hawaiian chiefdoms clearly incorporated the latter piece, but as they were by far some of the most advanced chiefdoms known to anthropologists, they integrated all three bases of power.

That said, these bases had important relationships to the three "levels" or forms of inequality chiefdoms could manifest (Goldman 1970): traditional, open, and stratified chiefdoms. *Traditional* inequality was distinguished by two levels of authority: the chief and his real/fictive closest or primary relatives and all others. Authority was vested solely in possession of *mana*. However, the distinction between chiefs and commoners should not be underestimated. In Samoa, for instance, subjects were expected to prostrate themselves in his presence. Indeed, even among the Nootka of Vancouver Island—a rare example of a chiefdom *sans* agricultural surplus (Service 1971)—clear distinctions in privileges and rights existed between the chief and his followers, as well as kin who could locate themselves closer genealogically. *Open* chiefdoms added military/political expertise to the base,

allowing chiefs to lay claim to loyal men willing to defend and support the chief's authority and decision making. Inequality between chiefs and commoners was exponentially greater in open societies, such that touching the hair clippings of a chief was thought to contaminate the exposed. In Tonga, we see the outlines of endogamous caste-like stratification, but it did not achieve this level. A final point worth noting is the emergence of discrete physical space dedicated to the chief, his family, and his retinue. As Camp David is for the modern presidency, chiefs created seasonal homes that often doubled as sacred burial grounds and leisure activities. Finally, *stratified* societies are characterized by endogamous strata, highly distinct physical, temporal, social, and symbolic space, and, usually, three or more classes of people. In Zulu, for instance, we find four endogamous categories: the king (Zululand had transitioned into a kingdom upon Shaka's militaristic exploits) and ruling lineages directly attached to or allied with Shaka; the 'provincial' chiefs; the lower ranking members considered Zulu or citizens; and a category of refugees or subjugated people who were denied basic rights and privileges. Hawaiian Islanders, too, demonstrated the transition to stratification, even before it approached a kingdom: a hereditary nobility consisting of paramount and district chiefs stood in sharp relief against the rest of the population, or commoners. As with Shaka's decision to remove existing privileges to classes of people who previously had them, Hawaiian Islander chiefs declared all land in their possession, thereby removing privileges vested in a landed gentry. And though Hawaii never developed a multi-tier stratification system, gradations of rank and prestige emerged within the hereditary nobility that had powerful consequences for mobility and opportunity.

Thus, chiefdoms look and feel very different from their predecessors. They concomitantly provide public services and goods beyond the capacity or desirability of Big Men or egalitarian societies (Service 1975), *and* produce and enforce inequities that diminish the positive nature of these public goods and services (Fried 1967). Chiefdoms are paradoxical in many other ways. For instance, they begin the long, slow process of rationalization described by Weber or differentiation described by Durkheim that sees ascriptive status replaced with achieved status, custom and norms replaced by positive law, decisions made purely by arbitrary fiat replaced by administrative apparatus, and so forth. However, while chiefs and later kings spend inordinate amounts of time devising ways to sever subjects' loyalty to family, village, and territory, they succeed more so in creating two competing spheres of domination: local kinship and regional, distant polity. Meanwhile, political power is vested in elaborate kinship genealogies for the privileged strata, further entangling the powerful in a web of

kinship. Additionally, chiefdoms begin the acceleration of a "social cage" (Maryanski and Turner 1992) that only declines with the evolution of autonomous religious spheres (see Chapter 10) and breaks down when law and economy grow autonomous (see Chapters 13 and 14, respectively).

The remainder of this chapter turns to the question of "how" political evolution proceeds. We offer a general theory of political evolution that draws from myriad theoretical and empirical sources to chart the basic dynamics that undergirds the emergence and further growth of all chiefdoms.

The Fundamental Engine

If material surplus is the fuel of political evolution, then population pressures are the oxygen necessary for combustion. Population pressures, however, only drive political evolution under the right conditions and, still, are not sufficient for chiefdoms to form.

The settlement of Homo sapiens

Some 12,000 years ago, following the end of the last ice age, humans filled up most of the arable land on Earth. When times are good, humans usually reproduce with few mechanisms of birth control besides those that are culturally embedded (e.g., male-born preferences). The speed with which humans spread across the globe points to the most common response to population growth: fission. Foraging groups could support, usually, 50–80[2] people, and once the upper number for a particular habitat and niche was reached, only a few options remained to maintain subsistence levels with horizontal mechanisms of social integration and regulation. In short, while humans are capable—clearly—of building very large societies, there are cognitive and affectual limitations on the number of people we can trust, personally, without some sort of mechanisms mediating impersonal or, even, depersonal relationships (Dunbar 1992; Hammond 1983). Humans carry in their fundamental biological nature preferences for individualism, autonomy, and efficacy, even as they must accommodate more stable patterns of social organization compared to their great ape ancestors (see complexes in Appendix II in Chapter 1), and they certainly act to thwart aggressive efforts of others to dominate (just as their great ape ancestors did; Boehm 2018). Indeed, humans only gave into being constrained by power because of the necessity for better means of control and coordination as populations grew in size. Thus, if possible, nomadic hunter-gatherers would break a band apart if it had

become too large; and so, egalitarian preferences won out (Gintis et al. 2015), leading to groups segmenting into smaller groups with one staying and the other moving on.

The other option, which we saw the outlines of in Big Men societies, was to create a second layer of authority but this could only be done when there was a sufficient supply of protein available, typically through fishing. Thus, in order to consolidate power in leaders and make this new layer of authority a permanent feature of a society, populations had to grow to the point where normal give and take was no longer possible, forcing two large transformations: (1) increased production of resources through technological leaps and/or specialization, and (2) political entrepreneurs clever and willing enough had to seize the moment. Marx (1867 [1990]: Chapter 26) spoke of "primitive accumulation" to describe the skill and fortune actors would have had in securing good land, and eventually pressing this advantage against others who suffered bad luck and misfortune through debt. But, we can also speak of primitive accumulation in a political fashion, as patrilineal arraignments made it possible for an aggressive male to secure monopolies over certain claims, such as the Nootka chief's claim to fishing rights that he "leased" to others (Service 1971). Hence, chiefdoms can only evolve when power can be harnessed and when inequality has already become a factor (Earle 1991; Flannery and Marcus 2012). And these two factors depend on five key conditions: sedentary settlements (which we have already discussed briefly), a material surplus, specialization, trade, and circumscription.

Material Surplus

Material surplus means intensified trade and property rights (Lenski 1966), and has direct and indirect causal relations with political evolution. On the one hand, to create loyalty, influence, and authority, a surplus is necessary to incentivize subordinates and to symbolize distinction. On the other hand, the production of material surplus is tied to intensified production (and population growth), which, in turn, drive a series of new problems that only political complexity, usually in the form of entrepreneurship, can resolve (Johnson and Earle 2000). Generally speaking, these new problems are: (1) production risks as more people need more food and shortages carry greater consequences, (2) increased likelihood of raiding and warfare, (3) inefficiencies in resource use, and (4) resource deficiencies. Each of these problems are baked into the evolving political economy, and create pressures for chiefs who can (1) manage those risks, (2) create and maintain alliances, (3) centralize and invest in capital

technology, and (4) employ capital for trade. As material resources and property rights increase, stratification forms around control over central surplus storage, access to regional networks, possession of or ability to finance capital investment, and the consolidation of mana, tohunga, and/or toa. And, as basic distinctions calcify into sharper ranks, upstart chiefs can assert their will.

Specialization

In Service's (1962: 135ff.) exhaustive review of chiefdoms, he found that two forms of specialization were catalysts of chiefdoms, as it is far more difficult to induce specialization where none exists than it is to coordinate and expand. The first, which he believed more common, comes from regional specialization of different local residential units. Often this specialization was a natural outcome of variations in environment and natural resource availability. Mesopotamia yearned to expand its boundaries, in part, because it lacked timber and was always in search of sources of timber that initially pulled other societies into its orbit through trade and then, later, through imperialism (Postgate 1977). Thus, residential specialization offered myriad pathways, none of which were exclusive: reciprocal foreign trade; alliances; raid targets, and potential slaves. The second form of specialization came from pooling diverse individual skills into public works projects, like canals or defensive measures. The division of this labor could justify and come to represent the social divisions of a society. And, once built, could stand as a physical reminder of the expertise (tohunga) and life force (mana) of the man critically involved in coordinating its construction (Richards 2000).

Regional Networks

Isolated tribes would have no one to mutually benefit from trade that enriched both groups or as real/imagined hostile threats that could generate solidarity. Keep in mind residential units were corporate units: land was corporately owned as were any resources. Hence, a single or small group of representatives made more sense in trade negotiation. These nascent elites would be in a perfect situation to leverage this structural hole for their advantage. For one thing, weak ties produce access to information and other advantages (Granovetter 1973). Additionally, a superordinate market of luxury or prestige items could circulate through these relationships, perhaps first as an exclusive gift exchange, and then as a necessary aspect of

the evolving political economy. Finally, as trade networks grew in distance, only those with sufficient capital could afford the risks of this kind of trade, including collateral and protection rents (Lane 1979).

Circumscription

Perhaps no condition mattered most than circumscription. Central to Carneiro's (1970) theory of the origins of the state, it plays no less of a role in helping explain the origins of political economy more generally. It is not surprising, for instance, that the most elaborate chiefdoms emerged on islands, where subordinates were unable to withdraw legitimacy by picking up and moving; bloody rebellion is much more difficult than fleeing in the dark of night. Carneiro identified three sources of circumscription: (1) geographic/ecological, (2) social, and (3) militaristic. The former is most obvious: political economy will most likely evolve where movement is restricted and where the environment offers the potential for intensified productivity. Social circumscription often proceeds ecological. Ascriptive social bonds made leaving difficult, because one's status—and rights and privileges—were tied to one's birthplace. Setting out on one's own usually meant losing status with two possible outcomes. A person could create a new settlement, though ecological circumscription would eventually make that difficult. Or, a person could join another group, but would then be subject to that group's classification of outsiders. This latter choice also became less palatable, as we saw the Zulu deemed refugees the "destitute." The third source of circumscription was militaristic. This source evolved in three ways. First, lineal obligations usually committed all men of a residential unit to the territory itself and, thus, where warfare was common or a sign of prestige (*toa*), it meant one's lot was cast. Second, some political entrepreneurs enforced norms and, through the state, laws, that conscripted all men or a subset of men to warrior castes. Third, and closely related, as stratification calcified—usually because chiefs and then kings laid claim to possession of all land—warfare became the principal pathway to social mobility. Chiefs could reward their best soldiers with land, wives, and titles in exchange for fealty and loyalty. And, that brings us to one of the central ingredients: men.

Pressing Advantages

A core principle of all pre-chiefdom societies was reciprocity: gifts were expected to be returned. Subsequently, "chronic failure to reciprocate

was met first with grumbling and later with anger [with unpaid debts… or defaulting…punishable by raiding, captive-taking, and slavery" (Flannery and Marcus 2012: 75). Admittedly, much of the reconstruction of how chiefdoms emerge relies on oral histories, archaeology, and drawing parallels to the rise of kingdoms, but there are good reasons to presume force, violence, and male aggression was at the core of chiefdom formation and expansion. The Nootka, mentioned above, was one of the few examples of pre-agricultural societies with inequality, including slavery (Coupland et al. 2009). Successful families were willing to incorporate impoverished families, which eventually led to slavery. The reason male aggression mattered stemmed from the upper limits with which prestige could lead to greater privilege. As Charles Spencer (1990, 1998) demonstrated, political entrepreneurship is always delimted by the amount of material surplus available, leaving aggrandizers with three options: (1) demand more from their own subjects, which usually invites revolt; (2) intensify production through technological improvement, but without any guarantees of political evolution; and (3) take land, women, and other desired resources from neighbors, which, as noted, usually leads to slavery in one form or another.

Ultimately, as we shift from these earliest sketches of unequal societies to chiefdoms, we see men aggressively pursuing power and privilege. Besides toughness and military expertise being bases of power, chiefdoms were premised on hereditary succession—usually primogeniture. Fratricide was so common such that usurpation was a problem that often was resolved by splitting the sacred and secular roles of chiefs. In addition, incest taboos were often relaxed or ignored by chiefs to create or reinforce endogamy as well as solidify claims of ultimate power. As chiefdoms grew larger, and new levels, like paramount chiefs, grew differentiated from district or local chiefs, cycling between the rise and fall of paramount chiefs became the rule and not the exception. And, in Flannery and Marcus' (2012: Chapter 17) review of four chiefdoms transitioning to kingdoms, we see the true underlying violence inherent in these pre-state societies. For instance, Shaka of the Zulu is sharply contrasted with his "mentor" for his willingness to destroy his enemies, *and* his own people (7,000 of which were executed as he mourned his mother's death). The same force is present throughout the Hawaiian history, leading eventually to Kamahameha subjugating all of the islands and declaring himself a king.

Secondary Chiefdoms

It is worth noting Service's distinction between "pristine" and "secondary" chiefdoms, which may not be as exclusive a set of categories as he assumes. Either way, he notes that smaller foraging societies that live near an extant chiefdom not only must adapt to the natural environment, but the "superorganic surroundings" (Service 1962: 141). Being nearby is transformative, as the foraging group becomes enmeshed in a regional trade network. On the one hand, they gradually come to be at a competitive disadvantage to their bigger, better organized neighbors, which encourages them to increasingly adopt, isomorphically, various structural and cultural elements. On the other hand, opportunities emerge for upstart men who, through subterfuge or force, can rise to the level of chief in their own group. These processes may have been further accelerated when European colonial states entered into economic and political relationships, making alliances or confederacies power-balancing strategies.

Many chiefdoms were "dead-ends," because they reached the maximum size a polity could give the resource base or technology available, because they were conquered, or because they collapsed for any number of pressures that they succumbed to (Stein and Rothman 1994; Tainter 1988). Some, however, like Hawaii Islanders began to resemble agrarian states (Flannery and Marcus 2012), while other polities rapidly leapt from villages into city-states because of the right confluence of factors (Abrutyn and Lawrence 2010). The rise of the state, however, marks a qualitatively different type of polity evolving. One with autonomy, or structural *and* cultural discreteness as a sphere of action and organization. But, this evolutionary leap is too great and too distinctive to leave as an extension of chiefdoms. In part, because we are not just talking about the expropriation of surplus produce, but rather the construction of a cultural and structural set of relationships shaped by generalization of a symbolic medium of interaction, exchange, and communication separate from *love/loyalty*: *power*. Chiefdoms, except in the rarest of cases, remain deeply embedded in kinship structure and culture; decisions are both political *and* restrained by kinship values and norms. It is because the polity is erected upon a kinship template. In state societies, polity becomes dis-embedded, within varying degrees, from the local kin structure and culture, and becomes a self-reflexive sphere in which values and norms, interests and goals, feelings, thoughts, and actions are evaluated and understood through increasingly distinct political criteria. Put simply, *power* comes to be the dominant material and symbolic frame through which the polity is distinguished in many facets from their kin counterparts.

Conclusion

Societies organized by kinship were relatively stable, in part because of their relatively low levels of organization, obligation, and need/use of resources. As early polities differentiated, change and instability became the rule and not the exception. Hence, the need for two chapters on political evolution. Like adding electronics to your household, new institutional spheres require more resources, but unlike electronics, as polities began to demand more resources, new problems arose. Intensive resource production degrades the environment; warfare brings logistical problems related to what one does with the conquered; defensive measures require new organizational innovations; growing surplus and growing administration requires new rules; diversifying populations create new sources of conflict and new demands on third-party resolution; and, when power is increasingly consolidated and centralized, unhappiness, resentment, and so forth increase concomitantly. Even the most collectively oriented polities are designed to make collective binding decisions and mobilize resources towards goals. This means moving resources from one place to another.

Eventually, the number and scale of exigencies a given polity must contend with grows to the point where it is a full-time activity and to the point where actors devoted to political goals, decisions, and actions become divorced—intentionally or not—from the daily experiences and problems of those continuing to live in the world of kinship. Political spheres become self-reflexive systems and their actors develop a structural web of relationships that are imbued with distinctive cultural meanings. When these discrete structural and cultural formations act on their denizens and when a significant portion of the broader population come to recognize political emotions, attitudes, actions, interests and goals, values and norms as different from kinship, political evolution has begun the slow grind towards political autonomy (from kinship). And thus, in the following chapter, we examine the first autonomous institution in human history, polity, which, in turn, sets the scene for other institutional entrepreneurs to strain towards their own independence by carving out their own autonomous sphere.

Notes

1 See also: Younger (2010); Henrich et al. (2015); Boyd and Richardson (1988, 1992); Mathew and Boyd (2011); Oliver (1980); Baldassarri and Grossman (2011); King et al., (2009); Lowie (1948); Carneiro (1970); von Rueden (2011); von Rueden and Curven (2012); von Rueden et al., (2011); Glowacki (2015); Glowacki and Wrangham (2013,

2015); Glowacki and von Rueden (2015); Glowacki and Gonic (2013); Wiesner (2005); Wrangham and Glowacki (2012); Lewis (1974); Kelly (2013); Johnson and Earle (2000); Panchanathan and Boyd (2004).

2 There have been semi-settled hunting and gathering populations numbering several hundred.

8
The Increasing Autonomy of Polity

In the mid-fourth millennia BCE, what is usually called *the urban revolution*, began in southern Iraq (Adams 1966; Childe 1953). To be sure, towns like Ur and Eridu had dotted the alluvial crescent for a few thousand years prior to the emergence of Uruk during the Halaf and 'Ubaid (Jawad 1965; Postgate 2003; Wooley 1946) —the first true city-state for which we have evidence (Liverani 2006; Nissen 1988). In previous eras, archaeological evidence reveals increasing wealth at settlements, but few signs of chiefdoms (Stein 1994; van de Mieroop 2004), and in lieu of chiefdoms, there appear to have been a series of politically autonomous villages interlinked by a centralized Temple-economy (Lipinski 1979). This structural feature would have been a structural basis for the transition to a Palace-economy (Abrutyn and Lawrence 2010). The lack of chiefdoms in southern Mesopotamia was likely due to a series of key factors, such as the complexities of long-field barley farming (Liverani 2006), but by 3500 BCE, Uruk emerged growing to a peak size of 100 hectares and a population of 50–80,000.

Like chiefdoms, city-states, were redistributive hubs, but higher levels of material surplus, expanded public works, and greater self-awareness and self-aggrandizement had exponentially increased. Moreover, regional networks of trade and political alliances increased and represented the first examples of "globalization" (Algaze 2005) that were added to the selection pressures outlined in the previous chapters that were the original cause of political evolution (see, also, Johnson and Earle 2000). City-states, like Uruk, were discernibly different from chiefdoms, in that the city became an economic unit integrated by a *centralized Palace-Temple complex*. Furthermore, they featured a burgeoning class of specialists that were directly dependent on the Palace-economy for subsistence and a dense conglomeration of residents who resided outside of the palace complex but still within the massive walls and defensive measures designed to protect the polity from invasion. Surrounding these political centers were agricultural villages, towns, and residential centers that remained locked in a struggle over political autonomy (Pollack et al. 1996; Yoffee 2005) until the

 DOI: 10.4324/9781003224433-9

first empires solved a host of problems, particularly around transportation and communication technologies.

Mesopotamia, as well as its counterparts in the Nile valley (Richards and Van Buren 2000), China (Gernet 1982), and the Indus Valley (Kenoyer 2000), appear to have been ideal places for political evolution; and employing from Elman Service's (1962) stage model, village-based organization appears to have rapidly evolved into city-states and, then, empires. The annual flooding, which removed dependence on rain, meant more settlements taking up less space (Nissen 1988), thereby creating the potential for both trade and warfare over resources. Additionally, these four locations were notable for their highly diverse ecological zones, which is always associated with ramified and extensive trading (Potts 1997), which, in turn, tends to encourage administrative innovations such as writing and keeping accounts (Schmandt-Besserat 1992). Climate change around 3200BCE may also have been a significant force (Fagan 1999) in Mesopotamia, causing acceleration of political and social evolution (Nissen 1988). Finally, the gap between city-states and chiefdoms was further widened by the effects of the temple and temple personnel, which unlike modern temples, were the hub of administrative activity in addition to, and perhaps surpassing, the significance of their ritual activity (Chang 1986; Oppenheim 1975). Van de Mieroop (2004), for instance, posits the legacy of Uruk was the spread of bureaucratic practices, like writing, standardized weights and measures, and metrology, throughout Anatolia (modern Turkey/Syria) and Susa (Iran).

Thus, these early polities marked the slow shift from kinship-based to polity-based societies (Adams 1966; Flannery 1972). The true state would begin to emerge in Mesopotamia and then elsewhere throughout the world in places like Mesoamerica, Peru, and Rome. Just as chiefdoms evolved through fits and starts, or cycles of rise and fall, so too did state formations driven by political entrepreneurship (Chase-Dunn et al. 2008) marked by near constant expansion until the upper-limits were reached and, then, followed by either stasis or rapid decline, especially from warfare. Sometimes the decline would lead to extended decentralized periods, such as the collapse of the Bronze Age empires and the relatively long duree until the Iron Age witnessed empires of previously unimaginable sizes (Sanderson 1999). At the core of this story is the evolution of the state (Eisenstadt 1963) and the movement of polity as an institutional system toward increased autonomy from other institutional domains (Abrutyn 2013). Thus, our goal in this chapter is to outline the evolution of the first

state-based societies that, in turn, would alter the path of subsequent societal evolution.

The State as Inevitable

Once city-states became the dominant political form of organization, they grew quite rapidly owing to the fact that agricultural intensification was steady, male aggression and warfare were constant, writings on past political innovations could be used as blueprints for political reorganization, while expanding regional trade networks could generate wealth for building up state formations. Egypt in 3200 BCE, for instance, occupied less than 0.01 megameters squared (Mm^2), but grew to 0.25 (+/- 0.01) by the time the Old Kingdom had completed its unification project; and would double in size at the peak of the Middle and then New Kingdoms (Taagepera 1978).[1] Likewise, Mesopotamia and China both occupied less than 0.01 Mm^2 in 3200 BCE, but by 2300 BCE, when Sargon the Great from northern Akkad unified the south and north through conquest, it reached 0.65 Mm^2 (+/- 0.1), while the Xia Dynasty in China grew to 0.10 Mm^2 in 2600 BCE and peaked at 0.45 Mm^2 in 1800 BCE. While centuries do not seem rapid, before the common era, these are exceedingly fast spurts of growth, which would only grow faster during the Iron Age, where the Persian Empire, the Western Han in China, and the Roman empire all eclipsed 5 Mm^2 at their peaks (Taagepera 1979). The state's emergence as a distinctive social unit vis-à-vis the household, structurally, was the first steps towards a fully institutionalized and autonomous political sphere. But, to draw analogy with speciation in the biotic world, the polity would also have to become *culturally* and, thereby, *phenomenologically* distinct for this process to become "complete." The remainder of this chapter examines this process, beginning first with the sticky relationship between religion and polity that, even today, remains complicated and will be a recurring theme throughout the rest of the book. From there, we turn to a discussion of the state and then what we mean by political autonomy.

Why Palaces and Not Temples?

Some, including one of the authors (Turner 2003), have argued in the past that religious evolution often precedes political evolution because charismatic religious actors, like shamans appear as early, if not earlier than, their political counterparts (Barth 1963; Radin 1927 [1955]). But, while practical decisions that involved the collective's fate always demanded political action, there are questions about what "religion" was prior to, at least,

the rise of the earliest states and the establishment of temples. Indeed, the word religion itself only enters into our lexicon when European colonial states started to deal with people practicing and believing things very, very different from their own experiences (Smith 1998). For our purposes, we begin with a simple premise derived from Durkheim's (1912 [1995]) *Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, but which was elaborated empirically by Guy Swanson (1966) and, recently, by Abrutyn (2014a, McCaffree and Abrutyn 2020): religious evolution is driven by political evolution, at least until the first millennia BCE. It might be noted, however, that we earlier emphasized that *Temple-based* economies, at least in Mesopotamia, preceded political evolution into Palace-economies; and so, how can we conclude now that polity evolves before religion?

The answer resides in the fact that these temples were not "religious" in the sense that 21st century denizens have become accustomed. First, the vast majority of humans enmeshed in both types of political economy would have had little to no connection to the priest's spiritual activities. Until the late first millennium BCE, most humans continued to participate in kin-based religious practices rooted in ancestor worship and rituals designed to procure rational ends unattainable other ways (Wallace 1966)—e.g., rain, fertility. The temples themselves were most likely viewed as much as economic and political centers, though villagers and priests alike would have treated them as sacred space and adhered to prohibitions. However, the peasants' lack of orientation to the temple as a religious object was precisely one of the reasons religious evolution was stymied: peasants were less seen as the material base for the priestly class and more so as a pool of labor necessary to produce the temple's own base of subsistence (Liverani 2006).

Second, activities of the religious looked less like priests or prophets and more like shamans. Because they could not reveal the rituals or the innerworkings of the temple, they did not see themselves as mediators between the peasants—individually or collectively—and the gods; rather, they were the caretakers of the temple god (e.g., they literally fed and watered the gods [Stark 2007]) and, moreover, did not lay claim to a monopoly over "psychic coercion," to borrow Max Weber's (1978: 54) term, which was reserved for ancestors or local supranatural beings. Instead, their power rested on the practical solutions—no matter how shrouded in magic and the supranatural—to more mundane exigencies such as floods, irrigation, risk management against famine, and general administration of political affairs. To be sure, they wielded their superior knowledge of the celestial universe, and their subsequent ability to predict, within reason, when the floods were coming as a form of symbolic power. But, priests in these

economies were political actors whose claims to legitimacy, like a chief, depended on the material health of those whose labor they demanded as tribute.

Indeed, as the Palace-economy grew to replace its forbearer, the political function of the priesthood became even more sharply outlined as political entrepreneurs sought to monopolize physical force. And, through this monopoly on force, these entrepreneurs could subjugate the temple and transform the priesthood into another set of bureaucratic specialists who, to be sure, were qualitatively different from weavers or potters but, in fact, their material dependence was indistinguishable from that of other state functionaries. Furthermore, as writing became more complex, so too did the training of priests for more mundane administrative activities. The initial training of a priest in Mesopotamia, for instance, was not about learning scripture, pastoral care, or performance of ritual; it was learning to write and read existing texts and star charts (Garelli 1975). To be sure, some priests would be trained in the ritual performance of deity care, but many went on to be scribes for kings, royalty, landed gentry, and urban elite, writing grocery lists and not novels, liturgy, or anything that creative. (Authorship did not exist as an objective thing until the Israelites began naming books after their supposed authors [Dever 2001].) Further evidence of their practical and political functions over their religious functions comes from the fact that there was only a small proportion of the population that had disposable wealth and, thereby, who would see value in the skill sets revolving around literacy. As such, the cost could "only be borne by … ruling groups" and, hence, religious entrepreneurs in these early years were "far from establishing an independent cultural … base [and] simply continued to serve the ruling group" (Machinist 1986: 202).

Thus, religious evolution could proceed only after a certain level of political evolution had been achieved. In most cases, at least until we see "middle-class" religions emerge in the first millennium BCE, evolution of religion revolved around alterations of beliefs at the most abstract level, typically creating conceptions of more gods to reflect the accelerating differentiation of occupations within a given city, regional networks of cities that each needed a local god, and the creation of a big-gods like Assur to rule over all the gods that reflected the construction of new capitals for the emerging state and political logistics. The mythologies rarely changed in fundamental ways but were, in fact, stereotyped across time and place, even as the name and descriptive elements were shuffled and changed. The priesthoods also were conservative forces (Oppenheim 1975), often deeply united with political elite in elevating order over all other values. Eventually,

this would change, but that story will have to wait (see Chapter 10). For now, we turn to the principal engine of political evolution and autonomy, the state.

The State and Collective Action

If the residential lineage in expanding kinship systems were the first true collective actor that institutionalized patterns of feeling, thinking, and doing (Douglas 1986) then the state was (and still is) the most advanced and efficacious. Its efficiency lies in the one key characteristic that distinguishes states from other polities: the monopoly over the legitimate use of force as a last resort (Weber 1978). If politics are the struggle over who gets to make binding decisions about how resources and labor are mobilized towards goals, then the polity is the institutionalization of the legitimate right to make these decisions and set goals for everyone in a society. And, once force is monopolized, the consequences for not obeying commands increase dramatically. Of course, the state can leverage its monopoly into other bases of power, especially administrative, but usually material incentive and symbolic bases as well. Doing so reduces the cost of making decisions, while reducing the probability of resistance across different strata. So, what sorts of decisions and activities does the state specialize in?

States engage in five basic types of activities (Abrutyn and Lawrence 2010): (1) defending against real or perceived external threats (Carneiro 1970), (2) creating and maintaining internal order (Yoffee 2005), (3) sustaining and protecting privileged interests (Fried 1967), (4) managing and transforming economic production/distribution (Polanyi 1957); and (5) providing various services to the population (Service 1975). Polities do other things, of course, but these five basic activities appear ubiquitous to all states (Earle, 1991; Johnson and Earle, 2000), although (a) the degree to which these functions are monopolized by political entrepreneurs, (b) the efficacy of entrepreneurs and others at each activity, and (c) the centrality of each activity to entrepreneurial projects shaped by the polity's level of autonomy from other institutional domains vary tremendously. And most importantly, because states are rational collective actors that manage real-world problems like famines or hostile neighbors, they unintentionally and intentionally impose a certain degree of rationality on those subject to their power (Scott 1998). City planning, for instance, often requires thoroughfares designed for both rapid mobilization of defensive forces against enemies and for military parades following victories. In building straight and wide roads, states reconfigure the movement of people unrelated to military activities. Moreover, early originations related to census,

tax collection, administrative necessities, and internal policing or security also had the effect of imposing a kind of rationality on populations. And, the same logic underscored public works, especially monuments and public space, which will occupy greater detail shortly. Indeed, patterns of enforced organization and the building out of infrastructures by states has large effects of what individuals and corporate units organizing individuals do and, furthermore, their outlooks and culture—a point to which we will return shortly.

Evolutionary Advantage

Humans had resisted subordination to power and inequalities for millennia (Boehm 2018; Gintis et al. 2015), and so, we can ask why they began to embrace power and even inequality. Why, then, would people not flee rather than be subjected to a sphere of domination like the state, especially since the state was relatively unstable over the medium and long run? One answer is that population growth forced the institutionalization of power and control, beginning with Big Man settled hunter-gatherers and then the use of authority within unilineal kin units. Moreover, the evolving state represented, like chiefdoms, an evolutionary advantage over smaller, less organized societal forms in competition for resources. While Herbert Spencer's (1874–94 [1898]) political theory of evolution is sometimes lost in the often unfair criticisms of his sociology, Spencer recognized that states evolve under intense selection pressures related to war and conflict with other societies. And, the data on societal evolutionary theory rests on supportive empirical evidence: Bigger, better organized, and more technologically advanced societies will nearly always defeat smaller ones with less organization (Turchin 2003, 2006; cf. Collins 1981b). Defeat may not be conquest, as was the case with myriad foraging societies that were pulled into the orbit of British Columbia in Canada and eventually developed chief-like political structures. But, often defeat in the ancient world lead to the absorption of a people, the demise of their culture, and the expansion of the state until it reached the limits of existing transportation and communication technologies (Mann 1986).

States themselves are only advantageous vis-à-vis smaller societies. As states become the dominant form of political organization, however, they too suffer from selection pressures. First, they often grow too big and rigid, unable to innovate in ways that maintain their advantage against other states, or react fast enough to smaller, more nimble actors seeking to raid the state (Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997). Indeed, the Achilles' heel of the state is its ever-expanding nature that tends to reach limits that invite multi-front

wars and rebellions on the margins that increasingly drain resources from the center, causing both internal rot and external threat (Collins 1981b). Examples abound, but perhaps the most telling example can be drawn from the first true empire that we know of, the Akkadian empire (*c*. 2350–2100 BCE). As the story goes, Sargon from northern Mesopotamia conquered the southern city-states, building the first known imperial state (Liverani 1993). He claimed to have conquered "the four corners" of the earth, but given the limits to moving soldiers and supply chains, Mann (1986) estimates the polity consisted of a 90 km radius. His grandson, Naram-Sin spent forty years expanding the boundaries of the state to their upper limits. But, near the end of his reign, resources began to be spent on protecting gains instead of expanding. His death was met with city-state rebellions and a push for decentralized, localized rule (Nissen 1988). His son did not rule for long before the Akkadian empire was swept into the dustbin of history, replaced for a century by decentralized, economic networks of city-states called Ur III. Notably, because of writing, Sargon and Naram-Sin's respective innovations could be selected in the future and used as blueprints for building empires and avoiding their collapse. For instance, Sargon's most notable innovation was building a new capital, which both demonstrated his power as a creator and his use of the priesthood and temple as a means of avoiding long-standing ascriptive and territorial ties that could disrupt the bureaucratic efficiency of the state; a political technique still employed today. And, Naram-Sin's big contribution was his deification of secular rule. Temples, dating to the Temple-economy, "belonged" to the god that lived there, which meant priests were the caretakers. By declaring himself the biggest god, Naram-Sin made a *de facto* claim to all temple land as a resident god; and while this move encountered resistance, it became taken for granted over time that Mesopotamian rulers were also godly.

The Rise of Political Autonomy

Institutional autonomy can be defined as the degree to which a sphere of social action, like polity, has become structurally and culturally discrete vis-à-vis other spheres. Autonomy is a process, measured best by degree and not kind. Total autonomy is rare, as it would indicate a fully separate sphere of social reality that, for all intents and purposes, would be better characterized as a society. Rather, institutional spheres fluctuate in autonomy over time, as other institutions grow more or less autonomous. Phenomenologically, autonomy has major consequences. As we saw in Chapters 5 and 6, the social logic of political, economic, or legal action was inextricably tied to kinship for most of human history. To be

sure, ethnographies underscore the fact that people were aware of *law* as a sphere of feeling, thinking, and acting apart from kinship (Malinowski 1959), but the customs themselves revolved around the only available roles/status positions (all of which were kin-based), as well as the rights and duties afforded these roles vis-à-vis other roles (Hoebel 1954 [1973]). Five thousand years ago, and perhaps even earlier with the rise of chiefdoms, the polity began to evolve towards greater autonomy. It would take several millennia to reach its acme, owing more to the deficiencies in communication and transportation technologies than anything else. The treaty of Westphalia in 1648 marked the application of positive law to a sovereign state (de Mesquita 2000; Le Goff 2005) and, over the next couple of centuries, the polity arrived at autonomy in ways unimaginable (Meyer 1987). Nonetheless, the lack of autonomy in the earliest states does not mean political entrepreneurships made no difference (they did) or that even partial autonomy was not impactful (it was). To illustrate how autonomy works and its consequences, we turn first to the macro-level to discuss the reconfiguration of the four dimensions of space (Abrutyn 2009): physical, temporal, social, and symbolic. The methodological individualism of contemporary sociology often balks at thinking about macro-level phenomena as real, cautioning against reification. But, they are real in that the dominant functions and signs of representationality come to alter the landscape in ways that affect meso-level and micro-level phenomena such as fields and organizations embedded within encounters and role/identities. Thus, following our examination of the four spaces, we use this backdrop to think about how the experiences of social reality were altered alongside the construction of various types of corporate and categoric units.

Institutional Spheres in Space

Physical Space

In the earliest chiefdoms physical space becomes central to the project of distinction necessary to both satisfy functionality of the chiefly role and represent a new social reality. The former means needing more space to store surplus and to accommodate polygamy. It also means being able to facilitate rituals in the center space and, in so doing, the construction of rank differences and, therefore, a new moral order. In the long houses in the northwest of the North America, chiefs and their families would have certain spaces reserved for them, with the closest spaces being reserved for the next closest, genealogically speaking (Prentiss et al. 2008), with the lowest ranked individuals—slaves—near the door. This same configuration

of space by rank could be found in most residential arrangements, regardless of the form of organization: chiefs and their families had domiciles set apart, with relative distance representing closeness or farness from the center of power. In contrast, states were a whole other level of physical differentiation of space and rank.

The earliest cities had unique physical properties: often built on a hill, a city within the city was highly typical, at least in capital cities. At the center was the Palace-Temple complex and the homes of those closest to the king. Like the long houses in northwestern America, the city took on the logic of relational distance to the center of power. Surrounding this city was a wall, which separated the rest of the urban denizens from the Palace, and yet, both the Palace and Temple were massive constructs visible by all people in the city and beyond its gates. Where political and religious functions were separated to some degree, the royal places remained set aside, while ritual spaces rested at the heart of the community, such as those found throughout Mesoamerica. The separation and distinction further threw into sharp relief the importance of political actors vis-à-vis commoners. As Rosemary Joyce (2000: 71–72) remarked:

> By creating different kinds of space within sites, the continuing elaboration of monumental architecture served to create spatial arenas with restricted access, a constantly visible form of exclusivity. [Thereby altering], the patterns of habitual movement of all the inhabitants of the site, stratifying space and hence the people who were allowed access to different space, creating and marking centers and peripheries… [Moreover,] monumental art permanently inscribed a small number of figures as actors linking the natural and supernatural world. [And which] provided a history…that gave members of new polities a *ready-made store of understanding about the meaning of such architecture*…In the same way, the iconographic motifs and selection of valuable materials that were transmitted to successor societies constrained reinterpretation.

There is something ecological, then, about institutional autonomy (Abrutyn 2014b). Implicit in Durkheim's theory of ritual was a notion that things that came to be imbued with the collective emotion generated during assembly not simply represented the *sui generis* moral order, but also had centripetal properties. Human societies, he reasoned, emerged first around a bunch of individuals who drew solidarity in attachment to a collectivized center (Caillois 1959). Shils (1975: 36–37) pointed out that

this "center of gravity" functioned and represented the collective's "system of authority and its own culture [some of which] will be about itself." Cognitively, the center consists "of beliefs about the history and nature of the [collective], its relationship to certain ideal or transcendent entities or values, its origin and destiny [and] the rightfulness of its existence." It is a repository, to some degree, of collective memory. Hence, by altering the physical landscape, leaders of the emerging state only monopolize authorship over culture and, at the same time, draw members into this culture and structure. The act of building a capital from scratch, coordinating a public works project of immense complexity that mobilizes large sectors of human labor, and erecting a massive monument that casts a literal shadow on the lives of regular people all represents acts of *political entrepreneurship*. Such entrepreneurial acts sever, or at least weaken, the deep attachments of populations to natal territory, kin-based ties, and ascriptive solidarities while replacing them with a regional, political collective identity through new forms of corporate ties rooted in a (in)direct relationship between the village and the city and the subject and the king. But, it also has the practical effect of changing the paths people take to go to the market, thereby altering daily routines; and even more significantly, the alteration of space generates a ritual effect of demanding attention during annual or monthly public ritual. In turn, both of these daily and ritual activities have a representational effect of demarcating new categoric distinctions of stratification related to who is allowed to enter and use what portions of "public space".

Temporal Space

Since Durkheim's (1912 [1995]) treatise on the sociology of knowledge, the idea that time is socially constructed has only been give sporadic attention. It is not to say that time is not objective, but rather how days and other units marking time are carved out temporally and are social constructs very much constrained the logic and physicality of social organization. In many foraging societies, for instance, an average of 15 hours of work was necessary to subsist (Sahlins 1972), whereas modern Western democracies have arrived at 40+ hours per week. Beyond the day, how weeks, months, seasons, and years are organized institutionalizes patterns of feeling, thinking, and doing. The close compression of American Thanksgiving and Christmas, for instance, becomes a cultural phenomenon called "the holidays" that have inordinate mental health consequences for people (National Alliance on Mental Illness [NAMI] 2020). For Jews, the High Holidays alter the rhythm of everyday life

for a week, especially in observant communities where rituals and solidarity take on new meaning (Heilman 1976 [1998]). From the standpoint of imposing moral authority, *sui generis*, entrepreneurship is not simply about authoring distinction through physical reconfiguration. It is about changing the routines of everyday life and, at the same time, both highlighting distinctions among objects and people that install new paradoxical sets of ritualized encounters and everyday experiences.

The most notable ancient temporal ritual can be found in nearly every ancient state's efforts to legitimate political elite's authority by bringing "commoners" into direct relationship with the transcendent center. Every year, during the new year celebration, taboos and prohibitions were relaxed and anti-structural behavior encouraged (Kramer 1963). These week-long festivals were filled with excess, as the elite were not treated as elite and the commoners not as commoners. The chaos was followed by a highly ritualized, public event in which the king restored order. If this narrative sounds familiar, it is because it was inserted in the Hebrew Bible's book of Genesis in which Yahweh created order out of chaos. The festival allows for the direct communion with sacred time, or ahistorical time set aside from the rhythms of daily life, and which allows people to enter into ritual with the entire collective, stretching back to the founding members (Eliade 1959). It also was representative, showing the power of the king who was the only one capable of restoring the community to its rightful order.

Today, states and political entrepreneurs use time in much the same way. Holidays are meant as moments of remembrance for individual or collective heroes. In more authoritarian states, parades and other collective assemblages of the larger population are often punctuated by parades of military power (e.g., marching troops, tanks, and missiles) that, not so subtly, communicate the power of the state. In the city-states of Mesoamerica, the central city was more of a ceremonial compound of dramatic architecture set up to personify the power of leaders as quasi gods and to serve on particular dates as a set of collective rituals reinforcing the power of political leaders in front of masses who would enter the city for such ritual tributes. Elections in political democracy also have a temporal dimension, as elections occur on particular days and temporal intervals, with campaigns and media advertising all symbolizing the coming contest for power and giving individuals the sense, perhaps somewhat illusionary, that they are part the institutionalization of power, at least on these periodic temporal moments when elections occur. Thus, controlling time and activity in space combined operates as a means to political control, even as citizens are given some say in this control.

Social Space

Political entrepreneurs were working against millennia of social evolution that found individuals deeply embedded within a kinship system that was local, tangible, and filled with intimate relationships. Even today, for many people in the U.S., as one example, small towns feel authentic and real while distrust for the distant federal government has produced intense anti-government sentiment (Hochschild 2016). Reviewing the complexes of human nature outlined in Appendix II in Chapter 1, it is immediately evident that humans are wired to be highly emotional and have needs for verifying identities, for feeling included in ongoing interactions, for experiencing trust in others and situations, for experiencing positive emotions, for making profits in exchanges with others, and for achieving a sense of balance among cognitions. At the same time, humans inherited from the ancestors of great apes and hominins a suite of interpersonal skills to take account of the self being presented by others, the status and roles that others are playing, the elements of culture that others think are relevant, the structure and situation within this structure that is to be relevant during an interaction. Conversely, those "taking on" this information by reading the gestures of others also inform, more "make" evident to others by their sense self, their status and roles, their emotional dispositions, their sense of the relevant cultural codes to guide the interaction, and their sense of structure and situation within a social structure that is relevant for the present interaction. These dynamics are built into the evolved nature of humans, with the result that within in each institutional system in a society, individuals in encounters within groups in organizations and communities and, most critical, with institution domains seek to establish some consensus over what identities, roles, statuses, cultural elements, emotions, social structures, and situational elements are to guide the interaction. Much of this effort to achieve a convergent view for the interaction at hand is facilitated by recognizing the institutional domain in which an interaction is embedded, and the corporate units within this domain that are relevant.

In kin-based societies, almost everything occurs within kin-based corporate units within the larger kinship structure and its culture; and thus, it is relatively easy for individuals to interact; the same had been equally true of members of hunter-gatherer bands since all institutional systems were embedded in kinship and band. But as societies grow and differentiate, then the dynamics of interaction become more complex because there is potentially more information about culture, structure, emotions, identities, roles, status, and situations to sort through because there are more

institutional systems differentiating, and more diverse types of corporate units and categoric units in which interactions can occur. This complexity allows more options but it always presents a problem for an evolving polity which must establish not only (1) a political culture revolving around the symbolic medium of power, generalized values transformed into political ideologies, and normative expectations; but also (2) a commitment from individuals giving the polity certain rights to regulate certain classes of interaction in other corporate units within other emerging institutional domains. Part of both (1) and (2) above is achieved by the manipulation of physical and temporal space in which the prerogatives of polity are imposed on daily routines of a population as well as acts of ritual acquiescence to the dictates of political leaders. Still, in these emerging polities, "commoners" are not occupying status and playing roles within the emerging polity, while they are doing so in families, communities, and perhaps in religious worship of local gods, which only intensifies the dilemma for political entrepreneurs.

This is why entrepreneurs seek to control social space by inserting the rights of polity to engage in projects in which activities of commoners are regulated by political actors. Creating temples and then palaces of political leaders and religious practitioners as part of the administrative base of power is one mechanism in establishing status and role relationships between centers of power and "commoners." There are political rituals affirming their power, as well as acceptance of the rights of polity in public works projects, in warfare, in taxation policies, and, in as many ways as possible, to create the respective status positions, roles, norms, and culture distinguishing and yet connecting political elite and commoners, with periodic ritual affirmation of this fundamental relationship. And as polity consolidates more coercive administrative, coercive, and symbolic power, coupled with an increased use of incentive-based power, it increases its capacity to establish at least the appearance that polity and commoner are in a daily relationship, just like those in kinship, labor, and worship. And, the more that polity can penetrate potentially completive institutional domains—e.g., kinship, economic (labor), and religion (worship)—through entrepreneurial activities, the more is the degree, range, and scope of all bases of power of polity increases.

The goal of polity is to reach the point where any agent recognized by both parties as being authorized to act on behalf of the state cues to the other that they are being labeled and treated like a subject or citizen. Thus, tax collectors, police, political party officials, public works directions, and others engaging in action by the polity become a proxy or substitute for the

actual role of polity and those subject to its authority. In this way, polity penetrates other institutional domains and creates "relationships" with those occupying positions, playing roles, and adhering to an institutional culture that is now intertwined with the positions, roles, and culture of the evolving polity. As long as polity can penetrate and even usurp some of the social space within other institution domains, it can typically achieve its goals because it has "routinized," to a degree, "relationship" between polity and subjects in a society. And this relationship becomes the key as to whether a polity is successful or not, not only among emerging polities of the past but of all polities in all human societies.

Symbolic Space

Each of the previous forms of differentiation—physical, temporal, and social—are tightly bound to the symbolic world; and the symbolic world is tightly tied to the creation and pervasive circulation of generalized symbolic media of interaction, exchange, and communication. In the case of polity, we are talking about *power*, or the "generalized capacity to secure the performance of binding obligations" (Parsons 1963b: 237; Baldwin 1971; Luhmann 1982). The more polity becomes "about" power, the more autonomous the sphere becomes from other spheres. Structurally, this means the modes of integration like differentiation (Rueschemeyer 1986) or embedding/inclusion come to be defined by the flow of *power* from one actor to the next. The relationship takes on meanings built up from power: who has more capacity to secure binding obligations; what is given in exchange for subordination; and so forth. Phenomenologically, both entrepreneurs and those subjected to the political sphere come to understand and evaluate political actors and political action by criteria distinct from kinship; primarily through themes of discourse revolving around power. Agrarian states, in Eisenstadt's (1963: 19) analysis, differed from chiefdoms because autonomous polities set goals "as different from other types of goals or from goals of other spheres or groups in society [in so far as their] formation, pursuit, and implementation became largely independent of other groups…governed mostly by political criteria and by consideration of political exigency."

The reader may object, and argue one of two possible things. First, the reader may say: politics are everywhere, in every sphere. To this, we would agree. Power is a pervasive resource shaping all interactions. However, in societies with polities, the right to use power beyond informal settings like the household—where, incidentally, the amount of power of each individual *legally* is afforded—is regulated by the state. Thus, politics may be endemic, but the production and distribution of power as a tangible and

intangible resource, as a set of objects with value in exchange, and as a discourse or set of themes remains inextricably tied to the polity. Second, the reader may protest and say politics are not just or primarily about power; what about money? To this we would respond with three points. One, this is an empirical question, and we would be willing to wager that the vast majority of interactions, exchanges, and communication within a government or political party, for example, center on power. Two, as we will see in Chapter 14, the economy or, for that matter, any institutional sphere, can grow autonomous enough that its media circulates across institutional boundaries in complimentary and contradictory ways. Politics can be corrupted and be about money; the latter can even subvert and pollute the process. But, the fact that we can intellectually and/or affectually identify corruption and pollution underscores just how deeply trained we are to expect the ideal typical feelings, thoughts, and actions in the political sphere vis-à-vis other spheres. Three, the same point can be made about the polity and power: power circulates across institutional boundaries as means of integrating and regulating institutional spheres and their actors. By this we mean the polity "franchises" power in the form of, say, authority to economic sectors and individual formal organizations in exchange for compliance with various obligations. For religious organizations in the U.S., this franchising comes, in part, through tax-exempt status and for public *land-grant* universities—at least, once upon a time—it was through charters and various other benefits. Power, thus, circulates in other spheres, but usually in slightly different guises, but it too can come to corrupt and pollute other spheres, turning kinship or religious behavior into political behavior (e.g., this was the norm, actually, in chiefdom societies where power and loyalty were often indistinguishable).

To return, then, to our main point: autonomous polities are denoted by the generalized symbolic medium of power shaping personal, impersonal, and depersonal relationships structurally, culturally, and phenomenologically. As generalized media come to characterize the cultural reality of an institutional sphere, the center (or centers)—or the place in which the greatest amounts of the medium are produced, distributed, stored, and consumed—develops increasingly strong centripetal forces that draw actors along the structural linkages described in chapter Figure 4.1 on page 113. The physical landscape becomes *meaningful* in political ways: palaces and temples, for example, are not just buildings, but meaningful objects we can recall when thinking about the king or politics. Moreover, the architecture and the organization of space further reflect the saturation of space in the social logic (power) of polity. The same can be said for specific people or offices, as these social objects come to represent the sphere to which they are embedded.

Thus, any representational symbol—from buildings or temples through flags and emblems to uniforms, badges, and markers of officers of polity—invokes a complex of cultural elements—values, ideologies, generalized symbolic media, norms, status, and roles—by which relationships between incumbents of polity and members of other institutional domains, whether kinship, economy, religion, or education, are constructed. It is this representational aspect of symbols that led Émile Durkheim (1912 [1995]) in the second half of his career to focus on totemism in religion, whereby physical objects symbolizing complex religious beliefs activated emotions, arousing rituals that activated both cognitively and emotionally the full weight of religious beliefs. The same is true of polity (or any institutional sphere, for that matter) that always manifests physical symbols or totems, marking their power and thereby activating a larger complex of symbols—values, norms, ideologies, generalized media—that are to govern relationships between incumbents of polity and individuals or other corporate units operating in other institutional domains.

Perhaps the most consequential reconfiguration, from a phenomenological perspective, comes in the form of changing social relationships. Institutionalization of a sphere of action depends, in part, on the construction of generalized role/status positions within corporate units that apply to all individuals who are incumbent in a particular status location and enact the expectations from cultural norms, often derived from ideologies in institutional domains that, in turn, were derived from the evaluative tenets inhering in generalized symbolic media. Thus, part of social space is occupied by cultural space consisting of generalized symbolic media, institutional ideologies, norms attached to status positions, and expectations for role performances, as culture inheres in, and adheres to, "networks of persons" whose routine and, at times, spectacular practices reproduce and embody "a core set of values and norms motivated by a common set of interests, goals, or needs" (Patterson 2014: 20). The structured world, then, generates cultural meanings that are available for the actors and the audience. More importantly, the structure that both produces generalized roles and brings them into recurring situations "consists of definitions of ties as a particular type of tie and of the construction of identities of the actors involved" (Fuhse 2009: 52–53). The same will be true of networks within economy, religion, or any other institutional domain, including polity, but most importantly, relations or networks among individual and corporate actors in different institutional domains—whether, for example, kinship-polity, economy-polity, or religion-polity—are symbolized in these complex ways; and as polity gains power, the symbols of polity will tend to dominate networks between polity and any other institutional domain.

When polity begins to lose its bases of power, the reverse can occur where the culture of economy, kinship, or religion increasingly comes to dominate the centers of societal power.

The Effects of the Evolution of Polity on Patterns of Institutional Evolution

The increasing consolidation of power along its four bases—coercive, administrative, symbolic, and incentives—was a response to selection pressures emanating from organizing larger numbers of individuals in more permanent settlements. Eventually, either the number of problems or the extraordinary degree of difficulty intersected with intense, intersecting circumscription, a rich base of resource, and one or more men willing and able to achieve what had never been achieved before: the state. In alluvial flood plains, like southern Iraq or northern China, fertile ground for political evolution lay where geographic barriers and social trappings (e.g., the means of production, whether instruments like the plow or the significantly larger number of kids needed for intensive agriculture, were not easily mobile) and where moving cost far more in uncertainty and potential death than staying. That is, they offered the aforementioned ingredients, and as polity after polity rose and fell, the fates of human societies were sealed. In part, we reach this conclusion based on historical evidence: where one's neighbor innovates politically and becomes more competitive, one has only a few options: scale up to match one's neighbor, risk conquest or subordination, or attack one's neighbor. The same isomorphic forces at work in economic fields described by DiMaggio and Powell (1983) were and are in play in the political world, too. The rise of city-states made some men jealous and ambitious, and others fearful of the implications of a new bully extracting resources. The consequence was statecraft everywhere.

The selection forces driving state formation were the same as those driving the evolution of kinship systems as the structural and cultural basis of societies: production, distribution, reproduction, coordination, and control, as was outlined in Chapter 2. The simplest response to these pressures, early on, was to expand kinship, using the nuclear family to build out a much more complex system of kinship capable of organizing larger populations to meet these selection pressures. Polity could evolve within kinship, but if population growth, ecological crises, density and circumscription leading to warfare, internal conflicts, and other selection pressures increased beyond the capacity of unilineal kinship to manage them, then power had to be consolidated and organized in a new way.

Without polity, it would have been difficult to organize larger populations and all of the associated problems, translated into selection pressures, of larger populations revolving around producing and distributing sufficient resources; reproducing members of the population and the corporate units organizing their activities; coordinating corporate units engaged in sustaining the population; managing conflict among individuals and corporate units within a population; defending territories from invaders; managing the increased emotional tensions that always come with more complex lifeways; dealing with ecological changes, whether natural or caused by human degradation of the environment; managing the inequality and stratification that comes with larger, more differentiated populations with higher levels of productivity; and many other idiosyncratic pressures unique to a population in a particular habitat.

The evolution of the state also allows and, to a great degree, facilitates the evolution of other institutions. The evolution of the state sets the stage for the eventual de-evolution of kinship back to nuclear families, although remnants of the older unilineal system could be viable for some time (particularly as set of rules for a hereditary aristocracy). Moreover, other patterns of kinship would also evolve as states formed, particularly if unilineal descent had not dominated a particular population. Because the early state was connected to religion in various ways and patterns, this separation of religion and polity would pose difficult problems and, in many ways, retard the autonomy of both institutional systems, whose entrepreneurs were often competing for power. Indeed, to this day, theocracies can be found around the globe where polity and religion overlap, often favoring the religious side and thereby reducing the autonomy of polity. Such systems will have difficulty in achieving fuller autonomy among other institutional domains under these conditions where a moral order committed to worship of the supernatural dominates secular institutional activity. Thus, much of the history of the evolution of state revolves around the long process of separating from religion. And until this separation could occur, the power of the state to deal with certain selection pressures on a population would be compromised.

As the polity gains autonomy, it consolidates and, to varying degrees, centralizes power in the organizational apparatus of the state. This power can be used in many ways, depending upon how it is consolidated around its coercive, administrative, symbolic, and incentive bases, and the particular configuration of this consolidation by the unique ecology and history of a state's evolution, or pattern of cyclical evolution and de-evolution. Moreover, the degree to which basis of power are used by elites in polity to increase wealth inequalities will have a very large effect on not only its

stability in the long run, but also on the autonomy of other evolving institutional domains.

Still, in the long run, the concentration of power in one institutional domain and the use of this power to address, to varying degrees, selection pressures leads to, for want of a better label, franchising power out to entrepreneurs and corporate units in other institutional domains, thereby giving them certain freedoms to evolve more autonomy. It was customary for new kings to make decisions about which Temples to elevate and which to destroy. In participating in various types of rituals, like laying the cornerstone for the erection of a new city temple, the king conferred *power* onto the priesthood in exchange for their compliance in matters important, such as legitimating the king's claims to power. Likewise, it was noted above that kings were usually one of the few men with enough capital to finance long-distance trade, which meant he had a vested interest in the workings of the market. To ensure he received fair or better-than-fair value, the king often enforced standard weights and measures, in exchange for compliance in the form of taxes and other duties performed by merchants. Eventually, polity, as part of its effort to coordinate activities within and between all institutional domains, begins to allow a certain level of autonomy in an evolving legal system in such actions as creating laws, adjudicating laws, and enforcing laws, although much of law remains embedded in polity at all levels of a society even in the most autonomous legal systems, but in allowing this autonomy in law works to provide an alternative basis of external legitimation of polity and its prerogatives outside of religion beliefs, which is important in increasing the autonomy of religion and thereby reducing its power to delegitimate polity.

In previous work, we have referred to media in terms of their temperature (Abrutyn and Turner 2010). *Hot* media, like love or aesthetics, tend to be highly particularized, difficultly fungible, and often highly subjective in value. They do not circulate as easily, which is why kinship does not stand a chance once one or more institutional spheres grow autonomous. Other media, like money or power, are *cooler*: more generalized in their value and meanings, fungible in myriad ways, and easily exchanged for local media. The penetration of the polity or economy into the lives of people is understandable, as are the efforts by those institutional spheres in erecting defenses against corruption and pollution. The larger point, however, is that institutions with cooler media are more capable of building bigger, more complex societies because (1) they can more readily produce structural and cultural equivalencies, (2) generate common ideologies and narratives that impersonal and depersonalized relationships can draw from

in orienting their behavior, and (3) mobilize key resources that can be used to deal with problems that arise in other institutional spheres. We may not like the "dirtiness" of the economy penetrating our lives, but there are good reasons why it does. Furthermore, if history tells us anything, the expansion of what is possible when an institutional sphere becomes increasingly autonomous indicates that their social evolution continues to march on.

Thus, in concluding this chapter, we note that the evolution of polity was both a good and bad thing. The latter refers to the increase in human suffering borne by the instruments consolidating and controlled by polities. Extraction of resources, the use of human capital in warfare or for defense, and the use of coercive force are very real costs of political organization. But, as with costs, there are benefits: the evolution of polity begins to open up the evolutionary space for humans. The innovations attributed to religious, legal, economic, scientific, educational, medical, artistic, and athletic entrepreneurs is due to the political sphere's ability to expand what was and is possible. The same use of distributive power for bad can be used for good, intentionally or not. For instance, once the state gains this capacity to franchise authority (as opposed to coercion), it creates a base for institutional innovation in response to selection pressures; and in return the polity gains both legitimacy and many extrinsic resources such as tax revenues, new goods and services, increased capacity to coordinate and control, educated workers, knowledge that can be used to enhance technologies, and so on. The result is that there is an initial take-off effect in which polity can grow and become more autonomous on a firmer resource base, while other institution domains necessary for later take-off points begin to evolve toward more autonomy and, moreover, allow for the evolution of new institutional systems that typify societies today.

In the next two chapters, we first push pause on this take-off story, examining religion as an institutional sphere (Chapter 9) before turning to the evolution of religious autonomy (Chapter 10). As one might expect, the tensions and conflict between religion and polity characterize the story, and if we were to look at modernity, still do characterize the story between the two spheres in most cases. However, religious evolution was important for political entrepreneurs whose ambitions continually outstripped their capacities to integrate and regulate ever-growing populations.

Note

1 Accordingly, 1 Mm = 1,000 km, therefore, 1 Mm^2 = 10^6 km^2 = 2.59 million mi^2.

9
The Emergence of Religion

In recent years, there has been a tendency to view religion as the outcome of genes wiring the human brain "for religion." For example, Dean Hammer (2004) announced that there is a "God gene" ($VMAT_2$) that predisposes human neurology for the propensity to experience religious faith. Similarly, Pascal Boyer (2001) felt that he had "explained religion" by postulating that the basic module (location unspecified) in the brain for "agent detection" was part of a larger decision-making process including seeing "gods" as agents. While there is no doubt that the human capacity for religion inheres in human neurology, this does not mean that selection pressures rewired the hominin brain for religion. It is far more likely, we believe, that religion is the byproduct of wiring the brain for dramatically enhanced emotions, expanded cognitive powers, speech, and culture in response to selection pressures to get late hominins and then humans to form stronger social bonds and group solidarities (see Chapters 1–6).

If one examines the complexes of human nature outlined in Appendix II of Chapter 1 (see pages 41 to 48), it is clear that human religions are made possible by these complexes as selection pressures pushed for what religions supply to human psychology and to human social organization. Key elements in the lists of cognitive, emotion, interaction, psychology, and community complexes that constitute humans' evolved nature (Turner 2021a) provide a neurological platform for religion but, by themselves, they do not *inevitably produce religion*. Religion, ultimately, is a complex neurological, psychological, interpersonal, and organizational formation, consisting at a minimum of the following (Wallace 1966):

1. *Beliefs* (a) in the existence of supranatural forces, beings, or, in some cases, realms and (b) about the relationship between the supranatural and the human.
2. *Practices* (a) surrounding interaction, exchange, and communication with the supranatural and/or (b) emotion-rousing rituals performed amidst the community of shared believers.
3. A set of *social relationships*, informal and/or formal, organized by and around beliefs and practices.

DOI: 10.4324/9781003224433-10

Based on these three properties, religion, or something recognizably religious, appears to be ubiquitous to human societies though expressed in a variety of ways. Perhaps most importantly, religions vary in terms of how formal their organization has become. This includes the actual "Church" or moral community in Durkheim's (1912 [1995]) terminology and the community's leadership. In addition, the central types of action vary in terms of how individualistic, communalistic, or congregational they are, which, in turn, reflects the underlying basis of social relationships between members of the community and with the supernatural. The level of abstraction of a religion's cosmology varies too, as it determines the degree to which the supernatural is imminent or transcendent, which, again, contributes to the organization of social action and relationships. Finally, religions vary in their physical, temporal, and symbolic "size." For nearly all of human evolution, religions were local, typically rooted in the kinship structure. With the rise of agrarian states some 5,000 years ago, gods were able to extend their dominion over a series of city-states, but the gods themselves were rooted in a specific city with the temple as their literal home. It would take a symbolic and organizational revolution to create ecumenical communities (Voegelin 1974) that spanned large geographic distances, that stretched into the mythic pasts and anticipated futures, and which expanded criteria for membership that had no ascriptive or territorial ties (Abrutyn 2014b). But, we are getting ahead of ourselves. For now, it is enough to say that religion, like the polity discussed in Chapter 7, was severely constrained by its deep embeddedness in kinship. Unlike polity, it has an interesting historical story in that it followed the political institution's evolutionary trajectory for millennia, growing increasingly differentiated and autonomous (see Chapter 9). However, like kinship, it has increasingly become a local, particular institutional sphere that, on the one hand, has a paradoxically significant amount of autonomy vis-à-vis other institutions, but, on the other hand, has become increasingly de-differentiated from polity as the fusion between family and religion has grown across the globe.

In the following chapter, we first do a little conceptual lifting and think more critically about the concept "religion," asking just how essential it was to human survival.[1] Hence, the remainder of the chapter looks at the neurological foundations of religion and then to what we believe was the selection process by which the earliest outlines of religion may have evolved. For instance, it remains an open question whether religion was truly ubiquitous to early humans, or is this a cultural and structural product that required the complex interplay between neurological, behavioral,

interpersonal, and organizational levels? As is evident in the ethnographic literatures on preliterate societies, just whether or not all early hunters and gatherers were religious is open to debate and to the definition of what constitutes religion. Nonetheless, some nomadic hunter-gatherers did develop religious beliefs about a supranatural plane of existence and rituals to access the forces and beings in this plane; and over time, as societies grew larger and more complex, the incipient forms of religion lodged in family and band began to evolve into an ever-more complex and autonomous institutional system in human societies.

Religion as an Institutional System: Basic Elements

The term *religion* has fascinating etymological roots and different usages, which bare only sketchy resemblance to how it came to be used as West colonized the rest of the world (Smith 1998). During the initial centuries of intersocietal contact, Western writers used the term to classify ritual differences and similarities between the preliterate groups they encountered and their own Catholic practices. Eventually, however, the practical side of religion gave way to definitions soaked in beliefs; a shift that may have been caused by the proliferation of Protestant sects and the growing theological concerns with the differences between these sects and with Catholicism more generally. The consequence is the association of religion with both the supernatural—e.g., gods or invisible forces—and its inextricable link to morality and piety. Within this context, the crude evolutionary models of the nineteenth century simultaneously maintained the belief that the West was more civilized and "evolved" than the rest of the world *and* the key to civilizing these people was getting them to adopt Western standards of morality and piety. Durkheim's (1912 [1995]) and Weber's (1922) importance, here, cannot be overstated. Both sociologists attempted to think through elements that mattered more than the beliefs and their content. For Durkheim, it was the fact that religion was just another social sphere of activity, and thus, the practices and beliefs mattered less than the fact they were shared and reflective of our ability to project representations externally that can then be internalized. For Weber, religion was another system of honor and esteem whose primary power derived from either how organized it had become (and therefore its ability to mobilize human, symbolic, and material resources), or, as a source of charisma, how much of a world changer it could be. Thus, sociology necessarily sets the tone of the discussion: religion is not simply a set of beliefs about morality or piety, though like any and all spheres of social activity, it prescribes

and proscribes behavior. But, so does kinship or polity; religion has no special claim to integrating or regulating behavior. However, there are reasons that at times (and still in some places today) it has be crucial to integrating and regulating societies. So, what is religion?

To begin, all religions involve some set of practices that are ritualized and designed to externalize beliefs, commune with the sacred, communicate with the supernatural, and bring the group into recurring contact. Rituals are of two types:

1. *Individual rituals* meant to directly communicate with the supernatural to obtain something believed to be or is actually impossible to obtain by ordinary means (e.g., rain, fertility, health) (Wallace 1966).
2. *Collective rituals* that are also used to obtain things (Finke and Stark 1988), but also serve the collective by purposefully bringing groups into emotionally charged assembly and, thereby, providing a sense of belonging to the group and intensifying commitments to its structure and culture (Rappaport 1999).

Second, beliefs range from highly abstract cosmologies to relatively concrete situational expectations. Cosmologies put humans and other social objects (that groups finds meaningful) into some sort of order in physical and temporal space. The situational beliefs usually revolve around how actors are supposed to exchange and communicate with the supernatural to obtain whatever it is they cannot get from natural means. In between, we find a range of epistemic and ontological elements that deal with a range of practical and metaphysical problems. At its core are often three central dilemmas: uncertainty, suffering, and evil (Geertz 1966). Uncertainty covers a lot of ground, including things like controlling the weather to making sense of earthquakes. Suffering has to do with health, death, and pain, while evil refers to understanding why bad things happen to good people, as well as why bad people are not always punished.

Third, practices and beliefs come to be organized around and by the *sacred* and the *supernatural*. The former refers to the externalized representations imbued with the collective effervescence generated by rituals and which come to be used, directly or indirectly, in future rituals for entrainment (Collins 2004). The latter refers to the forces or beings that are not classified as living and/or human. The two may or may not be mutually exclusive. In Judaism or Christianity, for instance, the sacred and supranatural overlap in many ways, whereas in preliterate societies the two are separate entities, with the former emerging in collective rituals and the

latter being confined to good or bad spirits or forces that "cause" positive or negative individual outcomes.

Fourth, a religion requires that these practices, beliefs, and the sacred/supranatural come to be shared by a *community of individuals*. The community may be delimited by natural or human-made criteria or can be intensively tied to territory or other ascriptive features or extensively tied to general beliefs about the sacred and supernatural.

Fifth, like the polity (*power*) and kinship (*love/loyalty*), religion eventually evolves a generalized symbolic medium of interaction, exchange, and communication. In fact, two media evolve, both around the binary of purity/pollution (Luhmann 2013). The first and earliest to evolve is *sacredness* and the second and more recent medium is *piety*. Both connect language, embodiment, and social objects to their level of purity and, consequently, their relative value, but differ in important ways. Sacredness is far less tangible and rooted more so in religions that lack explicit, rationalized ethical precepts, whereas piety becomes increasingly valuable in spheres that rely on prescribed and proscribed behaviors.

Sixth, religions vary based on how much a specific corporate unit or individual actor monopolizes the legitimate right to *psychic violence* (Weber 1978) and, therefore, the production and distribution of the religious generalized symbolic media. At one end, we have the prototypical hierocracy, the Catholic Church, which bureaucratizes both the authority to use psychic violence and distribute sacredness and piety. At the other end, there are patron-client type relationships as found in shamanistic religious organizations. In the middle are a host of corporate units ranging in their autonomy from a centralized system of organization, their level of formalization, the type of authority commonly wielded, and the sharpness of hierarchy.

Thus, differentiated religions usually are demarcated by distinct roles and corporate units being organized around increasingly distinct practices and beliefs; and, yet, these differentiated components tend to be culturally embedded in kinship or polity, or both. They cannot be said to be autonomous spheres of religious emotion, feeling, or action, interests or goals, values or norms. As religious entrepreneurs strain towards greater autonomy, it becomes a discrete cultural sphere, made meaningful by the circulation of generalized symbolic media that facilitate and constrain interactions, exchanges, and communication. In addition to *sacredness*, *piety* becomes increasingly valuable, and both of these media intersect in ways that shape a given religious sphere's unique system of stratification. In short, differentiated religions were increasingly common with the emergence of specialists like shamans, while autonomous religious spheres took

much longer to evolve; the reasons of which do not fully concern us now, but will be elucidated in greater detail in the following chapter.

The Neurology of Religion

The driving force of hominin evolution revolved around selection pressures to make hominins more social and more group oriented so that they could survive in more terrestrial habitats, and indeed, eventually open-country savannas and bushlands. A slow, bipedal great ape, revealing weak ties, no families, and no permanent groups was, despite its intelligence, no match for four-leg predators or packs of predators. Only with stronger ties and increased group-level social organization could open-country great apes survive. As we emphasized in Chapters 2, 3, and 4, selection first worked on subcortical areas of the hominin brain, expanding and elaborating on the number, variety, and nuance of emotions that, in turn, could strengthen social bonds among individualistic hominin apes and, eventually, make hominins more group oriented and, indeed, increasingly able to form what is a very *un*natural social structure for a great ape: *the nuclear family* that could be used as a building block for the hunting and gathering band (Maryanski and Turner 1992; Turner and Maryanski 2005, 2008, 2018; Turner et al. 2018). Selection thus worked on hominin neurology, first making hominins more emotional; and together with the cognitive growth that enhanced emotionality allowed, the neurological basis for religious beliefs and rituals became hard-wired in human neuroanatomy.

As is now known, humans' capacity for memory and decision making rest on the ability to tag cognitions about thoughts and experiences with emotions (Catani et al. 2013; Levine and Pizarro 2004). Thus, selection, as it grew the subcortical areas of the hominin brain, was creating an additional capacity for hominins to become more intelligent. Indeed, as is now well documented (Damasio 1994; Damasio et al. 2003), humans cannot make fully rational decisions when neurological damage to the brain has broken the connection between the subcortical emotion centers of the brain and the prefrontal cortex, where decisions are made. Similarly, without tagging cognitions with emotions, memories cannot form; and indeed, damage to the transition cortices holding cognitions, along with the hippocampus, which tags and initially stores cognitions that have emotional valences, prevents memories from forming. Indeed, unless the cognitions valenced by emotions have been reactivated as memories while stored in the hippocampus, they will fade from memory and not be shipped up to the frontal lobe for long-term storage. One of the reasons that Alzheimer's disease

patients lose their short-term memory is because this disease first attacks the subcortical *hippocampus*; and, then, only at a later stage of this debilitating disease does it finally begin to attack the neocortex and longer-term memory held in the frontal lobe.

Thus, the story of religion, like the other institutional spheres, begins with selection pressures on hominins for enhanced group solidarity, which meant enlarging and elaborating the affectual systems of the brain (Davies 2011; Davis and Montag 2019). This process led to more sociality generated by enlargement of subcortical areas of the hominin brain that, in turn, made possible the enlargement of the neocortical portions of the hominin brain over the last 1.0 million years of hominin evolution. Body language or the "language of emotions" (Turner 2000b), and perhaps proto-forms of sign language, had been evolving among hominins for perhaps several million years, laying down the platform for the beginnings of speech during the last million years of hominin evolution. For, as the neocortex was enlarged and cognitive capacities expanded, speech very likely became central to social organization of late hominins. With spoken language, coupled with all of the interpersonal capacities that hominins inherited from their common ancestors with present-day great apes (see Table 1.3 on page 29), interaction and sociality in general among late hominins became more efficient and compelling. Being able to speak and add voice inflections to express emotions, coupled with already wired dispositions for reading faces and eyes for emotions, mimicking emotions, reading gestures for role taking and empathizing, falling into rhythmic synchronization, calculating justice, reckoning status, and seeing self as an object, dramatically increased the subtlety and sophistication of late hominin and early human interaction. Each of these appear to become supercharged in humans (Tomasello 2019); and the ability to externalize mental states and emotions through speech allowed for individuals to share feelings and beliefs about realms in another reality, the supernatural. Indeed, many of these now enhanced interpersonal capacities are what would make the rituals of religious activity so compelling. And, with a now larger brain that could remember more, plan and think into the future, and think abstractly about other worlds beyond the "here and now," beliefs about the forces and beings of the supernatural could be codified and reinforced through emotion-arousing ritual activities.

We doubt that these neurological changes were in response to some drive to generate a religious capacity, *per se*. Rather, they were already present in the hominin genome and then, after enhancement by natural selection as the brain grew during late hominin evolution, they could be used to develop beliefs and rituals that could be considered "religious," if religion

would enhance fitness of human patterns of social organization. There is some debate as to whether or not early hunter gatherers were religious; and scholars' disagreements on this issue are often related to what they would define at religion. Is, for example, "Dream Time" by aboriginals as they experience in sleep images of deceased relatives the beginnings of religion as they visualize relatives and other forces in another plane of existence? If the answer is "yes," then religion may have been with the earliest of humans. If more is required—explicit belief systems, mandated rituals to access the supranatural, the pantheon of gods and supranatural forces, leaders organizing ritual pleas to the supranatural—then the answer may be that the *earliest* hunter-gatherers did not have religion. In either case, however, it is clear that something *very close to religion* evolved as natural selection was making humans more emotional, more intelligent, more linguistic, and more cultural in order to increase the strength of social ties and group solidarities and continuity.

It is plausible to suggest, then, that even though the earliest foragers did not have "religion," *per se*, it would not have taken a dramatic increase in selection pressures, both organizational and psychological, to develop it. From the cognitive, emotional, and psychological complexes of human's evolved nature outlined in Appendix II in Chapter 1 (pages 41 to 48), it is clear that humans' evolved neurology could be pushed to embrace conceptions of the supernatural. But, it was probably the selection pressures arising from needs to become more cohesively organized, or sociocultural selection pressures, that pushed the hardest on populations. As Émile Durkheim (1912 [1995]) came to realize, religion has the capacity to integrate and generate solidarities among individuals, even if they rarely interact with each other. The power of rituals directed at beliefs about supernatural forces to promote solidarity is, however, not only the hallmark of all religions, it is also the basic mechanism—collective beliefs and emotions arousing rituals directly at these beliefs, whether gods or society—that enhance human social solidarity.

Selection Pressures and the Evolution of Religion

The evolution complexes of human nature outlined in Appendix II increase the likelihood that religion would evolve in human societies, but as noted above, this pressure was not simply from the biotic world, but very likely from the evolving structure and culture of early kinship systems. The mixture of these two—big brains and increasingly complex social relationships—meant that humans not only experienced a wide variety of negative emotions, but also sought to make sense of and alleviate negative

emotions in collective meaning-making efforts. We suggest, then, that high emotionality coupled with a big neocortex is a formula for enhanced fear, anxiety and tension, thereby creating some of the first selection pressures driving the evolution of religion.

Fear, Anxiety, and Tension as Selection Pressures

One of the most remarkable aspects of being human is our ability to reflect on the past, plan for the future, and account for both of these in present interactions. These capacities also make three particular metaphysical problems salient that seem deeply tied to religion (Geertz 1966): uncertainty, suffering, and the existence of evil. We are compelled to make sense of things that we do not understand, that are threatening or chaotic. In addition, all mammals are capable of feeling some sort of empathy for conspecifics (Lents 2016), but humans are capable of elaborately transforming thoughts and feelings into collectively held, moral codes, moral conceptions of life and death,[2] the supernatural, and indeed just about anything. And, given that humans inherited a hard-wired sense of justice, fairness, and, thereby, morality (Decety and Yoder 2017), humans are prone to ponder and classify "good" and "evil." These existential dilemmas are intensified by our propensity towards negative affect, given the list of primary emotions contains three or four negative emotions (*sadness*, *anger*, *fear*, and, perhaps, *disgust*) and only one positive emotion (*happiness*)[3].

Thus, the biotic world of early foraging societies would have been rife with triggers of uncertainty, frustration, anxiety, unpredictability, and powerlessness in the face of environmental changes, and many other conditions that a low-technology animal with a big brain and powerful emotions must endure. In addition, the more complex human affectual attachments become to social objects, the more grief, anger, and anxiety were experienced when attachments were lost (Panksepp and Watt 2011); perhaps accounting for the evolution of social emotions like *guilt*, *embarrassment*, and *shame* that appear designed to foster both informal, preconscious forms of self-regulation (Tangney et al. 2007) and highly effective coercive forms of regulation (Garfinkel 1956).

It makes sense, then, that one mechanism humans discovered for reducing this anxiety and all emotional variants and elaborations of *anxiety* combined with variants of other negative emotions like *anger* and *sadness* was to see the *mundane world as controlled by forces in another realm of reality*. In terms of uncertainty reduction, the advent of cosmologies that provided myths of the origins of humans, their place in relationship to the natural and supranatural world, and ready-made sense-making frames for

new exogenous shocks worked to create consistent cognitive maps of the world (Eliade 1978; Radin 1937 [1957]). Likewise, rites of passage evolved around major life course moments that often involved suffering, like birth, puberty, and death, while beliefs and practices developed by shamans were nearly always designed to either improve health and luck or to bring suffering to another (Wallace 1966).

It is not difficult to imagine a process by which recurring interaction patterns became ritualized as they became meaningful, charged with collective effervescence, and focused increasingly on tangible and intangible objects that ensured mutual entrainment (Collins 2004, Berger and Luckmann 1966). Over time, and under the pressure to initiate new members to the group, practices became increasingly codified in myths and oral narratives, which eventually developed a life of their own because of our big brains. In these earliest societies, where things like food, fertility, health, and a range of other things we have ceded to science and scientists to help procure were difficult to obtain regularly or with certainty, new practices oriented directly towards the supranatural and designed to secure these "goods" could have been grafted on to the existing belief system (Stark and Bainbridge 1996). Indeed, anxiety about the world has not changed dramatically since these times, and, if anything, it may have increased as the world has become extraordinarily complex for an ape whose brain likely stopped evolving about 50,000 years ago. Thus, religion has not disappeared, but continues to be a major force across the globe (Almond et al. 2003). Indeed, even in more complex societies where there are myriad alternative "solutions" to "emotional problems," it is those populations of most subject to problematic conditions, and the anxiety thereby generated, that are generally the most religious, even in post-industrial societies of the present (Wuthnow 1987). And while there are data to suggest that religion in post-industrial societies is slowly losing some of its power (MacCaffree 2019), as long as stratification exists and many individuals and families feel vulnerable, selection pressures from humans' evolved psychology will continue to sustain religion. Especially given the fact that the neurology and psychology of humans assures that humans will experience negative emotions frequently, giving the evolution of religion an opening to evolve under the selection pressures generated by the arousal of negative emotions.

Reinforcing Social Norms and Cultural Codes as Selection Pressures

Given the dearth of bio-programmers for group solidarity among humans, social organization depended upon normative regulation more than

biology for groupness and families (at least in early human societies). A large brained animal that can speak and create culture to regulate actions and interactions and that can experience positive emotions when normative arrangements produce cooperation and solidarity will, thereby, elaborate culture norms, beliefs, and values to regulate behavior and patterns of social organization. Furthermore, our propensity to develop strong, affectual ties to social objects—including our own self!—meant the evolved capacity to attach ourselves to groups and abstract systems (Lawler 2001) *and* the very rules and norms that produce a sense of regularity, predictability, and certainty (Boehm 2018), as well as eliciting moral righteousness when transgressed (Durkheim 1893; Collins 2004). However, humans also resisted authority and subordination, hence a dilemma was posed: how can a group ensure members follow rules, especially rules that are essential for the survival of the group, such as incest prohibitions, without a human agent authorized to enforce the rules?

For Durkheim, the answer seemed so obvious: ritualized interactions generate collective emotions that feel outside of us and, through collective meaning making come to be attached to external representations and supranatural forces, which, in turn, are internalized in human psychology.[4] The relationship or group become objectified, consequently, and sacred much like the individual's self, which, through initiation rituals and other more mundane rituals come to feel as though they're "on loan" from the group (Goffman 1967: 10ff.). Indeed, rituals dramatize the (tacitly) agreed upon moral order (Swanson 1971), and, through adherence to performative and audience rules, also dramatize individual member's affirmation of moral codes (Rappaport 1999). Ultimately, the second driving force of religious evolution in early human societies was its unique capacity for reinforcing cultural norms, beliefs, and values. Instead of vesting authority in an individual, thereby subverting the motivation toward autonomy and independence inherited from our ape ancestors, moral authority could be vested in a world "outside" of humans and imbued in objects "set aside" from daily life. For if the powers of the supranatural support these cultural constructions, and if emotion-arousing rituals directed at the supranatural are also seen as supporting the culture of a population, then religion becomes a powerful force of social control and regulation (Swanson 1966; Durkheim 1912 [1995]; O'Dea 1966, 1970; Goode 1951).

When norms are seen as derived from higher-order moral premises like values and ideologies, and when these higher-order moral premises are seen as mandated by the supernatural, then religious rituals also support the secular social order and give normative expectations an extra constraining power. Additionally, when ritual appeals to the supernatural

further support and affirm the rightness of norms governing kin, economic, and/or political activity, normative expectations are given a further affirmation, tied to individuals' emotional well-being. For example, it is not surprising that in preliterate societies that when individuals must confront danger (and deal with their anxiety) that religious rituals support and indeed mandate that individuals follow normative procedures for engaging in dangerous activities (Douglas 1966). In Raymond Firth's (1936) ethnography on the Tikopia—a small island society in the Pacific where deep sea fishing in a small craft is necessary—canoe preparation for journeys into the sea was seen as a ritual obligation of each fisherman; and when economic activity was sanctioned by the gods and canoe preparation was viewed as a ritual obligation to appease the gods, the speed, energy, harmony, and coordination among workers greatly increased (Firth 1936: 90–95). Religious rituals also supported the Tikopian patrilineal descent system with the eldest male ancestor of larger kin units—e.g., lineages and clans—maintaining a small temple-like structure for ritual performances directed at the gods and ancestors (Goode 1951: 200), with norms of patriarchal authority being enforced by the exclusion of young women from certain religious rituals.

The more structures needed to sustain a preliterate society—such as a kinship system or perhaps the beginnings of a political system—the more likely is religion to be invoked and used as a means for legitimating these structures, and the more likely are religious rituals to be interwoven among the more mundane activities within an institutional system. Such rituals support the more general value premises from which norms are derived, giving them additional power because they are sanctioned by the supranatural forces governing the mundane universe. And, as we will see, even as a more secular legal system emerges to regulate relations among individuals and corporate units in a society, many of the legal precedents are drawn from earlier religious beliefs. Yet, before law as a clearly differentiated institutional domain could evolve (see Chapters 12 and 13), religion was critical in reinforcing the normative order in kinship, economic, and political institutional orders; and even in highly democratized and differentiated societies of the present it continues to reinforce and produce ontological security in smaller communities (Wuthnow 2018).

Reproduction and Regulation as Selection Pressures

There are always selection pressures for reproduction of individuals and the sociocultural formations organizing their activities in a society, as well as pressures for regulation and control of the actions of individual

and corporate actors. Reproduction of humans revolves around sustaining them biologically, while reproduction of sociocultural units revolves around sustaining the sociocultural formations that insulate and sustain individuals, while coordinating their activities. Religion evolves, to some extent, to facilitate both the reproduction and regulation of individuals as *organic* units (i.e., biological organisms) and *superorganic* units (social structures and their cultures organizing human organisms in sociocultural formations). In reinforcing the norms and values of superorganic units, religious beliefs and rituals regulate the coordination of individuals' activities in corporate units and, at the same time, sustain the viability of corporate units organizing societies. In so regulating, religion also allows for the reproduction of both individuals as organic units and societies as superorganic units.

Moreover, as individuals move through key transitions in life, punctuated by religious rituals, this process of marking life course transitions prepares individuals for insertion into the divisions of labor of corporate units, and the movement of individuals through these corporate units during their life course (Bell 1992). At first, this was a simple process revolving around nuclear kin relations and acquiring relevant economic skills to move into the two units organizing hunting and gathering societies: nuclear families and bands. With societal growth and differentiation, and especially with stratification (see below), this process became much more complex and often traumatic, creating new kinds of selection pressures on humans and their institutional systems. Still, for early human societies to survive, religion operated to assure that individuals and the corporate units sustaining then in an environment were reproduced and, moreover, that the transitions in the life course of individuals through the corporate units in institutional domains were orderly, often punctuated by rituals containing considerable religious content (Turner 1969; van Gennep 1909 [2010]). The transitions began with birth as religious rituals were enacted and continued through the life course for individuals, marking their movement to new status locations in kinship and economy, and perhaps in more differentiated societies, in polity and other institutional domains.

Moreover, most societies reveal rituals marking key phases in the development of humans as organisms, and often, these rituals are religious in nature, marking birth and key life cycle transitions such as puberty, marriage, divorce, and death. At the same time, religious rituals are often intertwined with rituals occurring in the social units most responsible for sustaining individuals as organisms and superorganic structures (e.g., kinship, economic, educational, political, legal, and other institution systems providing resources necessary for sustaining both organic and

superorganic life). These rituals tend to become more secular with the evolution of more complex societies, but rarely are they divorced completely from religion. For our purposes, however, in trying to understand the initial evolution of the first human institutions, religion was a key force in sustaining life of humans, *per se*, and the social structures and their culture that allow sociocultural formations to reproduce themselves as superorganisms and the human organisms whose actions they coordinate and regulate. Over time, the evolution of polity, economy, law, education, science, and perhaps other institutions like those preserving culture (art, literatures, theatre, etc.) evolve and supplant religion to varying degrees in response to reproductive and regulatory selection pressures of larger, more complex societies. Still, even in these societies that generally are more secular than early human societies, religious beliefs and values, along with the rituals that emotionally energize religious beliefs, are still prominent and prevalent in modern societies. Indeed, the institutional base for the takeoff to modernity was heavily imbued and even impregnated with religion; and without religion, it is unlikely that modernity could ever have evolved because religion provided, for the most part, a conservative, reproductive, and regulatory force on preliterate and more literate late agrarian societies that would move into industrial and post-industrial phases of development.

Stratification as a Selection Pressure

As human societies grew, they differentiated additional institutional systems. For our purpose, we are exploring the first institutional domains: kinship, polity, religion, economy, and law that provided the institutional base for further institutional differentiation and societal growth. As institutions evolved successively out of kinship, they became internally differentiated and hence more complex in terms of the number of different types of corporate units organizing activity by varying forms of division of labor. Relatively autonomous institutions always distribute valued resources to incumbents inside and outside of a more general system of inequality and stratification. Even when embedded in kinship, the media of the economy (*money*), polity (*power/authority*), and religion (*piety/sacredness*) were distributed unequally among kin members; and as other institutional domains became autonomous from kinship and, to varying degrees, of each other, inequalities in the distribution of valued resources increased. Some of these valued resources were more generalized, as is the case with prestige, knowledge, and positive emotions (Parsons 1963a). Other resources like money and power are more specific but still rather generalized in that

they can be used in a wide variety of circumstances (Abrutyn and Turner 2011). Thus, any of the generalized symbolic media connected to institutional domains can become unequally distributed (Turner 2010a, 2015d); and if this distribution is reproduced, often legitimated by religious beliefs, stratification begins to evolve as an outcome of the unequal distributions of valued symbolic media by all evolving institutional systems.

Religion was almost always part of these dynamics, first in the service of being deployed to legitimate inequalities as justified and even sanctioned by supernatural powers (Mann 1986). When religious beliefs were part of the legitimating ideology of emerging polities consolidating power, and through taxation, wealth religion was legitimating inequality. Even as religions became more autonomous, as we shall see in the following chapter, religions enforced inequalities through monopolies over psychic rewards and violence (Weber 1922). Thus, it worked to uphold the *status quo* of other institutional spheres and, eventually, developed its own hierarchy that, in some cases such as Hinduism, superimposed a rigid caste system the entirety of Indian societies (Dumont 1966). Thus, even the so-called world religions that offer far more democracy in access to sacredness and piety sustain the legitimacy of the split between elite and non-elite worshipers (Sharot 2001), which, at the same time, works to sustain and reproduce stratification between elites and non-elites more generally. This discussion will concern us in greater detail in the following chapter where we chart the course of religious evolution as it stretched towards greater autonomy. For now, it is enough to say that inequality was a powerful selection force of religion, as it forced elites and subordinate classes of humans to confront two of the key existential problems and make sense of their disproportionate presence in ranked and stratified societies (Flannery and Marcus 2012): suffering and evil.

The Evolution of Religion: A Brief Review

In Table 9.1, a brief summary of religious evolution from its beginnings in hunting and gathering societies through horticulture to early and later agrarianism is presented. The "stages" or phases of societal development are labelled in terms of their economic development (see Chapter 11 pages 261 to 266). What is evident is that religious evolution from the first seeds of religion in hunting and gathering involves movement toward more systematized beliefs, with (1) a coherent cosmology and mythology about the activities and nature of the supernatural; (2) an increasing number of both calendrical and non-calendrical ritual activities, engaged in by individuals and collectives of individuals; and (3) an increasing building up of

TABLE 9.1 Transformations in Religion during Pre-modern Phases of Evolution

	Beliefs	Rituals	Corporate-unit Organization
Hunting and Gathering	Conception of supernatural realm of forces and beings. Vaguely organized cosmology. Some mythology. No explicit religious value system.	Some calendrical rituals, but most rituals performed by individuals situationally and on their own. Shamans, however, begin to emerge.	None beyond nuclear kinship and band. Periodic "festivals" when several bands get together, often engaged in religious rituals.
Horticultural: Simple	Conception of supernatural realm of beings and forces. No clear cosmology ordering supernatural. Considerable mythology. No explicit religious value system.	Explicit and regular calendrical rituals, usually performed by individuals alone or in kin groupings, and at times led by a shaman.	Explicit structures devoted to religious activity, revolving around (a) division of labor among lay participants, lay organizers-sponsors, and religious specialists (shamans, magicians, and others deemed to have special capacities; (b) explicit symbols and artifacts representing various dimensions of the supernatural, and at times; (c) specialized buildings and places where members of religious corporate units perform religious activities.
Horticultural: Advanced	Conception of supernatural of beings and forces. Increased mythology that often	Regular calendrical rituals, often led by shamans and priests. Religious practitioners become full time "professionals" who	Explicit temple structures devoted to religious activity, involving (a) clear division among religious specialists and worshipers;

	organizes supernatural into levels and hierarchies of gods and forces. Extensive mythology. Beginnings of religious value system.	control and regulate communities of worshipers in their ritual activities, although some rituals are performed by individuals away from shamans and priests. Many rituals are collective festival-like affirmations of the power of gods and political leaders.	(b) hierarchy of religious specialists; (c) elaborate symbols and artifacts representing each aspect of the supernatural, often part of temple architecture; and (d) specialized buildings, places, and times for religious specialists to perform rituals and administrative activities. Beginnings of quasi bureaucracies organizing religious practitioners and religious elite.
Agrarian: Early	Clear conception of supernatural, codified into a mythology and pantheon of hierarchically organized supernatural entities and, at times, forces. Explicit moral codes and, hence, religious value system emanating from the gods and enforced by ritual actions of semi-professional clergy. Religious values often legitimate privilege of clergy and power of political elite.	Regular calendrical rituals, directed by full-time clergy. Considerable control by clergy of economic production, either through ownership of property, or indirectly, through ritualized rights to collect economic surplus. Ritual activities often conducted as festivals and sacrifices designed to legitimate polity.	Distinctive buildings and locations for ritual activity and administrative tasks of a semi-religious bureaucracies. Elaborate temples for marking the power of the supernatural (and often polity as well) and for both private and collective rituals affirming the supernatural and often political elites. Worship becomes more calendrical, with increasing rituals in religious structures and temples. Religious leaders and their organization in a system of corporate units control much economic and political activity.

(*continued*)

TABLE 9.1 Cont.

	Beliefs	Rituals	Corporate-unit Organization
Agrarian: Advanced	Pantheons reach their zenith as a prelude to decline in favor of single deity universal religions. Mythology also declines, but moral codes or religious values become highly codified and written down in elaborate religious texts and discourse. Religious legitmation of polity continues, even as universal religions appeal to "common persons." Traditional folk religions persist as do occult otherworld beliefs systems about magic and witchcraft.	Regular calendrical rituals directed by full-time clergy persist, as do individualistic rituals. Rituals are simplified and designed to appear to wider audiences. Clergy remains a major property holder, but rituals increasingly separated from economy and, eventually, even polity. Rituals increasingly seen as means to appeals to gods to improve the prospects of people now and in the hereafter. Beliefs increasingly emphasize life in a supernatural realm after death among universalistic religions.	Bureaucratized administrative structures for religious professionals expand, as do elaborate temples and churches, filled with religious totems overseeing worship by larger numbers of individuals. Religious corporate units still hold wealth and power, but decreasingly so as polity pushes for increased autonomy from religion. Polity begins its long move to a more secular basis of legitimization, creating its own bureaucracy and revenue-generating systems to support the emerging state bureaucracy. Alongside large, universal religions persist smaller religious organizations, with somewhat different ritual practices than the dominant religion in a society.

corporate unit structures, organized ever-more bureaucratically and often in networks of corporate units revealing clear divisions of labor among religious specialists who interpret religious beliefs and lead worshipers in collective ritual activities in ever-more elaborate temple-like physical structures. This brief outline in Table 9.1 does not, however, fully document the variants of these phases of religious evolution in diverse types of societies, especially settled hunter-gatherers and variants of horticultural populations (fishing and pastoral societies), but it does capture the general movement of religion, once it began to be institutionalized in human societies.

In sum, then, religion emerged early in human evolution—how early is a matter of what is defined as religion—but it is clear that as natural selection was rewiring the human brain and creating a human nature outlined in Appendix II in Chapter 1, it was also creating religion as the selection pressures outlined earlier attest. Moreover, as will be examined in Chapter 10, religion was also driving sociocultural evolution as human settlements became increasingly permanent and grew to sizes and scales previously unimaginable. At times, religion's impact on evolution derived from tensions between religious entrepreneurs and their counterparts in the political spheres, while at other times, power-sharing agreements between these two spheres led to incredible social change. In the post-Gregorian reformed Church and in the Caliphate Islamic world, religious autonomy as a dominant sphere may have reached its zenith, though its influence for most of the last 5,000 years has been relatively high, shaping kinship, education, science, medicine, and art (Huff 2005; Rashdall 1936; Sigerist 1951–61). Consequently, much of the evolutionary history of religion is related to the competition of religious corporate units with those in other institutional domains; and indeed, the history of any given society is related to how this competition played out. In fact, such competition among corporate actors in diverse institutional domains is very much like a Darwinian struggle over control over resources. And, though it is beyond the scope of our narrative, even today this struggle occurs on both a global and local stage (Almond et al. 2003). Thus, in the next chapter, we will outline some of the key consequences of religious evolution for not only religion but for the evolution of other institutional domains.

Notes

1 We start here for two reasons. First, what was once a central phenomenon of sociological interest has largely receded since the 1970s, as the growing interest in patterns of inequality have increased, especially in U.S. sociology. Indeed, concerns with

justice—broadly defined—for those who have experienced long-term discrimination has become the central focus of American sociology. As a result, many sociologists do not learn about religion, even at a cursory level; and when sociologists do focus on religion, they are most interested in the question of secularization with little historical and ethnographic context to make sense of the modern world. Moreover, the current trends in evolutionary psychology and biology that seek to explain religion and religious history through hard-wired propensities (Hammer 2004; Boyer 2001) or through cognitive processes (Norenzayan 2013) have erased the entire history of social scientific study of religion.

2 See for example Neimeyher et al. (2006) and Neimeyer et al. (2014) for the neurology and phenomenology of grief among humans.

3 See tables in Appendix I of Chapter 1 on pages 38 to 40.

4 Durkheim abandoned notions of *collective conscience* after 1895, never using it in his work on religion. He used the concept of *collective representations* to talk about collective beliefs, and he also violated his dictates in the *Rules of the Sociological Method* (1895 [1982]) and began to talk about human psychology.

10
Religious Evolution and Religious Autonomy

The evolution of religion had, as emphasized in the last chapter, been driven by the evolution of polity as an institutional domain; and it remained so through the evolution of horticultural and agrarian societies. By the middle of the first millennium BCE, religious/intellectual movements across Greece, Israel, India, and China accelerated and became highly visible and, eventually, ever-more impactful on societal evolution. This middle period of the first millennium BCE was an important period in human history, often overshadowed by the rise of the state because the rising state tends to produce material culture that can be excavated by anthropologists (e.g., canals, walls, stone buildings). Moreover, the size and grandeur of the Roman Empire and its relationship to Christianity and, centuries later, to the rise of Europe, biases historical accounts. First identified systematically in Weber's (1915 [1951], 1916–17 [1958], 1917–19 [1952]) classic works on "world" religions, philosopher Karl Jaspers (1953) coined the term "Axial Age" to argue that it was the epoch in which history turned from cultural assemblages distant from the modern world to those that "make sense" to modern humans. Whether or not there was something "axial" or not is much debated,[1] but what has not been debated is the impact made by religious entrepreneurs during this period[2] in transforming religion, epistemics, and culture more generally.[3]

Charles Taylor (2012: 32) has referred to this period as one in which the embeddedness of religion in extant social order began to decline, marking a "break in all three dimensions of embeddedness: social order, cosmos, human good." He went on to argue that Axiality has been overstated in its immediate impact, but the first millennium opened "new possibilities" for "seeking a relation to the divine or the higher [powers, suggesting] new kinds of sociality" (ibid: 37). Like states, religions left physical marks on the social landscape, but it was the temporal, social, and symbolic dimensions of religion which were initially important. Subtle shifts from cyclical notions of time gave way to future orientations (Eisenstadt 1986), both in the rise of personal soteriologies in most Axial religions (Weber 1946b) and, concomitantly, collective eschatologies (Weber 1922). The moral community became increasingly untethered to the evolving political domain as

DOI: 10.4324/9781003224433-11

did individuals' cognitive mapping of community, pushing for changes in how personal identities were to be constructed.

Alongside these changes, textual authority grew in importance (Goody 1986; Sanderson and Roberts 2008), while ritual was transformed with the emergence of individualized ethical and practical prescriptions, in addition to collective forms like pilgrimages. Perhaps most radically, a shift in symbolic reality occurred with the supranatural order being parallel in time and space with the secular order, and with the notion that the supernatural was accessible only to political and religious elites being replaced by a transcendent order accessible, in theory, to all (Abrutyn 2021b). More popularly in today's literature, this symbolic change has been referred to as the evolution of Big Gods (Norenzayan 2013), or moralizing "high gods" who evolved to function for the integration of large, heterogeneous, impersonal societies (for critiques of this thesis, see McCaffree and Abrutyn 2020; Whitehouse et al. 2019).

Thus, just as the earlier Urban Revolution several millennia prior led to the beginnings of autonomous polities, the Axial Age marked the onset of religious autonomy. Unlike the polity, whose autonomy, perhaps, reached its acme with the rise of the modern bureaucratic state, religious autonomy would peak with the rise of the Catholic Church and the Islamic Caliphate. In this chapter, then, we explore how religious space in its four dimensions—physical, temporal, social, and symbolic—differentiated and reached for autonomy.

Church and State

As was emphasized in Chapter 8, religious evolution was driven by political evolution until the first millennium BCE. Hence, we must begin by asking what happened in the first millennium that changed the relationship between state and Church? As we shall see, the role of religious entrepreneurs is critical to answering this question.

The Political Horse Pulls the Religious Cart

As early as the first unilineal descent systems in kinship, the sacred and supranatural were already becoming deeply entwined in the emerging polity within the structural framework of the kinship (Netting 1972). To be sure, religious specialists like shamans were set apart from weavers or boat makers but, nonetheless, religion was an occupational specialization. Like a boat maker whose finished product could be traded for other things he needed, a religious specialist had a trade that he plied in exchange for other commodities with use-value. Thus, so long as a patron-client relationship

dominated the exchange, religious specialists were nothing more than tradesfolk (Eisenstadt and Roniger 1980). The shaman's trade was in communication with the supranatural, but very often it also involved practical knowledge about plants and their medicinal properties or other matters related to the natural world. Max Weber's (1922) work on religion is central to the story. Full-time priests require consistent access to subsistence (e.g., food) in order to spend their days doing their tasks, while corporate units devoted to religious activities need even more subsistence continually flowing their way. In early horticultural systems, there simply was not sufficient economic surplus to transform their part-time practice into a full-time profession, to say nothing of building out a religious infrastructure housing an elaborated and differentiated corporate unit of religious practitioners. Thus, like a potter, religious specialists could only be full-time if they served the material and ideological interests of political actors.

Two further constraints on the options of religious specialists often existed. First, religious specialists were often close family members of the chief, perhaps a younger brother. Among the Tongans, for instance, power passed through the oldest son, which appears to have created a period of political instability as fratricide became the principal means of usurping power. To solve this dilemma, a second lineage formed separating secular from sacred political functions. Second, religious rituals and beliefs were increasingly becoming fused, physically, temporally, socially, and symbolically, with the nascent autonomous polity. The Tongans had a special island "resort" that chiefs and their closest family would "retire" to when they needed a vacation. The burial grounds of both lines of chiefs were there, as were many sacred objects that set the political elite aside from commoners.

In short, the material conditions of the earliest societies placed an artificial cap on efforts to monopolize religious experience, knowledge, and practice. Political elites who were further ahead in structural and symbolic independence were in a position to control religious specialists and, thereby, restrict the circulation of generalized symbolic religious media (*sacredness/piety*). Over time, this meant that commoners were less able to access and acquire the appropriate language, embodiment, and objects of religious value, which further constrained the importance of religion in everyday life. To be sure, there were recurring collective rituals, as the commoners could not be denied effervescence or transcendent experience without threatening the society's integrity. Yet, these very often were fused with displays and performances of power, further blurring the lines and logic between polity and religion. One ritual, for instance, that appears to

have strong affinities with power (as it appears, independently, in many chiefdoms and, again, many agrarian states) involves the "new year" celebration (Kramer 1963). In chiefdoms, this set of rituals usually occurred following the death of a chief and the anointing of his successor, but appears to have become annual, or perhaps more frequent, in early states. For a week, the society was purposefully cast into a state of liminality or *anti-structure* (Turner 1969), in which structural elements that facilitate patterned emotions, thoughts, and actions were temporarily paused. In this period, status was not important, as commoners were encouraged to do things generally reserved for the powerful. And so, the chaos that mythically preceded the birth of social order is recreated and, at the end of the period, it is the chief or king who restores order (Eliade 1958 [1996]).[4]

In sum, Guy Swanson's (1966) insights orient the relationship between polity and religion for much of human evolution: religion was very often the handmaiden of political evolution. Indeed, even during the Axial Age, when religious autonomy untethered the dynamics of religion from its political moorings, the relationship between the two remained complex; material complexity pushes cultural complexity (Peregrine 1996; Underhill 1975) because religions, at this early time, remained a central source of knowledge, intellect, aesthetics, and so forth (Humphreys 1975; Oppenheim 1975). However, Swanson's analysis had limitations for explaining why political evolution drove religious evolution and, especially, why the latter eventually broke from the former. That is, what is needed is a Weberian insight emphasizing the interests of religious actors vis-à-vis their political counterparts—a point we will return to again when we encounter the rise and proliferation of Big (moralizing) Gods.

The State and Power-Dependence

By the time the state had emerged, religious actors were more secure in their position. As noted in Chapter 8, Temple-economies dotted the Mesopotamian landscape. But, their function remained political in ways that looked nothing like priests or rabbis or monks today. With the rise of the state, the temple and its priesthood became another—albeit the most important—hereditary occupational class among others. Religious activity and knowledge remained mysterious to the average person, as temples were restricted to the priests (and, very often only the elite priests had access to the most important ritual knowledge) and to the king. Again, collective rituals occurred, but they very often marked the power of the king as much as the gods. The evolution of the supranatural, at this point, reflected many of the selection pressures discussed in the previous chapter: big

brained emotional apes capable of forming communities were increasingly surrounded by social ties that were increasingly impersonal and, with urban spaces, *de*personal. In an effort to deal with cognitive and affectual constraints that were exacerbated by the disintegration of kinship bonds, every occupation and every city adopted a god which was less personal than an ancestor at the head of a lineage but not different in-so-far as providing goods and services that were unattainable otherwise.

Notably, the gods of these societies looked nothing like the supernatural that would come later (Black and Green 1998; Stone 1986; Schwartz 1975). For one thing, they were geographically bound. The temple was their literal home, and the priests' primary religious function was, literally, to feed and hydrate the master of the home (Stark 2007). In the Bible, there are so many instances of burnt offerings, which are holdovers from the days when people asked for something from the deity in return for food. The priests were no different, except they were tasked with not simply a one-time transaction but sustaining the god and, thereby, ensuring good fortune for the king and the city. Thus, temple land was used to farm the god's food, which was really the source of subsistence for the priests and, eventually, surplus for the king to use as payment for corvée labor and as risk management in the event of famines or droughts.[5]

The surrounding agricultural world likely continued to practice ancestor worship, though the supernatural world probably remained present in times of need as well as through marking the major moments in the rounds of economic life (e.g., harvest). The Big Gods in the city were distant from the concerns of the general population because they were unable to help with fertility or droughts. Feeble sources of bonding vis-à-vis local rituals and their palpable mutual entrainment and emotional arousal would occur, but as Weber (1946b) emphasized, the deprivileged did not have access to Big Gods. When confronted with existential problems, generally of the practical nature, it is a luxury to think about thinking and, hence, contemplate the nature of the supernatural. As a result, even for priests, their most important function in agrarian societies was as keepers and producers of knowledge, intelligence, and writing rather than contemplation of the nature of the supernatural.

Knowledge, Intelligence, and Writing

In the preliterate world of early horticultural societies, knowledge was not scarce, but what people needed to know was delimited to the practical contingencies of everyday life (e.g., planting and harvesting), along with a "simple" supranatural world that largely reflected the practical experiences

of individuals (Evans-Pritchard 1956; Lowie 1936). Religion was not simple in the sense of lacking complexity, but simple in the sense that the number of objects and their relationships were largely reduced to, and subordinated to, kinship organization. With increasing population size, density, and heterogeneity, alongside increasingly complex forms of subsistence, the sheer amount of knowledge available would have been difficult for any one individual to master; especially those whose lives were devoted to reproduction (e.g., farming) or mastering a specific craft. Political entrepreneurs would have been quite intelligent, but so would the religious specialists whose entire body of expertise revolved around intellectual activities often removed from practical realities. However, so long as religious actors remained materially dependent on the political elite, religion remained an appendage of the state. Religious entrepreneurs, then, often sat in a state of tension: removed from the rounds of everyday life, yet also powerless to make direct decisions, and so, the earliest priesthoods were "far from establishing an independent cultural and political base [continuing] to serve the ruling group" (Machinist 1986).

Generally speaking, religious actors were a conservative force in the agrarian state-level societies that began to evolve (Eisenstadt 1963). The earliest systems of writing, for instance, were cumbersome to learn, had yet to develop the idea of "authorship," which constrained their relevance to charismatic authority, and remained in competition with oral forms of religious authority (Liverani 2004). In Mesopotamia, scribes were not trained to write creatively (Schaper 2013), but in fact were trained to copy the classic texts with fidelity—thereby building their own library and being capable of teaching the skills necessary as a means of added income (Garelli 1975; Oppenheim 1975). To be sure, scholar-scribes and priests were responsible for myriad proto-scientific advances in astronomy and medicine, but divination remained as an important, if not more important, tool in their skill set as kings continued to seek counsel with the supranatural in order to make expedient decisions. And so, monopolizing writing was a necessary condition for religious evolution, but it was not sufficient to get the process moving.

It would be difficult to suggest that writing, like the plow (Nolan and Lenski 2010), *caused* religious evolution and/or the Axial Age (Sanderson and Roberts 2008). In both cases, the technology existed for several thousand years before the radical reconfiguration of political and religious spheres as religious entrepreneurs began to seek more autonomy (Abrutyn 2014b). Of course, it would be naïve to assume that writing prior to the first millennium BCE was always conservative, flat, and redundant and, thereby, less transformative. Rather, writing created *opportunities*, but like

most opportunities, only when the political, economic, and cultural reality allowed actors to leverage these opportunities did writing have transformative effects. In a critical essay on writing and the Axial Age, Assmann (2012: 386) contends that until oral tradition fused with written authority, the transformative magic of writing could not be unleashed. That is, what was lacking in the earliest religions with writing was the capacity to "carry the *normative* and *formative* knowledge [passed down across] generations." However, once unleashed, religious writing could operate like its own rocket fuel to push religious evolution. As Assmann (2011: 4–9) argues, it is

> through the written element of traditions that the dominance of repetition gradually gives way to that of re-presentation—ritual gives way to textual coherence. A new connective structure emerges out of this, which consists not of imitation and preservation but of interpretation and memory. Instead of liturgy we now have hermeneutics…[Writing, in particular,] gives rise to a dialectic of expansion and loss. [It] facilitates a hitherto undreamed-of expansion in our capacity to *store and retrieve* information and other forms of communication, while simultaneously *leading to a shrinkage of our natural memory bank*.

Of equal importance, texts formed a "connective backbone" linking the past and the present in ways that ritualized *oral* religions could not. The commoners would, therefore, have to wait for the next public performance in order to access the sacred and supranatural, but texts offer continuity where "institutions of learning and exegesis are established that keep the ancient texts constantly present and semantically transparent" (Assmann 2012: 394). Written religions, then, were qualitatively different structural, cultural, and phenomenological forces. We conclude this discussion, then, by identifying the central elements that differed between the two, as we segue to the next question: why did religions evolve and how did they become forces driving selection in other spheres of social life? In Goody's (1986) seminal work on the subject, he points to eight key facets of religion that changed, gradually at first, and then rapidly over the course of the first millennium BCE. In Table 10.1, we present these seven to anticipate our discussion of religious autonomy and evolution.

Axiality and Autonomy

Something radical happened as human societies approached the Common Era, conventionally called the Axial Age. We may dispense with the term (given the extraordinarily unsettled nature of the debate

TABLE 10.1 The Consequences of Writing

1. **Writing facilitates ethical universalism**
2. **Writing favors generalization of values and norms:** (a) Decontextualizes rules by presenting a single abstract rule and (b) presentation of written word requires universal application
3. **Rationalization:** (a) Formalization and standardization encourages ethical universalism as (b) rules must apply to the moral community and not a ranked bureaucracy
4. **Strong ingroup/outgroup boundaries beyond territory:** (a) Beliefs and practices become fixed to texts and not to places and (b) portability and general nature of writing facilitates conversion
5. **Literate religions more fixed, temporal, and eternal:** (a) Teachings become standardized, formalized, and enduring, and (b) dogma emerges to protect textual authority
6. **Texts are less flexible:** (a) Practices are stereotyped and sharply ritualized, and (b) deviance less permitted
7. **Priesthood:** (a) Provides specialized access to the supranatural and moral authority, (b) monopolies of specialization translate into monopoly of training new priests, and (c) standardization of training and growing numbers of priests creates pressure for schools

[Arnason 2005]), but during this time frame, religion and epistemics more broadly went through dramatic transformations that resulted in major sociocultural evolution. What exactly changed has been debated (Abrutyn 2021b), but some overlapping changes are as follows: the emergence of a transcendent conception of the supernatural (Schwartz 1975), the rise of second-order thinking (Elkana 1986), the pervasiveness of theoretic beliefs (Bellah 2011), and the emergence of religio-cultural social movements and entrepreneurship throughout the world (Abrutyn 2014b; Eisenstadt 1984; Runciman 2012). It is during this period of rapid change that we identify the first strains towards religious autonomy in human history.

Why at this time? Though there are myriad answers to this question, the most visible and dominant one comes from evolutionary psychologists who propose that in order for complex, heterogeneous societies to evolve, heterogeneous societies needed Big (moralizing) Gods (Norenzayan 2013). Is this the case? This seemingly functionalist tautology deserves some attention, and just as we pushed back against the idea that religion was hard-wired into the brain in Chapter 9, we do so again here.

The Chicken and the Egg (Complexity versus Gods)

The Big God thesis has been exhaustively reviewed and debated elsewhere (McCaffree and Abrutyn 2020; Norenzayan et al. 2016; Whitehouse et al. 2019). The basic idea is that kin reciprocity and altruism are not capable of producing mega societies, and thus something else, something sociocultural, had to evolve to facilitate cooperation among strangers. That something was Big Gods, or moralizing gods whose omnipresent, omniscient gaze would make actors be good when not in the presence of an external agent of the state or society. In short: complex societies *need* external mechanisms facilitating cooperative behavior and reducing conflict, and Big Gods are *necessary* for reducing conflict and facilitating cooperation.

The causal ordering of this argument remains an open question, and perhaps one of the most fascinating in the study of religion. But, it also makes some dubious assumptions that take for granted the emergent properties of corporate actors and institutions we have discussed throughout and which are not reducible to individual psychology. Indeed, applying Darwinian logic to the evolution of Big Gods, once institutional spheres like kinship and then polity have become environments in which different types of selection operate, cannot adequately answer the question. Consider, for instance, three pieces of evidence.

First, the idea that Big Gods were necessary to facilitate cooperation ignores the massive sociological divide between religious elite, who produce and reproduce beliefs and practices, and the beliefs and practices found in mass religions (Sharot 2001). The evolution of Judaism, for instance, took centuries before the idea of monotheism replaced monolatry among the priestly class and probably did not diffuse among the people such that it made a phenomenological difference until after the fall of the Second Temple in 70 BCE. Second, India, China, and ancient Greece never developed a High God in the sense attributed to the Abrahamic gods. The mythology of the latter was never concerned with human welfare, but rather, they were often collateral damage in the myths. Indeed, at the cusp of Greece's rapid transformation into a world empire, religion was mostly muted while metaphysicians dominated the intellectual landscape (Elkana 1986; Humphreys 1975). Greece, nonetheless, grew in complexity. Thus, the Big God thesis not only ignores the structural conditions that shape the material and ideal interests of political and religious actors, but it ignores the massive divide that existed in political and religious spheres lacking modern transportation and communication technologies; and, therefore, the necessary ability to penetrate the reality of the masses in consequential

ways. Thus, Big Gods may have evolved, but their impact in controlling human behavior would have taken centuries, if not longer, which makes dubious the claim that they were needed to induce cooperation or moral behavior.

The final piece of evidence is an example of a failed revolution, and its failure underscores the missing pieces from psychological explanations of religious change. In the 14th century BCE, an otherwise traditional Pharaoh, Amenhotep IV (Manniche 2010; Ridley 2019), embarked on what can only be described as "not only the first but also the most radical and violent eruption of a counter-religion in the history of humankind" (Assmann 1997: 25). In his fifth year, he changed his name to Akhenaten, marking a sharp break from worshiping Amun to the worship of the sun god, Aten. He immediately set out on an institutional project that would consist of simultaneously building a new capital and instituting the monotheistic worship of Aten while also closing all the other temples, chasing out the priests, and then destroying the images of the other gods in order to erase their names and cults. The elevation of a singular, omniscient god would seem most adaptive, and yet, traces of this revolution remained hidden from history and archaeology until the 19th century. Why? In part, Akhenaten was a failed charismatic leader. The true "test of any great charismatic leaders lies not only in his ability to create single event or great movement, but also in his ability to leave a continuous impact on an institution's structure…by infusing into it some of his charismatic vision, by investing regular orderly offices, or aspects of social organization, with some of his charismatic qualities and aura" (Eisenstadt in Weber 1968: xvi). But, this failure was amplified by his inability to cultivate a charismatic group (Abrutyn and Van Ness 2015) or aristocracy (Joose 2017), who, in turn, could actually enact changes and work to diffuse religious beliefs throughout society. Upon Akhenaten's death, the exiled priests usurped the throne with their own nine-year old (Tutankhamen), defaced all signs of Akhenaten, and reinstituted the polytheistic cult.

Thus, were Big Gods necessary? We see that (a) the masses likely did not care or adopt any notion of Big Gods until much later, (b) complex societies often existed and flourished without moralizing high gods, and (c) the gods and the beliefs themselves were less important to the stability and integration of a society as the institutionalization of structure and culture that was capable of reproducing practices and beliefs. The fact remains, Big Gods, like other symbolic or normative creations, were created by elites whose interests are only marginally overlapping with the masses. Akhenaten's revolution may have been truly inspired, but the reasons for making monotheism had nothing to do with inducing cooperation; just as

the invention of a monotheistic Yahweh during the Babylonian exile had little to do with complexity and solutions to reduce it (Abrutyn 2015a). In some cases, their inventions may have the indirect effect of regulating behavior, but it is often the case—especially in the ancient world—that these innovations were meant to entrench claims of power and create order among strata competing with the ruling elite (e.g., landed gentry). So, beyond the causal debate, the argument itself seems less relevant to explaining why mega societies happened or, even, why religion evolved in the first place. So, the question then, is why and how did religions evolve towards autonomy and how did this effect society?

Crisis and Religious Entrepreneurship

At the end of the 11th century BCE, the Near East was in collapse: Assyria and Egypt were in a period of ebb, receding from the geopolitical scene, while the Hittite empire collapsed completely leading to the slow and then rapid diffusion of iron metallurgy (van de Mieroop 2004). Likewise, the Mycenaean civilization collapsed driving Greece into a two to four hundred year "dark ages" (Langdon 2010). Around 771 BCE, the Zhou dynasty in China began a five century period called the Spring and Autumn period in which the centralized polity broke down into recurring struggles between states that would eventually transition into the Warring States period (Gernet 1982). In India, the end of the second millennium was also a period of disruption: the Indus Valley urban civilization broke down around 1300 BCE, while conflicts between the Arya and other groups and between Aryan clans accelerated near the end of the millennium (Stein 2010). The outcome of these struggles would result in the evolution and crystallization of the earliest forms of the caste system and the formalization of the Vedas and another half century of conflict ending in the Second Urbanization period. Religious evolution first and foremost was forged in the crucible of political disintegration; and because the scale of empires had reached their largest size imaginable at that point, their deterioration reverberated in myriad ways.

Most notably, the dissolution of polity gave some structural and symbolic space for non-political entrepreneurs to innovate without fear of suppression (Abrutyn 2014b). But, it also gave these potential entrepreneurs the content for which they were to develop new symbolic, normative, organizational, and technological innovations (in the sense of knowledge and practices related to altering the supranatural world). First, the diffusion of iron led to the iron plow which would condition the explosion of populations throughout the world (Sherratt and Sherratt

1993). Between 650–430 BCE, for instance, the number of cities with 30,000 or more people leapt from 20 to 51, with the total urban population spiking from 894,000 to 2,877,000 people (Sanderson 1999: 111). An extraordinary amount of pressure on resources was the ultimate result, but so was the moral density necessary for intellectual endeavors (Collins 1998). Second, and closely related, iron technology meant iron weapons, and iron weapons meant more devastating militaristic outcomes. Nearly every religious entrepreneur spoke and wrote of existential horrors perpetrated by profane secular elites (Armstrong 2006; Martin 2012). How devastating was it? The neo-Assyrian empire was known for not just subjugating enemies, but also, for sometimes skinning an entire town alive and lining the outside walls with their skins as a threat to others (Bleibtreu 1991).

Third, along with population size, density, and urbanization came sharpening inequality that could not be hidden as easily given its salience. Not surprisingly, the Israelite prophets and the Chinese sages (Aberbach 1993; Rowley 1956), as well as the various movements arising from the Upanishads and then Śramana (e.g., Buddhism or Jainism) movements (Thapar 1975, 2004) carried social justice and social protest messages, even if they were not necessarily put into practice. The same can be found in the critical philosophies of Socrates and Plato, not to mention the Pythagorean cult and, implicitly, the rise of natural history. Paradoxically, the vacuum left by the breakdown in states freed up a lot of resources once destined to flow to distant political centers, and along with urbanization and foreign trade, led to a growing middle class in many locations (Joffe 2002). A new material base upon which religious entrepreneurs could gradually free themselves from the yoke of political dependence emerged. In some cases, this meant improving their power-sharing agreements, as in the case of the Confucian literati, while in other cases it meant straining for freedom, as the Buddhist shift towards monasticism would eventually produce (Walsh 2009).

A fourth causal factor stems from the new forms of imperialism rushing to fill the vacuum left by the disintegration of the old (Abrutyn 2014b: 124). Whether it was Buddhism directly challenging the vice grip exercised by Brahmans (Pollock 2005) or the Israelites casting aspersions on political leaders (von Rad 1967), the horrors of conflict and the new means of political oppression gave impetus to the framing of a moral, social justice message, one especially salient given the visibility of sharp inequalities (McCord and McCord 1977). Paradoxically, the growth in empire also gave these entrepreneurs something unique: the conditions and pressures for the type of ecumenical or cosmopolitan message they came bearing.

On the one hand, transportation technologies made it easier for people to travel, safely, from town to town. Confucius and Buddha were both archetypal in their mobility. On the other hand, traveling from town to town, seeing inequality and misery in different contexts, and encountering alien culture meant having to reframe one's own conceptual map of the world while also articulating a more general, universal sense of sacredness and piety.

The gods could no longer simply dwell in a physical location, as it made no sense as populations were ethnically, culturally, and linguistically mixed in dense amalgams. No longer could the moral community either be restricted to the narrow territorial boundaries of the village or its access be constrained to the officials and virtuosi. No longer could the supranatural and natural worlds be conceptualized in lockstep, mirroring each other in form with the former ensuring the order of the latter. To be sure, political evolution continued, and in fact, was fueled by religious evolution. However, there were enough material, symbolic, and human resources available to support a distinctive religious sphere in which the practical problems of the state were secondary, subordinate, or complimentary to those of beliefs and practices of the religious elite. The consequences were measurable in physical, temporal, social, and symbolic space, and through the efforts of religious entrepreneurs.

Reconfiguring the Religious/Political Spheres

Given the conditions above, the first millennium was ripe for sociocultural selection that had little to do with complexity or functional needs. Hence, the biggest weakness and most taken-for-granted dimension of evolutionary psychology and the Big Gods thesis is the omission of interests. Whether or not complex societies need something to become complex, to ignore the material and ideal interests of the actors, usually collective actors, who take high risks (e.g., death by the political elite) to propagate institution-smashing (Weber 1968) normative, symbolic, organizational, and technological innovations cannot be dismissed. Big Gods require authorship and a material and symbolic base of resources detached from the political elite who appropriate religion and priests as instruments of political decision making and legitimacy. Weber's charisma, centrally located in groups, was anti-institutional; it sought to strike out at the extant order. In the Axial Age, then, part of the motivation or, as Runciman (2012: 323) terms it, their "aspiration" is "to demolish the institutional structures from which the rulers have derived their power," through intense political and social critique (Momigliano 1975). Thus, it is rare that a corporate unit

taking high risk/high reward strategies takes a high-level goal, like inducing cooperation among heterogeneous actors, as its motivating force. More often, it is other instrumental (e.g., power) and/or substantive (injustice) goals that drive entrepreneurs as evolutionary forces (Abrutyn and Van Ness 2015). Therefore, the last ingredient in our story of religious evolution are religious entrepreneurs.

Where political entrepreneurs leveraged force, male loyalty, and political expediency, religious entrepreneurs sought to monopolize not physical violence, but psychic coercion or violence (Weber 1978: 54). Psychic force derives from the legitimate right to produce and distribute (as well as withhold) access to sacredness and piety, and therefore, communication with the supranatural (see also Murvar 1967). It should be noted that not a single entrepreneur in the first millennium succeeded in constructing an autonomous religious sphere, though it is not for a lack of trying. Variation in outcomes can be charted along three independent dimensions: (1) how strong existing power structures were, (2) the amount of "free resources" available for religious entrepreneurs to claim, and (3) the number of competing entrepreneurs claiming the right to key generalized symbolic media like *sacredness/piety* as well as *truth* and *knowledge*. The first dimension speaks to the cohesive nature of polities in two key ways. First, do polities have internal cohesion among ruling elites such that they can respond coherently towards upstart movements? Second, are resources, like military units, stretched thin to the margins of a political territory? Either vulnerability can crack open space to operate, while also determining just how independent entrepreneurs might become. The second dimension refers to the material base and just how extensive it is such that other strata can become a reliable base of human and material resources and allow entrepreneurs to avoid dependency. Finally, heterodoxic religious spheres are highly dynamic and quite unpredictable in their evolutionary trajectory (Eisenstadt 1984) because they delimit monopolization and can lead to one entrepreneur making power-sharing arrangements with political elite in exchange for vanquishing their rivals. Monastic religions, like Buddhism, struggled with creating a true hierocratic religious corporate unit and, therefore, resisted carving out an autonomous religious sphere that stretched beyond the local Sangha's members' interests (Walsh 2009). Nevertheless, it would be difficult to deny the success Buddhism has had in carving out religious autonomy, even if the religious sphere was unable to create a Church in the Weberian sense of the term.

Ultimately, religious entrepreneurship, like all forms of entrepreneurship needs space to operate (Abrutyn and Van Ness 2015; see, also, Wittrock

2012). The archetypal "Big God" religion, Judaism, underscores this point most clearly. Though it is dubious to assume the historiographic accuracy of the Hebrew Bible (Davies 2008), the narrative from Deuteronomy on is instructive. The reader sees an entrepreneurial process unfolding in which religious entrepreneurs found themselves on the margins, eventually found shared interests that pulled them into the political core, were cast from that core, and then returned, like the Egyptian priests following Akhenaten's death, with a vengeance (Abrutyn 2015b). However, these struggles were not very different from other struggles and do not offer a straightforward answer to why monotheism or a Big moralizing God. That answer is found in one of the most important drivers of entrepreneurship: the intersection of exigencies with structural and cultural spaces to innovate. Assmann (2012: 69), for instance, has argued that the loss of "contact with living models [compel] people to turn to texts in their search for guidance." When Judeans were deported to Babylon in 586 BCE, "written tradition [could not] simplify experiences, it [had] to be studied [and with] disappearance of the models provided by older generations…normative tradition [has] to be put into writing because it can no longer be followed intuitively" (ibid). The Israelites faced twin pressures, then, that account for the evolution of monotheism. On the one hand, they faced metaphysical issues. Gods lived in their temples, tying people's to their gods and to their territory. Armed with some semblance of written traditions exalting Yahweh, but also seeing his home (the "Solomon" temple and Jerusalem) destroyed and his people scattered meant either their god was destroyed or they needed to innovate symbolically and normatively. On the other hand, being free from the daily practical decisions and intrigue of politics as well as the routine ritual of temple life meant being free to do what Assmann suggests: study the texts. The solution, in exile, whether widespread or fully formed, was the following: the elevation of textual authority over oral authority; the location of Yahweh in two portable vessels, the law that can be carried in texts and the individual soul; and, the sketching out of blueprints for a physical, temporal, social, and symbolic divide between the religious sphere and political sphere (if and) when they returned to Judah and rebuilt Jerusalem (Abrutyn 2015a, 2015b). And, thus, Big Gods were a survival mechanism not for a complex society, but rather for a corporate actor, a religious entrepreneur, trying to survive a major metaphysical crisis and a practical crisis (which, included incidentally, strong pull and push factors for assimilation into Babylonian society). From this example, then, we look more generally at the differentiation of those four dimensions of autonomous institutional space.

Physical and Temporal Space

Recall our discussion of the construction of an institutional center or core (see Chapter 3) as being key to developing autonomy. Religion was no different. For many millennia, the temple was, in fact, located very closely to the polity for functional and representational reasons. Religious entrepreneurship brought with it two different ways of constructing religious centers. One was the Israelite plan that would eventually reach its peak in the Catholic Church, and the other was the Buddhist plan that emphasized the diffuse nature of the supranatural and the evolution of myriad localized centers apart from the secular and profane. Both, however, were successful in creating monopolies over the legitimate right to psychic force, though the former's reach offered potentially more extensive and intensive symbolic power whereas the latter constrained the reach, though was more efficacious in its phenomenological impact on those within the local center's physical and cognitive orbit.

Until the invention of congregational religions, both relied heavily on collective rituals like pilgrimages. Pilgrimages, Victor Turner (1973) argues, are liminal rituals on a mass scale, allowing large batches of impersonal and depersonalized others to enter into anti-structure simultaneously. They pattern the phenomenological experience of accessing the supranatural, while suspending profane time and allowing actors to enter into sacred time together. For the Israelites, the fusing of a national and familial tradition to create Passover, compelled individuals from all over the rural villages to re-create and re-present the mythic origin story (Exodus) of the Hebrew people (Smith 1997). As the procession worked its way to Jerusalem (with the Temple serving as metaphoric proxy to Sinai), the ascriptive status of villagers would disappear like the tribal identities of the original Hebrews. At the Temple, the priests would read the law and sacrifice offerings brought by the pilgrims. In Buddhism, where the religious entrepreneurs never sought to become a singular Church, or ended up fusing with the political elite (like the Confucians), their center was not in the center, but rather on the margins. Places where Buddhists had attained Bodhisattva status, for instance, became known holy sites worth of pilgrimage (Keyes 1975). Of course, because Sanghas and monasteries more generally remained deeply entwined with local spaces, access to the supranatural became easier and routinized, as monks in many Asian societies were not restricted from economic interaction with non-monks (Collins 1997; Walsh 2009).

A final point must be made about religious entrepreneurship. Prior to the carving of physical, social, and symbolic space, religion remained

backward looking; rooted deeply in the mythic origins and concerned with maintaining the cycling nature of sacred and secular time (Gauchet 1985 [1997]). The advent of soteriologies and eschatologies radically changed this (Weber 1946a, 1946b). Soteriologies are about the epistemics of individual suffering and salvation. In that sense, they offer an individualized path to concerns about the future of one's soul or sacred substance. In line with the idea that the sacred can be found in the self, then, this temporal dimension pushes religious actors oriented towards the religious sphere to think forward and not backward. Most readers are familiar with Abrahamic religions, but the Śmarana movement in India also presented a soteriology. As the Vedic texts and caste system crystallized, reincarnation, or the linkage between karma (one's fate) and samsara (the cycle of rebirth), was made inextricable. Buddhism and Jainism offered paths to escaping this cycle, escapes which were reserved only for the Brahmanic caste in Hinduism. The second piece is the eschatological, or narrative of the moral community's fate. Revelations, of course, are the most archetypal in modern Western society. The idea that the future mattered, again, was a departure from the past where keeping the secular and sacred orders aligned was central to ritual. Instead, faith and adherence to the principles of the sacred (and, therefore, an emphasis on *piety*) gradually entered into the lexicon of the religious sphere, especially where the path was towards hierocratic organization.

Social Space

Just as the state needed to develop new structural relations between new generalized roles and corporate actors, so too did religious entrepreneurs. This process occurred in external and internal ways. Though the polity had succeeded in introducing the idea that extra-local levels of structure and culture could impact the lives of people not in direct contact, the religious sphere was introducing something new. On the one hand, it was pushing individual behavior towards greater self-regulation, equating daily decision making with pathways to communicating with the supranatural. Though priests were likely aware that piety among the masses would never and could never be equivalent to the elite or virtuosi who had the time and freedom to focus only on religious practices and knowledge, the idea that individual behavior was agentic was novel. On the other hand, the use of psychic force as opposed to physical force meant reconfiguring the collective identities of individuals and their ascriptive, territorial corporate units through new symbolic, normative, organizational, and symbolic means—e.g., the metaphoric myth of 12 tribes of Israel being fused into a singular, homogeneous

moral community. New collective identities, structurally and symbolically independent of old ethnic and political commitments was a difficult project. The construction of new criteria for membership, criteria that reduced the cost of membership, appears to have been one key mechanism, eventually concluding in Christianity and Islam's rather simple process of conversion and commitment—baptism and accepting Christ as one's savior in Christianity, or with the *shehada* (or a profession of faith) and the ritual observance of the five pillars to the best of one's ability in Islam.

Once criteria are settled and boundaries erected, a second point of social differentiation emerges that was likely far less salient before the Axial Age: inclusive/exclusive. Struggles between religious elite, to be sure, were common. In the Near East, temples were also financial organizations, acting as banks. Rival priests and temples, like the Ba'alists and Yahwists in Jerusalem in the 7th century BCE, would have meant rivals for economic customers as much as religious customers (Lang 1983, Liverani 2005). The same struggle, though far less overtly economic, occurred between the practitioners of Vedic religion and Buddhists, the latter of which had experienced brief success in institutionalizing their religion during the Mauryan empire and its chief emperor Ashoka's (*c.* 268–222 BCE) reign (Eisenstadt 1984). However, once the moral community had in fact spread beyond the physical limitations of the political sphere, the elect could be clearly distinguished from heathens, heretics, apostates, or pagans who often suffered real consequences for their exclusion.

Internally, like the polity's development of a hierarchy predicated on closeness to the production, distribution, and consumption of *power* as a generalized symbolic medium, religious spheres also revealed hierarchies according to closeness to *sacredness*, *piety*, and in many cases, *truth* also. In pre-Rabbinic Judaism, a division of labor emerged within the temple priesthood and between the temple priests and the "country" priests (Levites and forbearers of the Pharisees and, later, Rabbinate) (van der Toorn 2007: 167–69). In the Confucian case, an Academy rationalized the certification of piousness and sacredness (as well as truth and knowledge), but a hierarchy emerged in terms of where literati landed upon matriculation.

Once the internal patterns in the social sphere had formed, a fourth line of social differentiation emerged: rival "sects." Islam is perhaps one of the most clear-cut examples. Upon Mohammed's death, his father-in-law (Abu Bakr) and son-in-law/cousin (Ali ibn Abi Talib) clashed over who was to succeed him as leader of the Islamic movement, as well as political and ideological conflicts. The former founded Sunnah Islam and the latter Shia Islam. Buddhism, after the fall of Ashoka's empire, split into two main

traditions: Theravāda and Mahāyāna. While Christianity would resist the formal split, monasteries were always sources of rival pieties and sacredness and were also subject to splits as monks and friars were different from each other and, also, invited their own internal differentiations.

Symbolic Space

Like the polity, religion also evolves symbolically through external representations, cultural configurations, and generalized symbolic media. And like the polity, this begins in the architectural achievements that grow increasingly prominent in size and scale and, ultimately, stylistically apart from their political and kin counterparts (Sharot 2001). Unlike polity, nearly any objects or place can become imbued with the essence of the sacred and set apart as representative of the religious sphere. Those of particular importance are usually tied to a hierophany, or a place in which a person or persons have been exposed to the sacred. According to Eliade (1959: 21), hierophanies reveal "an absolute fixed point, a center" in which the "sacred ontologically" founds or founded the world. The texts themselves also become portable representations orienting religious emotions, attitudes, and practices.

Symbolic differentiation also emerges in interactions, exchanges, and communication facilitated and constrained by generalized symbolic media—primarily *sacredness* and *piety*, but very often *truth* and/or *knowledge* also circulate within the religious sphere. How sacredness and piety shape interaction and exchange are already well developed in the Durkheimian (Durkheim 1912 [1995]) ritual tradition (Collins 2004) and in the religious-economies tradition (Finke and Stark 1988; Stark and Bainbridge 1996). By communication, we are talking about language, discourse, texts, and so forth. As discussed above in detail, language and especially texts are central to the ability religious spheres develop to dominate human emotions, feelings, and thoughts.

What is perhaps not as obvious are the parallels between religious media and the archetypical medium, *money* (Simmel 1907 [1978]). Consider the following facts. First, *sacredness/piety* adhere in social objects. But, the strain towards autonomy meant that these objects could become divisible and, thereby, portable. Most contemporary Americans are familiar with how actors signal to others the communities to which they belong and the language in which they are fluent in through necklaces with crosses or cha'is. But the ultimate innovation was the situation of *sacredness/piety* in the individual. The soul is, in essence, on loan from the supranatural and, therefore, is expected to be returned at some point. Individual acts

of charity or alms, likewise, are sometimes conceptualized as being placed in a ledger for the time of judgment. These media are also durable, with texts lasting several thousands of years, while sacred time and place that defy physical laws can extend a sphere and its members far into the past. Religious media are standardized too. The Ten Commandments, fourfold path, five pillars, and so forth point to formalized, routinized ethical precepts or behavioral guides. On the one hand, then, all actors have access to these media, thereby homogenizing interactions, exchanges, and communication. However, sharp hierarchies form in most cases, with several forms of each medium being indicative of greater or lesser value or scarcity.

As these events surrounding increasing religious autonomy described above ensued, the evolution of writing accompanied the increasingly discrete nature of the religious institutional sphere. The result was that the epistemological and ontological foundations of religious cosmologies also changed, as did religious practices. To begin, writing and the re-introduction of a transcendent supernatural led to five major changes (Wittrock 2005: 66–67): (1) reflexivity in writing and consciousness, (2) historical consciousness, (3) sense of agency, (4) reflective cosmologies, and (5) formalization of *mnemotechniques*, or norms and rules about interpreting, editing, and glossing texts (Assmann 2011; also Levinson 1997; Olick 2008). Each of these denote the way in which religious entrepreneurs had already begun to experience the here and the "there" differently, and with increasing distinction. In particular, the emergence of reflexivity is a key attribute of an institution's growth in autonomy. Just as the self, in Meadian symbolic interactionism Mead (1934), is not truly a self until it acquires the capacity of self-reflexivity, no social unit can be an emergent structural or cultural force without the likewise capacity to see itself as an object (Luhmann 1995). Of course, institutional spheres do not actually acquire a self-consciousness, but rather corporate units differentiate with some becoming focused primarily on the construction and reconstruction, interpretation and reinterpretation of the institutional core itself. Second-order thinking, so to speak (Elkana 1986), is critical to institutional autonomy.

The Consequences of Autonomy

Empire

It is impossible to say that the polity had reached its maximum capacity, all things considered, at the end of the second millennium BCE. However, a sociological law drawn from Amos Hawley's (1986) social ecological

theory provides some context. First, all social systems can only grow as large and complex as existing transportation and communication technology allow. It is, therefore, plausible to suggest then that innovations in these technologies would have enabled political entities to grow bigger, but whether the mechanisms designed for integrating increasingly distant populations subjected to political domination is an open question. Thus, we may add a corollary to the law posited above: while coordinating and controlling larger and more complex populations is facilitated by transportation and communication technologies, durability and stability require normative, symbolic, and organizational innovations. Consequently, the long, slow road to the separation of the political and religious spheres found in modern democratic states began here. In many ways, it was simple math: the larger and less physically bounded religious spheres became, the more difficult they were for polities to control. The best-case scenario played out in China where literati accepted their power-sharing agreement and were tightly embedded in the state. The most reasonable solution, of course, was to render unto Caesar and to god what was rightfully theirs. However, this tension was undoubtedly rocket fuel for political evolution, too.

Let us review the evidence. India's history is unique among our other cases in so far as it was characterized for most of history by decentralized rival polities whose authority was curtailed by a caste system that elevated religious elite (Stein 2010; Thapar 2004). Nonetheless, Buddhism was the lynchpin in one of its rare moments of imperial centralization: the Mauryan (322–185 BCE). At its peak, under Ashoka's rule, it ruled over 50–60 million people across 1.9 million square miles (Turchin et al. 2006), making it one of the largest agrarian empires. Though his conversion followed this expansion, it appears his efforts to weaponize Buddhism contributed to its incredible stability through his life. The story of the Confucian literati's achievements in introducing legalism and rationality that stabilized a series of successive dynasties while imparting a thread linking each different dynasty to a political style is well known (Gernet 1982). However, it was the Emperor and other levels of the polity that were the true disseminators of Confucian beliefs and practices to the masses, constraining the literati's independence greatly (Wei-Ming 1986). Of course, one of the most famous instances of religion acting as an integrative force, or being perceived as such, would be Constantine of Rome, whose conversion to Christianity in 313 CE was strategic as much as it was inspired. To be sure, it may have been repairing holes in a dam whose structural integrity was beyond repair, but it was a politically expedient solution to an increasingly difficult to control population.

In each of these cases, and many others, we see a major difference between the Church and State. In the past, the former was extraordinarily dependent on the latter for material and symbolic support. However, in each case the polity's efforts to co-opt the religion, like Pharaohs or Kings of the past, did not end the same way. In most cases, the religious spheres' spread was accelerated by the levers of the state, leading unintentionally to the religious spheres growing in autonomy and the entrepreneurial classes' increasing independence. In many cases, such as the Buddhist/Ashoka or Christian/Constantine case, the elevation and selection of a religion as the state religion created the conditions for those cultural assemblages to outlast the spatially and temporally bounded political sphere. To be sure, in the case of Buddhism, Hindu's would succeed in expelling the religion and its acolytes from the subcontinent, but it would take root and spread quite efficaciously throughout the rest of Asia as a result of the missionizing zeal of Ashoka (Bary 1969).

Cultural Spheres

Religion, stretching back much further, had long been entwined with several other emerging institutional spheres, including art, science, medicine and, with the rise of the agrarian states, law and economy as well. The growing separation of polity and religion also led to transformations in these spheres that would gestate to full blown autonomy in many cases over time. In part, the logic is grounded in material conditions. For millennia, political elite were the only source of capital great enough for patronage. Artists either plied their craft directly in the service of the king or some other wealthy elite, or they were independent and sold their goods to the highest bidder. Without more circulating wealth in the form of money, formalization of occupations into professions or the construction of communal or associative "societies" of dense social ties between artists or scientists was impossible. With the rise of a religious elite, a second source of patronage emerged offering not only material wealth but also access to the sacred and the psychic wealth it offered.

A second factor differentiated the interest that religious entrepreneurs had in these other spheres vis-à-vis their political counterparts. Both were prone to protecting privilege and subject to aggrandizement. We should be suspicious of their motives. However, the base upon which their power rested was qualitatively different, and thus, religious entrepreneurs saw expressions of their ideal and material interests in the *aesthetics* of artists, *knowledge* and *truth* of scientists, and *justice* in jurists. All three of these media of interaction, exchange, and communication fit neatly into the

religious sphere, and invited efforts to transform them. For instance, Levinson (1997: 16) argues that the ancient Israelite project, expressed most forcefully in the book of Deuteronomy, appears to be designed to implement an agenda not only in political and religious Judean life but also judicially, ethically, economically, and culturally. And, the expression of religious fervor, of the ultimate moral or substantive nature of religion was extraordinarily different too. In political action, the affectual experience of power is rooted in maneuvers of subordination and, at its peak, in battle and victory. In religious interactions and exchanges, it is in subordination with others and alone to the supranatural, a far less tangible experience with far less immediate tangible ends.

These differences also channeled religious entrepreneurs directly into developing knowledge and practices in other spheres. Religious entrepreneurs whose base of independence rested on psychic force and whose most tangible monopoly was writing and its interpretation, were intellectuals and not warriors (in most cases). In the previous chapter, we already demonstrated that they were intimately tied to proto-scientific efforts in astronomy and medicine. But, they would also be consumed with law, in part as a means to distinguishing between their jurisdiction and their political rivals, but also because the supranatural's moral authority transcended the secular elite's authority, and everyone had skin in the new ethical and moral community. Likewise, monastic communities in the East, such as Japan, were autonomous enough to radically alter economic relations between their closed community and neighboring villages (Collins 1997).

There may be a theoretical generalization that is possible here: the more institutions achieve some degree of autonomy, the more likely their generalized symbolic medium becomes a resource to be exchanged with actors in other institutional domains. And, the more diverse symbolic media begin to flow among individuals and corporate-unit actors in emerging or only incipient institutional domains, the more likely are these domains to begin pushing for autonomy. It was critically important that polity—as the center of power which can dominate other domains—differentiate from kinship, where most daily activities of individuals occur, and religion for this dynamic process to begin. Thus, as the first institutional systems were evolving, their generalized symbolic media—whether *love/loyalty* (kinship), *money* (economy), *power* (polity), *piety/sacredness* (religion), or *regulation/coordination/justice* (law)—were liberated from being embedded in other institutional domains, thus creating a symbolic basis for exchanges among institutional domains and, moreover, a stimulus for other institutional domains to evolve toward more autonomy.

As *money* became increasingly a dominant generalized symbolic medium (see Chapters 11 and 14 to follow), while polity became more willing to franchise power as *authority* out to corporate units in other domains in return for tax revenues and commitments to polity, material resources for the expansion of the number and diversity of corporate units in all institutional domains increased (e.g., *money* could support incumbents in many different types of corporate units and their material infrastructures), as well as be used as a medium of exchange among corporate units in diverse institutional domains. And once such exchanges are common, institutional differentiation and growth can ensue rapidly.

Religion and Education

A literate priesthood with resources and growing dominion over myriad concerns, including managing land, people, and so forth experiences intense pressures, internally, for the ability to train and not simply reproduce itself, but expand itself. More literate priests capable of establishing satellites or proselytizing missions, means more human, material, and symbolic resources. Writing, as noted above in Table 10.1, naturally lends itself to rationalization, and with it, as Weber (1978: 460ff.) pointed out, the tendency towards formalizing education in schools (Collins 1979). At its peak, the Confucian Imperial Academy had 30,000 students, which is a number that would rival many universities in the West. Indeed, the way in which religion becomes the fuel for art, science, law, and medicine is through education (Rashdall 1936). It was Islamic religious scholars in Spain that introduced and explained Aristotle to Western theologians and budding scholars (Gaukroger 2006). The Catholic Church, for different reasons, invented Western law and law schools by charging some priest scholars to find justification for legal jurisdictional claims (Berman 1983). Throughout their history, Catholic monasteries were sites of innovation, culminating in the 19th century with a monk's discovery of the basic principles of genetics.

Conclusion

As our discussion of political autonomy and now religious autonomy reveals, autonomy is directly related to a different type of sociocultural evolution: the creation of structure and culture accumulate the capacity to handle increasing complexity, larger populations, more diverse societies, and increasingly intense exigencies. As different corporate units specialize in producing and distributing solutions to specific human concerns (e.g.,

power or *sacredness*), new modes of integration, regulation, and legitimation emerge that were previously impossible. Empires grow exponentially with the advent of territory-less religious institutions.

Concomitantly, the expansion of a society's capacity to integrate and regulate myriad actors produces a set of new problems that can only be dealt with by extant structure and culture for so long. Religion, for instance, as a mechanism of integration is only so effective, especially as polities seek to regain control over their populations vis-à-vis religious entrepreneurs. Furthermore, as societies get larger, the economy, as always, becomes a problematic sphere. Population growth always reaches certain limits given existing technologies, and thus polities have to resolve these problems lest they lose their grip and collapse. All of these processes of differentiation in growing and expanding societies generate many selection pressures for social "integration," to use just one word for what are many types and points of integration that need attending. The differentiation of polity and religion as autonomous institution domains was perhaps inevitable if polity was to exercise secular control, which was easier if polity's symbolic base of power was not the supernatural but instead more secular symbols, backed up by the emergence and movement of law towards great autonomy. With law, coordination and regulation of corporate units can occur without the heavy hand of coercion, while franchising out some of the administrative basis of power to the judicial system to manage disputes among corporate units. Moreover, for law to evolve, markets had to evolve in the economy, and markets operate as yet another integrative mechanism regulated by law and monitored by polity which, again, reduces the direct burden on polity. So, as religions became ever-more autonomous, it also left polity with a much more secular basis of control through the consolidation of bases of power and through the expansion of markets in the economy and law as an institutional domain. The result was religion was much more autonomous but also delimited in what it could claim, being mostly confined to the spiritual realm, using money as a generalized symbolic medium to expand its infrastructure and reach to the populations across ever-more expanses of territory and crossing many societal boundaries control by polity. Thus, the differentiation of religion and the partitioning of its sphere of influence allowed economy and markets, law, and polity all to expand in ways that lead to the growth and expansion of societies on the institutional bases laid down by the first institutions—kinship, polity, religion, economy, and law. The potential for the mega societies that would eventually become human survival machines was thus established, awaiting technological breakthroughs on new sources of energy.

Notes

1 Assmann (2012); Bellah (2005); Joas (2012); Mullins et al. (2018)
2 Abrutyn (2014a); Humphreys (1975); Runciman (2012); Thapar (1975).
3 Bellah (2011); Eisenstadt (2012); Schwartz (1975); Wittrock (2012).
4 As the reader may guess, this ritual was transformed into a story and the king's power was stripped from him and given to a god capable of creating a society in his image. The meaning of this transformation is indicative of the gradual break of religion from polity.
5 Corvée labor was an early form of taxation. Essentially a number of males from each village were required to sow and harvest the temple's farm in exchange for protection by the king and other tangible services. While on the farm, men were "paid" with grain rations that kept them alive.

11
The Emergence of Economy

Economy as an institutional domain revolves around the processes of (1) *gathering* and extracting resources from the environment, (2) converting these resources through a process of *production* into usable goods (and services), (3) *distributing* these goods (and services) to members of a population and the corporate units organizing their activities, and (4) the subsequent *consumption* of said goods and services. Sociologists often see economy as the driving force of societies, and in the sense that humans need resources to survive, this assertion has surface validity. But humans also need patterns of social organization to survive, and as has become evident, it was kinship organization that allowed late hominins and early humans to survive, with economy fully embedded in nuclear families within small bands of nomadic hunter-gatherers. Most designations of "types of societies"—e.g., hunting and gathering, fishing, herding, maritime, horticulture, agrarian, industrial, post-industrial (Nolan and Lenski 2010)—are labelled by the nature of economic activity, which obviously attests to the importance of understating human social organization. Yet, while humans and, hence, societies cannot exist without economic activity, the differentiation and later autonomy of economy as an institutional system only came after a long period of being embedded in kinship and, to a lesser extent, incipient patterns of political and religious activity, which probably had more direct effects on patterns of social organization of early human societies than did the mode of production. Still, all other institutional systems depended upon a successful economy where resources could be gathered, converted into usable resources by production, and then distributed and consumed.

Thus, the economy is a complicated institutional sphere to broach. On the one hand, to paraphrase Marx, humans are what they eat; and what they eat to survive is predicated on the productive, creative, and social effort to subsist. On the other hand, until rather recently—at least in human evolutionary terms—economic activity was submerged within non-economic individual and collective actors and, to borrow Polanyi's (1944) terminology, socially embedded. The cultural logic of kinship along with emerging polity and religion is what guided human activity, including economic

DOI: 10.4324/9781003224433-12

activity, which was only one of several forces pushing on individuals to organize their activities in certain ways. For virtually all of humans' time on earth, they were organized in simple hunting and gathering societies; and it was only a relatively short time ago—the 15,000 to 10,000 years that alternatives to nomadic hunting and gathering—fishing, herding, episodic gardening—emerged and began over the last 12,000 years to change the nature of human societies and the institutional systems within these societies. With more intensive gathering, higher levels of production, and new mechanisms for distribution of resources and goods, economic activity began to change the nature of other institutional domains and societies as a whole. The economy would thus eventually become an ever-more dynamic engine of change in societies, with ever-increasing effects on the structure and culture of other early institutional domains and, later, all other institutional domains.

Elements of Economies

The elements that are seen constituting an economy tend to be biased by more contemporary conceptions of what makes up an economy, particularly capitalist economies. Thus, rather than pronounce that the basic elements of an economy are technology, physical and human capital, property, and entrepreneurship, we need to refine these often noted "elements" to help explain the emergence, early evolution, and later evolution of economy as an institution domain. To do so, we will expand and change the vocabulary, somewhat, to explain the evolution of economy. The following elements are central, then, to understanding how an economy is built and operates: (1) *technology*, (2) *physical capital*, (3) *human capital*, (4) *transactional capital*, (5) *property*, (6) *structural formations*, and (7) *cultural formations*. While this may seem like many more elements than commonly employed, a sociological approach to what an economy is requires a more robust set of elements because economies, while becoming somewhat autonomous over time, are still connected to, and are often still embedded in, larger patterns of social and cultural organization.

The interactions among these elements of an economy determine the potential level of gathering, production, and distribution, which, in turn, determines the level of economic surplus beyond subsistence generated by the economy. The greater the surplus, the larger the population can become, and the more elaborate are patterns of organization among corporate units—groups, organizations, and communities—along many dimensions such as size, degree of differentiation in activities, exchange relations, culture, and specialization with respect to diverse types of institutional

activities. Moreover, as economic surplus increases, inequalities in this distribution of valued resources (Lenski 1966)—money, power, prestige, happiness and positive emotions, health, and anything that is valued—begin to generate selection pressures on societies to find ways to manage the anger, alienation, frustration, and other emotional reactions among those who receive less resources than others in a society (see Chapter 15 for an analysis of the effects of stratification on institutional evolution). These selection pressures inevitability push, at the very least, for the further differentiation and increasing autonomy of polity as an institutional domain (see Chapters 7 and 8). Ironically, the concentration of power often increases inequality as polity taxes members of a population in order to control the tensions and conflicts that arise from stratification.

Technology

Though we commonly talk about technology vaguely, referring to objects created by technologies, we should conceptualize technology as the *knowledge* necessary to manipulate and control natural and social spaces in the process of extracting, producing, or distributing. A cell phone is a *product* that was created by a certain type of knowledge that allowed for gathering of the necessary resources as well as their organization for production and distribution of cell phones. Our definition is broader in so far as technology does not inhere simply in knowledge about materials and their manufacture, but also in how to raise the capital necessary to produce a good or service and how one might distribute said good or service, including purely imaginary goods like stock or other meta-market commodities (Pardo-Guerra 2010, 2019). Thus, the economic sphere and economic action revolve around the *overall level of available and accessible knowledge*. Moreover, economic spheres are defined by the distribution of technology, as in foraging societies, how and where to hunt and gather, create the tools necessary for doing so, and so on are highly diffuse, whereas in capitalist societies, technology becomes so large, complex, and unwieldly, pockets of highly specialized sectors or niches emerge around aspects of technology that come to denote human capital.

At the core of Gerhard Lenski's (1970) influential model of evolution rests the nature of a society's subsistence technology: size, scale, and complexity of a society are positive functions of economic surplus, which is delimited by the predominant form of subsistence production allowed by technology. Consequently, societies are classified by the technology determining subsistence production: hunter/gatherer, fishing, horticultural, simple and

advanced agricultural, industrial, and post-industrial. So long as there are lower levels of technology, economy will remain deeply embedded in the kinship corporate units because there is not enough surplus generated beyond subsistence. For example, for most of human history, hunting and gathering populations among humans (just as smart then as humans are today) developed only very simple technologies for resource extraction—spears for killing animals for their protein and knowledge of how to gather plant life. Such was the case for hundreds of thousands of years, with only small increments in technology advancement, such as how to fish, how to use slings to launch spears, how to scatter seeds when leaving an area hoping for easy pickings when returning to this area, occasionally herding animals to make kills easier, and how to make and use fire in cooking. Returning to the arguments laid out in Chapter 7, a political economy—or one in which surplus gradually becomes centralized and reciprocal mechanisms of economic distribution are supplemented by redistributive mechanisms (Johnson and Earle 2000)—depends on *something* being controlled, coordinated, and appropriated. Though that something is usually the actual surplus, the surplus itself depends on technological advances in subsistence goods as well as other material (e.g., pottery) and, eventually, luxury goods and services (e.g., jewelry).

As a political economy begins to emerge, the more subtle and oft-ignored aspects of technology become increasingly important to economic organization and action. For instance, coordinating divisions of labor on a farm requires knowledge about plant life cycles, techniques for sowing and reaping, and a set of beliefs about who should do what (and why). This same logic scales up as one farm blends into farmland that surrounds a city-center, and coordinating and controlling flows of resources between the center and periphery become critical for the city's population to survive and for the political center's ability to stave off revolt and resistance. The idea that the economy operates, or can operate, through some sort of invisible set of natural laws ignores the pragmatic and political dilemmas all groups face when trying to extract, produce, and distribute resources.

Physical Capital

Physical capital is simply the implements and other materials used in order to gather resources, convert them into usable commodities through production, and distribute them to members of a population. In many economic schemes, money is also seen as physical capital, especially when it is symbolized by objects carrying value and when it circulates among members of a population as a means to purchase goods and services. We

will, however, see money as a different kind of capital that is more symbolic of value that can, of course, often be used to purchase physical capital; and, in so doing, the sum of money can certainly be seen as capital, but of a different kind: *transactional* capital.

Physical capital in the modern world would be objects like factories and buildings as well as physical infrastructures—roads, ports, canals, airports, etc.—that allow for gathering, production, and distribution. Like technology, for most of human history, physical capital was very low, consisting at best of spears, perhaps bow and arrows, crude knives, hand axes, and simple cooking equipment. Because nomadic hunter-gatherers must move about a territory in a cyclical pattern to secure food, capital formation could not be high because it had to be carried by hand. Since hunter-gatherers only source of transportation was walking, with only hands and perhaps simple bags and packs for carrying physical objects, physical capital formation remained low, thus assuring that gathering, production, and distribution would be very simple and direct.

Human Capital

Human capital denotes the distribution of properties and characteristics of persons playing roles in corporate units organizing the economic processes of gathering, production, and distribution of resources. Knowledge, skills, motivations, and traits of individuals as they affect economic processes are basic to the economic activity and productivity. In particular, it is the distributions of these traits across a population that, in the aggregate, have effects on the level of all other economic elements because these traits are brought to status locations in divisions of labor of corporate units and have large effects on how roles in divisions of labor are played out. The more skills, the higher the motivations for success in economic roles, and the greater the range of skills all affect the dynamism of economies; conversely, if knowledge, skills, and motives are limited, economic change will be slow or even stable for long periods of time. Thus, for example, hunter-gatherers have delimited economic knowledge and skills revolving around how to hunt for meat and how to gather plant-based resources with limited physical capital and low levels of technology. This limitation on human capital led to a stable form of social organization among early humans for at least 350,000 years. Only severe environmental change, whether from the natural or sociocultural ecology of a population (Fagan 2004), or from the growth of a population (Cohen 1975, 1977), could generate selection pressures for change in the economy

and the knowledge, motives, and skills of incumbents in the economy. Because economic positions and roles were embedded in nuclear families and the small band in which technologies, as well as physical and human capital, were very limited and, hence, not likely to be dynamic (Lenski 1970; Nolan and Lenski 2010). Indeed, traditional structures such as band and family, coupled with other (typically) conservative forces like religion, do not generate intense selection pressures, unless they are inadequate for an ecological habitat; and, even under these pressures, they are difficult to change. More fundamentally, the abundance and relative ease of subsistence in most foraging habitats constrained the need for transformative innovation (Sahlins 1972), especially if populations could migrate to new, more favorable hunting and gathering habitats in a world composed of only a few million humans.

However, human capital always plays a role in the dynamism or conservativism of a given economic sphere. As other institutions evolved and the economy grew more complex, it remained sidelined as the driving force we think of today. In agrarian societies, for instance, the growing division of landless peasants or serfs and landed gentry far removed, cognitively and often physically, from subsistence practices, led to highly stable, relatively uninventive social organization like feudal societies (Bloch 1962). On the one hand, the landless or dispossessed had little incentive or physical capital to innovate technologically. Any innovation would have been expropriated along with any benefits it produced. On the other hand, the elite were so far removed from subsistence that their base of knowledge was incompatible with technological improvement despite possessing the capital necessary for said innovation. The result were social "cages" erected around kinship and political membership with economic ties simply serving as sources of integration and regulation in those spheres (McCord and McCord 1977).

Thus, until economy could become more autonomous, and not just differentiated, evolutionary change would be relatively slow, especially given the limited starting points of economic evolution in societies with low levels of technology, physical capital formation, and human capital in the form of individual skills, knowledge, and motives. Without a generalized symbolic medium like *money* and an ideological advocating technological advance, profit and wealth, and economic growth independent of other spheres, the market as a dynamic force was severely hamstrung by the institutional spheres covered in previous chapters. In short, much of this new dynamism that eventually pushed economies toward more autonomy, as we shall see in greater detail in Chapter 14, was dependent upon the third form of capital, *transactional capital*.

Transactional Capital

We have separated transactional capital, or resources used to facilitate interaction and exchanges among actors, from physical and human capital because much of the dynamism of economic evolution depended upon the evolution of the media of economic exchange as *money* (Polanyi 1944; Simmel 1907 [1978]; Weber 1927 [2002]). Indeed, Randall Collins (1990) has argued that markets are "the engine of historical change." Yet, money was slow to evolve in human societies during humans' first three hundred centuries on earth (Luo 1998; Orrell and Chlupatý 2016). When media of exchange did begin to emerge among hunting and gathering populations (Wright 1995), it dramatically changed their modes of social organization as it allows for markets to emerge around, on top of, or in subversion of reciprocity and redistribution (Polanyi 1957). With money as a medium of exchange, markets expand the number and diversity of persons who could engage in exchange and what can be exchanged, while at the same time generating an utilitarian world view, codified into new moralized ideologies about exchange (Fligstein and Dauter 2007; Zelizer 1989). And as these changes occurred, the polity becomes both a regulator and enforcer of rules of exchange as well as an active actor in the market (Fligstein 1996). Furthermore, it facilitated the beginnings of world-system dynamics among preliterate populations (Chase-Dunn and Mann 1998) leading some to argue world-systems extend far beyond the 14th/15th centuries, dating, at least, to Mesopotamia (Algaze 2005). Consider, for instance, that among Chumash aboriginals of the central coast in California, the evolution of an early form of money led to the development of complex exchange relations among most of the Native American tribes of the central coast—from what is now called Santa Catalina Island through the large interior cities like Riverside to the Arizona border. Chumash "money" (described in more detail in Chapter 14, page 260) became the medium of exchange for the central and southern half of what is now California. In short, with money, the "value" of any object can be established, and exchange no longer needs to be barter—e.g., exchanging one commodity for another in a bargaining process—but "prices" can be established for goods and commodities to be exchanged. With any generalized symbolic medium, exchanges can accelerate, spread, and shrink temporal, cultural, and physical space; and with paper money, and later credit, money becomes portable, durable, fungible, and, divisible in ways sugar, cattle, salt, or other old means of barter exchange cannot.

Like polity (and *power*) or religion (and *sacredness*), once a *generalized* symbolic medium of interaction, exchange, and communication emerges

(e.g., money), the economic sphere begins to differentiate and become autonomous (Luhmann 1982). In part, these processes are facilitated by the replacement of in-kind payments for services with wages or salaries that expand the number of groups that can claim occupational or professional boundaries. When money, as the generalized symbolic medium of the economy, begins to circulate in this way among individuals and corporate units in non-economic institutional domains, institutional differentiation can accelerate because incumbents in different types of coporate units can be "paid" with a generalized symbolic medium. In turn, subsistence comes to depend on payment in money instead of in kind. Money thus begins to circulate in all institutional domains, facilitating the growth and evolution toward greater institutional autonomy, even though they all rely on the symbolic medium of the economy. This process is intensified by money's capacity in facilitating exchanges, thereby allowing individuals to express their preferences (by what commodities and services they are willing to spend money on); and in so doing, money not only makes possible the expansion and dynamism of markets, it changes the structure and culture of all institutional domains and even that of the whole society. Thus, to summarize in the institutional language developed throughout (see Table 3.1 on page 93): structurally, money allows for a dramatic increase in interdependencies among individual and corporate units and, eventually, between individuals and corporate units (as paid labor). These interdependencies are the result of market differentiation, with markets for ever-more commodities and services creating new types of corporate units and individuals providing these commodities and services. Markets are, in essence, "differentiating machines" that allow for—indeed encourage—the evolution of corporate units that can meet ever-changing and escalating market demand. Moreover, once money exists in the economic realm, it can be exchanged for generalized symbolic medium of other institutional domains. For example, individuals provide their labor in exchange for money in the economy (and the corporate units of any institutional domain willing to "pay for" household labor), while the corporate units paying individuals receive in return, the generalized symbolic medium of the family—*love/loyalty* or at least the "loyalty" part of this medium in willingness to show up for work. Religious corporate units can provide *piety/sacredness* and *access to the supernatural* to individuals and whole families in exchange for *money*—thereby giving religion a steady flow of material resources to support its administrative and infrastructural needs.

As long as wealth is tied up in commodities and properties, it cannot have these dynamic effects in encouraging differentiation of corporate units within institutional domains from each other and from the corporate

units of other institutional domains (Turner 1995: 47–95). Because there is *transactional capital* to exchange, exchanges with other institutional domains can accelerate; and like exchange in general, which is a capacity and drive lodged in the human genome (see Appendix II on pages 41 to 48), new forms of commitment to others and corporate units can be generated, as long as the exchange is defined as fair. Thus, markets can provide a new form of integration: exchange of valued resources that carry cultural significance in forming norms and ideologies linking actors within and between institutional domains.

Transactional capital subsequently becomes a driving force in not only the evolution of economies but in the evolution of *all institutional domains*, their cultures, and patterns of organization. Without money, the scale of societies is limited. The idea of money, for instance, allows polity to expand all of its bases of power through taxation. The idea of money creates a means for freeing labor from subsistence activities to ever-more specialized economic activities in not only the economy, but all other institutional systems. It is not an overstatement, then, to say that without money, the social universe is limited and tradition bound. Societies cannot differentiate extensively, nor can institutional domains realize higher levels of autonomy. And though it is beyond the scope of this book, money plays a central role in the more recent historiography of institutional evolution: the rise of secondary institutions like education, science, medicine, art, media, and sport.

Property

For most of human history, the concept of "property," or the socially sanctioned right to own and use physical and symbolic objects of value, was limited to the personal possessions of individuals and, at times, a territory that was the "collective" property of the hunting and gathering band. Even as humans began to settle down into more permanent communities, property was collectively "owned," often by kin units. But slowly, notions of personal and even "private" property expanded to include such physical objects as shelters and housing, plots of land for gardening, animals in pastoral or horticultural societies, implements for warfare, objects of art, and physical totems symbolizing group affiliations and attachments. Still, property was often somewhat elusive in whether individuals "owned" it or just had rights to it, and moreover, whether ownership or rights of access were individualistic or collective. For example, a simple horticultural community might be seen as collectively (perhaps via kinship) owning the land, with rights to cultivate certain

tracks of land as gardening plots are allocated to individuals or kinship units (whether this was actual "ownership" could be unclear); and if holding stocks of animals also existed, the ownership of these could be unclear, although generally a kin unit would typically be seen as owning animals that might eventually be slaughtered for food. Among settled hunter-gatherers who used fishing in addition to hunting and gathering, ownership was often the prerogative of the Big Man, although he was required to re-distribute property (such as dried fish and livestock) back to individual families (Flannery and Marcus 2012). Moreover, surplus economic productivity was often "held" by the Big Man as "his" in order to limit competition for this surplus, with the Big Man then distributing the property back in ritualized performances demonstrating his "generosity" to those who had actually accumulated the surplus. Even in agricultural societies, where money existed, property was often subject to dispute, and some property was considered "common," although often controlled by a kin or political leader. And much property was worked by peasants but not owned by them, with owners claiming a large percentage of the productivity generated by property (Bloch 1962).

The evolution of money, however, accelerated the movement toward defining property as owned when it had been bought in a market, or inherited through the existing descent system organizing kinship and (later the rules of inheritance for ruling lords and elite in feudal systems). But a market sets a price or a numerical designation of value for objects, with the purchase bestowing "ownership," which seems straight-forward today but was not so obvious just a few thousand years ago. But contention over ownership of property generated selection pressures for polity and law as institutional domains to regularize definition of, and rights to, various objects to be defined as property.

Thus, definitions of property have become more clearly defined in human societies, and ownership of objects has become increasingly regulated by legal codes. Still, there can be ambiguity, as would be the case of collective property held by the state. Do, for example, the people in a society own this property or does the state, and in what sense does the state "own" property? Even in state socialist systems, selection pressures favor the evolution of laws and their enforcement by polity that define what can, and perhaps what cannot, be privately owned by individuals or corporate units. Hence, until such definitions of what constitutes property are in place, evolution to a modern profile of social organization is difficult. For instance, China under the leadership of Mao did not fully define what constituted private property, and property that could be owned by what individuals and corporate units beyond the state. As a result, the dynamic

capitalism (an authoritarian form of state capitalism, to be sure) could not evolve as it has over the last four decades of state-sponsored capitalism, driven by market forces, that inevitably focus definitions of property that can be bought and sold, and who can own such property. Indeed, much of what has transpired over the last 10,000 years in societal evolution has, to a large degree, revolved around definitions of who can own what objects in a society.

For nomadic hunter-gatherers, ownership was relatively clear: individuals owned their personal possessions; the band or system of bands controlled (ownership may not have even been a concept, however) the ecological range in which hunter-gatherers wandered in search of food (Evans-Pritchard et al. 1956; Sahlins 1972). Horticulture created permanent communities within which economic activity occurred, leading to efforts to define who and what units had rights to own what physical objects (Nolan and Lenski 2010), especially land use for cultivation and livestock used to provide a consistent source of protein. Conflicts were often intense in horticultural societies, fueled by the constraints of the unilineal kinship system that defined property and specified what members of the kinship system could inherit property. Agrarian states were defined by the struggles over land between the Temple and the Palace and between the Palace and aristocracy (Eisenstadt 1963), with the Palace usually seeking to usurp and control as much land as possible. The latter set of struggles continued to plague the feudal system where the dissolution of centralized power (e.g., the death of a king) was frequently followed by intensified conflicts between dependents and other claimants to the throne (Le Goff 2005).

State-based societies represent, in many ways, one response to not only organizational problems, but especially problems revolving around control of property and any physical objects of value.

The evolution of markets within economies and the gradual evolution of law as it extended the reach of polity did much to clarify what is property and who and what can own it. Yet, the legal system of even a modern capitalist democracy can be overwhelmed by disputes over property with respect to such questions as who owns it, who can and should inherit it, how it should be split up with dissolution of relations among its owners, and so on. And, of course, property is extended to such things as "control" of airways, which can be purchased but it is not clear that they are owned forever but, rather, for a period of time specified by a license. So, it is for many resources in societies—the airways, the skies, waterways, lakes and bodies of water, mineral and other rights to resources deep in the earth, and so on. Indeed, the expansion of technology increases the scope of what

is property and, hence, marketed, leading, eventually, to the idea of intellectual property rights specifying the ownership of symbolic resources for periods of time by authors, inventors, scientists, drug companies, musicians and many others who create valuable commodities. Commodities that are, in essence, cultural products organizing symbols in ways that create value for sale in markets, or for leases and other mechanisms for generating income, often regulated or held in trust by governmental agencies for leasing out, or giving licenses, to actors paying a fee, often in a market created and regulated by polity and law.

Structural Formations

All social structural formations organizing institutional domains are built up from three basic types of corporate units: groups, organizations, and communities. The ways in which these corporate units are linked together has very large effects on all properties of institutional domains. In Table 3.1 on page 93, *segmentation*, *structural differentiation*, *structural interdependence*, *structural inclusion or embedding*, *structural overlap*, *structural mobility*, *structural segregation*, and *structural domination* are listed as modes of relations among corporate units. These modes of relations among corporate units operate to varying degrees to coordinate relations among corporate units, but often by very different mechanisms, with each revealing the potential for disintegration due to their own inefficiencies or because of contradictions with another mode(s). From a sociological perspective, a critical feature of an economy is the configuration of linkages of corporate units engaged in securing resources, production, and distribution.

As economies evolved further, they did so by structural differentiation among corporate units within and across differentiating institutional domains, often activating the other structural mechanisms listed in Table 3.1. Power was increasingly differentiated into polity and then law, thereby creating additional sources of structural domination. *Structural mobility* increased as individual moved among differentiated corporate units evolving within institutional domains that were differentiating from each other. And as differentiation within and between corporate unis of institutional domains moving towards more autonomy, *structural interdependencies* were created, often by market dynamics in which generalized symbolic media were exchanged, providing both material and symbolic linkages across diverse corporate units within distinctive institutional domains. And, if structural units were highly incompatible, their *structural segregation* in time and space would increase. All of these structural transformations were powered by the economy. And as result, new

forms of differentiation and integration began to evolve: (1) as technology expanded, physical capital accumulation increased; (2) human capital became more skilled, knowledgeable, and diverse; (3) transactional capital formed fueled market expansion; (4) power was consolidated by the ability to tax wealth and thus create coercive, administrative, symbolic, and incentive bases of power to regulate, coordinate and control; (5) law began to differentiate from polity and codify laws that could regulate and sanction; and (6) the structural and cultural bases for accelerated institutional evolution was created.

Thus, once the process of structural differentiation began, especially in economic organization, it set into motion selection pressures for new types of structural formations that, in turn, increased the dynamism of not only the economy but also the evolution of other institutional domains. Eventually, as other new, diverse types of corporate units organized more bureaucratically and new, larger types of communities evolved, kinship could de-evolve back to what it was like in hunting and gathering societies, while other institutional domains could use the expanded resource base to differentiate further and move toward more autonomy, building out infrastructures for diverse types of corporate units now engaged in exchange relations.

Cultural Formations

Figure 3.3 on page 91 outlines the culture and structure of institutional domains. As they emerged and then, slowly at first, begin to evolve, the individual entrepreneurs and corporate actors of an institutional domain in formation draw upon the texts, technologies, and values of a society as they develop ideologies and normative expectations for both individual and collective actors. Ideologies represent applications of value premises to particular spheres of institutional activity, giving such activity a moral and imperative character. From ideologies ultimately come *generalized symbolic media* that have a number of important characteristics. First, they emerge from discourse and interaction of actors and, increasingly, become terms of discourse, reaffirming ideologies and giving evaluative power to normative arrangements that emerge within and between corporate units (Luhmann 1982). Second, they become a valued resource that is exchanged in intra-institution activities as well as inter-institution activities whereby the symbolic media of one institutional system is exchanged for the media of others.

Certain generalized symbolic media flow and circulate more readily than others (Abrutyn and Turner 2011). For example, once *money* becomes a generalized symbolic medium marking value, it circulates from economy to all other institutional domains and, moreover, circulates widely within

institutional domains along with the various generalized symbolic media generated within each institutional domain. In conceptual terms, then, we mean that *money* flows from the economy into other spheres either directly, in the form of salaries or indirectly through actors' capacity to acquire more of a specific institutional sphere's media. So, *money* can be transformed into greater quantities and quality of, say, *knowledge* from education or *health* from medicine. Other media, like *love* or *sacredness* are not as easily fungible across institutional boundaries, serving as generalized media of institutionally particular interactions or exchanges and not inter-institutional interchanges. Of course, once *money* circulates within another institutional sphere, it fundamentally changes that spheres' structure and culture. Viviana Zelizer (1989) has written extensively about the moral and subjective qualities of *money* in families, as have others (Hochschild 2013; Pugh 2005; Williams 2006). Though it is not necessarily always a negative outcome, Jurgen Habermas (1973 [1976]) warned that the penetration of one sphere by another could lead to the former's colonization; something that Abrutyn (2015c, 2018)[1] has extended and argued is at the heart of pollution and contamination, in addition to colonization of one institutional sphere by another.

These dynamics affect cultural formations in institutional domains, especially the ideologies of each domain, the value of generalized symbolic media as valued resources to be exchanged and circulated throughout an institutional domain, and the normative systems operating at many levels, as (1) *institutional norms*, (2) *norms* tied to *the division of labor at the corporate unit*-level, and (3) *normative expectation states* of individuals at the level of *face-to-face encounters* within corporate units of an institutional domain. In short, then, the culture operating within any given institutional domain is a mix of:

1. Texts, values, technologies from societal-level culture as it has adapted to the activities of individuals and corporate units within a given domain.
2. Generalized symbolic media from other domains complementing the specific generalized symbolic medium of a domain.
3. Ideological beliefs about what is right and proper within a domain, as it flows from the generalized symbolic media in play within a domain.
4. Normative expectations operating at several levels: institutional, corporate unit, and interpersonal encounter.

The exact mixture of these cultural elements into a cultural formation in the economy is related to the structural formations of economic corporate units vis-à-vis corporate units of other institutional domains.

Thus, as economy begins to emerge within the categoric differences between males and females in the nuclear family, the economic division of labor follows the sexual distinctions. Since the generalized symbolic medium of money rarely existed in the first human societies, the generalized symbolic medium of kinship—*love/loyalty/commitment*—would dominate the emerging economy. Indeed, an economy without a generalized symbolic medium of its own—as was the nature of economies for most of human history—could not differentiate elaborately, nor could it move toward great autonomy vis-à-vis other institutional domains. And even as money or its early equivalents began to evolve, the structural domination and structural inclusion of economy inside kinship placed limits on how much autonomy the economy could achieve. As polity emerged, economy became beholden to two masters: the existing kinship sphere and the nascent political sphere. It is no wonder that Weber (1978) protested the centrality of class and wealth in Marxian sociology: not only was economy a slave to other institutional spheres for the vast majority of human evolution, it lacked the type of cultural dis-embeddedness that Polanyi (1944) noted was a rather recent occurrence.

Ultimately, we take the Weberian tradition's bigger points seriously: it is not so much that culture drove or caused material change, but rather the worldview that a collective adheres to greatly influence their material and ideal interests (Weber 1946b: 181ff.)—both in terms of how they are formulated and pursued. It does so through the patterning of an "ethic" that consequently shapes just how valued certain beliefs (e.g., pursuit of wealth as good or bad) and activities (e.g., mercantilism) are (Swedberg 1998), and therefore whether or not they engender support from individual's pursuing their own interests and structural supports (e.g., certain types of property laws). Thus, structural and cultural formations were fundamental barriers to the evolution of economy, as much as the material base itself. And the former took longer to overcome than the latter.

Escaping Structural and Cultural Constraints

While the economy was essential to human life, it remained remarkably static for 300,000 years of human existence and only began to change dramatically over the last 12,000 years. First kinship, then polity, and even religion dominated economic activity, with the result that humans remained hunter-gatherers for thousands upon thousands of years and only slowly began to gain autonomy as selection pressures mounted to support larger populations and as other institutional domains like polity and religion increasingly depended upon the use of transactional capital, or money, to

support corporate units within these domains. Indeed, for polity and religion to evolve, they required some form of transactional capital to build out their infrastructures and support their constituent corporate units. And under these pressures to do so, economy could begin to develop new technologies, forms of physical capital (especially with the discovery of metallurgy after the "stone age"), and most importantly, transactional capital and market processes for distributing economic goods and services. As these changes occurred, new kinds of structural and cultural formations could be created that, in turn, would allow entrepreneurs to expand economic production and distributions. In so doing, economy became more autonomous and finally lived up to the hype given by Marx as the driving force of history. But for most of human history, such is not the case because of the structural and cultural constraints of small, nomadic societies with only hunting and gathering technologies. Figure 11.1 outlines the constraints surrounding the first human economies.

As is indicated by the bold-face type in the boxes denoting *level of technology*, or knowledge about how to manipulate the environment, and the *level of resource extraction, production, and distribution as commodities*, it is technology that drives economic evolution. Low technology means low levels of gathering of resources, their conversion to usable goods and commodities, and their distribution to members of a population. And, if a society has low technology, as is the case with hunting and gathering bands, they also have low levels of transportation infrastructure and low levels of information in their cultures (as is also the case for hunting and gathering societies). Since most of the forces in the figure have positive relationships, low levels of technology lead to low levels of almost every other force that can push an economy to evolve. Thus, the low values for technology, transportation (basically walking in a circular nomadic pattern, perhaps with rough pathways), and information stores means that the level of physical, human, and transactional capital will be low; and if these are low, then the level of structural formation and cultural formation will also remain low, as will the capacity to accumulate and horde property and rights to property. Moreover, the low values for these forces assure that the rate of technological innovation will be low, as will resource extraction, production, and distribution. The structural formations that organize hunting and gathering are, as emphasized earlier, compatible with human nature as outlined in Appendix II on pages 41 to 48, but they trap hunters and gatherers into a model of adaptation that limits economic evolution. Nuclear families inside of bands allow for considerable personal freedom and individualism and, at the same time, a lack of inequality, but such families also impose limitations on the size of the band, and all of the

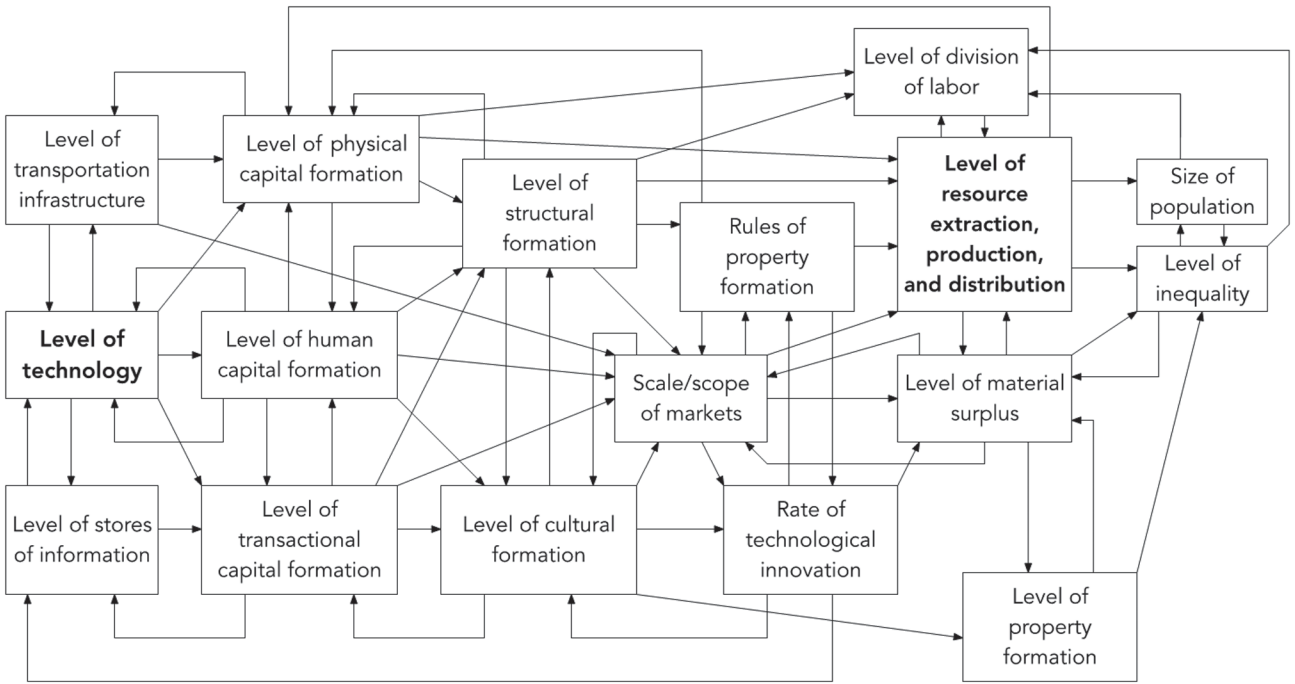


Figure 11.1 Dynamic Relations on Forces Driving Emergence and Evolution of Economy

other forces outlined in the figure. Thus, a hunting and gathering population remained small in size, with a simple division of labor in the family determining the nature of economic roles, sustaining the low technology basis of the economy, and reinforcing the simple social structure (structural inclusion of family [and economy] inside of a small band structure). Similarly, cultural formations are minimal, generally revolving around a normative structure for the nuclear family and band, perhaps some emerging beliefs about religion, and a pattern of daily activities that sustain low technology, low stores of information, low capacities for mobility, low physical, human, and transactional level of capital, and low capacities for cultural innovation. Most importantly, it generally will not encourage the evolution of the generalized symbolic medium of money to evolve, thereby cutting off more dynamic processes of distribution that could stimulate increased resource extraction and production. Of course, these same low levels also make for human happiness, and in general, reinforce the biological nature of humans as outlined in Appendix II.

The Same Old Story…

As with all the other institutional spheres, the story begins to change about 12–10,000 years before the present, when human populations increasingly became sedentary and formed larger amalgamations of communities, placing pressure on existing structural and cultural patterns of organization and "welcoming" innovation. The result was expanding the technological base of populations, which in turn, increased stores of information and increased capacities for transporting individual and commodities for trading with other populations, thus initiating barter and eventual quasi forms of money (as among the Chumash). As with the technological revolution, the transactional revolution followed from political and religious expansion (larger, more diffuse populations meant more trade and market-like economic activity, which in turn meant pressure for mechanisms reducing cultural and geographic distances). Thus, settling down meant natural and purposive expansion in physical capital and subsequent feedback and feedforward effects of these on human capital and transactional capital leading to intensifying extraction, production, and distribution processes. Economic processes were likely cyclical at first, owing in part to the lag in structural and cultural formations changing. Eventually, a "tipping point" was reached and some human societies began to rapidly increase technologies for resource extraction, which set into motion all of the forces arrayed in Figure 11.1.

In short, like the polity 5,000 years ago, once the economy began to evolve autonomously, it transformed society completely and rapidly. It took less than 2,000 years for human societies to evolve from an agrarian profile to a post-industrial profile (Nolan and Lenski 2010). The slow nature of the economy and its sudden explosive force demands explanation. One explanation is Weber's *Protestant Ethic* thesis, which has received support and challenge since it was written (Cohen 2002; Delacroix and Nielsen 2001; Gorski 2005). The logic here is that changes in religious authority and worldview facilitate the diffusion of a particular economic ethic. Others argue that it was the peculiar form of mercantilism in the Italian city-states (Braudel 1979 [1985]; Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997; Wallerstein 1974). We will argue, drawing from a less noted strand in Weber's (1927 [2002]) last writings on economic history (Collins 1986a), that it was in fact the evolution of legal autonomy in the 12th century that added the greatest amount of rocket fuel. It is for this reason, that we alter the organization of the book, shifting in the next two chapters to an analysis of the legal sphere before returning to our second chapter on economy. However, in anticipation of that last chapter, we conclude this chapter by sketching a broad classification system of economies from the beginning to today (Table 11.1).

TABLE 11.1 The Evolution of Economy

Hunting and Gathering Economies[a]
Technology: Practical knowledge of indigenous plant resources, including seeding and harvesting, and knowledge of animal resources and hunting. Knowledge of seasonal effects on availability of resources. Knowledge about how to make spears, digging sticks, hatchets, bows and arrows, baskets, and, at times, crude pottery.
Physical capital: Hunting equipment, digging implements, and cooking utensils.
Human capital: Skills at hunting; skills at gathering. Sexual division of labor.
Transactional capital: Cognitive and emotional reactions to fair exchanges of resources; at times opportunities to engage in exchanges of small objects and resources with others.
Property: Personal possessions that can be carried. At times, collective territory, and particularly so among settled hunter-gatherers. No material inequality, although rules of fairness about how to distribute hunting kill among individuals and families. Gathering resources considered possession of nuclear family. Among settled hunter-gatherers, fishing resources considered property, sometimes given to Big Man for holding; at times, livestock, housing structures, canoes, and other economic resources.

(*continued*)

TABLE 11.1 Cont.

Structural formations: Nuclear families lodged inside of bands organized for hunting and gathering.

Cultural formations: Implicit rules of exchange and fairness. In a few cases, typically among more settled hunter-gatherers, symbols of value in objects that can be used in exchanges for resources.

Simple Horticultural Economies

Technology: Practical knowledge of herding, farming (planting, harvesting, storing, grinding, and cooking grains), tool making (initially with wood, then stones, and eventually metals), pottery making (with simple kilns, which later led to annealing, smelting, casting, and, eventually, alloying).

Physical capital: Tools, pottery, storage sheds, objects used in barter negotiations, unstable economic surplus, little capacity to horde wealth. Axes, spears, bows and arrows, and other weapons.

Human capital: Clear division of labor between males and females (with females doing most of the tending of gardens). Specialized occupational trades in weapons making, pottery, house building, boat building and bartering. At times, some use of proto-slaves captured in warfare.

Property: Emerging system of property, private and collective. Moderate inequality in distribution of property. Headmen, religious specialists, heads of kin units, some craft specialists and paramount chiefs receive surplus material goods (lodging, food, weapons, land), with some redistribution reducing material inequality. Gardening plots, tools, and weapons are major forms of property. Symbolic objects bestowing honor and prestige among leaders and specialists work to increase inequalities. Thus, some stratification in terms of material and symbolic property but not developed into hard ranks or strata among members of communities. Clear differentiation of headmen, kin leaders, and religious specialists that eventually become basis of stratification in evolution to advance horticulture. Also, inequalities among communities can begin to emerge, which also becomes further institutionalized in movement to advanced agrarianism. Slavery also occasionally present, creating a potential "class" divide, with distinctions among kin groups, sex, age, and at times, specialists in religion, crafts, warfare, anticipating further evolution to more clear-cut classes and strata.

Social formations: Community/villages, kinship elaborating to a more unilineal profile, with leaderships at each level of corporate-unit organization. Leadership generally has special rights and duties, often making them the nexus of resource distribution in kin units and communities.

Cultural formations: Explicit rules organizing larger kin units organized in hierarchies, often sanctioned by edits from supernatural forces. Clear rules for trade and exchange, with occasional used of a generalized symbolic medium of exchange, such as early forms of money or objects of value.

TABLE 11.1 Cont.

Advanced Horticultural Economies[b]

Technology: Practical knowledge of herding, breeding, farming, fertilizing, crop rotation, tool making with metals (with exceptions such as ancient China), pottery making, metallurgy, and masonry.

Physical capital: Tools, pottery, housing, storage buildings, vehicles and animals for transportation, roads, walled cities, and the beginnings of transactional capital in the form of money, with value in objects bestowing value. More stable economic surplus, which can be horded or used in exchanges.

Human capital: Clear division of labor based on age, gender, and specialties, with dramatic increase in specialization of trades and occupations, particularly for masonry, metal working, weaving, leather-making, pottery and ceramics, building of boats, ground travel, houses, storage facilities, and religious temples, roads, and facilities for commerce. Frequent use of slaves captured in war-making. Specialists in warfare. Community structure, kinship and headmen are principle organizing forces at community level, with headman involved in redistribution, but larger cities begin to reveal infrastructures for emerging political and religious leaders, as well as for commerce in the form of markets and trade specialists, potentially accompanied by very beginnings of new services such as banking and insuring.

Transactional capital: Evolution of markets and money dramatically increase trade, and orient many individuals and corporate units to the normative structure of trade and exchange, with specialized individual and corporate units further institutionalizing trade. The range of trade dramatically expands for basic commodities, luxury goods, and services, thereby creating a new normative system in trade practices and law.

Property: Clear definitions for designating property evolve within kinship, in communities, in trade centers, in differentiation among political and religious elites. Thus, a hardening system of private property, with high inequalities in its distribution evolve. Headmen, religious elites, paramount chiefs, military elites, successful craft specialists, and particularly emerging leaders of polity ("king" and court) all can claim high levels of private property as a basis for high levels of stratification. Accumulation of wealth increases, with redistribution of wealth decreasing as political, religious, and commercial elite emerge. States revolve around political elites and their families, religious elite, military elite, and commercial elite, with the general population holding little property and slaves virtually no property. Age, sex, strata become criteria for a restrictive system of inheritance of wealth and property. Moreover, with mobility of populations, ethnic stratification begins to evolve, with slaves typically at the bottom of such a system.

(*continued*)

TABLE 11.1 Cont.

Social formations: Social formations expand and provide a basis for stratification and institutional evolution of polity, religion, and law, with kinship (except among elites) beginning to de-evolve back to simpler nuclear formations. The dramatic increase in the variety of corporate units devoted to a wide variety of trades and occupations, fueled by money, markets, and growth as well as by diversity of communities regulated by polity more than kinship, coupled with beginnings of the differentiation of law as an institutional system, create a platform for not only expansions of economy but also all other institutional systems. At the same time, stratification, as it evolves into a class system of inequality, orders individuals into a hardening societal-level hierarchy, while channeling human capital to locations in the economy "appropriate" to their location in the stratification system. The sphere differentiation of types of corporate units—groups, organizations, and communities—provides a broad basis for institutional expansion but, at the same time, the hardening stratification system creates a tension-generating machine that will make societies less stable. Moreover, bureaucracies begin their ascendance in religion and emerging state, as well larger-scale economic corporate units.

Cultural formations: The evolution of money and markets in the economy provides a generalized symbolic media for almost all transactions, although barter persists among those without money. Normative systems evolve around exchange and trade, and as stratification evolves, this system is expanded to legitimate inequality. Religion evolves its own normative system, generally oriented to retaining its privilege by legitimating the emerging political elites. The beginnings of law, especially laws written down in codes, work to legitimate market transactions, inherited privilege, and stratification more generally. At each level and type of corporate unit, norms specify obligations for their incumbents and, implicitly, their subordination to all those higher in the bureaucracy and higher in the stratification system.

Simple Agrarian Economies

Technology: Knowledge of herding, farming with animal-drawn plows, irrigation, ferritization, sailing, wheel and use of vehicles, orchards, husbandry, ceramics, metallurgy, writing, mathematical notations, and solar calendar. Rate of innovation high, but tending to decline, polity begins to circumscribe activity in advanced systems.

Physical capital: Plow, work animals, wood, ceramics, and sometimes iron tools. Large facilities for storage and milling of grains. Roads, and often large-scale irrigation projects. Most significantly, increased use of money.

Human capital: Dramatically increased division of labor as occupational specialization expands. Continued clear division of labor by age and sex. More merchants and "trade" specialists with wider varieties of skills emerge. Free labor appears as artisans begin to sell their services in labor markets, thereby making it possible to have mechanisms for inserting incumbents into increasingly bureaucratic-looking structures.

TABLE 11.1 Cont.

Transactional capital: More widespread use of money, creating an ideology attached to symbolic aspects of money, thereby increasing the dynamism of exchange. Legal regulation of trade and exchange increases, backed up by courts and police. Credit and debt begin to become a commodity exchanged, requiring more complex legal contracts, backed up by legal systems and normative expectations.

Property: Fully institutionalized system of private property, leading to high levels of inequality and stratification. Almost all material resources owned by the nobility, political elites, and religious elites and their corporate units. Some material accumulation by merchants, bankers, financiers, and craft specialists but for base majority of the population, wages and other forms of compensation are low. And, tax burdens begin to increase significantly as state seeks monies to finance emerging bureaucracies, and its control of property. The result is a very explicit class system, with clear demarcations of class differences (including military and religious classes) with little voice in political decisions, short of rebellions against the state and propertied classes. Moreover, class-like distinctions are made among occupational specialists, especially for artisans, craft specialists, merchants/traders, and slaves, if any. Rural properties are generally "owned" by nobility, with urban areas revealing more diversity of ownership by economic classes. Infrastructures, such as roads, ports, canals, warehouses and the like reveal a mixed "ownership" with the state increasing gaining control of key elements of the material infrastructure needed for social control, defense, and other military actions.

Social formations: The complexity of structures built from corporate units increases in all institutional spheres, save for kinship among non-nobility where evolution to a more nucleated corporate unit is under way. Communities of all sizes, with varying levels of infrastructure, emerge, often linked with larger urban complex housing political, military, and religious elites and the corporate units organizing their activities. Polity, religion, economy, and to a lesser extent, law, all begin to elaborate types of relationships among corporate units—groups, organizations, and communities –by using money as compensation for human capital; and the beginnings of rational-legal bureaucracies can be seen in some societies, particularly the state, large economic organizations, and large religious denominations. Thus, the structural base, especially organizations, reveal bureaucratic potential for building up larger-scale societies, which catalyze further evolution of all institutional domains, except the de-evolution of kinship back to its original nuclear form. Indeed, the de-evolution of ascriptive kinship is critical to the evolution of ever-more "rational" bureaucracies.

(*continued*)

TABLE 11.1 Cont.

Cultural formations: Money, markets, and contracts increase the salience of money as a generalized medium of exchange that reinforces ideologies that begin to add an economic ideology to those existing in evolving political, religious, and kinship institutional domains. This symbolic medium increasingly penetrates other institutional domains, thereby allowing them to increase the complexity of relations among corporate units, except for kinship which becomes more nucleated, although other patterns of kin organization become evident—e.g., patrimonial families of kin and non-kin apprentices, as well extended families that are blends of kinship less organized by a descent rule. Religious values and beliefs can often support or work against economic evolution, but with the spread of money as a generalized medium in ever-expanding markets, economic ideologies begin to dominate economic actors, but actors in other institutional domains as well, particularly polity and, at times, religion and kinship.

Advanced Agrarian Societies

Technology: In addition to technology available in simple agrarian societies, advanced systems reveal knowledge of smelting and hardening iron. Other advances include improved harnesses for horses and horse drawn plows and horse-power vehicles. Still more technological advances occurred with the wood-turning lathe, the auger, screws, printing, clocks, spinning yarn and weaving cloth, windmills, and watermill technology.

Physical capital: Beyond simple agrarian societies, new forms of physical capital include widespread use of metal tools. Facilities for storage, transportation, and milling became much larger. Roadways expanded as did irrigation projects. Light industry was made possible by wind and water power for accelerated production, setting the stage, eventually, for industrial production.

Notes

a This composite description is drawn from the following sources: Turner (1972, 1997, 2003); Lenski (1966, 2005); Maryanski and Turner (1992); Turner and Maryanski (2008); Roth (1987); Hose and McDougall (1912); Radcliffe-Brown (1914, 1930); Spencer and Gillen (1927); Linton (1936); Steward (1936); Holmberg (1950); Childe (1952); Clark (1952); Elkin (1954); Goldschmidt (1959); Goodhale (1959), Turnbull (1961), Washburn (1961), Service (1962, 1966); Clark and Piggott (1965), Lee and DeVore (1968, 1976); Sahlins (1968a, 1968b, 1972); Coon (1971); Biccieri (1972); Earle and Ericson (1977); Rick (1978); Tonkinson (1978); Lee (1979), Schrire (1984); Johnson and Earle (2000); Hart, Pilling and Godhale (1988); Howell (1988).

b Descriptions drawn from: Turner (1972, 1997, 2003); Turner and Maryanski (2008); Maryanski and Turner (1992); Lenski (1966); Gordon (1914); Malinowski (1922); Landtman (1927); Childe (1930, 1952, 1960, 1964); Herskovits (1938); Goldschmidt (1959); Leach (1954); Schapera (1956); Sahlins (1958); Hawkes (1965); Flannery (1972); Gibbs (1965); Earle (1984); Mann (1986); Johnson and Earle (2000); Bates and Flog (1991); Sahlins (1968a); Boserup (1965).

Variations in the Evolution of Economy

We should emphasize before closing this chapter an obvious simplification in the analysis of the economy and other institutional systems in previous chapters. Labeling "stages" of evolution implies that evolution is an onward and upward movement from simple nomadic hunting and gathering through simple and advanced horticulture to simple and then advanced agrarian (and then onward to industrial and post-industrial) (see, for instance, Nolan and Lenski 2010).

Societies are, of course, not evolving in a vacuum; they interact with each other through trade, migration, and even warfare. In so doing, they have effects on the technology that a society possesses and what can be done with this technology, under the ecological conditions to which a population must adapt. Figure 11.2 outlines the most likely path of evolution societies took in the distant past, given their technology and the ecologies to which they had to adapt. What becomes evident is that depending upon the initial ecology, evolution to the "next stage" of development will vary. Most societies will go to simple horticulture, when required; then,

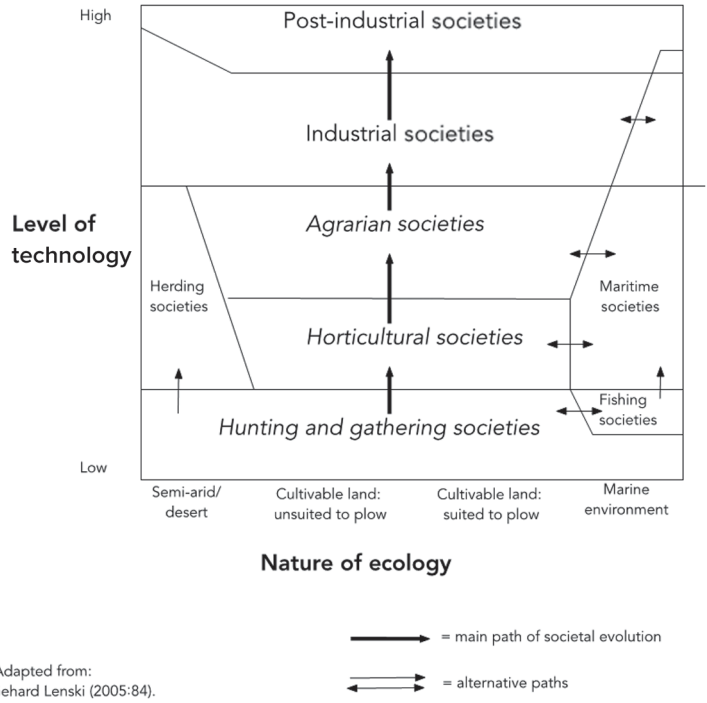


Figure 11.2 Various Paths and Patterns of Societal Evolution

depending what is occurring in the social environment of a society, perhaps to advanced horticulture, and then on to various levels of agrarianism. Yet, the two environments of the left and right side of the figure indicate that hunter-gatherers often have had to adapt to either dry, arid conditions not suitable for horticulture much less agriculture, on the left side of the figure, and a more marine environment consisting of large rivers, lakes, or ocean, on the right side. If these two extremes are the starting points, then those in dry arid ecologies will likely seek herding as means of survival, unless they migrate to more a more verdant ecology, whereas those living in marine ecologies have the option of fishing as a means of obtaining protein, with the result that they may become settled hunter-gatherers who may still hunt, gather, and even practice some gardening or horticulture, but obtain most of their protein and sustenance from fishing activities. These two types of societies may later evolve into advanced horticulture and agrarianism, but the more likely path is that herding populations are exterminated by growing advanced horticulture or agrarian societies, and whether or not they make it to industrial technologies depends upon what the agrarian societies are able to do. On the other extreme, the settled hunting and gathering population may stay in a fishing phase through horticulture and, then, may become a true maritime society through the agrarian era, also practicing some agriculture if they have lands that can be cultivated. They may even move into more complex stages of evolution by becoming industrial, or at least having an industrial and post-industrial base, even if fishing and agriculture remain a prominent part of their economy. New Zealand is a very good example of such a society, as are many islands societies, such as Hawaii, that have enough land that can be cultivated to supplement fishing.

Again, we should emphasize that societies do not evolve in a lineal manner. They evolve institutional structures but often hit dead ends, or are conquered by another society (Abrutyn and Lawrence 2010). They can remain "primitive" only to be colonized by more advanced societies building up an empire, thereby forcing changes in a society's institutional systems. Or, they can be exploited for their resources and left to fend for themselves just how to increase resource extraction, production, and distribution of commodities to now a larger, and poorer population. Thus, the stages outlined in Table 11.1 are the most common stages in the history of the evolution of human societies, but again, most industrial societies today have diverse origins because they involve territories that were once at a number of different stages. Thus, the stages are only meant to highlight that institutional evolution has *a pattern* to its evolution in terms of which

institutional domains lead and follow depending upon the level of technology the other elements of an economy—that is, physical capital, human capital, transactional capital, and property—as they are used to build out social formations and to develop cultural formations.

Yet, by isolating stages, we are able to discern how levels of technology and other economic elements affect other institutional domains, and vice versa. We can see the basic configurations of institutions that have appeared in the evolution of human societies; and such knowledge is useful, because it is possible to see which institutional systems evolved in what sequence and with what influences on each other to bring human societies to the brink of evolution into modernity. The collapse of most advanced agrarian societies, in Europe and even in the Middle East created the "dark ages" which were not so dark as a quiet regrouping from political collapse of societies and their institutional systems that, over a thousand years, slowly were rebuilt to a point where there could be a Renaissance followed by an expansion of markets creating a commercial era led to early industrialism. Societies had to be put back together as they had originally evolved, although they started much further long the evolution path that we are outlining. But the key is, they had to recreate the evolutionary base of the first institutions; and once this base was back in tact, evolution to the current age and beyond was likely, even though it could all fall apart again in the near or distant future.

Conclusion

Above, we demonstrated just how powerful, but historically delimited, the economy was. Technology, physical/human/transactional capital, structural and cultural formations were constrained in their growth and potential to dis-embed economy from kinship, polity, and religion. At least until the Middle Ages in Europe, where a true Axial Age occurred in which the modern world began to take form in Europe and then throughout the world. Today, the world looks nothing like the pre-12th century world. What happened, though in the 12th century? Why did the Italian city-states and Western Europe experience changes that were just as likely to happen in China or the rich Islamic medieval period? We pinpoint, more extensively in Chapter 12, the evolution of law as the big change. But, before reaching that conclusion, we first treat law like kinship, polity, religion, and economy, examining its basic properties as a sphere of social action and organization as well as its role in preliterate and premodern societies.

Note

1 *Power* is also a more generalized symbolic medium and exists as authority within the diverse corporate units of all institutional domains, whether family, economy, law, religion, education, etc. (Baldwin 1971; Luhmann 1979). Indeed, in exchanges with polity, *authority* is franchised out in exchange for the media of other institutional domains. For example, parents are given *authority to control members of family* in exchange for their *loyalty and commitments* to polity; economic actors are given authority to regulate their activities in gathering, production, and distribution in exchange for their willingness to accept tax burdens on their activities. Similarly *learning-knowledge* from education (as it evolves) for educating members of the population and their commitments to polity is exchanged with polity for limited *authority* to control the educational corporate and for shares of tax revenues (*money*) from polity to support educational infrastructures. These exchanges and then the circulation of generalized symbolic media within other institutional systems moralizes, to a degree, social relations within and between institutional domains, while regularizing relations among actors in diverse domains.

12
The Emergence of Law

As each of the fist institutions evolved in response to selection pressures, status locations and roles became organized into corporate units and, then, into a more coherent system of corporate units, using a generalized symbolic media of exchange for transactions within an institution, as well as, for exchanges among actors in different institutional domains. Arising from transactions within institutional domains emerged cultural beliefs (ideologies) about what was proper and appropriate within a domain, along with more specific normative expectations for behaviors of actors within and between corporate units. Thus, kinship evolved by first forming the corporate unit that allowed humans to survive—the nuclear family—organized into bands of nuclear families engaged in hunting and gathering activities. Polity began with leaders emerging in times requiring direction and coordination of kin, band, and community members, setting into motion the consolidation of power as a generalized symbolic medium and beliefs about how power should be used. Religion emerged from the anxieties, fears, and uncertainties that big brained and highly emotional animals like humans will inevitably experience in trying to adapt to potentially difficult and changing ecologies. And economy began to evolve, once hunter-gatherers began settling down into more permanent communities and increasingly dense networks of exchange, pressure for intensifying the production of subsistence and trade goods, and the rise of political leadership that both coordinated the production of surplus and its exchange, eventually gave rise to second-level markets of ever-more diverse goods, including luxury or prestige goods. We mention these obvious points because the early differentiation of institutional systems from each other not only solved one set of adaptive problems, but it inevitably set into motion new adaptive problems for how to regulate, coordinate, and control the larger population engaged in diverse institutional activities. Most of these problems arose from increasing social differentiation, both vertically and horizontally, that inevitably generated selection pressures revolving around coordination, control, and integration of differences.

The internal mechanisms of social control within each institution would eventually need to be supplemented by some form of "external control," as

DOI: 10.4324/9781003224433-13

would occur first with the evolution of polity. Eventually, however, political power founded on kinship principles would prove too delimiting, restricting the size, scale, and complexity attainable by the collectively organized actors. Hence, the introduction of religion as a mechanism of integration and control (see, in particular, Chapter 9). Religion often was used as a stop-gap strategy for giving institutional beliefs and norms additional power by emphasizing in beliefs the sanctioning from the forces of the supernatural and, of course, by giving leaders in polity certain rights to enforce conformity to beliefs and norms sanctioned by the supernatural. Agrarian states were capable of reaching new heights, but not without costs. In particular, the tension between political and religious actors was both transformative and potentially destructive, as the latter were specialists, but their monopoly of psychic violence was qualitatively different from, say, a potter or metallurgist.

We left off in Chapter 10 with an increasingly autonomous religious sphere not so much *running away* from polity, but rather becoming a competing, discrete sphere of social action in which resources flowed more freely. Moreover, it was not bound by the laws of polity, which usually constrain the circulation of power to the territorial boundaries controlled by a given state. The church was ecumenical, shrouded in universalist language that saw its "kingdom" as rooted in a time and place apart from the secular, political world. Its past was more primordial and its future more glorious and everlasting. The tension between these two spheres was not inevitably resolved with law—nor could one say the resolution has been smooth or permanent—but, as we will see in Chapter 13, legal autonomy emerged in the interstitial struggle between church and state. However, the turn to law occurred much, much earlier, being discernible in ephemeral instances (fortunately recorded in ethnographic reports [Barton 1919; Malinowski 1959]) and, then, with the rise of agrarian societies, increasingly clear in its outlines.

In many ways, law may have been the slowest institutional sphere to differentiate when compared to kinship, polity, religion, and economy, although as outlined in the previous chapter, the differentiation of the economy and its movement to more autonomy occurred with the spread of markets and money as a generalized symbolic medium of exchange. But, as markets emerged, selection then increased for some form of external regulatory mechanism which could sustain the viability of markets and the stability of money. And so, in this sense of requiring law to begin evolving, one could say efficacy and extensivity of the economic sphere, as well as the rise of education, science, and medicine as distinctive institutional spheres in most modern societies (Abrutyn 2009), could only develop with the initial

evolution of law outside of other institutional domains. Notably, despite its slow evolution structurally and culturally, law's roots are as ancient as religion's roots, built up from powerful selection pressures on affective and cognitive functions of our brains and sociality (Decety and Wheatly 2015; Jensen et al. 2014) and, therefore, requires some consideration of its biological foundations. (Interestingly, much less debate centers on the neuroscience behind law, morality, or justice, perhaps because there are fewer explicit appeals to faith-based beings.) We begin by laying out our conceptual terms regarding law as an institutional sphere before considering the evolutionary foundations of morality, justice, and, ultimately, law. Indeed, the evolution of the economy beyond advanced horticulture, delineated in Table 11.1 on page 261 to 266 would have stalled unless law also began to evolve under selection pressures for coordination, control, and integration of actors engaged in resource extraction, production, and most importantly, market distribution of goods and services.

Basic Elements of Law as an Institutional Domain

Early signs of law as an institutional domain can be found in very simple hunting-gathering and horticultural societies; and if a society revealed all of the following elements, it could be argued that the institution of law had emerged, albeit in very simple and tentative form. Stripped of the formal aspects we recognize in modern legal systems, "social norms are legal if their neglect or infraction is regularly met, in threat or in fact, by the application of physical force by an individual or group possessing the socially recognized privilege of acting" (Hoebel 1973: 28). The norms are only "legal" then where there is general agreement that physical coercion is the legitimate consequence for their violation. Thus, gossip or other informal mechanisms of shame do not elevate a norm to legal status. There is tremendous variation in the agents authorized to deliver the punishment. In foraging societies, it is often a matter of whether the transgression violates the rights or duties of an individual or the collective. Malinowski (1959) recalls a fascinating example in which a Trobriand youth punishes himself by public suicide. At the age of puberty, boys and girls are separated from their natal home, and reside in communal huts differentiated by sex. During this "liminal" age period, before marriage arrangements are made, youth are free to sexually experiment, including violating some incest taboos between cousins. The basic norms surrounding this practice is (a) it will be discrete and (b) once marriage arrangements are made, norms specify that these relations will cease.[1] As the girl's wedding drew closer, the two cousins continued to have an affair, which had become increasingly difficult

to remain secret. Once public, members used typical private degradation techniques to shame the lovers, but the boy remained insistent. Eventually, the affair became very publicly discussed and the boy had no recourse but to kill himself to repair the moral order. Malinowski maintained, through his own observations and subsequent lines of questioning, that this was *law* and cognitively distinguishable by the Trobrianders vis-à-vis other things like religion or kinship.

Weber, of course, argued that a legal order was only possible with some formalized organizational apparatus, even if it was a single office authorized with adjudicating on the behalf of two parties, including the collective. In the Ifugao, for instance, it was conventional for prestigious members of the community to preside over disputes over things like property (Barton 1919). Their decision was considered binding for both parties, and was backed by their legitimate right to head-hunt those who violated the judicial terms. But, Hoebel would likely push back against Weber's stricter definition, arguing the most important ingredient in a legal order is *regularity*: the violation of norm becomes legal when its sanctions *always* follow, even if the sanctions themselves sometimes vary according to rank.

However, a legal institution, differentiated to some degree from all other institutions, does require some level of formalization, as Weber maintained, which includes predictability in sanctioning. Thus, Hoebel's three basic ingredients can be further subdivided, for our purposes, into five basic elements every differentiated legal institution possess even if they vary in content and prominence. These elements are as follows: (1) *a body of laws* or rules about conduct; (2) a mechanism by which such rules are *enforced and sanctioned*; (3) *a means for adjudicating* (as a primitive, quasi-, or *ad hoc* "court") disputes and failures when individual or corporate unit activities deviate from laws; (4) capacity to *impose sanctions* for the failure to conform to rules; and (5) a capacity to *enforce existing and/or new laws*.[2] Before we examine each of these more closely, a few words on the key dimension of variation—rationalization —is worth discussing.

The Key to Weber's Master Process?

More so than any other institution, even polity, law strains toward Weber's (1967) master process of history: rationalization. While it was noted in Chapter 10 that religious writing naturally lent itself to standardization and routinization, legal writing does so even more. The formulaic "if-then" statements found in the earliest law codes in Mesopotamia, for instance, demonstrate the detachment of legal codes from local customs

and conventions (van de Mieroop 2004, 2005). Across Weber's writing, he argues that institutional spheres—or *social orders* in his terminology—begin to rationalize relations as full-time corporate units emerge, focused on a singular set of activities and knowledge. Importantly, a specialized set of corporate units evolve once full-time status is achieved, whose primary activities are focused on second-order thinking, or reflecting on the activities, practices, and, sometimes, ultimate grounds upon which the institutional sphere rests (Luhmann 1977). Self-reflexivity, in particular, is central to the rationalization process as they select elements of the broader structure and culture in the training of new members of the corporate unit. They are the canonizers, the standardizers, the formalizers. In the following chapter, we will explore legal entrepreneurship in greater depth, but it is important to note that different legal institutions, for historical reasons, formalized different elements more readily than others. Its tendency towards rationalization has had incredible consequences for the modern polity, the Catholic Church, the economy, and every other sphere, as laws impose formal rationality on the practices and beliefs of other actors, directly or indirectly (Unger 1976). We will discuss rationalization in the following chapter in greater detail, in part because it is a key cause and consequence of legal evolution towards autonomy. However, it is imperative to note that wherever law evolves, it always pushes other spheres of activities towards greater rationality. It stabilizes and makes more predictable conflict transformed into competition (Black 1976). Put differently, it is an immunizer (Luhmann 2004). The standardization and generalization of codes provides actors with a sense of predictable outcomes that reduces the likelihood of bad or unpredictable behavior. Once precedent becomes standard practice, then legal spheres also "vaccinate" societies against recurring "plagues." We will return to much of this shortly.

The Body of Laws

Laws are special kinds of rules, above and beyond normative agreements that individuals constantly make in day-to-day activities, especially coordinated activities. Laws specify clearly rules that *should* and *must* be obeyed and failure to obey these rules will invite intervention by third parties (Malinowski 1922; Hoebel 1954 [1973]; Moore 1978, and Turner 1980). A "body" of laws, even if somewhat implicit, distinguishes between (a) *substantive rules* for regulating relationships among members of a population, especially behaviors that are deviant or disruptive to coordinated activities and (b) *formal* or *procedural rules* that govern the rights and duties of the third-party adjudicator and the actual process of

adjudication (Weber 1967). Because laws in early hunting and gathering societies were infused with customs, traditions, values, and ideologies of the general population (Lowie 1920, 1940; Gurvitch 1953), it was typically rather easy for informal leaders to decide on violations and punishments, if any, that would be accepted by the general population, since there was typically a general consensus on these matters in small band societies. Later, as institutional domains evolved and differentiated, such consensus was less assured, as laws became (and still are) weapons of the powerful to both protect their interests and to determine other classes' pursuit of their interests (Turk 1976). Importantly, the legitimate right to legislate is one of the most powerful forms of symbolic power and, consequently, violence available today, as it confers upon the monopolizers the sole right to *name* groups while prescribing and proscribing their rights and duties (Bourdieu 1989). Hence, law is an arena of contestation, with modern autonomous legal spheres allowing for far more mobility than in previous times, while paradoxically escalating inequality and stratification as both justice and conflict resolution are skewed to favor the wealthy and powerful over the poor and less powerful.[3]

Adjudication of Disputes

In some hunting and gathering societies, a third party to hear a dispute and to suggest a judgement is simply not available. Under these conditions, violence can occur or, more likely, a serious breach of rules will lead to a break-up of the band (Newman 1980: 50–103). Equally often, however, high prestige individuals whose views are respected can be recruited to hear litigants in a dispute and then pass along his (and it is generally a "he") "advice," but without the ability to impose this "decision" on either of the litigants and their relatives. In such cases where the advice is not accepted, the tensions will persist. However, given the high degree of consensus over cultural traditions among hunter-gatherers, individuals likely recognize that it is in their best interest to accept advice, especially since punishments are generally not that severe, unless of course, murder or real bodily harm has occurred. Once power and authority become institutionalized to any degree, adjudication is more mandatory and decisions by leaders acting as "judges" are enforced. For example, in Big Man societies of settled hunter-gatherers or in simple horticultural societies with kin leaders, mediation by the Big Man or kin chief in a dispute leads to real adjudication. Thus, enactment, courts, and enforcement of laws are all related to the institutionalization of power in the emerging polity, and, at times, in religion as well.

With Big Men or with kin-leaders mediation of a dispute or an alleged violation of a law leads to a more court-like process in which kinsmen act as "lawyers" for the disputants, with the Big man or kin elder or elders acting as judge(s) with authority to render a verdict or decision and, if required, to impose punishments as well. This model, in fact, survived for a significantly long swath of human history, often resting parallel to a more complex, centralized politically backed legal order. In Mesopotamia, for instance, where we saw villages retain significant political authority, most conflicts and transgressions were adjudicated through local tribunals (Yoffee 2000). For really complicated cases or difficult to resolve conflicts, once a year, the king would travel a "circuit" throughout the surrounding environs, and listen to appeals and render final, binding decisions.

Eventually, more and more of this duty and right will be turned over to a more autonomous legal system in complex societies because the complexity of regulations increase beyond what political leaders, *per se*, can do as adjudicators. However, while the day-to-day decisions of an autonomous legal sphere's court system tends towards legal criteria in decision making, those with power rarely give power away for free. And, so, the last court of appeals in most cases remains in tension between the legal values and norms its jurists are usually steeped in and the political process by which they are appointed, and the high-stakes outcomes of the decisions. The history of the Supreme Court in the U.S., for instance, is one of fluctuating from leaning more legally to being a mechanism of the dominant ruling class (Irons 1999). The freer of political or economic or religious considerations legal actors are in adjudication, the more autonomous the legal system, and the greater the capacity to regulate, coordinate, and control larger populations engaged in diverse institutional activities.

Enforcing Bodies of Laws

Until there is some degree of consolidation of power, it is difficult for populations to enforce rules and to monitor members of a population so that violations can be spotted and brought to adjudication. The mechanism for doing so in hunter-gatherers and small horticultural societies is monitoring by band or community members, coupled with a willingness to request, if available, mediation by a high prestige individual or individuals, or by a kin leader (say, clan leader) of the lineages within which the violation of a rule is alleged. Recall, for instance, the Trobriand teen that refused to cease intimate relations that violated the incest taboos: the rules were enforced by the community-at-large, but the sanctions were self-administered (death by suicide). In Big Man systems, there is sufficient

power for the enforcement of laws and then the adjudication of the violator in a quasi-court. Similarly, in a community of horticulturalists, kin relations across lineages, clans, and perhaps even moieties are sufficiently hierarchical (see Figure 6.1 on page 139) to give leaders authority to impose punishments and/or restitution. Moreover, such leaders often will have the power to act as legislatures if new laws are required. And it is with adjudication by third parties of disputes over rules that this autonomy begins in societal evolution and, then, is furthered by the capacity to create new laws as changing circumstances demand.

Legislation of New Laws

At times, holders of prestige in small societies can suggest new laws in light of disputes or other problematic situations, but rarely did these individuals have the power to enforce the new laws that they suggested unless there was virtually complete consensus by the members of a band that this new law was indeed a good idea. As a political sphere grew increasingly differentiated, conflict resolution between individuals or their corporate kin units continued to require adjudication, but new "public" norms emerged too. Transgressions deemed in violation of the group likely always existed, hence the suicide of the incestual teen. But, with an embodied representative (a chief, for instance) and the differentiation of physical, temporal, social, and symbolic space, transgressions against the chief could be interpreted as transgressions against the polity and, therefore, the community *writ large*. While we have no data, to our knowledge, demonstrating the actual creation of new laws, clearly the use of power to carve out, say, distinctive physical space for only the chief and his retinue that was saturated with sacredness meant entering that space was prohibited to most commoners. This norm could easily be applied to touching the chief, handling his personal effects, and, even, looking at him. The point, here, is that legislation as we might think of it today, did not likely occur frequently or rapidly until chiefs were able to monopolize psychic violence to some extent and shroud their own claims in sacredness. Once doing so, a new set of laws that would be the onset of public versus private law could emerge; but even this distinction took a significant length of time and political differentiation to crystallize.

The key to effective legislation is the degree to which it is considered legitimate by those subject to this legislation; and the more concentrated its power and the more power has been used to increase inequalities, the more problematic legitimation becomes, forcing the use of administrative

and coercive bases of power to stifle dissent. As we noted, then, with religious legitimation, the symbolic base of power can be used effectively to convince members of a population that legislative action is needed and appropriate to broader cultural ideologies. Despots can, for a time, use the law as a part of a symbolic and administrative base of power—as is the case in many despotic societies today. But among hunter-gatherers and other small populations of humans' first 300,000 to 350,000 years, such efforts were not viable because of the inability to consolidate power and to use this power to enforce rules and legislate new rules or edicts with the limited and egalitarian structure and culture of hunting and gathering bands.

Enforcement of Laws and Court Decisions

For most of human history, moral persuasion, informal sanctions, shaming, and non-coercive acts of influence were often sufficient to maintain the normative order. At times, violence did occur in bands of hunter-gatherers, and then, it was through agreement of kin and non-kin that the violent person would have to be punished, often with death and certainly with expulsion from the band. Moreover, there are now sufficient data to document that when individuals in preliterate societies began to abuse their powers, or to try to impose power, on those who had not ever experienced concentrated power, they often killed in a collective effort those who would impose power on them (Roscoe 2007; Wadley, 2003; Wrangham 1999; Peterson and Wrangham 1997). Acts of collective revenge and retribution by individuals in early societies appears to have turned out to be a very effective way to sustain the democratic organizational patterns of hunter-gatherers; and this power of collective revenge probably operated well into agrarianism and, of course, is still evident in revolutions and genocides today. Thus, the patterns of violence that we might think are only part of the more evolved social world, from late horticulture to the present, were in fact operative throughout human history (Boehm 2018).

The Neurological Foundations of Law

Law is inextricably tied to *morality*, or how we are expected to treat others and what we expect treatment to be for ourselves—including intentions, and *justice*, or the outcomes expected when violations of expectations occur (Stone 1965). Our ancestors, arguably, had already evolved the capacity for both. Frans de Waal (1989, 1991, 1996, 2009) long observed the ingredients for morality—reciprocity/fairness and empathy/

compassion—in apes, while others, like Christopher Boehm (2018), have detailed the use of collective force chimpanzees use against upstart alphas that threaten the social order. Chimps, for instance, perceive the value of treats and rewards and also have strong sense of equity when it comes to the treats they get vis-à-vis conspecifics (Lents 2016: 49ff.). Moreover, they can act empathically when a close other does not receive the equivalent of what they in fact receive. "Some of these chimpanzees preferred to go hungry and throw a tantrum rather than tolerate unfair conditions." Lents (2016: 50–51) concludes, "If this is not the beginning of a system of justice, then I do not know what is."

The behavioral capacities we inherited from apes (see Appendix II of Chapter 1, pages 41 to 48), as we have seen throughout, makes us exceedingly attuned to each other, and in particular, social information. Morality and justice are necessary if a group is to survive, as each member's reputation must become as important as the reputations of others. The more we depended on each other, the more pressure there was to keep track of social information regarding the purported intentions of others, compiled, in part, through data collected on past decisions they made (Buckholtz and Marois 2012; Ruff and Fehr 2014). Not surprisingly, there is evidence that supports Durkheim's (1893 [1997]) theory of crime that *both sides* of morality and justice —that is, living up to one's duties *and* punishing transgressors— are affectually driven and, therefore, intrinsically rewarding (Jensen et al. 2014; Tabibnia et al. 2008). Indeed, newborns show preferences early on for prosocial stimuli, develop preferences towards people who have acted pro-socially, and, by six months, will act selectively with prosocial agents when paired with neutral or antisocial agents (Decety and Howard 2013). Combined with our significantly evolved capacity for role taking (Tomasello 2019), adult morality is built up from premoral dispositions in infants that are deeply affectual and, over time, come to take on cognitive significance.

Thus, the emergence of norms, for instance of reciprocity, is universal in all societies and nearly every small group to which people belong. What is important to keep in mind is that even short of institutional structure and culture, the basic affectual and cognitive attributes of law are wired, and thus were distinctive from other aspects of social life, like sacredness and piety, which are often lumped together (Diamond 1935). Religion and law only merge together, first, with the rise of complex agrarian states and then, second, under polities that adopt theocratic forms. But, before we get ahead of ourselves, let us consider how these neurological foundations were harnessed in the earliest human societies for the development of law as an institutional sphere.

Escalating Selection Pressures During Institutional Evolution

Population growth and sociocultural differentiation inevitably increase selection pressures. In the case of law, the emergence and evolution of law as an institutional domain are almost entirely driven by the sociocultural environment's growing complexity as opposed to environmental or exogenous factors. That is, from a macro perspective, law is a sociocultural mechanism that integrates and regulates the interchanges between institutional spheres that have grown distinct from each other (Bredemeier 1962), while regulating the interaction, exchange, and communication between actors, individuals or corporate units (Parsons 1962; Turner 1980). As societies become predominantly *impersonal*, that is the majority of relationships are between individuals or groups that do not know each other, law serves—in the background—as a mechanism ensuring trust and reducing uncertainty. This problem becomes increasingly present in *depersonalized* societies, where not only do individuals not know each other personally, but interactions, exchanges, and communications depend on highly stereotyped and generalized typifications.

A second reason for law's delayed evolution is that it requires organizational *problems* generating selection pressures. In preliterate societies where 25–100 humans comprised a society, the need for third party adjudication or for collective enforcement of sanctions was relatively rare. On the one hand, kinship conventions were pervasive, making conflict resolution easier. On the other hand, the number of transgressions and, therefore, things for law to deal with, were delimited by the small number of relationships possible between kin. If one considers the modern U.S., where courts are overworked with cases, the difference is stark. Moreover, while legislation is something the powerful and privileged can do, the seeking out of adjudication requires both parties involved in the conflict to believe that adjudication is the normative course of action (Black 1976). That is, not only must they agree that resolution is possible, but that the agent or agents they seek mediation from will do so justly. As such, legal entrepreneurship is much more difficult without a large base of people with the material and cultural resources to seek to transform thejir dispute into a legal dispute. Where political entrepreneurs aggressively monopolize physical force and religious actors make claims on the supranatural, legal actors only derive power when their procedures are valued by a significant portion of the population *and* that population can afford to support a full-time corporate actor devoted to legal knowledge and activities. As we shall see, then, each institution contributes to the evolution of law, but there are two in particular responsible for its initial differentiation and, then, one that is the source of rocket fuel: polity, religion, and economy, respectively.

Nonetheless, law is one of, if not the most, important spheres of social evolution. While polity drives the first great revolution in human history and economy is responsible for the most recent transformation of human action and organization, law is the sphere behind the scenes making both of those transformative effects occur. Though Weber (1927 [2002]) vacillated between religion and economy as the motors of the West's peculiar rise, throughout he returned to law as the fuel (Collins 1986a). He recognized, for instance, that China had a burgeoning economic entrepreneurial class, as a wealthy merchant class developed, but the legal protections given to European cities in the 15th century (Weber 1904–05 [1958])—and respective by both the Church and State—had no parallels in China. Thus, law was and is an essential sphere.

On the one hand, societal evolution will remain stalled because it does not have an adequate way to deal with selection pressures revolving around coordination, control, regulation, disputes, and conflicts that inevitably emerge within and between institutional spheres as societies grow and differentiate. As polity and religion grow as centers of domination, and stratification sharpens, selection pressures become even more intense. Law becomes a source of conflict resolution that reduces violence, provides clarity in rights and duties, and offers, as least in theory, a route of expressing grievances (Black 1976). On the other hand, law becomes its own source of social change, both in the sense that it facilitates the expansion of justice to greater swaths of the population, and in the sense that it provides the mechanisms for other institutional spheres to evolve further. This is especially true once law becomes relatively autonomous from other spheres of social action. However, as the rest of this chapter will show, law remained deeply embedded in other institutional spheres, even though their development served to drive the evolution of law.

For example, unilineal kinship systems set up rules for governing relations among kindred, leading to a quasi-legal system in which rules of kinship, councils of kin elders, and kin-based political leaders legislated bodies of law, enforced laws and court decisions, and in general housed the emerging legal system. When economic actors needed regulation and coordination across emerging markets in territories without coherent political authority, merchant laws emerged, as was the case in the Hanseatic League cut across a good part of Europe in a period of political decentralization before industrialization (Braudel 1979 [1985]). At other times, law has been lodged inside religion, as is the case with Catholicism and Islam, which have their own set of legal codes that, to this day, dominate legal systems in some societies. And, as has been the case over the last millennia,

consolidation of power has also led to polity dominating the legislative, enforcement, and judicial elements of many legal systems, thus compromising the integrative power of an autonomous system of law-making, law-enforcing, and law-adjudicating. Thus, autonomy has often been difficult to achieve and sustain, but when it has existed, it has provided a solution to intense selection pressures and, as a result, allowed for further evolution of societies. In the following chapter, we will examine the evolution of autonomous law in greater depth. For the remainder of this chapter, however, we explore each institutional sphere and its early effects on law.

Evolving Institutions and Evolving Law

Kinship and Law

One of the first pathways of institutional elaboration clearly occurred with kinship, which moved from nuclear families lodged within bands of hunter-gatherers to systems of families organized by rules of kinship, such as rules of descent, size and composition, residence, activities, authority, and marriage among horticulturalists. Virtually all other institutional activity occurred *within* the potentially complex unilineal systems of kinship that grouped nuclear families into lineages, lineages into sub-clans, sub-clans into clans, and so forth. As is evident from Figure 6.1 on page 139, comparatively large populations could be organized in communities in terms of these rules of kinship. Inevitably, when restrictive rules of kinship organize relatively individualistic and, at their biological core, autonomous great apes like humans, problems would emerge along many fronts when kin rules dictated rules of endogamy, locality, authority, and, especially, inheritance. Furthermore, the tension of bringing spouses from one location to live and be subordinate to in-laws in their nuclear family within their lineages would inevitably increase tension and open conflict. In short, the complexity of one's obligated duties and expected rights grew concomitant to the complexity of the kinship system in which a given person was embedded.

To be sure, at times, religious beliefs could reinforce these rules, but until the evolution of an autonomous polity (see Chapter 8), religion itself remained primarily individualistic, rooted in patron-client relations, and lacked systematicity. Hence, the body of kinship rules, backed by religious beliefs and reinforced by totems symbolizing descent groupings, was one way to reinforce the power of these rules, while non-sacred norms and rules evolved relatively independently. Eventually, unilineal kinship systems tend to evolve and change in response to events on the ground, and so, councils of kin elders and leaders often formed to legislate new rules

that met both requirements of the kinship system and control of potentially disruptive actions by individuals or groups of individuals. For in violating kin rules, the organizational and cultural basis of society is attacked, with the result that kin leaders often assumed the role of judge in adjudication of violations of rules of or among individuals, who would often be represented in these "courts" by kindred (Gluckman 1965; Pospisil 1958). Judges or councils of judges (senior leaders of kin units, for example) could make and enforce rulings involving punishment and/or restitution; and moreover, if a situation required new rules, these councils could operate as legislators of new laws that would be enforced by members of kin units that served as a kind of deputized "police force."

For example, the Bantu-speaking Tswand of South Africa in the mid-20th century possessed considerable law-making authority and could lay down edicts and declare old laws obsolete (Schapera 1956). Hoebel (1954 [1973]: 278) illustrates this capacity in the case of the death of a young man in 1934. The extant rule specified that a deceased's man's younger brother was to marry his widow and produce children. When the younger brother refused to do so, the brother's father acted as a substitute for the derelict son. Soon after, the father's wife appealed the case to the district council, transforming herself into a litigant and the council into a court. The court initially ruled against the wife, basing their decision on "ancient rights and customs" (that had apparently existed at some point or were invented for the sake of deciding). The district chief, in the end, overruled the council, declared the customs obsolete, and, acting as an appellate judge, determined that only the younger brother could enter into sexual relations with the wife and, thereby, the father must immediately cease and desist. The legitimacy of the chief's right to overrule was further affirmed by his ability to severely punish the father when the decision was ignored and disobeyed.

Another interesting case reported by Llewellyn and Hoebel (1941: 127–28) comes from the Cheyenne aboriginals of North America. To go on the warpath, a Cheyenne warrior borrowed, without asking, the horse of another warrior. When the horse was not returned, the aggrieved warrior went to a "court" consisting of "warrior chiefs." The aggrieved was now a litigant in an *ad hoc* court of high-ranking warriors; and when the accused was summoned, he confessed to his violation and agreed to restitution and even went so far as to propose making the aggrieved a "blood brother." Following the court's settlement, the chief warrior assumed the role of legislator and articulated a more general law that would now be in effect: "If any man takes another's goods (note: not just horses but any good/property) without asking, we shall go over and get it back for him,

and if he refuses, he will be whipped." Thus, the Cheyenne like most other preliterate societies had the means to carve out time and space for legal activities like adjudication and even legislation despite having no need for full-time legal actors. The more general point is that humans clearly could mobilize authority rapidly, and once this step could be taken, the key elements of all legal systems could be brought to bear, even without a large physical infrastructure, legal traditions and precedents, permanent courts, or legislatures. As societies grew and developed more settled populations in communities of varying size and complexity, it would not have been a large step to more fully institutionalize a legal system.

In short, as we have seen previously, unilineal kinship solves one set of organizational problems while creating a new set because of the highly constraining societies organized by a descent, marriage, and residence rules. While humans can suppress negative impulses, social control, when exercised in dense kin networks, will inevitably arouse intense negative emotions that, in turn, can lead to violations of kin rules, forcing the hand of kinship leaders to respond to such violations and, in so doing, leading these leaders to begin constructing the institution of law, revealing in incipient form all of the elements of law enumerated earlier. As added layers of political authority were laid on top of these unilineal systems, greater and greater pressures for conflict resolution and some degree of equitable justice simply amplified these existing pressures and further delineated the outlines of a legal institution. In addition to intra-kin and inter-kin conflicts, then, grew resentments and resistance borne of subordination by increasingly distant ruling elites, which, in turn, would require more generalized and efficacious mechanisms of integration and regulation than, say, coercion or reliance on loyalty. Adding a layer of a new institution—law—on top of the kin system and, as we shall see, growing polity, allowed humans to survive, but at a high cost to their emotional well-being—especially compared to nomadic hunter-gatherers who are more relaxed.

There is a reverse causal process revolving around how kinship sustains a legal system that should at least be mentioned in analyzing the relationship between kinship and law. Since kinship is the principle socializing agent in human societies, especially early human societies, children in such a system are socialized into not only religion and its beliefs but also the rules of kinship as backed up by the rules of law; and moreover, they learn the commitments to religion and law in ways that makes these emerging institutions powerful forces of social control. Sanctions by the supernatural forces and sanctions by the "laws," "courts," "judges," and "police" of an emerging legal system were enough to allow humans to survive until

they could construct more viable patterns of social organization. These more viable patterns, of course, emerged first through political evolution, which also harnessed religion and law, entering into mutually beneficial relationships in many cases.

Polity and Law

Of the institutional spheres we have discussed thus far, none is more instrumental in accelerating legal evolution than the polity. Political evolution, particularly administrative differentiation, intensifies the need for a whole new set of laws devoted to integrating and regulating within and between bureaucracy (Weber 1978: 641–46). However, as the political sphere grows distinct from the kinship sphere, two further forms of differentiation inevitably emerge: public versus private law, and then civil versus criminal law. The former recognizes the polity as both a distinct sphere of social reality *and* the embodiment of the collective. Crimes against the state are, in theory, crimes against each individual member. The latter emerges as polities seek to regulate conflicts between increasingly impersonal actors. Durkheim recognized this distinction, believing that restitutive laws should increase with organic solidarity—an argument, incidentally, that empirical evidence seems to flip on its head, as restitutive laws decline as polities consolidate and centralize power (Schwartz and Miller 1964).

When we turn to the historical and ethnographic record, it is possible to see the earliest strains of polity dis-embedding law from kinship. As Big Man systems give way to chiefdoms, a center of power emerges and with it, selection pressures with respect to providing a *symbolic base* for the consolidation of power that will legitimate the authority of political leaders as well as an *administrative base* for executing and enforcing decisions. As Weber (1922) has persuasively demonstrated, coercion and charisma are unstable foundations of control and coordination, especially as organizational patterns become routinized. While often elaborate, or at least "showy," festivals and rituals emphasizing the "generosity" of the Big Man in redistributing resources or in successfully negotiating with other leaders in surrounding populations work to sustain his authority. But, there is only so much "hype" that routinized redistributed acts can generate and, eventually, Big Men will make appeals to supernatural forces as his allies; and, equally often, he will begin to create in very elementary forms the elements of law as an emerging institutional domain.

If routine activities can be given some ritual "hype," if they can be seen as signs of the supernatural forces or being favored, and if they can be

shrouded in laws and, moreover, in rights of the Big Man to make and enforce laws necessary to the collective well-being, an alternative base of power, beyond personal charisma, can be institutionalized. Once these steps are taken, law becomes a critical force in providing what Parsons and Smelser (1956) termed "contingent support" to polity, while at the same time providing higher-order symbols (edits, decisions, commands, paths, rituals, etc., often sanctioned by the supernatural) that can be seen as a *symbolic base of power*. Moreover, the very nature of laws in a legal system giving rights to leaders to make laws and to adjudicate in quasi-court proceedings not only increases the symbolic base of power, it also gives Big Men broad rights to make decisions about, and to impose rules on, problems of coordination and integration among members of the population.

The tentative way that law begins to emerge in human societies, like those organized around the Big Man, highlights the fundamental dilemma in all societies in the relationship between polity and law as institutional domains. Law always requires a structural basis for making laws (e.g., Big Men, councils of elders or kin leaders, legislatures), for adjudicating actions in terms of these laws (in some form of "court"), for enforcing decisions in courts and the mandates of laws (some form of "police"), and for dealing with those who violate laws (e.g., punishment, confinement, isolation, banishment). The result is that much of the legal system overlaps with the polity of a society, and the dilemma that soon must be confronted is: how is law as an institutional system to gain autonomy from polity when, ultimately, the bodies making, adjudicating, and enforcing laws are based in the polity? The less autonomous is law from polity, the less effective it becomes as an integrative mechanism in a society (Berman 1955; Huskey 1982). Yet, the power consolidated in polity rarely likes to give too much sovereignty to law, although the most successful and dynamic societies are able to do so, at least for a time. As we shall see, the crowbar that pries law from polity emerges, unintentionally, in the explosive growth of religious autonomy in the middle ages in Europe. Legal entrepreneurs came to wedge the monopoly over conflict resolution between the State and Church, eventually finding a path to indispensability and, therefore, autonomy. This story consumes a significant chunk of the following chapter, and, thus, for now, we move to the links between religion and law.

Sacred Law

Religion and law, in the most structurally simple societies, appear to be distinct from each other, with some—but not many—transgressions

being "religiously" sanctioned, while most remained secular (Diamond 1935; Malinowski 1959). However, alongside political evolution came the gradual blurring of lines between religion and law, as their affinities—especially magnified in their service to political entrepreneurs—would persist until the 11th century in Europe. Berman (1993: 5) highlights the elements shared between the two, which give "sanctity to legal values and thereby reinforce people's legal emotions: the sense of rights and duties, the claim to impartial hearing, the aversion to inconsistency in the application of rules, the desire for equality of treatment, the very feeling of fidelity to law and its correlative, the abhorrence of illegality." While Berman is speaking of the religious sphere that we covered in Chapter 10 and not Chapter 9, the argument still stands: religions that see no physical boundaries and only a vast, moral community, share much in common with a universal, generalized legal system. Political entrepreneurs recognized this affinity early on, often blurring the lines between public, political and sacred, religious legal issues. As legal complexity grew, however, so too did the training and time spent learning legal procedures and precepts; and, consequently, specialists among the priestly class (or the only literate class) was inevitable and, eventually, entrepreneurial. Of course, we can see the outlines of the relationship between law and religion that was forged in agrarian states and continues on in many theocratic polities today.

As religions evolved, some developed beliefs emphasizing that the forces and beings inhabiting the supranatural realm—some of which were omniscient (Radin 1937 [1957])—will punish those who violate taboos or other mandates emanating from the supranatural (Stark 2007; Swanson 1966). In this way, religion was used, and indeed is still used, to control and coordinate mundane activities. For example, among traditional Inuit Aboriginals of Alaska and Canada, violating a taboo could invite hardship or "bad luck." The prescribed solution was to consult a shaman who, as an authority in religious "law," would point to the violation and then serve as an intermediary between the supranatural and the violator to relieve said hardship. There is a court-like process occurring here, but it is essentially a religious matter.[4] Already, in this simple example, we can see the outlines of the ritualized procedure of ascertaining guilt and determining remediation that is both the hallmark of law and religion, but which is truly exemplified in the various trials Weber (1922, 1967) highlights, like trial by ordeal.

Even in contemporary legal systems, religious beliefs and values are often the basis for secular laws, serving as moral underpinnings that make laws more powerful (Akhavi 1992; Berman 1993; Songer and Tabrizi 1999)—at least for the religious. There can, of course, be entire systems of religious

law, as can be seen in Islam today, where laws, courts, and enforcement is conducted in a wholly religious context, at least for some crimes and illegal behaviors. Thus, detaching the legal and the religious was and remains an arduous, incomplete task, as the two have such strong affinities with each other. Affinities that we will explore, alongside the pressures and process by which the West succeeded, within reason, of dis-embedding law from religion, in Chapter 13.

Economy and Law

The final institution we discuss in relationship to law is the economy. In many places, Weber (1927 [2002], 1958, 1967) argued the two had the strongest effect on each other (Collins 1986a). If the polity and religion were forces driving legal evolution, legal evolution and economic evolution were a marriage of necessity and mutual attraction (Lopez 1971; Unger 1976). Economic exchanges require far greater amounts of trust and certainty as they usually involve impersonal or depersonalized actors, while markets are most flexible and ramified where law can standardize and support things like weights and measures and currency; corporate actors, furthermore, benefit from predictability such that they can make the most instrumental decisions without fear of random or arbitrary consequences (Edelman and Suchman 1997). Again, we can see these dynamics clearly emerge even in the earliest forms of differentiated economy.

As outlined in Chapters 11 and 14, economy as an institutional sphere was originally lodged within nuclear families and bands, and then with horticulture within unilineal kinship systems. These structures were, initially at least, able to provide the entrepreneurial aspects of an economy—that is, the organization of production (extraction of resources and their conversion to useful commodities), distribution of products and eventually services, and definition of what could be considered property, whether individual, or communal property. Exchange of resources across populations also occurred, and while "markets" were yet to evolve, humans are hard-wired to assess the value of resources and to expect a "profit" or fair value for resources exchanged (see above and in Appendix II of the complexes of human nature). There may have developed certain rules of fair exchange among particular resources exchanged, and to some degree these may have been institutionalized in the sense of acting much like laws governing exchange. Still, most of the organization and cultural structures needed to organize production in simple societies was accomplished by kinship, bands, and communities, with kinship rules specifying appropriate economic roles for individuals and kin units.

With more advanced horticulture or fishing activity among settled hunter-gathers/horticulturalists, exchange relationships could increase, creating markets and, in a few cases, currency by which to establish exchange values. For example, the Chumash aboriginals in central and southern California (in pre-European contact) were settled hunter-gatherers who reveal some pastoral activities, but it was the half of the Chumash living on Santa Cruz island, some 25 miles offshore, who were critical to creating a "currency" out of stacks of sea shells. By diving for rare and glittering abalone-like sea shells and, then, by (a) cutting these shells into circular wafers, (b) polishing the shells, and (c) drilling a hole in the middle for stringing together into stacks of varying sizes representing different "values," this "currency" became a basis establishing value of commodities that could be bought or sold in exchanges (Arnold 1987). With a marker of value, exchange could accelerate and expand since actual goods need not be exchanged but, instead, anything could be "bought" with currency made by the Chumash, who became, during pre-contact times, the "bankers" of the simple societies inhabiting lower central and all of southern California. Once this step was taken by economic actors, selection pressures for rules and regulations increased.

At about the time that the Chumash were helping to create a preliterate "world system" among indigenous populations in southern California, the Hanseatic League was spreading across northern Europe (Wubs-Mrozewicz and Jenks 2013; Harred 2015; Cowan 2010; Nicolle 2015). The League's composition varied but between the 12th to 15th centuries, merchants and merchant towns across northern Europe, often with rivers connecting them to the North Sea, began to organize in new ways. There was no political authority across such a large expanse (from Poland to London); rather, when local lords and cities engaged in trade both could claim authority, but to engage in transactions across the small fiefdoms, the merchants and leaders of cities needed armies to enforce rules of trade and exchange across this large expanse of what would become northern Europe. The League was not a "state" but a band or confederation of merchants and cities seeking to facilitate trade, with the degree of autonomy from other sources of political authority varying. But, the goal was, in essence, to negotiate laws and rules that favored league members in trade across northwestern Europe. Thus, the distributive dimensions of an economy, revolving around exchange in markets using money, inevitably generates selection pressures for regulation; and in the absence of a dominant political authority, a quasi-system of (exchange) laws and quasi courts for adjudicating disputes emerged; and moreover, an army for not

only protecting goods as they moved in and out of markets but also for enforcing court rulings could be formed as a quasi-political "authority" regulating specific aspects of economic activity. And, such was the case for several hundred years, before Europe began to consolidate power into nation-states. Thus, an autonomous system of law, essentially organized by cities and merchants, can evolve once economic exchange accelerates through markets using money along long trade routes.

Eventually, these selection pressures lead to political evolution because trade using money generates wealth that can support the consolidation of political power. And at this point, law is taken over by polity and used to justify taxation of wealth and property to support the state in exchange for the polity being willing to grant law a certain degree of autonomy—although getting the balance right is, as noted earlier, always problematic. But once economies can produce an economic surplus, law becomes an increasingly important part of "entrepreneurship" because the relations among producers of goods and resources, on the one side, and distributors of these resources, on the other, require a stable currency and regulation of markets. Something like the Hanseatic League can form, but in the end, local and expanding polities will begin to assume the burden of entrepreneurship of production, distribution via markets, and currencies used in markets by consolidating power and then, to varying degrees, expanding the legal system to regulate economic activity. Indeed, when this process begins, the proportion of law devoted to "criminality" begins to shift toward "torts," and in particular, toward management of market relations among individuals and corporate units. Torts, as distinct from crimes, appear to have initially emerged in the Egyptian legal system around 6,000 years ago, and later around 4,000 years ago, the Codes of Hammurabi in Mesopotamia contained large sections dealing with property and commerce—e.g., deeds, sales, loans, deposits, bill of landing, and partnerships (Davis 1962)—and thus there was an legacy that the Hanseatic League members could draw upon as Europe began to move out of the "Dark Ages" after the collapse of Egyptian, Greek, and Roman periods of political development. And in this case, economic actors' more than centralized polities initiated the re-emergence of laws governing trade and commerce. Such probably had been the case in the earlier emergence of torts, but polity soon usurped such laws to effect more political control and to tax market transactions.

As a basic generalization, it can be argued that the more autonomous is the economy from polity, then the more autonomous is tort law and its adjudication. Yet, if a system of religious law already exists, as was the case with Islam, and even Christianity at various stages (such as during the Inquisition), then the less autonomous will the legal system become. Yet, in

Europe, the eventual rise of capitalism, and then industrial and post-industrial capitalism, would push for an autonomous legal system to coordinate and control such dynamic economies. But, eventually, polity would assert control, using law as a symbolic and administrative base of power and, at the same time, as primary entrepreneurial force (via tort laws and courts) coordinating and controlling high levels of production of goods and services in vast and differentiated markets using money and other financial instruments to accelerate rapid exchanges of virtually anything and everything. Yet, as with the classical period before the Renaissance, a centralizing polity would also use this control to tax wealth and thereby build up the administrative and coercive base of state power.

The importance of tort law can be seen in the case of China which, only in recent decades, has fully embraced capitalism (while sustaining a dictatorial state system). Indeed, China was a late industrial society, and even without the decades of authoritarian control (which persists to this day), the Imperial Code of medieval China was a criminal rather than tort code, and thus, did not concern transactions, exchanges, contract, and property law. Such matters were managed by customs and traditions that had a quasi-legal character but were not managed actively by polity. This lack of a systematic body of tort laws represented a roadblock to economic evolution in China, despite its rather advanced technologies that clearly exceeded those of pre-industrial Europe (Weber 1954, 1922; Sawer 1965: 55–60; Lloyd 1964: 241–42; and Davis 1962: 80–81). Thus, the evolution of law is critical to the evolution of the other first human institutions, particularly the economy but also polity as well.

Conclusion

In Figure 12.1, we have outlined the processes by which law evolves at one of the first human social institutions. Settlements create sedentary populations that tend to grow, if they can produce and distribute sufficient resources. Settled hunter-gatherers can typically produce sufficient food through fishing, whereas horticulturalists can do so through gardening in settled communities, often also engaging in domestication of animals and pastoral activity. These shifts in the economy are, of course, related to selection pressures for increased production and distributions of resources, plus additional pressures associated with control and coordination, thereby initiating the elaboration of kinship and the first signs of polity. Similarly, religion continues to evolve as uncertainties and anxieties, as well as other emotional states of humans increasingly caged in unilineal descent kinship systems, increase. As the center of the figure illustrates, the developing

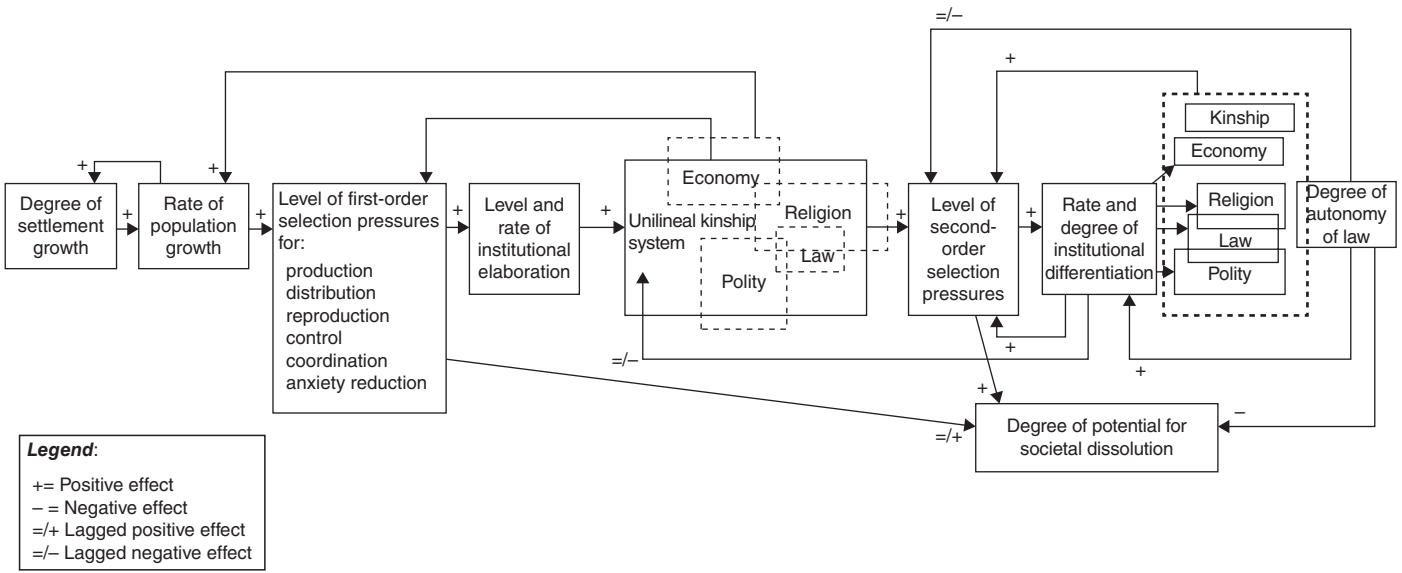


Figure 12.1 Institutional Elaboration/Differentiation and the Evolution of Law

economy, polity, law, and religion continue to be embedded in a kinship system and community form of settlement organization. Moreover, only kinship is clearly differentiated, with the other emerging institutional domains often overlapping and almost always lodged inside the kinship system, although there can be exceptions to this generalization. But, the initial emergence and elaboration of institutions, collectively, generate what we termed second-order selection pressures stemming from new types of relations *within* and among the first institutions of kinship, polity, religion, economy, and law, with such second-order selection pressures for integration within and between institutional systems pushing each institution to become more differentiated, coherent, and elaborated, and especially for law to do so because it possesses the potential to provide the mechanisms for control, coordination, and integration among differentiating institutional domains.

Both first- and second-order selection pressures increase the likelihood of societal dissolution or disintegration because there is no guarantee that actors in these early societies forming communities can meet these pressures. Many societies such as these had, no doubt, revered back to more nomadic hunting and gathering, often leading to the killing off of those who could not be supported by productive outputs. Much depends on the ecology in which a population lives and on the capacity of individuals and corporate units organizing this population to develop new economic technologies (e.g., fishing, gardening, and domestication of animals), to build up a coherent kinship and/or community system capable of supporting the growing populations, to develop leadership and authority so that collective actions can be coordinated, to legitimate these systems by beliefs, often religious in nature, and most important, to begin activating the elements of all systems of law.

This build-up of institutional systems should result in their differentiation from each other and to their growing autonomy from unilineal kinship which, with advanced horticulture will begin its de-evolution back to the nuclear family typical of nomadic hunters and gatherers. In its place, law should become more differentiated from all institutions and, at the same time, become more autonomous, especially from religion and polity if it is to provide the integrative capacity for societies to evolve further. Indeed, the subsequent evolution of societies depends very much on the elaboration and differentiation of polity, law, economy, religion, and kinship, with growing autonomy of law from all institutions if it is to serve as an "outside" force of integration within and between institutional domains. Of course, by its very nature, law will remain partially embedded in polity (and sometimes religion), but it is the degree to which some

autonomy can be attained by law that, in the end, affects just how far institutional system evolve and, moreover, what new institutional systems can emerge and begin the process of differentiation and elaboration.

Notes

1 Nonetheless, in fact, extra-marital relations were common among the Trobriand Islanders with paternity often not known. Still, it was normatively demanded that these relations be discrete; and moreover, the husband of the mother will *always* be the designated father, as designated by kinship norms which have a quasi-legal character.

2 This general argument is taken from Turner (1972; 1974, 1980, 2003), but includes insights from a number of sources: Evan (1962, 1980); Black (1976, 1989, 1993); Selznick (1968); Reason and Rich (1978); Vago (1994); Chambliss (1976); Black and Mileski (1973).

3 In sociology, these points have been emphasized and indeed dominate much analysis (Chambliss and Seidman 1982; Quinney 1974; Black 1993).

4 Of course, if an individual in traditional Inuit society persistently violated a taboo, this individual would often be punished by fellow humans who were "authorized" by the supranatural to administer punishment (Hoebel 1973: 261).

13
Legal Autonomy and the Expanding Institutional Infrastructure

The Evolutionary Potential of Law

As we explore the direction the legal sphere took in its evolution toward greater autonomy, we begin by asking a simple question: what does law do? Law is, above all else, one of the more peculiar institutional spheres. Unlike polity, religion, economy, or kinship, one cannot imagine a society in which the legal elite are the dominant strata comprising the ruling elite; at least not until the modern notion of constitutional democracies which, in essence, base rule on law. Kinship and political domination are most typical, but theocratic systems (like the Temple-economies we briefly surveyed in Chapter 8) are also possible too. And, of course, societies like the Phoenicians, who specialized in long-distance trade, are clearly organized around economic power. But law is unlikely. Why?

Without legitimate recourse to physical or psychic violence, legal entrepreneurs must depend on their interstitial position as "liaisons" between institutional actors. Subsequently, law evolves not because of changes in the biotic environment or the will of a charismatic individual/group, but because the sociocultural environment evolves and becomes impossibly complex. Legal evolution, then, rests on two things: (1) pressures for *integrating* increasingly disparate elements by subjecting them to standardized substantive and procedural norms and sanctions and (2) *immunizing* depersonalized societies against future risks caused by uncertainty, mistrust, and human nature.

(1) Selection Pressures for Integration

Law's integrative consequences for societal organization is the better known of the two evolutionary adaptations law provides (Bredemeier 1962; Parsons 1962; Turner 1980). Law is integrative in so far as it makes explicit a set of norms and generalizes them such that they apply to specific classes of people, and makes consistent—in theory—the procedures for determining violations and issuing sanctions. As groups grow in size and density, the probability of conflicts increases; add in heterogeneity

 DOI: 10.4324/9781003224433-14

that collapses the efficacy of kinship mechanisms of integration, and these conflicts are not only more frequent, but potentially more explosive. Regardless of the inequities of the use and application of law discussed in Chapter 12, groups of all sizes cannot tolerate recurring conflicts if they are to continue to operate within and between corporate units of diverse institutional systems. A society that is conflict-ridden or war-torn is not a happy society. Its members are unlikely to be committed to any fundamental notion of community and self-sacrifice; economic production is likely to be low and met with resistance; and, daily life in virtually all activities would be intolerably unpredictable. Legal systems thus seek to impose order in societies when informal remedies to grievances can no longer be secured without the specter of violence (Black 1976). The evolution of law to reduce integrative problems may, of course, be in the best interests of the ruling elite, but collective interests are also served by the evolution of law, especially where law has attained a level of autonomy that reduces control by polity, at least to some degree. Autonomy is never complete because both the enforcement and legislative elements of law remain lodged in polities at all levels of social organization. Still, with some degree of autonomy, law itself can impose limitations on the use and abuse of power by polity. While integration matters in the capacity of societies to evolve to certain advanced stages of social organization, it is *immunization* that makes law the most revolutionary of autonomous institutions.

(2) Selection Pressures for Immunization

Perhaps no sociologist has recognized the evolutionary impact law could make than Niklas Luhmann. In a posthumously translated text on law as a social system, Luhmann (2004) cogently argues that law is the only mechanism capable of *immunizing* (depersonalizing) societies against recurring system-debilitating risks. In foraging societies, informal controls work to produce regularities in emotional, attitudinal, and behavioral expression, allowing for stable, predictable daily life. As complexity increases, however, the resulting population growth, density, and heterogeneity make the predictability of actions less certain. In a perfect world, a polity would penetrate the phenomenological reality of its members and re-orient them towards a taken-for-"granted-ness" of impersonal order. But such faith in polity is difficult without symbolic power that initially in societal evolution was often founded in religion, which is capable of generating stability among elites whose positions were guaranteed and granted by the supranatural forces, while imposing constraints mandated by the gods on the general population. But state religions, in the end, often legitimize the use of physical

force by polity and wield their own form of coercion by either the power of the gods or the coercive forces that religious organizations often mobilize. Theocratic polities and hierocratic religions were ruthless in their enforcement of dogma and doctrine, generating social control at a high psychic price for most members of a population. In the Middle Ages, for instance, the Catholic Church prohibited suicide, routinely torturing the decedent's body in public before placing it on public trial, alongside the surviving family (Barbagli 2015). Moreover, polity often rules by using the coercive and administrative bases of power which, like religion, are conservative forces, with (1) religion being rooted in a supranatural world, a cyclical sense of time, and a tendency to gaze longingly at the past and imagine a future beyond the material world and with (2) polities comprised of actors naturally trying to protect their own privilege and power, and when embedding these elements in traditional authority, ritualism becomes paramount to the needs or wants of its members.

These two factors, alone, are what constrained other institutional spheres from growing autonomous and societies from reaching certain levels of complexity. In particular, economy was unable to grow either because of intense religious proscriptions against wealth and mercantilism or the polity's arbitrary policies towards the merchant middle class that could turn ugly quickly in times of political expedience.[1] Thus, in our estimation, without economic autonomy, the world as we know it could never have evolved. And, without autonomous law, economic autonomy was impossible, while polity becomes too free to impose coercion. As we outlined in the previous chapter, economic evolution towards autonomy was only possible with the evolution of markets using money and credit, regulated by law. Thus, as long as polity and religion use law to reinforce the interests of political and religious elites, law cannot be used to facilitate the evolution of markets and generalized media of exchange in economies; and in not being able to do so, law cannot become sufficiently autonomous to provide sufficient integration and immunization of actors from arbitrary impositions of power.

Economic exchanges require mechanisms safeguarding trust and mitigating uncertainty, especially those that emerge in generalized systems of exchange. While personal relationships, recurring interactions, and cultural reputation can also mitigate these problems (Bearman 1997; Mauss 1967), these mechanisms cannot easily be effective in long-distance trade through cross-national markets where money is the medium of exchange. To operate effectively, protracted networks of trade must generate predictable frameworks for exchange across diverse geographic, social, and cultural distances. Thus, the world gets "smaller," but concomitantly, it gets

more diverse and complex, requiring new mechanisms to make predictability of social exchanges possible.

A second factor, however, is central to law's evolution: as institutional spheres grow more autonomous, escalation in conflict can occur within and between institutional domains that are increasingly difficult to resolve. There is now a pressing need for adjudication of disagreements and conflicts of interests that are difficult for polity alone and for religions because of their interests in domination. As density, diversity, and size grow, then, so do risks and uncertainty; and while polity and religion can provide some control of risk and uncertainty, they are not capable of immunizing. Immunizations, of course, are designed to prevent illness in the host organism and, through herd immunity, plagues and pandemics. Positive law functions the same way: legislatures and courts in a more autonomous legal system identify problems through very different procedures and logics than either polity or religion, even when religion has created its own legal system. Like any vaccination, no one is fully immunized from risk, nor is a society completely safe from a disease, but laws are designed to give actors from various institutional spheres a sense of what will happen if they choose particular lines of action and, therefore, provide more information for decision making. Moreover, when law is highly evolved, it operates to provide instructions for ever-more lines of conduct in all spheres of societies. Most important in Luhmann's argument is that there has to be a "positivation" of law, with law being capable of responding to new points of conflict of interest and tension in societies as they become larger and more differentiated. Legislatures can begin to anticipate harm, while courts can adjudicate potential harms and make new laws through using legal criteria rather than administrative and coercive impositions of power or religious criteria imposing the dictates of church dogma as handed down by the supernatural.[2] Consequently, in a depersonalized society where corporate actors are treated, legally, in ways similar to individual actors, law's "attempt to anticipate, at least on the level of expectations, a still unknown, genuinely uncertain future" (Luhmann 2004: 147) has proven to be the most efficacious mechanism for social control.

The logic is as follows. (1) Norms precede the need for pre-emptive decision making for following/not-following them. (2) While sanctions are not the only part of the calculus, the discourse surrounding law and regulations becomes deeply embedded in the decision making of non-legal actors. (3) And, while it is naïve to presume laws promise conduct, they do offer protection to those who obey them, which means that even restrictive laws provide rights that would otherwise not exist and, moreover, that provide for (4) predictability in outcomes in making decisions to

act in particular ways. (5) As such, law stabilizes and immunizes because it is a response to the growing inadequacy of previous non-legal institutional solutions, such as generalizing morality, conventions and customs that have lost their efficacy in regulating complex patterns for social relations in larger, more differentiated societies (see, also, Durkheim 1893 [1997]). Indeed, moral systems become more abstract and general, providing moral premises that may affect how laws are enacted and enforced, but these moral premises do not provide sufficient detail for actions of individuals and corporate units in the myriad of situations that typify large, differentiated societies.

Without law, then, a truly hierocratic, trans-political religion cannot happen; without law, a truly autonomous, bureaucratic democracy or communist polity is impossible; without law, an impersonal market and, thereby, an autonomous economy is impossible. Thus, while law does serve as a mechanism of integration, it does so through stabilizing *depersonalized relationships and immunizing against risk and uncertainty*. The big question, then, is how and why did law become sufficiently autonomous?

The Differentiation of Law

Social scientists have long pointed to the inevitable rise and decline of polities, especially in the earliest periods of political evolution in the Bronze and Iron Ages (Chase-Dunn et al. 2008; Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997). The underlying story has long been the following: political entrepreneurship moves towards greater centralization, and then expansion of the peripheral boundaries; expansion of the peripheral boundaries leads to pressures for decentralization because of the over-appropriation of resources to the center and, subsequently the margins to control gains. Decentralization either occurs because of endogenous factors (the center and surrounding areas decay as resource flows to the outskirts) or exogenous factors ("marcher" states, or smaller, more agile hostile neighbors take advantage of weakened polities).[3] In some cases, invading groups (like the Mongols) simply set up shop and sustained the political center. In other cases, like Rome, the polity is smashed. The point, however, is that tensions between centralization and expansion are constant. The solution that most agrarian states employed, besides embedding new city-states into the regional religious system, was administrative complexity. A growing polity can only manage so much stimuli from its institutional and inter-societal environments. Ironically, perhaps, environmental complexity introduced by

expansion of trade and war, can only be reduced by internal complexity even as a societies' institutional systems are differentiating.

As political complexity evolved, however, this complexity generated selection pressures on political entrepreneurs to innovate in ways that reduced complexity. Thus, while public/private law had already evolved as a means of distinguishing the rights and duties of ordinary people vis-à-vis the rights of the polity as a social object and actor, the next step was administrative laws meant to distinguish the rights and duties of different individual/corporate elements of the political bureaucracy vis-à-vis *each* other. And, importantly, the rights and duties of subjects vis-à-vis these new appendages of polity. To be sure, law had in no way evolved to look like we would recognize it today, but as political entrepreneurs became increasingly invested in ruling, the size and complexity of problems they faced with regard to maintaining adequate subsistence (to stave off rebellions and coups), defending the city against threats, finding new resources for self-aggrandizement, dealing with increasingly salient conflicts between increasingly diverse segments of the population, and controlling increasingly vast political empires grew in magnitude. These problems all lent themselves to administrative solutions, which further encouraged the development of administrative law. To be sure, administrative law, by often working against civil laws meant to regularize relations among economic actors, served as another potential roadblock to legal autonomy as relationships between the polity and public took precedence.

Thus, the differentiation of law can only go so far with political evolution toward state formations. An economy without levels of market differentiation and the widespread use of money, credit, and other financial instruments is a roadblock to further development because it cannot generate the wealth needed to operate a state economy (through taxes or tribute). Moreover, only markets using money and credit can break the hold of both polity and religion on the evolution of law, with the result that the legal system becomes more autonomous. China, which was far more advanced culturally than was Europe or the Americas, nonetheless could not breakthrough to capitalism because of the lack of civil law and overabundance of penal and administrative law (Hall 1985). Yet, as will also be evident, growth of the state needs to be fed by growth of commerce in markets using financial instruments and, for such to become the case, law must be evolving a system of laws and courts to adjudicate economic activity. The Aztec empire was well on this path (Margadant 1983), until the Spanish conquest forced its devolution, as perhaps was Mesopotamian and other early state systems in Europe and the Middle East. Thus, for law to differentiate, and indeed for the entire society to differentiate, early market

growth and the distributive infrastructures supporting them must also initiate new merchant and civil laws and systems of courts for adjudicating transactions, independently of laws used to support state political control.

The Differentiation of Law in Advanced Horticultural and Agrarian Societies

Tang Dynasty to Yuan Dynasty (618–1368)

In contrast to the legal systems that would evolve in the West, traditional Chinese law running through the last four dynasties ending in the early 20th century, emphasized maintaining distinct ranks and order among the nobility, while at the same time controlling the populace (Bodde 1981). Early legal systems in the West and Mesoamerica also had this goal, but they were much more open in several senses: laws governing trade and contract were much more prominent; advocates and other roles like those of contemporary attorneys were allowed; and decisions were often adjudicated by juries of the populace. The Chinese system focused more on punishment and adjudication among contending parties to disputes, although more recent analysis (Johnson and Twichett 1993), suggests that the equivalent of judges did adjudicate civil cases more than was once thought and, moreover, the system was much fairer than previous portrayals (Huang 1996). Nonetheless, for many hundreds of years, Chinese law was divided into "official" and "unofficial." The official law emanated from the authority of the emperor who could impose laws, whereas unofficial law was, in essence, customary or traditional practices and rules developed in local communities or in merchant guilds for dealing with everyday matters and disputes (Ch'u 1961; Escarra 1936; Hulsewe 1955, 1985). Yet, none of the standard words that might be used to denote law in China were used to describe this civil form of law. In fact, official law referred to penal law and administrative law, with penal law prescribing punishments for certain behaviors and administrative laws specifying duties of officials in the bureaucracies of dynastic governments.

During the Tang dynasty, Emperor Gaozu began reconciling the Tang Code of 624 with Confucian philosophy, codifying codes with more precision (Farrah 2008). Still the penal codes contained only rules that describe punishments for specific offenses of specific laws (Johnson and Twitchett 1993). Magistrates who heard cases were to identify a violation of a rule and, then, the punishment that was required by the facts disclosed. Because lawyers for those charged with crimes were not generally allowed, the defendant in a penal code case would face the state alone, often after having

undergone physical abuse during interrogation. The system was thus set up to punish without a great deal of testimony by others. In short, a top-heavy system with no sense of "rule of law" resists autonomy, as *justice* remains beholden to *power* with emphasis on substantive over formal adjudication and procedures. Not surprisingly, top-heavy systems tend to be bloated in administrative law and light on civil law (Hulsewe 1981).

Rather than contract law, for a long time in China, there had been only "customary law" which was often managed by penal law for matters like debt and usury, land dealings, pledges of property for loans, sale of commodities in markets, and lawsuits where punishment would be required by penal law. Magistrates did intervene in these kinds of civil issues, but their heavy workloads often made them reluctant to do so. The traditional Chinese system of law was not set up to deal with problems arising from contracts and property rights in ways that would increase commerce and profits from commerce. Conversely, the systems of law evolving in the West and among the Inca, Aztec, and Mayan empires in the Americas before European contact were oriented to these very concerns more than with penal and administrative law. Indeed, the rise of capitalism in the West rather than the East, despite the latter's significant structural and cultural advantages over the former, was probably due the codification of civil law and development of civil courts that could unlock inherent dynamism of markets using money, even though the Chinese were probably the first to use paper money. Thus, without law to regulate and even encourage commerce, markets remained more like distribution depots by the state (as was the case, for example, in Mao China and the Soviet Union and its satellites nations before 1990).

Classic Maya (250 to 900)

The Ancient Mayan civilization had existed for over 2,000 years before the Spanish conquistadores arrived in the 16th century. The Maya represent a good example of an advanced horticultural set of societies organized as a series of city-states governing surrounding communities. The classic Mayan period was from 250–900 before European contact (Martin 2020; Foster 2002). These societies were also highly stratified and engaged with both trade and warfare with each other but when the Ycatec Maya first encountered the Spanish in 1502, the system of city-states and their satellite communities was already in decline, guaranteeing conquest by the Spanish by 1830. Unfortunately, many records were destroyed by the Spanish, but the system of city-states was linked together by trade, political alliances, and tribute obligations that ebbed and flowed depending on successes or failures of a city-state in warfare. At the time of Spanish conquest, there

were 18 states consisting of towns and villages under the jurisdiction of a capital city, with nine of these under the rule of a supreme leader whose power was limited by a council and special military advisors (George and George 2010) The supreme leader of each city-state appointed overseers and administrators of dependent cities and villages.

Given this structure, plus the commercial activities and market exchanges linking cities and communities, it is not surprising that Maya had a well-developed legal system of laws dealing with crime, property, commerce, family, and military (Sharer 2009). The laws were issued by the supreme leader and council (and council alone if a city did not have a paramount leader), and it was the overseers in central cities and local communities who acted as judges for their towns and adjudicated civil and criminal cases in courts in public meeting houses. Judicial proceedings were rapid, conducted orally without written records. Witnesses were required to testify under oath and contending parties appeared to be represented by the functional equivalent of attorneys, with the overseer acting as judge rendering decisions. The Maya did not have prisons, and so those sentenced to death were locked in wooden cages until their execution; and if a case was serious and involved acts across two or more towns, the paramount leader might be consulted. Murder, rape, incest, treachery, arson, and acts that offended the gods were punishable by death. Crimes of theft were punished by temporary enslavement and/or restitution, and nobles found guilty of crimes would have their faces permanently tattooed as a symbol marking their criminality.

Commoners could own small land plots, and were generally required to pay tribute to elite nobles and to the gods, while other goods produced, such as cacao, cotton, salt, honey, dyne and other exotic goods, were marketed in trade relations with and between communities. Some of these commodities were part of a currency system of money denoting units of value, used as merchants and buyers bartered over price. Contracts and agreements were formalized by public drinking of a mild alcoholic beverage in front of witnesses. Credit was used in trades, and those who could not pay their debts would become slaves of those to whom they were indebted. Thus, while most laws were not written down (and what had been written was destroyed by the Spanish), they were well known. Public officials doubled as lawyers and judges in courts mediating criminal, commercial, family, and military laws. In short, all elements of a legal system were evident in rudimentary form in light of selection pressures of societies with considerable differentiation among labor, market transactions using money and credit, high stratification, slavery, and warfare. These are all conditions that set up needs for rules and their adjudication even though each of these

societies were highly centralized by polity built around the coercive and administrative bases of power. Perhaps with greater selection pressures, a more autonomous legal system would have evolved.

The Aztec Empire (325 to 1521)

In what is now Mexico, the Aztec Empire slowly built up, especially after the city of Tenochtitlan was founded in 1325, and expanded, despite a variety of ecological disasters periodically interrupting the consolidation of territories into an empire (Aguilar 2006; Avalos 1994; Townsend 2000). The Aztecs were conquered between 1521 and 1551, when the Spanish took possession of Tenochtitlan. The empire was composed of a series of city-states, each ruled by a supreme leader and a supreme judge and administrator. The capital city, Tenochtitlan, and its supreme leader was the ruler of the entire empire of city-states. The Emperor was the ultimate owner of all land in his city-state and, consequently, he received tribute, oversaw markets, temples, and military; and if necessary, he was the last arbitrator of disputes. The Emperor was recruited from the noble class in a highly stratified society and, once selected, served for life. The supreme judge and administrator were also of nobility and served as the chief jurist for a rather extensive court system. Aztec society was arranged in a strict hierarchy where individuals were identified as nobles, commoners, serfs, or slaves, with merchants belonging to the common class. Merchants, however, could enjoy great wealth and even prestige within this class of commoners and had developed their own self-governing trade guilds. Aztecs had systems of schools, varying in content by class and gender. And so, much like China at this time, the Aztec Empire was by definition an advanced horticultural society (by virtue of not using the plow), although in almost every other sense an advanced agrarian society.

The Aztec legal system was highly complex with the goal of maintaining social order and fostering respect for government, while also facilitating market activities. Royal decrees and customs constituted the content of the system, but the system was highly flexible because the law did not always have to be followed in all circumstances. The principal criminal and civil laws were written down in pictograph form and passed across generations by spoken hymns (Duhaime 2020b; Hassig and Spores 1984). Unfortunately, the Spanish sought to destroy all written documents, thereby also much of Aztec culture cannot be known.[4] The judicial system revealed various levels of courts (Carter 1964; Sues 1969; World Encyclopedia of War 2020): *trial courts* that adjudicated both criminal and civil matters; *appellate courts* that held appeals of criminal cases and that operated as a trial court for nobles; and, the *supreme court* presided over by the supreme judge and

administrator, with the Emperor being a last resort for further appeals. Particularly important for the dynamism of the economy is that Aztec's had specialized jurisdiction courts, especially *commercial courts* (which dealt with market and merchant disputes) but also specialized courts for families, fiscal affairs, military issues, and religious affairs. Moreover, there were more *neighborhood courts* for local civil affairs that were presided over by judges elected by the neighborhoods, with verdicts and decisions passed up the chain to the judge of *trial courts*.

Crimes were severely punished, and unlike the Maya, the Aztec legal system had prisons, including a "death row." Furthermore, ownership of property was complex and hierarchical, with the result that there was also a complex system of law to define what was property, as well a system of mapping property. Commoners could not own property, but they could have rights to occupy the property of nobles in a quasi-feudal arrangement. Likewise, commercial and tax laws were highly developed in the Aztec empire, which was held together by a system of tribute from conquered territories and by a complex system for taxing citizens of the empire (with the exception of priests, nobles, minors, orphans, invalids, and beggars). Merchants paid taxes on value and amount of goods sold, artisans paid taxes on the value of their services, and serfs/tenant farmers paid taxes on the crops that they produced. Penalties on failure to pay taxes were severe, revolving around slavery and confiscation of property. Moreover, special *commercial courts* in marketplaces could adjudicate disputes and even had the power to impose capital punishment. Markets were mediated by quasi *money* (specified by the values of particular amounts of particular goods or pieces of gold, tin, and rare feathers) and, equally significant, was the use of *credit*. Contracts to carry out business activities were verbal and binding once at least four people witnessed a statement about the nature of the contract.

Somewhat surprisingly, given this complex differentiation of courts, the role of attorneys did not exist. Parties represented themselves in public court proceedings in which all participants were under oath, and verdicts were determined by majority votes of those hearing the case. The courts had, however, a rather large set of bureaucratic personnel for recording or even painting images of court proceedings, a crier who announced verdicts, and an executioner to carry out death sentences.

In sum, the legal system among the Aztecs was highly evolved, revealing differentiation of types of law and courts. Especially noteworthy is the amount of law and court time devoted to commercial activity, which perhaps is not surprising, given the reliance of the empire on tribute and taxation. The other side of collecting money and wealth in taxes is the

entrepreneurs in markets who are motivated to create that wealth; and Aztecs seemed to achieve a better balance than, for example, the Maya and traditional Chinese in using law, courts, and punishments to facilitate market activities and hence economic growth, while sustaining the viability of a polity that, while spread across diverse city-states, was highly centralized in power use and in assuring that taxes and tribute to the Emperor were paid by holding out very extreme penalties, such as death or slavery.

Mesopotamia (3400–900 BCE)

In reviewing key dynasties of China and the Myan and Aztec civilizations in the Americas, it becomes clear that law evolves as polity and economy are evolving, often as a substitution for the legitimating mantra that religion often gives an evolving polity. While polity can be highly centralized and still lead to evolution of law, it appears that market dynamics are critical to the nature of the legal system. For the same reasons, Mesopotamia is interesting because it was arguably the first true state to evolve (Adams 1966; Liverani 2006), as it was the birthplace of intensive agriculture (Postgate 2003). We see that the pressures for legal evolution proceeded along three axes: (1) economic differentiation, (2) political evolution, and (3) writing. To explore why law evolved so much in the agrarian age we focus on Mesopotamia, not because it was an exception, but because it very much reflects the types of changes we see in the other pristine states (Egypt, China, Indus Valley, Mesoamerica, and Peru), as well as secondary states like the Hittite and Mycenaean polities (Postgate 1977).

(1) Economic Pressures. One of the reasons Mesopotamia evolved in the first place was its unique ecology, comprised of four distinctive ecozones with varying natural resources and capacities for agriculture (e.g., dry- versus wet-farming [Sürenhagen 1986; Weiss 1986]). The diversity in ecological zones and the lack of resources, like timber in the south, created immense pressure for complex interchanges between groups (Flannery 1965; Wright and Johnson 1975). Consequently, the demands of high volume and intense economic exchanges across relatively long distances required some mechanisms of trust. The invention of writing, for example, was built on the logistics of ensuring a shipment reached its buyer intact and payment returned intact (Schmandt-Besserat 1992). At first, three-dimensional symbols (bullae) were sent in clay envelopes that were sealed—both in the literal sense and in the sense that the sender embedded a distinct mark that guaranteed who was sending what. Over time, this method

shifted to two-dimensional clay "letters," or what we would consider a bill of laden today, being sealed in clay envelope. These earliest forms of writing were contracts in the legal sense of the term, and violations could be enforced by various legal measures. The Mesopotamian world rapidly became a mini-world economic system (Algaze 2005), and with each level of economic complexity came a corresponding shift in legal complexity. The standardization of weights and measures, as further evidence of economic pressures, was not simply a matter of efficiency, but one of the state making the economic sphere both rational and legible (Scott 1998), but also creating legal norms and sanctions that ensured trust and reduced uncertainty in emerging markets (Powell 1999).

Intensification of economic production also meant public works projects, like irrigation and canal building; projects that could not be undertaken by villages, but only through the distributed power of polity mobilizing collective power. These projects, however, accelerated the process of destabilizing the Temple-economy system of village ownership and the shift towards appropriation of agriculture land into estates or manors and the creation a growing mass of deprivileged farmers (Adams 1966). New forms of property rights and class divisions transformed the categoric distinctions of myriad actors, demanding legal categories, norms, and sanctions be developed (Gluckman 1965). These categoric distinctions were even more pronounced in urban life, where occupational differentiation accelerated, as did the creation of guild-like claims to certain specializations (and titles) (van de Mieroop 2004: 26ff.). Consequently, these lists, and also the titles, were legal in their explication of rights and duties (Nissen 1988: 75ff). Stratification and, of course, inequality invited control and coordination; and, demanded generalized mechanisms of exchange, interaction, and communication.

Finally, as polities rose and fell, and struggles between priests and the ruling elite and between the landed gentry and the royal family over land and authority intensified, so did the need for law if these disputes were to be resolved non-violently. Again, violence could and often was used to resolve conflicts; coups and rebellions are as old as claims to centralized authority. However, the more socially circumscribed elites became, the more vested their interests were, and, thereby, the more "sense" legal remedy became as a weapon against each other and in service of sustaining their own claims vis-à-vis other strata. Indeed, disputes have always been at the center of legal evolution, and the ability for some actors to cement their claims to power and privilege. Hence, political evolution matters as much as the pace with which economic differentiation occurred. Especially considering the fact that long-distance trade was primarily facilitated and funded by the

ruling elite (who could incur the protection rent necessary to ship goods that could be pirated).

(2) Political Evolution. As the polity grew more complex, it needed law to (a) settle disputes, (b) enforce decisions and inflict punishment, (c) administer enacted decrees, and (d) serve as a public notary (Postgate 2003). The ruling family needed the first three in general, but found the most pressure in resolving conflicts between "bureaus," ensuring their decisions were executed by political subordinates, and stamping down corruption.

Kings who ascended to the throne also took the time to enact reforms that were not as progressive as the modern connotation of the word implies. Reforms usually involved the public pronouncement and then display of collections (not codes) of law, placed on large stone monuments (stelae). The laws themselves were mixtures of restated traditional laws and also responses to changing social and economic order. Finally, they were general pronouncements designed to shape future action and court proceedings. Accordingly, these laws formed the content of what Postgate (2003) refers to as a pyramid of legal order. At the base were local councils that constituted "a jury and a source of specialist local knowledge, which can uniquely contribute to the establishment of the facts of the case" (ibid: 276). The local council was responsible for ensuring individuals adhered to the laws, as the village would be held collectively responsible. In this way, the polity could ensure some level of order, while not taxing its own limited resources. Where disputes could not be settled, litigants could turn to courts that were often held in temples or a palace, where the case was tried before seven (not full-time) judges. Finally, the king sat at the top of the pyramid and was the last "court" of appeal. Disputes could be brought to him, but he also traveled a "circuit" annually in which he would hear important cases (Yoffee 2000), either deciding them or returning them to lower courts for retrial.

At the heart of this project, whether intentionally or not, the ruling elite and the royal family had a vested interest in controlling violence, as the state is only as powerful as its claims to a monopoly over the legitimate right to force (Jacobsen 1943). As we will see, using law to proscribe personal status, to channel grievances, and to recognize strata and their rights/duties (or lack thereof) are powerful mechanisms of social control (Cohen 1969). Law was, and is, power.

(3) The Natural Outcome of the Development of Writing. The final force driving legal evolution early on was writing. Recall Goody's (1986) discussion of writing and religious evolution (see Table 10.1 on page 224).

In particular, two aspects of writing are compatible with legal evolution. First, written authority tends to externalize power in something external to the group. This is especially important for weakening the power of local corporate actors, where law appears to be embedded in a power beyond tradition (Goody 1986: 12). Second, "written formulations encourage decontextualization or generalization of norms…In written codes there is a tendency to present a singly abstract formula which overlays, and to some extent replaces, the more contextualized norms of oral society" (ibid: 12). To this, we can add the tendency of writing to generate "scribal cultures," or clusters of moral density committed to writing, interpreting, editing, glossing, and so forth (van der Toorn 2007). Thus, legal language became increasingly monopolized and kept esoteric from the king and from other strata. Though full-time jurists would not appear for several millennia, the consequences are obvious: self-reflexivity leads to law begetting more law and also leads to groups of people committed to legal activities and knowledge as central to their material and ideal interests. An active agent of law, besides the ruling elite and royal family who see law as a means to their ends, emerges first within the ranks of the religious elite and then, as we shall see shortly, among a new cadre of legal entrepreneurs.

Law, however, never reached autonomous levels like polity or religion did before the Common Era. Why? In part, there were severe barriers to its realization, which we turn to now.

Barriers to Full-blown Law

A court system predicated on a legal order constituted by lawyers and jurists trained in universities that are controlled, in part, by a centralized professional organization is impossible without an appropriate transportation and communication infrastructure. More consequently, however, was the lack of a truly generalizable medium of economy in most of the economic systems of the late horticultural and early agrarian era: money. China did develop money early at around 900 CE, but the economic system was still relatively undynamic, and the legal system was not geared up to increase the autonomy of the economy.

Without the type of durable, divisible, and portable form of money, labor markets were dramatically constrained, and a middle class of any consequence was impossible. Without the former, jurists could only be part time legal experts, as they needed other means of work. Without the latter, the need for jurists was significantly constrained, thereby delimiting the value of legal expertise. As such, there was no pressure for legal entrepreneurship to "globalize" their legal practices and knowledge, carve out

physical, temporal, social, or symbolic space, and create autonomy. The need for other skills meant no real diagnostic struggle or boundary work with competitors which would be two key features of legal entrepreneurship (Liu 2013: 674–75). There were few incentives to struggle for power and privilege, especially as most legal actors would have derived that status from their other roles, like belonging to the priesthood.

Symbolically, there were some barriers rooted in the lack of rationalized law, although elements of rationalization were clearly evident in both Mayan and Aztec law. Yet, the centrality of religion as a legitimating mechanism favored by kings and elites in general meant formal and substantive irrationality dominated legal thought. The former refers to lawmaking/lawfinding based on means not controlled by the intellect, like oracles, while the latter refer to arbitrary influences rooted in ethical, emotional, or political biases (Weber 1967). To be sure, the more complex the polity's bureaucracy grew, the more rational law became. But, the lack of a centralized, standardized legal system prevented full-blown legal-rationalism, as did the relatively low levels of political autonomy that ceded some control to local councils that relied on traditions of evidence and procedure. These barriers, material and ideal, had to be overcome if the legal sphere was to obtain a level of true autonomy. In Europe, this evolutionary leap happened beginning in the 11th century CE. And in China, Mayan city-states, and the Aztec Empire, bureaucracy was also developing but was still too controlled by the coercive and administrative bases of power, even though the legal systems were clearly evolving toward to degree of autonomy, especially in Maya and Aztec cities. It is this story and its aftermath that consumes the remainder of the chapter, especially since the economy and legal system began to gain real autonomy that, in the end, would usher in the transition to highly dynamic markets that, in turn, would bring industrialization, while China and civilizations of the Americas would eventually be under the yoke of Western imperialism.

How The West Was Legally Reconstructed

Our story begins with the peculiar history of the Catholic Church around the end of the 11th century CE, in which the so-called "Investiture Controversy" (Cantor 1991) precluded Pope Gregory VII's reformation movement (Tellenbach 1945). Make no mistake, the reformation was nothing short of revolutionary (Klaniczay 2004; Moore 2001), and the revolution that transformed Europe was neither religious nor economic in nature; it was legal (Berman 1983; Unger 1976). In 1075,[5] when then-Pope Gregory VII declared himself the "vicar of Christ," effectively claiming his monopoly over sacred values, religious grace, and, importantly as far as the

Emperor of Rome and various lords throughout Europe were concerned, the sole right to appoint bishops to a court and abbots to a monastery. The radical nature of this claim is difficult to explain in modernity, but it sent ripples throughout the European world. Up until then, nobility—e.g., kings and other lords—had the authority to *invest* secular *and* sacred authority in the bishop or abbot they chose to be the Catholic representative to their court. These titles were heritable and, in fact, buyable and sellable (otherwise known as *simony*). Thus, election was deeply entwined with local political expedience and, while benefiting from the Church as a source of sacred legitimation, relatively detached from the control of Rome and the papacy.

Pope Gregory VII—and, it should be noted from here on that every pope is simply a shorthand reference to the actual historical figure and the much larger collective of reformers—decided this arrangement must change. In issuing his *Dictatus Papae*, which, among other things, declared the pope the sole authority capable of deposing the Emperor because the Roman Church was founded by God and not by man, Gregory declared the Church's power—and, thereby, his—transcended the natural world (Appleby 1999). The Holy Roman Emperor, Henry IV, obliged Gregory by appointing numerous bishops and challenging Gregory. In 1076, Gregory excommunicated Henry, effectively deposing him and technically freeing all Christians from any oaths made to him. The various Germanic princes immediately seized upon this opportunity, building up their own fortresses and expropriating royal property—including peasants. To reverse this, Henry embarked on his now-famous walk to Canossa in hopes of meeting and apologizing to the pope in person. As the story goes, he waited outside, barefoot in the snow for three days until Gregory agreed to see him and absolve him of his sins. However, in 1081, Henry prepared to invade Rome and put an end to the upstart pope, but the latter prevailed when he called on a mercenary army from the south of Italy. These events commenced what is called the *long* 12th century, initially characterized by struggles between successive popes and secular leaders, including Henry's son, Henry V, who resisted until 1122, when the Concordat of Worms[6] concomitantly signaled the end of the more violent aspects of the conflict and the acceleration of the Gregorian Reformation's revolutionary dynamics (Cantor 1991).[7] The deal's most striking outcome was that the pope was formally and *legally* given near total autonomy from all Earthly institutions while, conversely, declaring that even the Emperor's power had moral and practical limitations.

The Concordat had two other notable effects that would shape our story. First, it hastened the decentralization process begun when Henry IV was

excommunicated in 1076. Though a difficult thesis to test by conventional means, Luther's own religio-political movement's success owed itself, in part, to the political autonomy various Prussia princes secured due to a weakened political center. More broadly (and immediately), the weakening of the sole centralized polity rippled throughout Europe in a broad array of ways. Germany, for instance, until 1050 had been the center of science and art, but soon fell behind as once-peripheral towns and regions in Italy (Bologna, Salerno), England (Oxford, Cambridge), and France (Paris) built universities and shifted human and material resources away from the atrophied center (Rashdall 1936). The second outcome was the sudden importance and centrality of law as a mechanism of settling conflicts within and between spheres and, alongside the rise of cities and universities, the rapid evolution of legal entrepreneurs. To be sure, these entrepreneurs were initially indistinguishable from religious entrepreneurs, but eventually this changed. So, why did this revolution begin at that historical juncture and why law?

Selection Pressures

Entrepreneur-driven sociocultural evolution usually requires some real or perceived need for normative, symbolic, organizational, and/or technological innovation (Abrutyn and Van Ness 2015). Following a 10th century filled with rapid demographic and economic growth (Lopez 1971), and several decades before Gregory's bold decree, the religious elite had already come to define a set of exigencies internal and external to the Church. All groups look to realize their material and ideal interests, and in the late 11th century these interests would have been severely delimited by the Church's subordinate status to political power. They could, theoretically, raise an army and secure their independence via direct conflict, but Gregory's gambit showed the risks in this strategy were high. Instead, the pope saw the Church as a corporate entity (Southern 1970 [1990]). Law made sense given the Church had already begun to be a proto-bureaucracy, and legal-rationality is commensurate with bureaucratic structures (Stinchcombe 2001).

However, as a bureaucracy, one of the biggest dilemmas it faced was integrating and regulating its own employees. Delimited by its decentralized organization and the transportation/communication technologies of the day, it needed to find creative ways to control priests and bishops, who were far-flung throughout Europe and who had strong local interests tied to local political elites (Moore 2001). Again, the choice was to use law as a weapon, which meant embracing a legal-rational ethic and finding conduits along which to impose that logic on other actors. Gregory, for

instance, prohibited clergy from having families, children, and claims to heritable property (Goody 1984). While Gregory's own reforms did not immediately put an end to these practices, his stance against it was well known and, eventually, became the *de facto legal position* of the Church. This change was coupled with a ban on *simony*, or the buying and selling of titles, which not only gave the Church more control over who had ecclesiastical authority, but, again, took away another avenue of material gain from the priestly class. Ultimately, it protected its corporate interests through law, resulting in centralized control through the expropriation of parish land and property (Collins 1986b). Subsequently, priests' only recourse was to take their grievances to Rome—at least until Canon courts systematically grew throughout Western Christendom. The consequence was the reconfiguration of time, space, and social relationships by imposing legal authority and legal norms as the legitimate path to conflict resolution and justice. Thus, the religious elite had transformed into an entrepreneur looking to carve out a religious center in Rome and draw human and material interests towards the center.

These reforms naturally led to bureaucratization: (1) activities of priests and bishops were formalized as official duties; (2) authority of commands were formalized; (3) the ban on buying and selling titles led to control over who was qualified to be employed; (4) management of the various offices are found in written documents; (5) the means of production and titles belonged to the organization and not the incumbents; (6) and, ultimately, the position became a vocation. It is important, however, to note that the papacy did not seek these remedies in tradition, but rather used the weight of the Church's material and symbolic power to *create* new laws, hence the entrepreneurial nature of the reformers. The bureaucratization of the Church and the rise in *positive* (papal) law put even more pressure on priests and monks, bishops and abbots to resolve their grievances and disputes through legal recourse. Because the pope, like kings before him, was the last source of appeal, Rome rapidly became the center of ecclesiastical legal action. And, in doing so, it drew all sorts of actors deeper into its web. Eventually, as Berman (1983: 521; see also Tellenbach 1945: 115) concludes, law *had* to be "dis-embedded" from religion and systematized if the Church was to legitimate its claims to corporate authority over its own employees *and* over personal status issues of its adherents. Hence, legal innovation became a normative process by which the Catholic Church made sense of itself, integrated and regulated its people, and, eventually, interacted with secular powers.

If organizations, in Weber's estimation, cannot resist rationalization, the Church's choice in legal-rationalism accelerated and amplified this impulse.

These legal innovations worked centripetally, cognitively and physically, orienting the Church's employees to Rome as a center (Shils 1975), and consequently, diffusing outward a legal-rational ethic. And, because law, ultimately, begets law (Black 1976; Unger 1976; Luhmann 2004), this process of legal-rational "socialization" accelerated throughout the long 12th century as the Church imposed new law through decree and precedent. To be sure, the Church's entrepreneurs were "*acutely* aware" of the "legal implications" as new laws generated new disputes, which only generated new laws (Brundage 2008: 80ff).

The practical consequences of law would eventually drench the Church in a spirit of legal-rationalism matched only by its doctrinal and dogmatic ritualism; and, as the Church's tangible and intangible reach penetrated every nook and cranny of medieval Europe (Moreton 1990), this legal-rational "spirit" would spill over into almost every major actor in Europe. Yet, as the Church rapidly became the center of intellectual activities associated with law, and as noted above, the decision to draw boundaries through law would eventually have the unintended consequences of delimiting the Church's ambitions.

Law and Legal Innovation

The 12th century and the Gregorian Reformation can be divided up into pre-Gratian and post-Gratian times (Cantor 1991); or more accurately, pre- and post-*Decretum* (*c.* 1150 [Gratian 1582 (1993)]). The pre-Gratian times saw the first efforts to create a systematic document out of the disparate Canons and the newly "found" Justinian Digest (the most codified Roman code in existence). The latter was a huge discovery, as with the fall of the Roman Empire came the complete disappearance of any semblance of universal law. The Justinian Digest was perfect for exciting the intellectual spirit of these early legal scholars, as it offered a relatively codified, systematized, and generalized set of legal principles for a wide range of civil matters that had yet to be synthesized with an ever-expanding body of disparate Canon law and centuries of papal decrees. Necessity being the mother of invention, synthesis demanded the adoption of a set of methods for resolving contradictions, legal "glossing",[8] and integrating legal codes (Brundage 2008: 96); methods still in use today.

The jurist Gratian, however, changed the entire world.[9] Unlike predecessors, Gratian succeeded, around the mid-12th century, in creating a unified body of law called the *Concordia discordantium canonum*, or more familiarly, the *Decretum*. After Gratian's *Decretum* was produced, "universal ecclesiastical law and a universal secular law

made their appearance" and considerably "broadened the *universalistic outlooks*" of Church and State, aristocrat and urban dweller alike (Kantorowicz 1966: 90)—that is, through the diffusion of a legal-rational ethic. So influential was the *Decretum*, that it quickly became the "basic text in schools of Canon law everywhere from the middle of the 12th century to the *beginning of the twentieth century*" (Brundage 2008: 97, emphasis added). Importantly, it immediately became the foundational pedagogy of the first law university in Bologna, soon spreading to every university (Berman 1983; Rashdall 1936).

From Religious Dependent to Entrepreneur

By the end of the long 12th century, a legal order whose outline was recognized by Weber (1927 [2002]) and emphasized by Collins (1986a), but whose historical and sociological details have so far resisted elucidation, began to grow autonomous vis-à-vis the religious order despite the important overlapping elements of each order (Abrutyn 2009). This new autonomous social order gave rise to both the forces that would erode Church gains and an impetus for further invigorating religious entrepreneurs. For instance, the use of law continued to deepen the legal morass caused by greater numbers of people seeking appeal from the papal curia. As the pope's legal role grew larger than his religious role, he invited greater legal professional control over these matters and shifted towards new religious projects, like the Crusades. Thus, while religious entrepreneurs were at the heart of the legal revolution, they soon ceded control as religious matters and legal matters conflicted pragmatically and philosophically.

Ultimately, the *Decretum* encouraged the growth of law and, eventually, the law's increasingly discrete cognitive and symbolic boundaries vis-à-vis religion, as well as the legal profession's normative, organizational, and technological boundaries vis-à-vis their religious counterparts. Concomitant to this growing tension between social orders was the Church's growing efficacy in penetrating the lives and realities of clergy and lay people alike through increasingly efficient legal-rational authority (Donahue 1983, Goody 1984). Together, the distinct ambitions of legal and religious entrepreneurs spread "the *litigious thirst* that took possession of Europe in the twelfth century" (Brundage 2008: 110, emphasis added). Yet, the *Decretum* also contributed directly to the rise of a legal entrepreneurial class, or a loosely integrated group of similar actors who innovated technologically, organizationally, normatively, and symbolically around the substantive value of *justice* and the practical problems related to *conflict resolution*.

Courts as Practical Sites of Entrepreneurship

To say that the "litigious thirst" was good for the Church is an understatement. It not only benefited economically, but the more religious and non-religious actors came to rely on the legal system, the more they needed to rely on the Church's legal services (e.g., Canon courts). By the end of the 12th century, the ubiquity of Canon courts throughout Europe created "a number of interlocking systems, of law of a hitherto unknown complexity [in which] a vague sense of obligation was replaced by an exacting set of rules" (Southern 1970 [1990]: 151). How did this interlocking system come about?

By the time of Innocent II (1130–1143), the volume of legal disputes pressing the capabilities of Church courts was enormous. That is, it was no longer just the pope whose time was being diverted to legal matters, but the papal curia (the pope and his cardinals), as well as all of the bishoprics, were under pressure to divide time between religious and legal activities. "Faced with this situation, popes and bishops began to search for new methods to cope with the flood of lawsuits that were pouring into their courts. The search *began at the top*" (Brundage 2008: 126–27, emphasis added). Not surprisingly, by 1150, the papal curia was composed of far more lawyers than theologians (Morris 1971). Consequently, "popes had begun to surround themselves with men whose minds had been formed by puzzling their way through the juristic texts assembled in the Digest and Gratian's *Deceretum*, the character of the curia was bound to change, and so was that of the church as a whole" (Brundage 2008:132).

These events paved the way for legal entrepreneurs to grow bold. First, as previously seen, the more legal-rational authority was implemented, the more law occurred. The deluge that led to the changes in the papal curia, continued unabated. Popes began not only electing cardinals with legal experience, but soon started having legal experts act as full-time council. Eventually, the appellate function of the papacy was further inundated with first-instance cases, which were too difficult and time consuming to adjudicate, and "the use of judges-delegates increased rapidly [such that the Church began] to develop a system of central courts, complete with professional judges and lawyers" (Brundage 2008: 137). As these courts spread throughout Europe, standardization of methods and procedure became essential to ensuring their efficient operation. More and more, an autonomous, professional legal class was indispensable. More and more, interlocking court systems imposed a homogeneous cultural reality on all who used them.

Second, the Church's invitation of legal experts, both in the legally trained clergy and non-clergy jurists, led to what Morris (1971) called a "managerial revolution" in which the Church was not simply dominated by legal-rational thinking, but formal education became the central criteria for advancement; an essential feature of Weber's bureaucracy and one that would become a hallmark of state bureaucracies. The Church became a center of administrative power and legal-rational authority begged for legal entrepreneurs capable of managing the complex hierocracy (e.g., Chroust 1956: 561–62).

Third, the increasing reliance on legal experts and the importance of judges-delegates had in this new court system created the central impetus and logic for monopolizing the certification of legal actors and provided motivation for greater numbers of sons of well-to-do families to become lawyers. The universal, codified legal system was too difficult for lay people to access without legal advocates further contributing to the Church's courts busyness, which, in turn, eventually served as the physical and symbolic domain of legal entrepreneurs in confident control over procedural practices and knowledge. There was money, to be sure; but, legal entrepreneurs by the close of the 12th century had become elites. Their indispensability and ubiquity allowed them to demand that they not be called "doctors or masters, but *domini*, lords [as] they assumed a title normally reserved to noblemen and prelates" (Kantorowicz 1966: 91). This title gave them the leverage they needed to not only protect their gains, but to carve out increasingly distinct physical, temporal, social, and symbolic space across Europe. The production and distribution of *justice*, as an ultimate end, was increasingly wrested from the hands of popes and kings, and monopolized by legal actors; their vision of social order became spread everywhere as their services became essential to political or economic action; and, the world became dominated by legal-rational authority.

Professionalization and Education

Parallel to the ambition of a nascent entrepreneurial class was the founding and then growing autonomy of the university and legal education. Indeed, the demand for legal education was one of the early pressures for the emergence of medieval universities. By the mid-12th century, the university had created an alternative path of mobility for nobles' second- and third-born sons, whose futures were blocked by the rule of primogeniture. In the face of choosing the priesthood or monastic life, legal scholarship had its appeal (Berman 1983; Brundage 2008), and, thus, the university became

the physical, temporal, social, and symbolic space in which the transformation from profession to entrepreneur accelerated, and eventually, led to the development of an autonomous legal sphere. Again, we see the role the *Decretum* played in creating a legal-rational ethic and a carrier group capable of diffusing it throughout Europe, for it served as the homogenous text from which distinct themes of discourse and self-referential procedures and methods could be based; conditions central for institutional autonomy (Luhmann 2004). A standardized text led to increasingly standardized educational procedures and, thereby, a relatively homogeneous professional class of lawyers who were suddenly motivated to realize their ideal and material interests. As the law grew in size and complexity, a legal education and a trained body of legal actors became necessary, and the opportunities for an entrepreneurial class to untether themselves from political and religious elite increased (Donahue 2012; Pennington 1993). Like any profession, these early lawyers came to monopolize the application, development, dissemination, and transmission of legal knowledge and beliefs and became capable of carving out autonomous physical, temporal, social, and symbolic legal space.

Eventually, Canon law was joined by Royal, Manorial, Urban, and Mercantile law, indicating a wider base of resources from which the legal profession could transform into a legal entrepreneur capable of securing a high degree of physical and social independence vis-à-vis the autonomy of universities. Universities provided physical refuge to protect the cultivation of a legal habitus through standardized training and a formalized legal text(book), the *Decretum*. As the cities that housed these universities strained for their own autonomy vis-à-vis the pope and state, they came to depend on the economic revenue produced by the universities and the influx of well-to-do second-born noble sons, as well as the would-be litigants who traveled to these cities in search of advocates or to use the courts (Brundage 2008: 238).

Though there is more to this story, the larger point was that the revolution led to an autonomous legal institution. Canon law became the force that held the Church together, and produced what Berman would characterize as the first "state" (Berman 1983: 528). It provided the legitimacy to create the first legal structure and corporation. Furthermore, the Canon law contributed immensely to the development of marriage, criminal, contract, property, and inheritance law. "The Papal Revolution was like an atomic explosion" (ibid: 531), giving rise to a set of characteristics identifiably shared by all Western legal systems, regardless of their unique features (ibid: 7–10). First and foremost, (1) they are *autonomous* in so far as they have discrete rules and concepts associated with the activities

and knowledge that form the base of law. In addition, (2) administration is entrusted to a specific class of individuals and is comprised of (3) professionals highly trained in a discrete body of knowledge. The legal sphere is (4) self-referential in that some professionals analyze the law itself, re-interpret law, and self-describe and observe law (see also, Luhmann 2004). (5) Law is conceived of as a systematic, integrated body whose (6) organic growth is the very mechanism that sustains the legal spheres' autonomy; and (7) this growth is believed to be rational and has its own internal logic. (8) Law is considered to be binding over all individuals, including political actors. (9) Western law is characterized by a plurality of jurisdictions and competing legal systems, which are autonomous but interlinked by procedural rules. And, finally, (10) there is always a tension between substantive justice and procedural justice. Given the importance of the autonomy of law to our own analysis' goals and to the evolution of law, the remainder of this chapter takes up the question of what autonomy looks like and then what its consequences are for polity, religion, economy, and to a lesser extent, kinship.

Legal Autonomy

There is no institutional sphere that depends more so on physical and temporal differentiation than law for its autonomy. Unlike polity or religion, science or economy, entrepreneurship is not straightforward. Jurists must wait for an aggrieved party and/or party with means to *ask* for their professional opinion. To be sure, the religious and then political entrepreneurs accelerated legal evolution because they became dependent upon lawyers and judges for their expertise, but legal autonomy requires a continual supply of clientele to sustain the entire judicial structure (independent legal profession, courts, law making, as well as reminding of existing law). The legal sphere's domination comes from its legitimate claims to handle malfunctioning in non-legal spheres because those other spheres become too complex to handle their own problems (Bohannan 1980). And, thus, the need for clear physical and temporal distinction: lawyers and judges must first separate the conflict from its "native" sphere, translate these problems into legal symbols and meaning to be thoroughly adjudicated, and then re-translate the solutions into non-legal symbols. The power resides in the fact that once a legal route is chosen, and "barring an agreement between litigants, they have to abide by the decisions made by the judge…The will of the judge will be made to prevail over the will of the 'clients,' if necessary by the use of force" (Aubert 1967: 41).

Physical/Temporal Space

We have repeatedly employed the metaphor of a center-periphery to denote the key transformation in physical space entrepreneurs embark upon. The courts set up first for Canon law, and then soon for Royal, Manorial, Urban, and Mercantile law, were the physical embodiment of conflict resolution and justice. They ecologically demarcate serious legal activity from the non-legal mundane world (Abrutyn 2009). The Church's success against its own employees was rooted, ultimately, in the Canon court in Rome—and the papal curia as last court of appeal—being a physical and cognitive centripetal force (Woods Jr. 2012). Priests and bishops, like Henry IV in his walk to Canossa, had to come to the courts if they have grievances they wished resolved. Over time, the Canon courts which were established in every bishopric did the same thing for the masses, whose personal status become intensely regulated by the Canon law (Gies and Gies 1986).

Equally important were the establishment of universities, like Bologna which purports to be the oldest university in history (1088 CE) devoted to law. Nothing could be more autopoietic than a group of students devoted to knowledge for the sake of knowledge. What differed in these early law schools from most other schools devoted to a master's teachings, was the existence and widespread acceptance of Gratian's text. Every student was studying the same laws, glosses, and techniques for further glossing laws. The university, however, also had another physical distinction: the construction of place identity. The University of Bologna, for instance, was not a university like those we are familiar with today. It arose around groups of foreign students who had traveled to Italy to learn the law, but whose foreign status left them without rights to protect them from city laws (that only recognized, as has long been the case, native-born citizens). Around these students grew a *universitates scholarium*, or mutual aid society that purposefully stripped their own individual status and corporatized them as a "nation" (Lines 2018). As a nation, they could pool their resources together to hire scholars from the existing ecclesiastic and lay schools to teach them law. Eventually, they grew large enough to form an even larger and more formally legal category: the *Studium*, or university as we know it. In 1158, Bologna was granted a legal charter, thereby granting it legal status as a distinct sphere with distinct actors (Rashdall 1936). Thus, the practice of law grew physically distinct in the court while the self-referential transmission and development of law became physically distinct in the university. The two worked in tandem, as students would eventually migrate where opportunities existed or could be carved out, while famous

jurists would eventually return to the university to ply their applied trade into general erudition.

But, courts and the law schools are not simply physical creations: they are temporal. As noted above, law only works when non-legal actors seek the services of the court. Once formally and legally bound to the legal process, temporal differentiation becomes essential. The primitive foundations of morality and justice prime humans for moral righteousness that easily spreads throughout a mob seeking to return the social order to its pre-transgressed state. There is a hedonistic satisfaction in this expression (Buckholtz and Marois 2012). However, where violence is one, if not the paramount, solution to expressed grievances, irrationality, arbitrariness, and potential recurring disruptions can become patterned. Autonomous legal spheres "cool" the process by slowing it down (Luhmann 2004). That is, once full-time legal actors exist and law is a continuously available sphere, its most powerful integrative mechanism is its ability to slow down conflict resolution, subject it to procedural rules that take time for decision making, and, consequently, gradually remove the affective impulse towards substantive justice. To be sure, this runs against the grain of our human nature, and explains why clearly guilty transgressors who are freed on technicalities or who spend life in prison as opposed to immediate death elicit intense negative reactions by many non-legal observers. Formal justice is always in tension with substantive justice, because of temporal differentiation. Our anger and also our acceptance of the legal system, however, speaks to the efficacy of social differentiation within the legal sphere.

Social Space

Adamson Hoebel (1954 [1973]: 48–49) identified four basic legal relationships between individual or corporate actors. (1) *Demand-right/Duty* refers to actor A's legal expectation that actor B will behavior in a certain way with respect to "A," and vice versa. If B were to damage A's boat, A can expect B to pay restitution either through legal coercion or through the desire to avoid legal coercion. In the second relationship, (2) *Privilege-right/No-Demand-Right*, A is free to behave in a certain manner with respect to B and B has no legal redress if A behaves in said manner. An employer, for instance, can wield their authority within a set of defined parameters with no legal recourse. In traditional patriarchal societies, men—and, more specifically, the head of the household—were only bound by custom and convention in the actions they took against those deemed dependents. (3) *Power/Liability*, arises when a new legal

relationship is created between actors: B offers a contract to A for services, and A's decision to enter into the new legal relationship imposes them to liabilities for not fulfilling their end of the bargain. The logic of indentured servitude serves as an extreme example. However, and while Hoebel stresses the voluntary nature of power/liability legal relationships, clearly this relationship can be involuntarily imposed through state legislation or religious decree. Bourdieu's (1989) notion of symbolic power revolves around the idea that some people and collectives have the right to *name* others, and by name he means impose legal definitions. The use of this power to draw clear lines around old categories of people and to reassign them to new categories can be benign (such as the polity moving the definition of poverty to include more people) or malicious and symbolically violent (e.g., reclassifying, formally or not, immigrants as aliens or worse).

The last is the opposite of our third relationship: (4) *Immunity/No-Power*. Here, A is not subject to B's attempt to voluntarily create a new legal relation; B cannot, by his own act, create a new legal relationship affecting A. A is free to accept or reject B's offer with no fear of reprisal and legal recourse in the event they feel threatened. Hoebel's bigger point is that all four of these relationships are universal to societies, even if they are sometimes quite rare.

Our point is that legal autonomy depends on their generalization to most, if not all, members of a polity. This is not to say that we see our partners or children through legal symbols; at least not typically. But, we can easily switch from kinship to legal language under the right circumstances. Teens can speak of emancipation, for instance. Threats of divorce suddenly transform love into conflict resolution. All of us are able to think legally because law is the normative path towards resolving conflicts that would otherwise require violence as a solution (Black 1984). And because it is normative and because we are able to mentally as well as practically activate the roles and status positions of client, litigant, plaintiff, and defendant, law in the West is extraordinarily autonomous. The same can be said of formal organizations who are deeply immersed in the legal sphere. On the one hand, the labyrinth of local, state, and federal regulations demands bigger organizations to carve out legal departments or retain lawyers whose sole role is to translate law into actionable and practical outcomes for these organizations—e.g., school districts, businesses, sports teams. Consequently, inviting legal entrepreneurs into these other spheres as full-time liaisons (Abrutyn 2016) generates normative isomorphic pressures (DiMaggio and Powell 1983; also, Sutton et al. 1994). On the other hand, corporate actors have the resources to "test" law, which is part of the organic,

unyielding growth of autonomous legal systems. Where regulations offer grey areas, corporations often bring cases to determine what the law actually is, which serves to further immunize future risks. Of course, these tests rarely rise above the world of law, but with, say, the last court of appeal, the ultimate test of a law's constitutionality is salient to all those concerned. Ultimately, what this points to is the ubiquity of a legal-rational *ethic*, in the Weberian sense of the term, which, in turn, means the majority of people subjected to an autonomous legal sphere have internalized the symbolic language of law at a basic, cursory level.

Symbolic Space

Like other institutional spheres, law differentiates symbolically—in the public/private sense of culture and in the creation of a generalized medium of interaction, exchange, and communication. Legal spaces, like court houses, usually are demarcated by some architectural distinctions designed to signal uniqueness vis-à-vis other types of buildings often in the nearby vicinity like jails, police stations, governmental buildings, and so forth. In Western culture, statues (e.g., blindfolded Lady Justice) signify the purpose and meaning of legal activities in their abstract. And, of course, legal actors dress and speak in ways befitting of their claims to authority. But, these are obvious. Less obvious are the creation of a legal-rational ethic that is pervasive throughout society and the dynamics of legal generalized symbolic media (conflict resolution/justice). The two are tightly connected, and thus we expand on each.

Creating Law

The strength of an autonomous institutional sphere comes from the general conferral of "cognitive sovereignty" by most people. That is, institutional spheres *think* for us (Douglas 1986; Parsons 1990) and channel our emotions, attitudes, and actions in well-worn paths (Abrutyn 2014b). In order for an institutional sphere to reach that level of autonomy, it must translate this cognitive authority into a practical ethic by which people orient their behaviors (Swedberg 1998). Thus, a legal order, or institutional sphere, is not so much a system of norms, but rather "a complex of actual determinants of actual human conduct [in that] *it is the "orientation" of an action toward a norm, rather than the "success" of that norm that is decisive*" (Weber 1967: 12–13, emphasis added). Legal orders, according to Weber, varied in the procedures by which cases are identified, categorized, and resolved and, thereby, how legal decisions were made. Irrational legal

processes do not produce codified, systematic law and, therefore, law remains either a privilege of the elite or one of many possible routes to conflict resolution. Where law is rational, substantively or formally, however, an ethic can become pervasive that takes for granted the jurisdiction of conflict resolution as primarily in the legal sphere. And through a widespread ethic, a legal order becomes a source of legitimation shaping collective ways of thinking and action a when significant proportion of people orient their present and future (as well as interpret their past) actions toward these norms, their meanings, and the real or imagined sanctions attached to them. Above all else, legal-rationalism, whether emphasis is on the substantive production of justice or the formal production of equity in procedure and process, is the most efficient and essential form of law for capitalism, modern forms of polity, and, as we saw above, a fully-formed hierocracy like the Catholic Church.

To turn a classic sociological phrase, by the beginning of the 13th century, the *spirit* of legal rationalism had spread to nearly every major class (besides the commoners who would not have been able to afford law nor likely saw its need) and city/parish in Europe. The need for jurists and lawyers had become ubiquitous in England, Netherlands, France, Italy, and Prussia, as well as other regions like Austria-Hungary, Spain, and Scandinavia. By spirit, it is meant that the principles of legal-rational authority, as a (1) source of legitimacy, (2) foundation for developing and applying procedures and methods to various types of practices, (3) worldview through which material and ideal interests were formulated and pursued, and (4) schema through which feelings, thoughts, and actions could be cultivated and expressed had become accepted and increasingly taken for granted. The lives of the European elite had been actively reconfigured (Cantor 1991; Moore 2004), and eventually, so were the lives of the masses whose lives were being shaped by legal-rationalism far more than at any other time (Gies and Gies 1986). That is, over a century of experience with legal-rational decision making, royal, manorial, urban, and mercantilist actors had already begun to be exposed to rationalistic decision making, goal setting, and means of action (Berman 1983). Conseuqently, the legal order was discernible in phsyical, tmeporal, social, and symbolic space (Unger 1976). The law itself had become self-referential and self-reflexive, and its actors were concerned with the intellectual side of legal goals, decision making, and substantive values as much as their material interests (Reynolds 2003). As we shall see, the material basis of law and this symbolic edifice would have transformative effects on polity, religion, economy, and myriad other spheres in the immediate run and, importantly, in the long run. Before, however, we discuss these effects, we turn to one more key

facet of symolic differentiation and legal autonomy: the production and distribution of generalized legal symbolic media.

Justice and Conflict Resolution

Much has been said above about the peculiarities of law as a distinctive sphere: it can never be as autonomous as other spheres because (a) it depends on the polity for enforcement and legislation and (b) its power derives not from control over force, but from its claims to mediate between non-legal actors. Consequently, its media are unique in that they do not circulate as readily across institutional boundaries; definitely not in the way *money*, *power*, or *knowledge* do. And, yet, *justice* and *conflict resolution* are highly valued resources, and those in the legal sphere with the greatest share of these media—whether in objectified form, symbolic form, or embodied form—are powerful people whose influence extends beyond the boundaries of the sphere. Supreme Court Justices, for instance, are prestigious actors because of their disproportionate access to justice and conflict resolution. Law firms, universities, and lawyers stake their reputation (and therefore, the amount of resources from other spheres that they draw towards themselves) on the amount of media they possess and can confer on clients or students. Like all autonomous institutional spheres, law generates a stratification system unique to its own activities and knowledge.

However, justice in particular, but to a lesser extent conflict resolution also, are valued media for non-legal actors. Not in their indigenous form, but in their fungibility. Consider two examples. In 2020, the then-president Donald Trump lost re-election and, therefore, access to a certain amount of power (and money). Rather than accept this fate, he claimed the election had been rigged due to widespread voter fraud. Turning to the courts for *justice*, Trump hoped to entrench his claims to power; and, had he won, likely increase these claims as well. His resounding legal defeats had the converse consequence of sapping his power. In 1967 and then again 2015, two high profile Supreme Court cases sought to transform what *love* meant. To be sure, the goal of legalizing interracial and same-sex marriages, respectively, had an economic, political, and legal purpose as well; in particular, individual couples demanded equal protection under the law across a spectrum of benefits married couples accrue. However, the logic of law was also meant to equalize access to the less tangible medium of love. To make normal images of black and white spouses or two men raising children meant to reconstitute how *love* is embodied and the discourse surrounding *love*, in addition to providing the objectified forms like

a marriage license. In both cases, we see how the true value of *justice* is in its convertibility into other symbolic media, and therein lies the true authority of legal entrepreneurs; especially lawyers who are "liaison" corporate actors whose sole function is to translate one medium into the legal sphere and then re-translate the legal medium into non-legal resources.

Law and the Acceleration of Institutional Autonomy

Polity Grows Up

The evolution of law had far-reaching effects across institutional spheres, but polity and economy were perhaps the biggest "consumers" of law and, therefore, diffusers of the legal-rational ethic. As polities throughout Europe sought to compete against the Church following its 12th century victories of the Holy Roman Empire, the easiest pathway was to corporatize in much the same way (de Mesquita 2000; Harding 2002). Like the Church, the more the state adopted legalism to both police its internal actors and resolve conflicts with external actors, the more it was subjected to the logic of legal-rationalism. Like their Church counterparts, civil "authorities found lawyers' knowledge and analytic skills desirable for the lawful conduct of public administration" (Brundage 2008: 164). For instance Kantorowicz (1966: 94ff.) identifies two important steps towards legal-rationalism that occurred before the end of the 12th century in the polity: (1) the idea that while there were legal principles for the absolute power of the king, sovereignty was conferred by the *people* and thus could be reneged and (2) therefore, there were legal principles suggesting limits to this absoluteness. In turn, legal-rationalism "gradually began to change the vocabulary of statecraft, and the new vocabulary began to influence statecraft itself [as] law-making kings began to eclipse the law-preserving king of earlier centuries" (Kantorowicz 1966: 99). And, this new polity, bound by rules and focused on pulling more and more actors into its orbit through law, was a key condition necessary for the growth and intensification of economic autonomy and capitalism (Collins 1986a; Weber 1927 [2002]).

The polity's turn towards legal-rationalism also fueled the growth of the legal profession and the ambitions of legal entrepreneurs. A civil bureaucracy needs literate administrators, and there happened to be a surplus found among legal entrepreneurs trained in Canon and civil law. Just as they influenced the Church towards a more ideal historical type of bureaucracy, legal entrepreneurs imposed normative isomorphism on the legislature and civil service. The use of legal means to separate clergy from

patrimonial ownership of title or office was a model easily adopted by other corporate entities influenced by a legal-rational ethic. Legal entrepreneurs were able to exploit these gaps, as well as exploit the power-differential between a monolithic religious sphere and a series of small, competing polities. Eventually, most Western democratic states were staffed primarily with legislators holding Jurist Doctorates. The logic of the modern polity is impossible to divorce from its legal-rationalism, in part because law has proven to be more effective than religion in penetrating the daily lives of individual and collective actors, and pulling the masses into the orbit of the polity.

The Economy Explodes

Weber famously argued that a rational system of law was also necessary for the growth of Western rational capitalism because it would provide the predictability needed for efficient and effective economic decision making and action. But, if it weren't for the legal revolution that occurred under Gregory's reforms, it is highly debatable just how independent urban Europe would have been and, therefore, just how dynamic the European city-based economy would have become (Nicholas 2014). From a practical standpoint, law became as big a business as long-distance commodity trading. As cities gained their autonomy, they came to depend on the economic revenue produced by the universities and the influx of well-to-do second-born noble sons (who because of primogeniture were either destined to the abbey, the Church, or, now, the courts). In 1209, for example, the masters and students fled Oxford as they feared the citizens who had hung two or three students for the murder of a townswoman. The economic damage caused by the exodus led the citizens to seek absolution from a cardinal, who imposed a settlement that led the masters to return and the town's economic fortunes to improve (Brundage 2008: 238). Additionally, Brundage (2008: 133) notes that "legal business at the papal curia unquestionably contributed in a major way to the economy of the city of Rome," as the number of legal experts grew, so did the permanent population, and as the number of experts grew, so did the number of litigants seeking legal remedy swelled. As Donald Black has argued, "law begets law", and thus with more law came more disputes, which produced more law and more disputes. The centralization of a court system diffused throughout the European world disproportionately advantaged the cities.

Importantly, while every lord and bishop needed legal experts on staff, legal entrepreneurs found natural affinities with urban and mercantilist actors. As two classes unable to monopolize the legitimate means of

physical or psychic violence like their political and religious counterparts, respectively, they found in each other a symbiotic relationship. The legal profession could grow more complex and mobile with salaries paid in money and not kind, whereas economic action is deeply embedded in the logic of impersonal transactions and, therefore, need the trust and safeguards of rational law (Turner 2003). Thus, while legal autonomy was well on its way because of the religious and political adoption of legal-rational authority, it accelerated and intensified by facilitating the increasingly complex and multiplex exchanges present in an autonomous economy and, consequently, the growing number of grievances, tensions, and conflicts needing resolution (Turner 1980). Once legal entrepreneurs became valued for their services and law became the legitimate method of resolving more and more conflicts, a feedback loop was created that raised the level of economic autonomy while continually expanding the import of legal entrepreneurs. That is, legal entrepreneurs, through their own legal-rationalism and scientific jurisprudence, imposed, directly and indirectly, the practical ethic on the day-to-day economic rounds necessary for the creation of a civic strata characterized by a "practical rationalism in conduct" (Weber 1946a: 284) and who were essential to (a) the formation of Protestantism, (b) the democratization of charisma throughout a whole community, and (c) the pervasiveness of a Capitalism Spirit.

The Hearth Shrinks

Throughout the book, we have made the argument that kinship autonomy has suffered at the expense of other institutional sphere's own development of autonomy and constituting new centers of domination. To be sure, kinship remains relatively autonomous: the household remains, in many ways, an ecological distinct space. However, like Ecumenical religions, legal-rationalism had begun to penetrate the lives of ordinary Europeans. By the end of the long 12th century, Europeans—especially urban Europeans—confronted a world vastly different from their grandparents and great-grandparent as "many kinds of business, from making wills or conveying land to litigating, had come to *require* advice from legal experts" (Reynolds 2003: 350, emphasis added). Where legal entrepreneurs could not directly dominate the lives of individuals, the Church and the growing bureaucratic state did. For instance, the legal-rational authority of the Church sought to define its jurisdiction primarily in matters of personal status (Donahue 1983). Marriage was elevated to a sacrament which meant the ritual need be mediated by a priest, in a church. Previously, marriage ceremonies were rooted in local familial or clan customs. The effects were numerous. First,

the central ritual defining alliance building and inheritance came under the control of the Church. Second, those not marrying in the Church could be excommunicated and their property expropriated. Third, it imposed a stereotyped ritual for all actors, regardless of class, ethnicity, or region, which, of course, has the effect of building formal shared realities. Fourth, it further allowed the Church to prohibit marriages it deemed as sinful, such as cousin marriage, plural marriage, remarriage of divorced persons, and other kin strategies of heirship (Goody 1984: 123ff.).

Additionally, the Church's legal reconstitution of feudal society by way of personal status issues led to the rationalization of inheritance strategies such as the institutionalization of primogeniture first in England, and then France, Germany, and elsewhere (Goody 1984, 2000) and the rationalization of family lineage or (the "science of") genealogy (Gies and Gies 1986: 142–43). Indeed, by way of necessity, pragmatism, and coercion, the masses (and not only the non-elite with means) increasingly oriented their goal setting, strategizing, and decision making to the legal order in terms of conflict resolution, disputes, grievances, and so forth (Moreton 1990). Eventually, the idea that codified legal principles could apply to matters of personal issue spread to the city as well, and eventually, generated highly standardized patterns of marriage, inheritance, and so forth.

Conclusion

The above discussion, then, strikes at the heart of Weber's classic Protestant Ethic thesis. Though it is difficult to test empirically one way or the other, it is logical to suggest the universalism of law had as much effect on the West and the explosion of Capitalism as Protestantism and, perhaps, was paramount. First, the idea that formal justice trumps substantive justice emerged early on. Following Gratian's systematic legal code, law professors—who were also practitioners—standardized legal procedures for training purposes and to prevent irrationalities from one court to another. All litigants, in theory, deserved a trial that proceeded along the same lines. More importantly, the systematization of legal education and the systematization of court systems, both Canon and civil, meant the rapid emergence of procedural laws (Donahue 1983; Harding 2002); and, procedural law, or norms that govern the legal order itself (Bohannan 1967), implies a high level of self-reflexivity and formality (Luhmann 2004). What this line of argument suggests, then, is some structural foundations for collapsing dualism as economic conflicts were to be resolved in standardized ways, while the foundations for enforcing contracts were already in place.

Second, the very pool of potential recruits to Protestantism, as well as their own leaders (e.g., Luther was trained, initially, as a lawyer and, not surprisingly, his 95 theses challenged the legislative authority of the Church), were rooted in the legal-rational notion of citizenship. Citizenship was, in turn, protected by the legal-rational jurisdictional claims made by various Germanic princes who could protect heretics against the Church and the Emperor, and whose source of authority rested on the legal-rational ethic that diffused several centuries prior (Pennington 1993). Finally, these recruits were already primed for the methodical, sober-minded nature of Protestantism as even Weber (1946a) notes that the civic strata in European cities by the 16th century was comprised of traders, merchants, and other actors who had been using the courts and legal coercion in their daily affairs for centuries.

In short, the legal-rational spirit that transformed the Church and State, and which was far more naturally compatible with market economics than with religion or politics, was easily transferred to the emerging economic entrepreneurs of European cities. Impersonal, generalized legal principles aligned with foreign trade and the spread of *money* economies, both of which depend on universalism over kinship, tribalism, or geographic particularism (Simmel 1907 [1978]). The unique notion of citizenship that Weber sees as essential to the formation of the Western ideals of self and individuality is rooted in these very same legal principles, which did not grant political privileges based on birth, but rather on the idea of membership in an autonomous *demos* shaped by a common political sphere (local politics) and religious sphere (the central cathedral in each city). The city's ability to sustain its autonomy was also legal unlike previous constructions of cities, which were either political or religious centers first and economic configurations second (Berman 1983). Instead, in the struggle between Church and State, legal charters protecting the political and economic autonomy of the city were created and respected because of the use of legal-rationalism to protect the sacred and secular jurisdictional claims of the pope and king. And, it would be in the city that our story continues in the following chapter, as the last site of institutional autonomy we are interested in evolved: economic autonomy.

Notes

1 Note, we are by no means making a value judgment that economics or economy are a good institution, but rather an evolutionary argument. If polity was the first sphere capable of transforming social relationships and expanding the possible, economy was the next sphere capable of making a world unable to fully untether itself from ascription to

a world capable of achieved status, depersonal relationships, and trans-national boundaries (Collins 1990; Marx 1857-8 [1978]; Simmel 1907 [1978]; Wallerstein 1974). Like any institutional sphere's historiography, the growth in its autonomy usually signals new problems for existing societies. Some of these problems were outlined by Marx, Durkheim, Polanyi, and Weber, others have been widely critiqued by entire traditions in sociology, including the Frankfurt school and World-Systems analysts. The point still stands: economy is a transformative institutional sphere, regardless of the goodness or badness.

2 The reader should, again, see this discussion as value-neutral. We have already noted in Chapter 12 that law, even autonomous law, is a potential and real weapon used by the powerful. So, "harm" is a subjective word, to be sure. However, in modernity, Beck (1992), and others, have noted the amplification of risks due to industrialization, technology for the sake of technology, and the marriage between polity and science. Consequently, the modern state's strongest weapon to immunizing against the serious risk a runaway economy poses is law (Luhmann 2008), which can regulate how corporate entities, for example, pollute and increase the risk of climate disaster.

3 See also: Turchin (2003, 2006), and Turchin and Nefedov (2006).

4 See: de Sahagun and Anderson's (1975) *General History of the Things of New Spain*, a twelve-volume work based on interviews with those who survived the Spanish conquest.

5 Though 1075 is usually the accepted starting point, it had its roots in ideas a century or so older (Cushing 2005).

6 Concordats are conventions in which lay and clergy officials work out the relationship between the secular and sacred boundaries of authority. In this case, Henry V and Pope Calixtus II met at Worms and struck an agreement.

7 As an aside, and further evidence of the importance of the Church and the Gregorian Reforms in changing Western society, the Concordat has been considered the forbearer to the Treaty of Westphalia, which was the legal-rational process by which nation-states came into being (de Mesquita 2000).

8 Making interpretative notes for meanings.

9 Like many of the Hebrew Bible's prophetic books, the text was attributed to Gratian, but whether he was the sole author, or even the final author, is a question unlikely to be resolved. It is best to see the eponymous book as a collective product, but often driven, literally or metaphorically, by the eponymous authors' intellect and skill.

14
Institutional Evolution to the Brink of Modernity

The economy always existed in the organization of humans, but for hundreds of thousands of years it was embedded in the nuclear family and hunting and gathering bands. Moreover, the elements of an economy that would eventually become clearly evident—*technology, physical capital*, *human capital*, *transactional capital, property*, *structural formations*, and *cultural formations*—existed only in very basic form (recall Chapter 11). This form of social organization was compatible with humans' evolved nature as outlined in Appendix II in Chapter 1, thus discouraging dramatic changes. At the same time, this rather simple economy left hunting and gathering populations vulnerable under conditions of rapid and significant ecological change, leading to periodic die-offs of human populations over the last 400,000 years. Still, hunting and gathering as an economic activity was highly efficient, relatively easy unless in an extreme environment, and emotionally gratifying, thereby proving to be highly adaptive for most of human history. Being so adaptive, some scholars suggest that there was resistance to domesticating animals and plants as a means to avoid the trappings of a more vertical political society (Scott 2017). In the end, however, after thousands of years of relative equality in nomadic bands, some foragers began periodically settling into more permanent communities. At first, settlement emerged, especially where water provided easy protein from fishing and could support larger populations. And, in doing so, a new type of corporate unit was created: community. Settlements and community organization would eventually generally initiate new ways to secure food, such as fishing, gardening, and even herding, that will, in the end, drive the transition to new type of society that will not only be larger but also more unequal in the distribution of resources (see Figure 11.1 on page 259). It is likely that this more settled form of adaptation had occurred off and on for much of human history, but it was not until 12,000 years ago that alternatives to hunting and gathering were becoming common (Zeder 2008), thereby accelerating societal evolution and, for our purposes in this chapter, setting into motion the evolution of economy.

Ultimately, to break out of hunting and gathering was not easy because it meant giving up a rather relaxed way of life and, equally important, it

DOI: 10.4324/9781003224433-15

involved creating new kinds of social formations and their cultures, new technologies, new types of human capital, new property relations, and eventually new types of transactional capital that would impose new constraints on humans. At first, bands may have settled for longer periods near water before moving on, enjoying the ease of fishing compared to hunting and, thus, not requiring dramatic changes. But, at some point, bands began to settle down into more permanent communities near resources such as water and land that could be cultivated in gardening activities (which hunter-gathers knew about but probably considered too much work).[1] Although the technological leap was not great and the process itself took time (Abbo et al. 2012; Langlie et al. 2014), once horticulture and, then, agriculture arose, populations probably began to grow where arable land was plentiful. Even so, many foraging groups likely adopted "spectrum" subsistence practices that increased the diversity and caloric intake of their diets, particularly those groups that continued to resist agricultural life on the margins of agricultural centers (Liu et al. 2011). Once the initial step to domesticate plants and animals in more sedentary communities was taken, humans began to leave the relaxed Garden of Eden of hunting and gathering for a new way of life: settlement in communities, cultivating land, hording and perhaps herding livestock, and eventually elaborating kinship beyond the nuclear family, as outlined in Chapter 6; and in so doing, human societies began to build up a stratification system revealing vertical systems of authority and inequality (Bar-Yosef 2001). Thus, if the decline in leisure time was not enough of a reason to resist permanence, the foragers that saw the downsides of "opulence" likely explains, at least in part, why hunting and gathering continued even into the present, although there are few cases remaining as the habitats shrunk due to political expansion and environmental degradation.

In these earliest moments of economic intensification, the economy still remained embedded in kinship and communities, and polity and religion had still not evolved as they would with movement to more advanced horticulture (see Table 11.1). The elements that make an economy dynamic had still not evolved to a point where they could begin to push for autonomy. Technologies still were not extensive, physical capital was limited, human capital was the same, transactional capital was emerging but most exchanges were still barter and not institutionalized in markets, definitions of property were still held hostage by kinship and inheritance rules, social formations had expanded but were still limited to a few types of corporate units embedded in kinship, and culture was still quite conservative given the domination of kinship, backed up by emerging polity and religion. What, then, led to the break out and, then, the comparatively

rapid growth and differentiation of human societies between 10,000 and 5,000 years ago? Our goal in this chapter is to outline some of the selection forces operating to transform human societies and, thereby, the evolution of economy.

Climate Change or the Expert Hunter?

Between 12,000–10,000 years ago, humans appear to have inhabited every arable ecological niche in the world (Fagan 2004). The last ice age was ending as glaciers retreated. But something else remarkable happened around that time period: a mass extinction of megafauna occurred, wiping out two thirds of all large animals (Mann et al. 2015). Why this mass extinction occurred remains an open debate, with most arguments centering on climate change having a direct or indirect impact. For the 50,000 years prior, abrupt periods of warming (interstadials) are associated with increases in human migration and population growth—both of which would have effected migratory patterns and survival of megafauna (Müller et al. 2011). In particular, humans were effective at killing megafauna—and still are (Ripple et al. 2019)—because such hunting could provide a great deal of protein in one hunt; and larger populations of humans would have needed more, posing serious threats to megafauna (Sandom et al. 2014). Meat eating, especially the caloric bang megafauna provided, was intimately tied to the evolution of hominins (Domínguez-Rodrigo et al. 2014; Cordain et al. 2000), and the sudden loss of the primary source of fat and high calories from the killing of large mammals may have accounted for the origins of higher degrees of cooperation in human societies (Bowles and Gintis 2011). A gaping hole in the social reality of human societies would need replacing, if only for survival, but also because the loss in megafauna had larger, imperceptible consequences for the biotic world in general (Sullivan et al. 2017). The world had changed for most humans 12,000 years ago, and the costs and benefits of permanent settlement and agriculture likely began to seem desirable for some, necessary for others, and too "expensive" for the rest.

Population Pressures and Evolution of Economy

In any case, permanent settlements began to dot the landscape, especially in the Near East, about 12,000–8,000$_{BP}$. Many of the same pressures driving political evolution were at the heart of the evolution of economy: population growth drove technological growth and pressure to either remain in larger amalgamations of social units or fission into smaller diffuse societies

(Johnson and Earle 2000). To remain in a larger amalgamation meant intensifying production of subsistence goods, which, in turn, generated (1) production risks, (2) greater chances of being raided as well as warfare more generally, (3) inefficient resource use due to self-aggrandizement or poor decision making, and (4) resource deficiencies (e.g., ecological degradation). Each of these potential problems generated pressures for changes in technology or one or more forms of capital, which, consequently, altered structural and cultural patterns of social organization. To be sure, there were caps on what could be achieved, given the fact that economy remained folded in kinship and in an elaborating and gradually differentiating political sphere (Earle 1989, 1991). In turn, political entrepreneurship out of necessity as well as from the self-interest of chief expanded physical capital (e.g., centralized storage for surplus needing redistribution), human capital (e.g., specialization), structural formations (e.g. regional networks and a growing division of labor), transactional capital (e.g., trade networks), and cultural formations (e.g., media of exchange and symbolic systems of power and authority). Thus, population growth generally forced a shift in economic organization, building out communities as a new form of corporate unit, and creating new levels of corporate units in the evolving kinship system (e.g., nuclear families into lineages which, in turn, could be organized in sub-clans and then clans, and perhaps even moieties). And, as structural formations expanded beyond the invisible walls of the band, linking myriad bands into a real or imagined community and to the most dynamic element of an economy—markets using symbolic media of exchange, in turn these could lead to increases in technology, human capital skills, physical capital as a generalized resource for exchange, new forms of property, and eventually new structural and cultural formations.

Ecological Pressures and Evolution of Economy

Environmental Degradation

Environments in which populations live are subject to change as a result of many general forces: climate change (seasonal or even more random), draughts and flooding, fire, and activities of other populations. Small bands of hunter-gatherers are less likely in their cyclical movement through a territory to change the ecology; indeed, the movements of bands is intended to give resources a chance to recover after a short period of gathering and hunting at a particular campsite, which is then abandoned by movement to a new site, allowing resources in the abandoned site to replenish. The

loss of megafauna, however, had implications for the ecosystem, even where humans' role in their extinction remains an open question (Hubbe et al. 2013). Once populations settle down in communities and begin to grow, economic activity can change the ecology to which the population must adapt. Horticulture is a particularly wasteful means of growing food and often involves eroding the soil of resources. Even "slash and burn" technology, which drew upon the restorative capacity of charcoal to re-fertilize soil, degrades the fertility of the soil, thus forcing movement of plots and perhaps even the community. Moreover, husbandry inevitably leads to over-grazing of food sources. And human habitation in communities of many individuals living in shelters eventually creates problems of securing enough food as the fertility of the soil erodes, and as waste products (sewage) of individuals and animals accumulate. Over time, horticulturalists did develop some capacity in more advanced societies to control ecological damage, but the very nature of the technology, coupled with population growth, still created ecological damage, forcing populations to move, which, over time, led to more densely settled communities, often leading to conflict with other communities which also could damage ecosystems.

The potential for ecological damage probably led to new technologies to mitigate damage, but with economic surplus, populations would continue growing which, in the end, would place ecosystems under continuous pressure. Moreover, while bigger societies were able to withstand ecological change more readily because of innovations for managing risk, larger societies not only put more pressure on their environment, but they were also more subject to the harmful effects of sudden climatic changes in ways their more nimble, adept forager predecessors were not (Fagan 2004). Thus, in the past where populations relied on less immediately renewable resources, such as forests, larger animal game, or even fish in confined waters, a population could move to a more plentiful ecozone. Permanence meant physical, social, and cultural trappings—e.g., difficult to move capital like the plow—which meant much greater costs in moving (Carneiro 1970). Hence, with population growth and density came greater pressures on the environment and greater motivation to resolve ecological changes, regardless of whether they were natural or human-made.

The Social Ecology of Inter-population Conflict and Warfare

Warfare between both simple and advanced horticultural societies was, it appears, chronic (Nolan 2003), with much of the younger male population mobilized for warfare as much as economic activity (which was done

by women and the young). Warfare leads to advances in weaponry, while consolidating power in a polity, especially where metal replaces stone in agriculture (Earle 2002; Gellner 1988). With a more centralized polity, coordination of males and their weapons increased, sometimes introducing new types of corporate units beyond community and kinship (e.g., secret societies, bands of warriors, etc.) for waging warfare, and generating a new type of circumscription alongside geographic and social: the constraints that a military imposes on a society (Carneiro 1970). Such new corporate units increased differentiation among corporate units and created a larger and more diverse structural base for activity that eventually led to the evolution of state-level polities. As polity consolidated power into formations resembling a bureaucratic-like state in advanced horticulture (Flannery and Marcus 2012), these became the template for agrarian societies, although there were other patterns of consolidation of power in those systems that revealed a feudal character.

At the same time, societies at war must increase resource extraction, production, and distribution to support in-the-field warriors (Mann 1986). Thus, leaders of the emerging state-based polity revealing a prominent administrative and coercive base, religious elite providing legitimating ideologies for the state and for warfare, new economic specialties such as weapon-making, and systems of compensation for warriors all generate selection pressures for a money-like symbolic media of exchange. Data support the idea that warfare was related to population pressures, especially among societies with agrarian technologies and metallurgy, most particularly metal craft differentiation and institutional differentiation more generally, and often internal conflicts of a society going to war (Leavitt 1977; Lenski, 1966, 2005; Lenski and Lenski 1974; Nolan and Lenski 2010). To be sure, warfare can also build up the size of societies through conquest and the expansion of the subsistence base; and as societies become consolidated in varying patterns of co-optations and domination, institutional systems evolve, especially economy and polity; and as a result, levels of resource extraction, production, and exchange across larger territories and population all increase. As such processes unfold in empires, market dynamics using money begin to increase the dynamism of the economy more generally, as discussed below.

Market Dynamics as the Engine Generating Economic Autonomy

Exchange is basic to human social relations and is hard-wired in the human genome, as was outlined in Chapter 1. Humans inherited from their last common ancestors of present-day great apes and hominins, not

only the capacity but also the propensity to engage in exchanges in which one resource is given for another, the relative value of the resources is calculated, and where implicit judgements of "fairness" of the exchange are made (Brosnan et al. 2010; de Waal 2019). When fairness is perceived by all parties, they experience positive emotions, whereas when an exchange or an offer of exchange is not seen as fair, negative emotions are aroused or, alternatively, actors negotiate for more resources in achieve fairness (Decety and Yoder 2017; Hegtvedt 2006). However, there is evidence to suggest sustained exchange relations is a fundamental human trait, lodged in humans' evolved psychology-complex (see Appendix II, pages 41 to 48), perhaps intensified by humans' evolved interaction-complex to take the role of the other (Tomasello 2019) and humans' need to maintain an identity and reputation (Arfer et al. 2015; Boehm 2018), and the evolution of third-party reinforcement mechanisms (Brosnan and Beran 2009). Thus, in sustained exchange we find the most primitive form of a "market" in which at a given time and locale, individuals negotiate over the value of objects. Recent evidence suggests trade networks may date to $320{,}000_{BP}$, marking exchange and trade as a core aspect of human societies (Brooks et al. 2018; Tollefson 2018). But, in all likelihood, exchange was rather limited as the number and diversity of goods or services that could potentially be traded remained small.

The following discussion approaches economic autonomy differently than the previous institutional spheres, beginning with the basic activity (trade and markets), because market differentiation is the underlying transformation from political and religious societies to modern, market-driven societies (Luhmann 1982: 197ff.) and because this path of differentiation is symbolic differentiation instead of earlier physical/temporal and social differentiations. Indeed, the evolution of money is far more important to economic autonomy than physical differentiation. Fixed capital, like farms or factories, are part of the story, as are marketplaces, but economy stretches out far beyond these material spaces once *money* circulates widely. In fact, as money begins to circulate within and between institutional domains, the nature of societal integration also changes.

Silent Trade and Its Elaboration

One tantalizing possibility in the evolution of markets is silent trade, though there are few instances of contemporary evidence, and therefore legitimate questions as to how *silent* trade was (de Moraes Farias 1974; Dolfsma and Spithoven 2008). What little is known about the history of silent trade comes from a review of a large number of reports from a diverse array

of observers commenting on the nature of trade among nomadic hunter-gatherers (Grierson 1903). Even if silent exchanges were, in fact, far more negotiated than the observers were led to believe, we do get a sense of the amazing complexity of exchanges which clearly represent the first quasi markets in human societies.

In the ideal typical sense, silent trade refers to exchanges in which partners trade without talking to each other, at least initially. More controversially, they often even "negotiate" without talking to each other. The basic pattern is for one actor or set of actors to enter the territory or stand at the borders of territory and lay down commodities, such as meat, artistic objects, animal skins, salts, or just about anything valued by preliterate populations, and then retreat out of sight. The other half of this exchange observes the actions of the first party and then, deposits his or her objects of value that are to be given in exchange, and then departs out of sight. If the person accepts what is offered, he takes these commodities away, leaving those that he deposited to complete the exchange. There are many variants and elaboration of such silent trade; and indeed, some of the elaborations are indeed just that—elaborations—to the point where a real market can be said to exist using a generalized medium of exchange. Thus, humans were quite advanced in their exchange activities, far beyond what most analysts on market evolution realized.

Most of the criticisms of silent trade have revolved around the lack of primary data. Many of Grierson's cases were secondary reports that could have been knowingly falsified or misinterpreted in translation but it would not be clear why they would be. Moreover, these reports from all over the world suggest that silent trade was at one time an important form of exchange among humans—although there will always be controversy over this issue. Though silent trades do happen today, they are rare and usually only employed when one or both parties are politically vulnerable or when "regular" or recurring trade produces a lack of trust. Woodburn (2016: 492) reaches this conclusion by considering the severe downsides to silent trading. "Since there can be no easy method for the silent trader of showing what he (*sic*) wants in exchange for his goods, since usually all he has available to choose from is what happens to be offered by his opposite number, the chance for mutual satisfaction cannot be high…And, of course, in the absence of other contacts it would tend to be dangerous particularly at the start [as] goods…might be destroyed or stolen…food received might be poisoned [or] the exchange site might be ambushed." So why do it in the first place? Woodburn argues the reciprocation is immediate, which prevents debts or commitments from accruing, and allows both parties—especially the vulnerable one—to maintain high levels of autonomy. Thus, for foragers who 'stumble' upon an encampment

of strangers that maybe do not speak the same language or are the first inter-societal contact they have had, trade would have been a natural intercourse but perhaps best served cautiously. It is also possible that this would have been a preferred exchange pattern between mobile foragers and their more sedentary neighbors; neighbors whose intentions and lifestyle may be "alien" to the hunter. One such example can be found in Grierson's (1903:45–46) discussion of hunters leaving wild boar near the armorer's door in exchange for axes and arrows.

From Silent to Brokered Trade

Eventually, intermediaries or middlemen are introduced, adding a third-party mechanism of reinforcement which, Brosnan and Beran (2009) argue, is key to creating enduring exchanges and, eventually, institutionalizing them. Grierson (1903: 51) reports, for instance, a case in the lower Niger, where an explorer stopped at a village in search of yams to purchase. He was subsequently taken to canoes for trading by a resident. The traders were armed as was the explorer. An older lady, who struck him as a person of consequence too, brought him to the yams. The purchaser selected a bundle of yams and placed beside it what he considered to be the equivalent in cloth, flints, etc. If the old women considered this to be equivalent payment, she gave the purchaser the bundle; if she thought it not sufficient, the purchaser was given the opportunity to add something to the deal. No one talked during this negotiation; it was all done by signs rather than words passing between the parties. But a critical ingredient has been added, an *intermediary* between seller and buyer—a kind broker who took a commission in the goods offered.

From this base, additional elaboration can occur, moving silent trade into ever-more market-like transactions that are not always so silent. One elaboration is almost mercantile relations among various groupings, in which visitors giving presents involves bringing objects as gifts that are, in essence, specified before the actual trade that are then reciprocated by gifts that have also been specified as fair exchange. Thus, visitors are like merchants, they come with a gift valued by a set amount and by implicit calculations that are agreed upon, to receive fair value in another gift given in return, which had also been specified. Moreover, once gifts are calculated by their value in terms their respective worth in exchange, a more generalized medium value in exchanges has come into play. It is not a long step to a more explicit symbolic medium and marker of exchange values with something like *money*. There can be elaborations of this elaboration, as is the case with individuals giving gifts in excess of what is required in order to gain prestige by being so "generous"; the famous competitive

potlaches among the natives of the north coast of North America are a good example of individuals, especially Big Man leaders of settled hunter-gatherers, seeking honor and prestige through generosity in exchange.

In various parts of the world, an early version of the "market town" was created by marking a particular location as monitored by the gods as a safe haven from attack even from waring groups seeking to trade their goods at this place. Indeed, at times, the constant warfare was suspended in order for trade to occur; and after exchanges were complete, the war was back on. Another variant of this is that men continue their typically tit-for-tat revenge killing of their enemies, with the women going to a safe spot to engage in trade, leaving the men to continue their war. A further variant is evident among the Rifis, where the marketplace and roads leading to it are considered safe from the private vengeance with the result that on "market day," all war and vengeance is suspended so that everyone could take their goods to the market to "sell" in exchange for other goods. At this point, silent trade becomes less silent, and it involves considerable evolution to a clear market, with an explicit location, schedule, and rules powerful enough to suspend hostilities while combatants exchange resources. Markets, then, have a kind of power to neutralize other considerations, such as killing one's avowed enemies, because they are a neutral place where exchanges are to occur. Moreover, such marketplaces often involved monitoring by the gods, especially when religious specialists are brokers in the market. Indeed, At Guzzula, a mountain region south of Atlas, tribesmen were in continual warfare, except three times a week, when a truce holds; and men travel to the marketplace to engage in exchange. Even more remarkable perhaps was the people of Riff who had besieged a Spanish garrison. Yet, each day they brought fruits and vegetables, and set them down outside the gates of the fort. The soldiers then come out unarmed and, almost unbelievably mixed with the mountaineers on rather friendly terms, and purchased what they required. At a fixed hour, a bell was sounded, the trade ceased, the gates closed, and the siege was back on (obviously money making was better than having a successful siege, which is difficult when those imposing the siege resupply their enemy). So, in this case trade was not silent, and during the hour or so of the "truce" interaction was friendly and purchases were made with money that the tribesmen could use in markets. Thus, once markets and money exist, trade can accelerate and, as in this case, produce some rather bizarre relationships among "enemies."

Markets and widespread use of money changed the nature of societies, as perhaps Georg Simmel (1907 [1978]) realized more than any of the other early sociologists. Simmel also realized that exchange using money

creates a sense of value, thereby increasing positive emotions each time one resource is exchanged for another. And, as is also evident, markets create a safe place where even enemies can exchange resources and that protect individuals from coercion. Moreover, markets institutionalize gift giving, which, as Marcel Mauss (1967) recognized, makes an interaction moral because the gift symbolizes a relationship among individuals. While markets do much the same, although in a less directly emotional way, the shopping to purchase a gift for someone activates a sense of commitment to those receiving the gift, with the added, somewhat mercantile, capacity to calculate the extrinsic value of the gift while mobilizing a positive intrinsic feeling of commitment. And perhaps equally important, markets and the use of money accelerate all aspects of an economy, constantly pushing on technology that, in fact can become a commodity in markets, encouraging the growth of physical capital, human capital, and of course, transactional capital. Property becomes more clearly defined by its exchange value in markets; and social and cultural formations can now grow and differentiate in ways that make, for better or worse, mega societies composed of many new institutional systems built upon the foundation of the first institutions.

The Evolution of Money

The institutionalization of exchange in markets, however, took a comparatively long time to evolve. There were clearly exchanges of personal objects throughout human history, and as horticultural societies began to evolve (along with their herding and fishing variants), barter in exchanges of resources increased. Moreover, symbolic goods carrying prestige also began to be exchanged, thereby strengthening symbolic and emotional ties among individuals. As more surplus was produced in advanced horticulture, and then in agrarian societies, exchanges increased with the result that slowly and persistently money, or some "object conforming to a reasonable degree to some standard of uniformity, which is employed for reckoning or for making a large proportion of the payments customary in the community concerned, and which is accepted in payment largely with the intention of employing it for making payments," evolved (Einzig 2014: 317). To be sure, the varieties of objects used—from special cloths in Samoa to pigs in the Hebrides, its functions—medium of exchange, store of value, and so forth, and how it was used—sometimes as a general currency for all, other times among certain traders (Einzig 2014; Orrell and Chlupatý 2016). Whenever employed, the use of money as a generalized medium of economic interaction, exchange, and communication was revolutionary, dramatically changing the social universe. Our discussion

begins, first, with some basic thoughts on money as a thing, and then its evolution, and finally, the consequences of money as a *generalized symbolic media of exchange*.

What Money Is…

According to Jevons (1875: 31), fully developed true money possesses the following requirements in order from most important to least: (1) utility/value, (2) portability, (3) indestructibility, (4) homogeneity, (5) divisibility, (6) stability of value, and (7) cognizability. In ideal typical terms, money would reveal all of these, but clearly even bad money can possess value in exchanges. Paper money, though portable, is not divisible and certainly cannot withstand fire. Furthermore, money has commercial and non-commercial uses, the latter of which can have real effects on their role in price mechanisms. Money is not just a medium of exchange, but rather has many functions including acting as a commodity, which though bemoaned by Marx, is key to its ability to create meta-markets in which people buy and sell money (Collins 1990). Einzig (2014: 327) offers some important dimensions along which money has historically varied, such as its level of abstractness, its exclusivity, its fungibility, and its particularity to a location.

For example, the southern Siouans used various kinds of animal skins as markers of value and exchange, with so many of varying types of skins used to calculate the exchange operating, and thereby, operating as a *de facto* form of money. As noted in other chapters, the Chumash of Santa Barbara coast and islands developed denominations of a "money" by shells packed in stacks held together by thread made from animal skins. Similarly, the northwestern Californian natives use dentalium shells as markers of value, labelling different commodities' value by the number of shells needed for their purchase. The natives of Santa Cruz used parrot feathers. Thus, among forging populations, money was emerging in exchanges in locales that looked very much like marketplaces that were more dynamic than individual exchanges of gifts because a form of money was used in most transactions.

In the Philippines among the Igorot or Ifugao, we see an even more complex system of money in the form of unthreshed or unhusked rice (*palay*) (Einzig 2014: 82). The unit is the *manojo*, or handful, with extraordinarily advanced fixed denominations ranging from 1 to 1000 *manojos*. It serves as a medium of exchange, and was also used to pay wages (e.g., 5 *manojos* were the daily wages for wood-gatherers). Like most forms of money, it was more than a medium of exchange. For instance, *palay* was used for loans with interest. Unlike true money, such as the dollars, it co-existed with

other forms of money. In addition to local money, the Igorot, use *palay* for exchange relations beyond their local communities, and also had come to accept modern money too. But, rice had certain advantages: as a staple crop, it was always in demand; it is impossible to counterfeit; it was not heavy and thus relatively easy to transport, at least not in the units usually used. But, its universality was restricted, as bigger transactions required other media of exchange, including modern money.

Eventually, agrarian city-states adopted metals in addition to staple crops to use as coinage. Mesopotamian kings, for instance, continued to use barley as the daily wages for the corvée labor they extracted from the countryside. The unit was standardized through the mass production of bowls that each worker would bring to a central grain storage. However, Mesopotamian kings, like the Babylonians, also used lumps of silver by weight and set prices by how many of these "skekels" were needed to buy a commodity for internal and external market exchanges. The Hittites used a mixture of sheep and silver (Einzig 2014: 210). By 2,700 BCE kings of Lydia, in western Asia, stamped lumps of minerals with the royal symbol, thus creating the first true coins (Lowie 1934: 152). Meanwhile the first paper money was created in China under the rule of the Mongol dynasty (sheets of varying sizes marking different values from mulberry trees, which were hard to forge and which carried severe penalties for forging). However, prior to the advent of paper money, and even after, silk and metal currencies continued to circulate. Indeed, livestock and various types of metals were prominent in medieval Europe, while as late as the 18th century, non-monetary currencies like rum in Australia (Gardner 1934), continued to be used as media of exchange, wage payments, and stores of value. Thus, we must ask how and why money evolved in the first place before thinking about the dynamic power of money once it becomes a true generalized symbolic medium.

Media of Exchange, Stores of Value

Barter and personal exchanges may still have constituted the majority of exchanges in a society, and even as markets emerged, barter continued to matter (Einzig 2014: 338–44). Long distance trade, mass labor, and loans generated selection pressures for creating objects that could serve as markers of value in exchanges of resources. Yet, how and why money evolved remains an open question. In reality, it is likely that money came about through different routes based on local circumstances. For instance, barter likely led to the evolution of money in some cases as "more and more people found it convenient to use the same intermediate goods in

their transactions [choosing] first as a favorite medium of barter and later as a medium of exchange [objects] because those accepting them could rely on being able to find others willing to accept them" (Einzig 2014: 346). A variant on this origin argument is internal trade, where professional traders choose an intermediary to facilitate inter- and intra-market exchanges between traders, while potentially bartering in-kind with end users. However, external trade is another possible source of pressure. Money could arise where imported objects with non-monetary use and relative scarcity, like salt in Ethiopia (Rey 1927), purposefully or not come to circulate, or where staple products like barley or rice come to have non-monetary demand in surrounding communities. For instance, as late as Italy's invasion of Ethiopia, salt was being used as a form of currency in many villages (Einzig 2014: 113–15).

These three routes, however, presuppose money as a medium of exchange as its only or primary function; it also may have evolved in relationship to problems of value (Keynes 1930 [2011]). The question is whether a medium of exchange could precede the standardization of value, or would some group of actors settle on a common denominator first and foremost? The argument rests on the idea that bartering economies predicated on presents would neither need a standard of value or mechanism of exchange. Once bargaining arose, the notion of value would grow increasingly salient. In particular, Einzig (2014: 366–88) points out that the exchange theories of money rest on the idea that money evolved solely for commercial purposes, which does not fit the ethnological record. Non-commercial origins—e.g., ceremonial, religious, political, matrimonial, and status symbols—are as frequently found in the empirical evidence on the origins of money as its commercial origins. Undoubtedly, economic entrepreneurs eventually play a central role in the evolution of modern money, as do legal and political entrepreneurs invested in monetary policy. In terms of its evolution, money has, at least three functions and, therefore, possible paths to evolution: medium of exchange, standardization of value, and, lastly, a store of value (Rist 2016). Money, especially forms that are durable (e.g., precious metals) or possess non-monetary uses and are replenished naturally (e.g., staple crops), can act as "insurance" against uncertain futures. Gold, in the U.S., is an example.

Nevertheless, money eventually becomes the *generalized* symbolic medium of the economic sphere, circulating in tangible and intangible forms in ways that explode the already-dynamic aspects of markets. However, before we can turn towards money and markets and the evolution of economic autonomy, a few words on money as a generalized symbolic medium are in order.

Generalized Symbolic Media

We have already said much about generalized symbolic media, generally (in Chapter 4) and more institution-specific (e.g., Chapter 8 or 10). *Money*, however, has served as the prototype, first with Simmel (1907 [1978]) and then with Parsons' (1963a, 1963b) re-introduction and attempt at expanding the concept into a classification system. Economies are complex in ways that polities and religions are not. While economic action in the most ideal typical form occurs either where fixed capital resides or a physical marketplace exists, economy in a broader sense is neither fixed nor literal. In some ways, this was Polanyi's (1944) "big point": the economy is a social thing because it permeates nearly all facets of life. Everything can be commodified once true money exists, and therefore, despite protests against the commodification of, say, family life (Pugh 2005), economy as a cool and ubiquitous symbolic medium of "value" can colonize any institutional spheres. And so, *money* is the ultimate colonizing medium of interaction, exchange, and communication.

What is remarkably important about media are their capacity to "thematicize" the patterned ways of feeling, thinking, and doing that comes to reflect the tone and timbre of an institutional sphere (Luhmann 1982: 204–08). Political action is "about" *power*, kinship emotions center on *love* (and, sometimes, contradictorily, *loyalty*). And, therefore, economy becomes about *money*. Not money in the strict sense of dollars and cents, but in its function of standardizing exchanges and value, conserving value. This is, in part, the reason we have avoiding talking directly about the other dimensions of institutional space (physical, temporal, and social) thus far: the symbolic medium of money reveals some properties that are not just prototypical to all other media but also some that are unique to money. In the economy, the physical sites exist only for the production and distribution of *money*. Mines, farms, and factories are all involved in the extraction or production of resources that, once money becomes the dominant medium of exchange, represent *money* as much as the *money* represents the value being exchanged when one purchases a commodity (Marx 1867 [1990]). Marketplaces are both real and virtual spaces that exist only to facilitate mass exchange between personal, impersonal, and depersonalized actors using *money*. And while in-kind exchanges do still occur, as well as gift exchanges, it is increasingly rare that the goods or services being exchanged are not understood in terms of the standard of value used to either procure them in the first place or in evaluating the good or service one gets in return. In Marx's famous equation, money replaces the direct social exchange ([C]ommodity • [C]ommodity) with a mediated

one that not only hides the inherent source of value (humanness) of the objects, but disfigures the relationship beyond recognition too ([M]oney • [C] • [M]). To be sure, Marx may romanticize the preliterate economy, and may in fact have known very little about these dynamics, but one thing is for certain: modern money easily penetrates every non-commercial nook and cranny in modern societies. Sociologists have studied the dynamics of money and economic action in historically non-commercial spaces like death (Zelizer 1978), love (Zelizer 2005), motherhood (Pugh 2005), as well as revealed the types of discursive mechanisms necessary for making money non-utilitarian and, in the case of alms-giving, sacred (Belk and Wallendorf 1990).[2] Every year, in professional North American and European sports, sportswriters and fans alike put up with, begrudgingly, the impurities of contract negotiations and disputes between stars and teams that threatens the purity of competition (Abrutyn 2018). Only during the bracketed "off-season" are these discourses about money permitted, with the desire for the actual games to be temporally protected from the ugliness of utilitarianism.

This last point underscores the temporal effects of money. The medium becomes an "ever-present utilizability," independent of time; it measures and conveys value, inhering not only in language, as Luhmann argues, but in physical and social objects that make tangible the medium and, also, makes it a resource one may pursue, hoard, and look longingly at (Abrutyn 2016). It becomes increasingly difficult to bracket non-economic action because money's utility is truly ubiquitous. Thereby, as a linguistic or textual thing, a physical object, and an idea, it *universally facilitates* an institution's interactions, exchanges, and communication, even if the *meaning* of a given set or cluster of interactions, exchanges, and communication develop additional intersubjective, particularistic meanings (Zelizer 1978, 1989, 1997). Indeed, the tendency for media like *money* to not just be purely utilitarian, but rather to signify normative or trigger affectual meanings further reinforces both the power of the medium and its elasticity.

In short, all media can come to circulate widely, across institutional boundaries, but *money* has a unique dynamic because economic autonomy means subsistence no longer becomes rooted in everyone producing the bare minimum, but rather flips the equation: the vast majority of people are freed from the rounds of subsistence life, but the tradeoff is that they *need money to survive*. The economy always cross-cuts all facets of life, but where *money* becomes the dominant medium of economic interaction, exchange, and communication, it dis-embeds itself from kinship and polity, but never loses its pervasiveness. Rather, all interactions, exchanges, and communication can become

quantified in monetary terms. Thus, on the one hand, specific generalized roles emerge: producer-consumer, for instance. However, the basic relationship is easily transposed over *all* generalized roles: doctor-patient, lawyer-client, and, in traditional gendered kinship, husband-wife. Put differently, economic relationships, like the medium itself, come to rest side-by-side with non-economic aspects of the relationship, sometimes contradicting it, other times complimenting it. But, in either case, the boundaries between one sphere and economy dissolve or are under duress incessantly.

The thing to remember, societies could not get bigger without *money*, as Simmel's (1907 [1978]) observation remains eminently relevant: while money can and does threaten to commodify relationships, it is the only non-violent generalized mechanism of integration capable of shrinking physical, social, and cultural distances without completely absorbing the particularities of a local culture. Polities use physical violence, religions use psychic violence, and law uses procedural violence. Money just provides a common language for exchanging goods and services both locally and trans-locally.

Markets and Money

In Figure 14.1, we outline the forces that affect the evolution of markets and money that, in turn, increase the scale and scope of distributive infrastructures (marketplaces, towns, and districts within cities). The left side of the figure denotes general forces that increase gathering (or resource extraction) and production (converting resources into commodities) in a society. As noted above, size of the population and its rate of growth will always increase production and resource extraction which, in turn, creates incentives to develop new technologies for doing so beyond what existed among hunter-gatherers and settled hunter-gatherers, simple horticulturalists, herding populations, and maritime populations. Warfare often occurs as populations settled down and grow which, in turn, also leads to innovations in technology. Size of the territory occupied by a population can also affect innovations, especially in transportation and communication among remote settlements and larger urban clusters; and such a situation also increases rates of exchange, initially barter but later exchanges using some form of money.

Another set of key process that is occurring as resource extraction, production, and distribution increase are increases in the number and diversity of corporate units organizing individual activities within all emerging institutional domains. Kinship may decline, but the organizational advantage lost in this "de-evolution" was replaced by more diverse corporate units in other institutional domains (especially polity) that all need

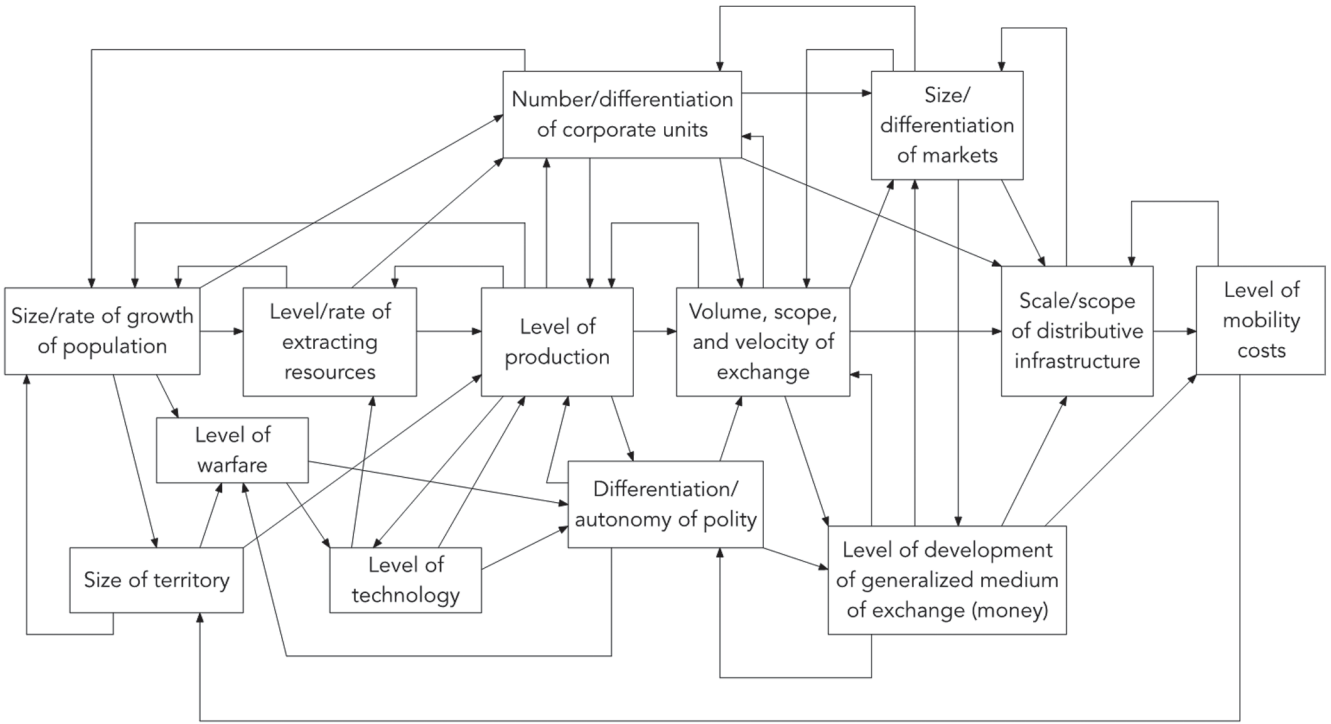


Figure 14.1 Evolution of Markets, Money, Distributive Infrastructures

resources to sustain themselves. Consequently, as indicated in Figure 14.1, these units begin to generate economic demand for needed resources that operate as selection pressures on the economy for increasing the level of extraction, the level of production of diverse goods and commodities, and the level of distribution (thereby increasing selection pressures for money and markets).

Notably, the arrows connecting these forces on the left side of Figure 14.1 represent positive relationships. Increased extraction and production generating economic surplus beyond subsistence creates the resources to support both the growing autonomy of religion and polity (through, respectively, donations and taxation); and as polity begins to grow, differentiate, and seeks more autonomy from kinship and religion it begins to have a vested interest in production and in increasing the volume, scope, and velocity of exchanges in markets of developing distributive infrastructures (roads, canals, ports, market locales, and modes of transportation). Moreover, as polity grows and becomes more bureaucratic, it has an increased interest in taxation of property and exchanges through money because this generalized medium of exchange can be used to, first of all, enhance elite wealth but, equally important, to pay for the administrative and coercive bases of power, while being available as a material incentive base of power. Moreover, whether directly taking money and/or coopting religious elites, money can be used to build up a symbolic base of symbolic power, initially through large monuments, such as elaborate palaces, public works, temples for worship of gods and kings, etc. Indeed, while slavery and conscription of workers using the coercive-administrative branches of power were used, money is a more flexible means to create physical markers symbolizing power that generate less potential resistance from members of a population.

The key breakthrough, as noted above, *is the development of money as a generalized medium of exchange*, serving as a marker of value of all goods (and eventually services) and as an implicit moral code guiding normative regulated transaction of individuals and corporate units. Moreover, since money is a "cool" medium and a neutral marker of value, it moralizes in ways that are very different than religious and political ideologies. It moralizes exchange in markets, thus giving cultural sanctity to a force that is, in essence, a "differentiating machine" because markets using money allow individuals to express their preferences, *qua* preferences, without having to compromise these preferences by bartering for those commodities that are available. It also moralizes by explicitly and externally signifying rank and possession of tangible and intangible qualities favored by society. More buying power means more status goods—whether houses,

cars, or the ability to buy your kids the newest and best toys—means greater moral influence over others. Ultimately, preferences can be expressed, and these preferences generate selection pressures for differentiated markets along lines of preferences of individuals and corporate units, as long as there are enough preference-seekers for particular goods, commodities, and services to justify a distinctive market.

As markets differentiate, new kinds of corporate units engaged in extraction, production, and servicing distribution begin to evolve—thereby increasing sociocultural differentiation in a society that in turn generates selection pressures, particularly on economy to grow and differentiate, on polity to regulate, control, and coordinate, and on law to begin to create new bodies of law (torts, contracts), courts, and enforcement mechanisms to regulate the increased volume of exchanges. This rapid evolution creates a "take off" point for increasing autonomy of economic actors. And once gaining high levels of autonomy from polity and religion in particular, the generalized medium of money begins to circulate in all other institution domains to supplement or supplant the generalized symbolic medium of each domain (see Table 4.1 on page 109). In so doing, money supplements the moral and ideological power of other generalized symbolic media, often "cooling off" the volatility of some generalized media (such as those in kinship and religion). Moreover, money can also be used to purchase the generalized symbolic media of other domains, as is the case when worshipers "donate" to religious temples in exchange for access to the *sacred world of the supernatural* (Belk and Wallendorf 1990; Walsh 2009); when parents try to "buy" obedience and *loyalty* of their children; when polity motivates and controls particular actors through tax breaks or sanctioned fees; when economic actors want to provide incentives for purchases through price reduction; when parents want to send their children to college; when persons want to acquire art; and so on.

Moreover, markets not only create news kinds of differentiated corporate units for organizing human activities, they create structural and cultural formations—as elements of any economy—that increase exchange activity and, hence, the dynamism of economies. While some corporate units remain embedded in constraining hierarchies, other corporate units are created or freed up to express preferences for particular types of goods and services in markets. As the kinship system begins to evolve back to the nuclear family, families can now differentiate in terms of how they express their preferences in markets, thus creating new varieties of economic demand. Each of the new corporate units within religion, polity, economy, and law represent a potential source of demand in markets, not only as an aggregate increase but also as an increase in the diversity of commodities

and services wanted, thereby increasing all economic processes through differentiated market demand. Thus, interdependence by exchange in markets using money increases, thus making it possible to organize larger numbers of individuals and units organizing their activities by expanding resource extraction, production, and most importantly, differentiated markets reflecting the increase in range and scope of demand from diverse corporate units and their incumbents.

Since hunting and gathering, the principal mode of integration among corporate units had been *structural inclusion*, often accompanied by *structural domination* of smaller corporate units lodged inside of larger units (see Table 3.1 on page 93). Moreover, *segmentation* (of families and bands) and, hence, low levels of *structure* made for little *structural mobility*, *structural segregation*, and most importantly, *structural interdependence*. The social universe was a series of embedded cages of nuclear families in bands, offering relatively few options for individuals and members of kinship units. Expanding production and distribution, and especially distribution, through money and markets, break this restrictive mode of organization, even as polity and stratification increase the limited options of individuals (see Chapter 15). Increasingly through the agrarian era, structural differentiation, structural overlap without domination, structural mobility, and structural segregation broke, to some degree, the hold of limited structural differentiation and structural inclusion and domination by bands and unilineal kinship. Indeed, by the time migrations off landed estates of former peasants and serfs to urban areas began to increase (Goldstone 1990) in search of a more diverse set of opportunities in crafts, arts, and labor, new modes of integration among more differentiated corporate units within and between institutional domains was well under way. Consequently, as markets for diverse labor skills increased, these structural movements continued and served as a structural base for the rise of industrial technologies and a complete reorganization of the economy into a more autonomous institutional domain.

Without early markets, the hold of structural formations on individuals in all institutional domains put a drag on innovation and new technologies that could drive economic evolution, but once markets began to be the means for distribution of goods and services, a new engine could drive the economy and change all of its other elements—technology, physical capital formation, human capital skills and knowledge, transaction capital, notions of property, social and cultural formations. These changes were clearly evident at the peak of societal evolution in Europe and the Near East before the collapse of the Roman Empire. Although the collapse of Rome stymied the evolutionary processes, it opened space

up for Muslim innovation, and also saw continued Indian and Chinese innovation and economic growth. Eventually, however, new innovations in law (see the previous Chapter 13) and technology slowly accumulated and, at some point, around 1200 to 1300 CE initiated a new phase of societal evolution in western Europe, spurned first by commerce and the activation of markets (Lopez 1971) in increasingly autonomous cities that became economic units (Weber 1927 [2002]). Then, new scientific and cultural breakthroughs (Gaukroger 2006) mixed with the decline in traditional authority and the concomitant rise in bureaucratic rationalism (Collins 1986a) drove economic evolution until industrialization exploded.

Market Cyclical Dynamics and Institutional Evolution

All of the arrows in Figure 14.1 represent positive relationships, which means that increases in the valence of the forces in any of the boxes increases the forces directly connected by an arrow and, indirectly, through chains of arrows connecting multiple boxes. The figure was drawn to emphasize that as human societies slowly evolved from hunting and gathering, the elements of the economy were changing in ways that set up a rapid movement in just a few thousand years to advanced agrarian societies after relative stasis in societal evolution for several hundred thousand years. These new elements overcame many of the structural limitations[3] of hunting and gathering economies in expanding the wealth in societies. Kinship as the structural backbone of horticultural societies was highly restrictive, as was the evolving polity and religious institutional systems in advanced horticulture and agrarian societies, but even as cages, these structures were more complex and provided the structural base for organizing ever-larger numbers of humans.

The evolution of markets was, perhaps, one of the most liberating features of advanced agrarian societies (Nolan and Lenski 2010), although crushing stratification kept most individuals from realizing the potential in markets when made available to entire populations. Indeed, market economies would eventually lessen patterns of structural domination and crushing stratification somewhat, but markets have not fully broken the hold of the stratification systems that had evolved during horticulture and the agrarian eras. Indeed, they have often contributed to increasing stratification by escalating competition for low-wage employment. Yet, as Figure 14.1 suggests, the dynamics of evolving agrarian societies created markets that fueled economies capable of providing some affluence to entire populations, if the hold of stratification could somehow be broken.

They created wealth and affluence for many, as they left many behind, but their potential for creating better societies was far greater than the agrarian polities, theocratic or not. However, one of the biggest problems—at the system- or macro-level—in societies where economies have attained relative autonomy, is the feedback loops from markets and money to all the other forces driving economic evolution. On the one hand, markets and money accelerate evolution as new meta-markets based in buying and selling imagined things like credit or securities, hedging bets on the future value of commodities, and even investing in money itself to drive technological innovation and expansion of wealth. On the other hand, meta-markets are even more volatile than regular markets (Collins 1990), and thus any collapse in one market will have immediate consequences for all markets and, because of the feedback loop, extraction, production, and distribution more generally. Metaphorically, autonomous economies like those in the U.S. or Canada—and, really, the global economy that has transcended the singular internal dynamics of any one country—are like a Las Vegas gambler. One minute they are on a hot streak, and those winnings can benefit most everyone, but winning becomes addictive and sooner or later a cold streak happens or the house wins, causing everyone to lose; but, losing and winning, in this metaphor, are never distributed evenly, with the most disadvantaged benefiting the least and suffering the most.

Figure 14.2 outlines some of the dynamics that lead to market crises, drawing from early sociologists like Max Weber (1933 [1978]) and Georg Simmel (1907 [1978]) and more contemporary scholars such as Fernand Braudel (1977, 1979 [1985]) and Randall Collins (1990).[4] The model seeks to outline the forces that lead to market contractions and, at times, actual collapses that, in turn, threaten all of the institutional systems in societies, but particularly the economy and its capacity to extract, produce, and distribute resources to actors in not only the economy but all other institutional spheres. This instability had become evident in advanced agrarian societies to a modest degree and, as is clear, had become even more volatile in industrial and post-industrial societies of the present era. It appears that these cycles of contraction are inevitable, and, like the rise and demise of dominant societies in the history of societies, initiate yet another cycle that greatly disrupts the institutional order of societies and systems of societies.

The Evolution and Collapse of Markets

Ferdnand Braudel (1977, 1979 [1985]) viewed markets as a transforming dynamic; indeed, they were essential to the evolution of law, economy, and polity in creating the institutional base for further evolution to modernity.

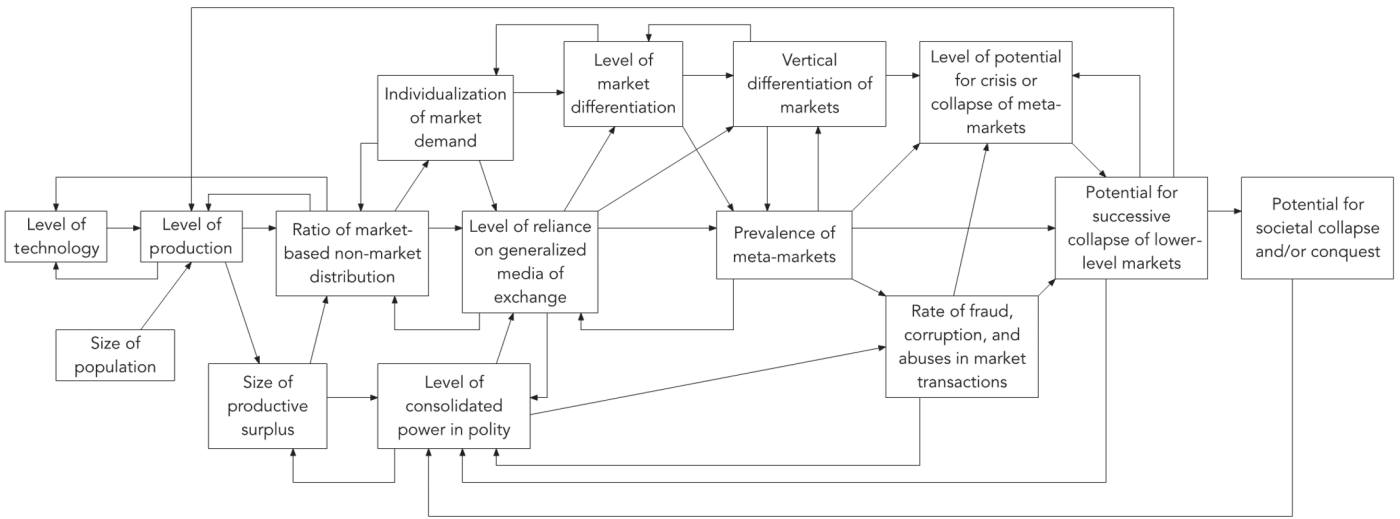


Figure 14.2 Differentiation of Markets and Economic Instability

Braudel distinguished between "lower" and "upper" markets beginning with (1) person-to-person barter, a kind of temporary or pop-up market situation; and then to (2) person-to-person exchanges using money; and with money, (3) peddlers who personally made goods that they sold for money, while at times offering what is necessary for higher-order markets to evolve, the *offering of credit* to customers.[5] The next level of market development was (4) shopkeepers selling goods that they did not make for money and, once again, credit. With this lower-level base of market development, higher order markets could evolve, but the use of money as a generalized medium of exchange was essential, as was credit, to market evolution.

As money or purchasing power become a commodity to be marketed in exchanges, there is a subtle but fundamental shift in what is a "commodity" in market dynamics. At the upper level, (5) fairs or relatively stable locations[6] emerge where larger volumes of goods are bought and sold alongside credit and other financial instruments. Next come (6) trade centers in permanent locations within urban areas or as actual market cities in their own right, where brokers and bourgeoisie sell goods and services, including credit, and other financial instruments. (7) The final level of markets are private markets where merchants engage in high-risk and high-profit speculations, often around trade along long chains of exchanges between producers and buyers. In these private exchanges, numerous financial instruments are also sold, such as credit, insurance, and the beginnings of quasi-stocks given to investors willing to share risks with lead entrepreneurs. These private markets often operated outside of the purview of polity but, in other cases, with investments by polity. But, given the number of non-material resources sold—credit, insurance, banking services, and "stocks"—in chains of exchange in often long paths of physical movement of goods (across oceans and larger territories), these kinds of markets became highly speculative, carrying high risks but also high profits for "investors."

These kinds of higher-order markets did not affect the average person, whose life revolved around lower-order markets, but the profits in private, higher-order markets involving risk and speculation generated wealth and capital that would, in turn, shape the six lower levels of markets, as more demand for diverse products could be created.

In Figure 14.2, this differentiation of markets is emphasized. Once money as a generalized medium of exchange is heavily used in market exchanges, markets not only differentiate horizontally by increased categories and diversity of goods sold, but they differentiate vertically, as Braudel has emphasized. Randal Collins (1990) terms these higher-order markets

meta-markets because they often bought and sold the medium of exchange in lower-level markets as the commodity bought and sold in a higher-order market. For examples, money markets would eventually emerge not just for extending credit, but money itself would become *a commodity* that was bought and sold on speculation and often on credit, thus compounding the typical risks of a market. Consequently, meta-markets create potential for market collapses; and just as higher-order markets can create wealth that has downward effects on the hierarchy of markets, failures in these highly speculative markets would also be felt in the demand for goods and services in lower-level markets, causing a cascading collapse of economic action. Stock markets are, of course, the poster child for what collapse can mean, when stocks lose their value, enormous amounts of wealth that can finance technologies or physical and human capital development are taken out of the economy, thereby sending the economy into deep recession or even depression.

Markets and Western Law

As argued in the previous chapter, markets could evolve because law evolved far more autonomously in the West than in the East. Moreover, it was not simply law imposed by the state, but the adoption of legal codes by every major estate—the Canon law of the Church, Royal and Manorial law for polities and aristocracy, respectively, and Urban and Mercantile law for the rapidly growing middle class in cities throughout the southern and western European states (Berman 1983). The Hanseatic League across northern Europe is a good example of what law can do to regulate the dynamics of markets and the relationship of markets to emerging polities. But, nowhere did law and economy enter into a marriage of dynamic evolutionary potential than in the European city-state (Nicholas 2014).

Though sociology often begins with Weber's (1904–05 [1958]) Protestant Ethic thesis, the basic argument was that rational, Western capitalism required the diffusion and adoption of a practical economic ethic—an economic ethic that *needed* rational law (Weber 1927; Collins 1986a). Before Protestantism, this ethic would have been crafted and carried by the legal entrepreneurs who came out of the Church's reforms in the 12th century and the rise of the law school and a standardized legal education. Indeed, by the end of the 12th century, legal entrepreneurs, through their own legal-rationalism and scientific jurisprudence, imposed, directly and indirectly, a practical and rational ethic on the day-to-day economic rounds on the guilds and merchants necessary for the creation of a civic strata characterized by a "practical rationalism in conduct" (Weber 1946a: 284). This civic strata was

not the result of the Protestant reformation, but rather the latter was *caused* by the pervasiveness of a legal-rational ethic. Consequently, legal autonomy was essential to (a) the formation of Protestantism, (b) the democratization of charisma throughout a whole community, and (c) the pervasiveness of a Capitalist Spirit. It is arguable that the size, density, and extensivity of the Occidental or European civic strata so peculiar to Weber's Protestant Ethic thesis could not have existed until legal entrepreneurs found their autonomy first.

In essence, as disputes occurred between all sorts of actors—e.g., the State, Church, guilds and, eventually, newly minted, legally defined corporate actors like universities, chartered cities, monasteries, and the nation-state—legal-rationalism and a practical economic ethic "made sense." And, as market dynamics provided wealth to states, urban elite, and myriad others, inter-societal trade became increasingly encouraged, which generated wealth for elite and polity, set the stage for industrial capitalism, as new sources of power (new technologies) could be harnessed to the machines that had been driven by air, water, and labor a century earlier. With new sources of power, then, the economy could take a sudden leap in the last 300 years into the industrial and post-industrial age, but this leap was made possible by the expansion and differentiation of markets generating wealth for investments in technology, physical capital, human capital, property, transactional capital, and new kinds of corporate units and their cultures connected to each other, to some higher degree than ever before, by markets, regulated by law and polity.

Conclusion: the Sociocultural Base for Modernity

As the economy grew autonomous, and the legal and political spheres grew increasingly autonomous, modernity as sociologists think of it, was on the cusp. Over the course of the next half millennium, economy, polity, and law would continue to evolve in ways that fueled each other, and also gave rise to new institutional spheres that found material justification in the circulation of money, franchised authority in the circulation of power, and legal jurisdiction in the circulation of justice. Spheres like medicine, science, and art have become distinctive cultural milieus, and have added a new set of contours to the modern world we inhabit. At the same time, the economy has grown increasingly dominant, threatening the initial gains and promise the 1950s and 1960s American economy provided. Our analysis, however, stops short of exploring the fomentation of the modern world, as historical sociologists have spilled more ink on this subject than just about any other. We also stop short

of examining contemporary societies, because even more ink has been spilt studying the last 40 years, but also because we are living through it and it is always difficult to gain enough perspective to evaluate where we are and where we are going.

In the next chapter, we will turn to the relationship between institutional spheres and stratification. While we have tried to include the dynamics of inequality where germane to the topic at hand, we have largely sought to emphasize the evolutionary dynamics driving kinship, polity, religion, law, and economy and their structural and cultural dimensions. Nonetheless, like all structures at all levels of social reality, institutional spheres both conserve and change patterns of stratification. When looked at over long spans of historical periods, we often see a pattern where an institutional sphere's structure and culture are evolving, in flux, and consequently, having transformative effects on inequality. With the growth of law in the long 12th century, for instance, legal entrepreneurs would expand a new set of paths to mobility, allowing more people to pursue and obtain desired resources like wealth and prestige. Law also had the effect of gradually making justice available to greater numbers of people. Over time, however, once an institutional sphere begins to crystallize, its elites typically become entrenched and seek to protect their privilege. Conservation of the status quo comes into tension with reformist efforts within and between spheres. The two co-exist, but there is no doubt institutional spheres are powerful forces of cultural reproduction and, therefore, domination and conservation of inequality.

Notes

1 Hunter-gatherers knew that plants would grow from seeds; and so, they would sometimes scatter seeds around places in the circular route through their territory with the hope of being able to "harvest" the plants that grew for food. Just how widespread this knowledge was cannot be known for sure, but it is likely that most understood this technology, but did not want to engage in the work of tending gardens year around (Liu et al. 2011).

2 The pervasiveness of money in modernity presents both advantages and disadvantages, many of which we explore in Chapter 15. For now, it is enough to say money provides myriad routes of mobility that power and sacredness (which is predicated on monopolized control over certain types of violence) simply does not. It provides the base upon which humans can be almost as free and independent as they were in foraging societies. However, its tendency to subvert indigenous media, such as quantifying love, has moral and affectual downsides. It also, paradoxically, intensifies stratification in different ways, as subsistence through direct production is no longer feasible for the vast majority of members of an industrialized/post-industrialized society; working for wages or salary is the principle path to biological reproduction, and thus any sharp inequalities

in the distribution of money produces life-and-death inequality that is qualitatively different from, say, feudal times. We will say more about this and other institutional spheres and their media in the conclusion of the book.

3 Ignoring, for the moment, their relative freedom, individualism, and compatibility with humans' evolved nature.

4 There have been many contemporary sociologists who have examined market systems, especially in a world context, but most of these have been directed as the evolution of the world system with a clearly Marxian bias that has led them to fail to see the other side of markets. See, for example, Weber (1927 [2002]); Simmel (1907 [1978]); Moore (1966); Hall (1985); Mann (1986); Wallerstein (1974); Chase-Dunn and Lerro (2014).

5 Markets had developed to this level by early horticulture, with perhaps the provision of credit, although it is hard to know if credit did or did not exist (Einzig 2014).

6 Fairs and permanent locations for exchange existed in early human societies, but the array of financial instruments probably did not exist in early societies before advanced horticultural and agrarianism.

15
Institutional Evolution and Stratification

The first human societies of nomadic hunter-gatherers were not stratified, at least not in ways recognizable to modern readers. There were powerful norms against anyone considering themselves better than others and, since there were few material objects of value, there could be little material inequality. Those who violated this normative culture were punished, and if a person sought to dominate others this individual could be killed or banished from the band. However, as institutional spheres began to evolve, differentiate, and develop their own distinctive generalized symbolic media, inequality and stratification began to increase, first within kinship relations and relations of property specified by kinship rules, and then increasingly by the differentiation of polity and evolution toward something resembling a state. As other institutional spheres evolved, they too began to move towards more autonomy with a distinctive generalized symbolic medium. Thus, as human societies evolved towards settled hunting and gathering through horticultural formations, and variants such as herding or fishing societies (see Figure 14.1 on page 350), into the agrarian era, each of the first human institutions outlined in the previous chapters had a distinctive generalized symbolic medium and some degree of autonomy, with the symbolic media circulating across institutional spheres. As these processes ensued, the distribution of valued resources by corporate units within institutional spheres became increasingly unequal and, moreover, access to resource-giving corporate units was increasingly restricted. The result was the evolution of stratification systems in all human societies. We briefly outlined these processes at the end of Chapter 4, with Figure 4.1 on page 113 denoting the key properties of stratification systems. Now it is time to analyze how institutions generate inequality and stratification and, moreover, how inequality and stratification escalate selection pressures on institutional systems.

What Is Stratification?

Stratification systems all share some basic features that vary with respect to the properties listed below:

 DOI: 10.4324/9781003224433-16

1. The degree of unequal distribution of resources valued by humans to members of a society.
2. The number and types of valued resources distributed unequally.
3. The distinctiveness of diverse subpopulations sharing the same levels and types of resources distributed unequally.
4. The extent to which members in these subpopulations sharing similar resources are homogenous in terms of the following variables, thereby marking them as members of a certain class or strata in a society:
   a. culture
   b. behaviors and demeanors
   c. memberships in distinctive social categories, such as ethnicity, religious affiliation, age, and gender
   d. networks of affiliation with others in corporate units
   e. lifestyles practiced
   f. relative rates of endogamy and exogamy.
5. The degree of linearity in the ranking of these subpopulations or classes in terms of their respective resource shares and their moral worth as defined by beliefs and ideologies.
6. The rates and direction (up or down the class system) of individuals and families from one subpopulation or class to another.
7. The extent to which membership in social categories such as gender, age, religion, and ethnicity are correlated with the linear rankings of subpopulations and classes in terms of their respective resource shares.

This list of properties is, obviously, stated rather abstractly but it does allow us to get a handle on how to conceptualize stratification. The basic point derives from Blau's (1977) conception of macro-space consisting of two intersecting parameters: status characteristics that are inherently nominal categories, on the one hand, and ranked characteristics that are built around the distribution of scarce resources valued by the group in question, on the other. All societies are, to some extent, stratified because just about any distinction—ascribed or achieved—can be made a salient difference. When a correlation emerges between a categoric unit and the distribution of a resource, inequality could be said to be salient. That is, when gender (the nominal parameter) and economic surplus (the graduated parameter) cluster together, with men having disproportionate shares of resources, then gender inequality will be a real determining force, as beliefs emerge to justify and make sense of the distributive patterns (Ridgeway 1991).

Thus, to return to the list above, we see can generalize stratification in two basic propositions. First, (a) the greater the inequality in the distribution of valued resources, (b) the larger is the number and variety of

resources distributed unequally, and, subsequently, (c) the greater is the distinctiveness of subpopulations sharing similar resource shares such that they can be identified as a "class." Second, (d) the more homogeneous are members of class with respect to their culture, behaviors and demeanors, memberships in distinctive categoric units, networks of relations, lifestyles practiced, and rates of intra-class marriage, (e) the more lineal the ranking of these classes in terms of their moral worth as defined by cultural beliefs, (f) the lower the rates of mobility from one class to another, and (g) the more membership in a class is correlated with *ascribed* categoric-unit memberships such as ethnicity, religious affiliation, age, gender, and so on, the more stratified and, hence unequal, are the classes in a society. And thus, the greater the material and cultural base of inequitable distribution, *the greater is* ***the overall level of stratification*** *in a society* (Turner 1984, 2010b, 2015d).

These stratifying dynamics are generated by the evolution of institutional spheres in many senses. First, while we understand sociologists' interest in the valued resources of *prestige*, *power*, and *wealth*, this "holy trinity" in sociology tends to underemphasize some key resources, such as the other *generalized symbolic media* that facilitate and constrain interaction, exchange, and communication (see Table 4.1). These other generalized symbolic media are highly valued and are distributed unequally. Moreover, as one of these generalized symbolic media grew in value during institutional evolution, it became a means to accessing media in other spheres (e.g., power, in polity, was fungible for loyalty in kinship, and, in early agrarian states, vice versa).

Second, institutional spheres not only erect stratification systems rooted, in part, in the inequitable access to the generalized medium, but also create new axes of inequality. On the one hand, the differentiation of corporate units responsible for producing and distributing generalized symbolic media often worked to create inequalities around categoric unit memberships. For example, a political administration that restricts access to the medium of *power* and authority often discriminates against individuals by such categoric units as religion and ethnicity, thereby creating higher and lower classes by ethnicity and religious affiliation which, in turn, add complexity to the class system distributing resources unequally.

Third, as survival machines, institutional spheres operate to reproduce culture. Particularly, the ideologies and beliefs defining individuals and families as morally worthy and, hence, entitled to resources are generated by institutional spheres. Ideologies and beliefs stigmatize individuals and categories of individuals as not worthy of access to certain corporate units within institution spheres and the valued resources that they distribute.

Such ideologies stigmatize those without resources and valorize those who are allowed access to resources.

Fourth, the meta-ideologies that legitimate stratification systems are (a) selected moral tenets from the respective ideologies of core institutional spheres and, then, (b) codified into a new level of ideology that legitimates specific patterns of inequality as well as the overall stratification systems. In legitimizing inequality, meta-ideologies make stratification seem inevitable and natural.

Fifth, the evolution of such meta-ideologies also legitimates what often become discriminatory practices against members of particular categories of persons that limit their access to resource-giving corporate units, or higher positions in such units, within various institutional spheres. And hence, ideologies make discrimination normal, acceptable, and even appropriate.

And sixth, in determining to a high degree individuals' access to the resources of corporate units in a society, institutional spheres also have large effects in gaining access to other types of *generalized* and highly valued *resources*, such as *prestige*, *positive emotions*, and *positive evaluations of self.* Conversely, discrimination by meta-ideologies forces individuals to live with *stigma, anxiety*, *depression*, *shame*, and other negative emotional states that those without resource shares inevitably must experience. Moreover, the value of having access to valuable generalized resources, while having to live with negative resources, often makes it difficult for individuals to overcome discrimination, thereby perpetuating inequality across generations of stigmatized persons.

These dynamic relationships between institutions and stratification are critical to understanding the evolution of human social institutions. Inequality and stratification inevitably generate selection pressures on a society, revolving around anger, resentment, and other highly charged emotions that, in the end, can make a society less fit in its environments; and the more extreme is stratification, the greater are these selection pressures on key institutional systems.

The Institutional Basis of Societal Stratification

Generalized Symbolic Media as Valued Resources

Some generalized symbolic media, such as *money* and *power,* are often seen as basic to stratification because their possession allows individuals to possess wealth (economy) and wield power (polity) and, then, to use these two resources to secure many additional resources in a society.

Yet, we should not ignore the value of other generalized symbolic media to individuals, such as *love/loyalty* (kinship), *sacredness*/access to supernatural (religion), and *justice* and *regulation* of actions (law). To possess love and loyalty from kin, to feel that one has access to the power of the supernatural, and to feel that regulation of actions is just and fair are valuable resources, even for persons without high levels of money/wealth and power/authority. Indeed, these resources can provide some compensation for those without money or power, thus making the system of stratification bearable. Because these media also come to be externalized in objects that act, signify, and represent value (e.g., a degree marking one's level of education is an objectified form of knowledge, or a family Bible is one of piety and morality), actors can accumulate resources, tangibly. They can pursue, hoard, gaze longingly, ritualize contact with, and literally exchange the media as objects.

Thus, each sphere comes to be stratified along the lines of access to its generalized symbolic medium. Economy and polity are about *money* and *power*, and not simply the notion of dollars and cents, but in terms of the knowledge and practices one cultivates, the ability to employ appropriate themes of discourse across settings, and in terms of one's commitments to the values inherent in the economic sphere. But, the same is true of other spheres: religious spheres come to determine who is most pious and/or moral through measures of quantity and quality; the sport sphere comes increasingly to distinguish quantities and qualities of *competition* that determine the rank of teams and athletes (Abrutyn 2018); the production and distribution of *health* can come to be monopolized by a professional class and fairly or inequitably distributed in terms of access; and so on.

Moreover, access to at least some valued resources can allow individuals to acquire more generalized resources that have large effects on personal sense of well-being—resources such as experiencing positive emotions for those resources that can be attained and personal self-worth from having at least some of the value resources of a society. Indeed, local prestige within a few corporate units is often enough to make individuals experience more diffuse positive emotions about life as a whole. And, when those resources that a person or family can secure from at least some institutional spheres become the credentials or criteria for gaining access to additional resources in other corporate units, the positive effect of limited resource shares increases. Thus, for example, if schooling is free and higher leaning is relatively inexpensive, parents can often be fulfilled by the knowledge that their children will have greater access to resources like money and authority in corporate units; and, with money, they may also have access to still more valued resources. Furthermore, the degree of stratification would

decrease, somewhat, with industrialism and post-industrialism because individuals and families have had increased access to the valued resources of more recently evolved institutional spheres which, in turn, has given them access to resources of other spheres distributing money, authority, and prestige, thereby allowing them to experience positive emotions, pride in self-accomplishments, and other positive emotional states. Of course, those left behind in the lower classes of a society will generally experience increased relative deprivation at having not been able to gain access to any of the generalized symbolic media (say, *learning, knowledge, health, aesthetics*) that are more widely distributed. Indeed, often the only highly valued resource that can be guaranteed is *love/loyalty* from kinship and even this resource is often unavailable for the poor where family problems often make getting this fundamental resource impossible.

The Substantive Properties of the Symbolic

Generalized symbolic media of exchange that circulate across institutional boundaries—particularly *money* and power as franchised *authority* (by polity) in corporate units are more than just "symbolic" (Abrutyn 2015c). They have material consequences because money can buy power, and power can be used to gain money. In fact, all of the generalized symbolic media operate at this more material level, allowing individuals to gain access to other generalized symbolic media. For example, *learning*, *knowledge*, *competitiveness*, *love/loyalty,* and *health* all have material consequences. *Learning and knowledge, competitiveness, loyalty,* and good *health* can all give individuals access to *money*, *authority*, *justice*, *love*, *aesthetics*, and other resources distributed by markets operating at many diverse levels in distributing products and services. The utility of money and authority is self-evident (because "what money is not, it can buy"), but access to the institution of medicine and its generalized symbolic medium, *health*, is more than symbolic; it also means access to the entire complex of health—its research, its science, it clinics, its hospitals, and its personnel, and so on. These are all material benefits that make health real, which are generally purchased with money, but also made available for those without money by welfare policies of polity and law. Thus, to have security because of access to health with little in the way of other extrinsic resources is access to a complex set of material benefits that can reduce negative emotions like anxiety and fear, while providing health and physical (and, at times, psychological) well-being for individuals and families.

While stratification limits options and access to the full range of generalized symbolic media as they are instantiated in extrinsic material

resources (e.g., jobs, health, authority) and in psychological resources (positive emotions, positive self-feelings), the evolution of autonomous institutions like economy, polity, and law led, in fact, to an increase in opportunities for individuals. That is, with autonomy came more paths to social mobility for more people, which had the opposite effect of institutionalization before modernity: institutional evolution became a source of social progress and change. The more full-time an entrepreneur became and the more distinctive the medium became, the harder it was for any given corporate or categoric unit to monopolize, which meant more positions for more people. The evolution of some level of autonomy in education, science, medicine, media, sport, and art generated numerous pathways to material and psychological need fulfillment. The result is a vast broadening of the middle classes, flanked by the poor at the bottom of the stratification systems and the rich and powerful at the top of the system. Thus, inequality and stratification have not, and probably will not go away, but to some degree in some societies, they have been mitigated. Yet, stratification will always generate tensions in societies; and subsequently, it will always place selection pressures on societies to increase access to the generalized media that can be translated into material benefits distributed more equally. Yet, those with power and money are always reluctant to give up their privilege, as are all those situated in the middle of a stratification system. The result is that stratification will persist in human societies, even in the face of constant pressures to open access to those without sufficient resources.

Generalized Symbolic Media and the Evolution of Ideologies

Generalized symbolic media of each institutional sphere evolved out of discourse of actors seeking to create corporate units that can resolve adaptive problems generating selection pressures. As individuals talk and work at creating new types of corporate units and relationships, they develop a vocabulary and implicit set of assumptions; and even if there are disagreements, these also become points of debate and discourse. Thus, individuals always talk and engage in discourse over problems and how to deal with them; and as lead entrepreneurs begin to emerge, they do much the same but become leaders in imposing certain themes upon others. Entrepreneurs are critical to the process of institutionalization, and they exert their influence in talk and actions, they set down themes that influence others within an emerging institutional domain. These themes generally draw from the highly general values (standards of right/wrong or appropriate/inappropriate) and often key texts outlining the history of a population (whether verbal or written down). From the discourse and actions

of those building up an institutional domain, the themes that emerge gain further power by being translated into a *generalized symbolic medium of exchange* that is used in establishing corporate units and relations among corporate units in an emerging institutional sphere. These media instantiate values and other cultural beliefs into a mechanism for conducting discourse and exchanges among actors operating around the core of an emerging institutional sphere (see Figures 3.1 and 3.2 on pages 76 and 86, respectively) and its entrepreneurs. Furthermore, as the number and variety of corporate units using a generalized symbolic medium increases; and as the core entrepreneurs begin to pull more peripheral actors toward the core, an *intra-institutional ideology* begins to emerge, specifying was is what right, proper, and appropriate conduct and orientation of those operating in a sphere (Luhmann 1982, 1995). In turn, this ideology provides further cultural constraints on actors operating within a sphere. Eventually, it becomes the guidelines for normative processes at various levels: at the level of the emerging institution as a whole (i.e., *institutional norms*), at the level of corporate units organizing divisions of labor within a sphere (as part of a general *corporate-unit culture*), at *the level of discourse* (e.g., how individuals talk and what they talk about) and interaction rituals (e.g., *interpersonal norms*). As a storehouse of value and medium of exchange, generalized symbolic media of exchange regularize social relations; and as they become the premises of ideologies, institutional and interpersonal norms, terms of discourse, and emotional fuel spent and received in interaction rituals, they provide a firm cultural basis for interactions with, and exchanges among, corporate units and their incumbents.

As these levels of culture evolve—generalized symbolic media, institutional ideologies, institutional norms, and specific norms for discourse and interaction and for exchanges between members of corporate units within a sphere or between spheres—they generally have the effect of reducing the initial selection pressures that stimulated actions to create a new institutional sphere. Yet, as an institutional sphere evolves into a more autonomous institutional domain with its own generalized symbolic medium and culture, new selection pressure can emerge from the increasing complexity of relations within an institutional domain and between actors in different domains, thereby forcing further evolution of institutional cultures. These dynamics are outlined in Figure 15.1.

The Evolution of Meta-ideologies Legitimating Systems of Stratification

Since the corporate units within institutional spheres distribute valued resources unequally, the cultures of dominant institutional spheres

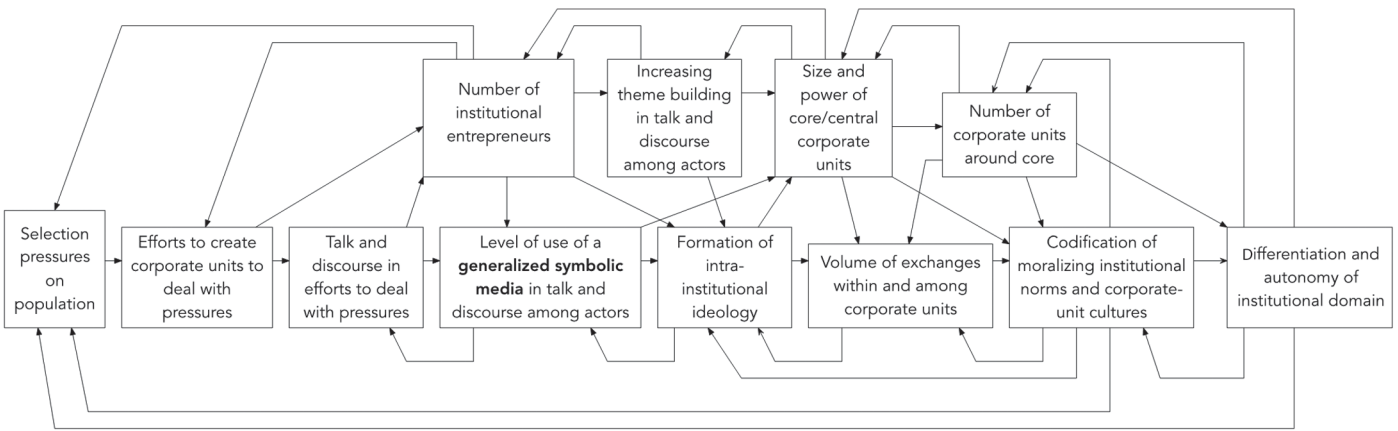


Figure 15.1 The Emergence of Generalized Symbolic Media, Ideologies, and Moralizing Institutional Cultures in Evolving Institutional Domains

generally become codified into another level of ideological formation, or *a meta-ideology*, that incorporates elements or tenets of the ideologies of these more dominant institutional spheres distributing resources unequally, although the element of less dominant spheres may also be included in this meta-ideology (Turner 2015d). In most Western-style democracies, the polity and, especially, economy (or *power* and *money*) are the principal ingredients in pervasive meta-ideologies. These two media not only circulate more freely in other spheres, but they are highly fungible and, thereby, desirable in extra-institutional contexts. Yet, such has not always been the case since the economic sphere has historically been less dominant across time and space as Marx and Marxists have presumed.

Importantly, meta-ideologies operate to legitimate the stratification system as a whole and, moreover, stigmatize those categories of persons in various social classes who do not meet the tenets of the meta-ideology, while at the same time, valorize those in categories giving them access to value resources. In this way, those without resources are "blamed" for their failures to live up to cultural ideals, and those who receive high levels of resources are given prestige and other positive accolades for (seemingly) realizing the goals and ideals specified by the meta-ideology. Of course, those who codify the meta-ideology tend to be those who are able to extract the most resources from a sphere, indicating that meta-ideologies do not just emerge, they are constructed by those with the power to impose an ideology legitimating their privilege, while stigmatizing and blaming those who have little chance in acquiring the resources distributed within and between key institutional spheres. Figure 15.2 outlines these dynamics.

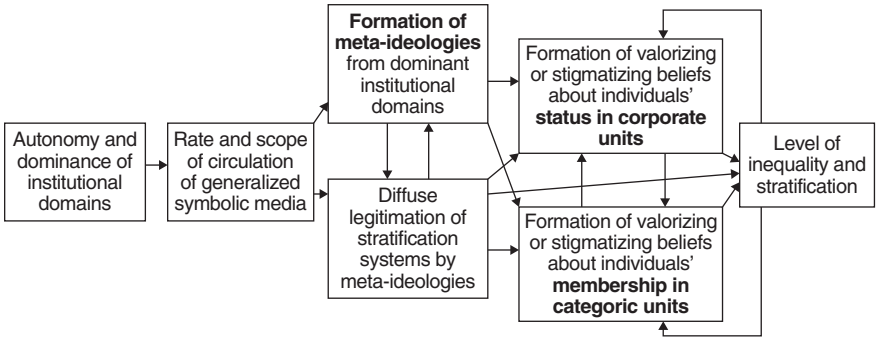


Figure 15.2 The Formation of Meta-ideologies and Beliefs about Status and Memberships in Corporate and Categoric Units Justifying Discrimination, Inequality, and Stratification

Historically speaking, meta-ideologies generally reveal a disproportionate number of tenets from economy, polity, religion, and, at times, law and kinship, because these are the oldest institutional spheres. Recently, science and education have grown prominent as elements of many meta-ideologies. Since stratification originally centers on inequalities in *money* (wealth) and *power* (authority) and the *prestige* that having these resources brings, it is not surprising that sociologists have focused on these resources when analyzing stratification (e.g., Weber 1922). However, other generalized symbolic media as they generate institutional ideologies are also highly valued resources and always need to be considered in trying to understand any given stratification system. Still, the meta-ideology is generally biased toward the morality contained in the ideologies legitimating political, economic, and, at times, religious institutional spheres, even after other spheres evolve and begin to exert some alterations in the meta-ideology that evolves to legitimate stratification.

The power of a meta-ideology resides in its capacity to generate what are often termed *status beliefs*, which are beliefs about two different types of status (Ridgeway 1991, 2019)[1]: (1) *status location* of individuals in the division of labor of a corporate unit, and (2) *diffuse status characteristics*, marked by membership of individuals in a categoric unit. As Figure 15.2 outlines, the level of autonomy and dominance of a given institutional sphere increases the rate and scope of circulation of their respective generalized symbolic media. At one level, the emerging meta-ideology biased by tenets from dominant institutional spheres provide a diffuse legitimacy for the stratification system as a whole. A meta-ideology's power, however, rests on its capacity to like create beliefs and expectations about which status characteristics belong in which locations within the institutional sphere's division of labor. Thus, meta-ideologies become embodied in lived experience, performed in interaction, and realized discursively.

Higher status locations in corporate units will always be evaluated more highly than lower status locations in corporate units, thus creating different *expectations* for the competence of individuals at high and lower positions in divisions of labor. Those higher, because they are seen as more morally worthy and deserving of their greater shares of resources—*power/authority*, *money*, *prestige*—that can be bestowed on persons in higher-level locations in the divisions of labor in corporate units. With respect to diffuse status characteristics like race, gender, and ethnicity, certain categories are defined as less worthy than others, generally because they are at the bottom ranks of the stratification system because of longer-term patterns of prejudice and systematic discrimination against certain categories of persons.

Consequently, the low locations in the stratification system are used to further stigmatize those categories of persons in lower classes, as well as those in the lower classes, *per se*, as a type of categoric unit whose members are often considered deserving of their fate since they have not been upwardly mobile. Ultimately, continued discrimination against the "unworthy" is legitimated in virtually all institutional spheres, thereby assuring that members of lower social classes and other stigmatized categoric units like race and ethnicity cannot gain full access to resources that could lead to upward mobility. In this way, highly general meta-ideologies are made highly specific, with *status beliefs* about the moral worth of those in high-position corporate units and favored categoric units and the stigma and low moral worth of those who are in lower-position corporate units and in devalued categoric units.

The Circulation of Generalized Symbolic Media and their Cultures

As institutional spheres evolve, they not only differentiate and gain some autonomy vis-à-vis other institutional spheres, corporate units within diverse institutions also begin to exchange resources, often their generalized symbolic media. The evolution of markets within the economy accelerates this process, with markets increasingly becoming the nexus of exchanges among actors in diverse institutional spheres. As a medium becomes increasingly fungible and/or highly valued, it begins to circulate in other institutional spheres; especially media with more universal use/exchange value. *Money* is, of course, the most liquid medium; and as institutional spheres differentiate corporate units creating products and services to be sold in markets, as is the case when the educated and knowledgeable trained in educational corporate units sell their skills in labor markets for access to the symbolic media of other institutional spheres and other types of corporate units. Other ways for symbolic media to circulate would include, for example, polity franchising *authority* in exchange for tax resources from all other corporate units in other institutional spheres, save perhaps for education and religion.

The differentiation and layering of markets accelerate dramatically the exchange of ever-more diverse products and services that are bought and sold. Indeed, virtually anything can be bought and sold in meta-markets, including the media of exchange in lower-order markets (e.g., money itself, stocks, bonds, derivatives). Moreover, these exchange activities are often accompanied by considerable overlap among several institutional spheres. For example, any corporate unit selling its products, information, and services in markets becomes part

of the economy because it buys materials, information, and labor services from other spheres, while selling its products, information, and services to other spheres via markets. Furthermore, corporate units in diverse spheres often form strategic alliances whereby incumbents' corporate units in one sphere are exchanged or work in collaboration, often forming a new "hybrid" corporate unit, as is the case when a pharmaceutical company combines research laboratories with laboratories on a university campus, thereby blending science, education, and economic corporate units and their cultures, each with their own generalized symbolic media and culture circulating across at least three different institutional spheres. The same is true when university laboratories develop products for governments, such as agricultural technologies, weapons technologies, or skilled labor for both polity and economy. *Money* flows, as does franchised *authority*, in exchange for *knowledge* and *learning* from science and education between corporate units in polity and laboratories in universities. Medical schools in universities already overlap with some elements of science and, then, when generating both knowledge and labor for corporate units in the institution of medicine, similarly mingle several generalized symbolic media.

During the early evolution of institutional spheres before dynamic and differentiated markets regulated by law evolved, these kinds of overlaps in corporate units and mingling of generalized symbolic media were less evident, but as kinship, polity, religion, economy, and law evolve to gain some autonomy, the flow of generalized symbolic media via markets across many diverse types of corporate units increases. In some cases, overlap between institutional spheres is inevitable, as is the case with law where some of the law-making, adjudication, and enforcement of laws structurally overlaps with various levels of polity. Thus, legislative branches of governments, courts financed by governments, and enforcement agents in a variety of governmental corporate units generally overlap, to a relatively high degree. In turn, it is often difficult to sustain sufficient autonomy of law from the use of coercive or administrative bases of power in polity (Balbus 1977)—a turn of events that will generally reduce the fairness and efficiency of the legal system which, in turn, will decrease the dynamism of markets.

Yet, as generalized symbolic media move among corporate units in diverse institutional spheres as resources, *per se*, or are embodied in labor or technologies that are bought and sold in markets, the culture of diverse institutional spheres is, to a degree, blended or at the very least begins to circulate among and then within corporate units. Money from economy and franchised authority from polity circulate everywhere, as does labor from a

kin unit trained by educational units that often overlap with corporate units in science, sport, arts, medicine, and law. With these generalized symbolic media come the ideologies and normative cultures of diverse corporate units that must be reconciled to some degree. The result is that ideologies and norms generate a certain cultural cosmopolitanism and, as a result, generate more flexibility among actors in corporate units. In the context of stratification, for example, efforts to reduce discrimination in all institutional spheres began as social movements when an increasing number of persons occupying positions across all institutional spheres had been educated in arts and sciences, had been exposed to the tenets of justice in a more modern legal system, and had interacted in schools and community neighborhoods with members of diverse corporate units. In agrarian systems, such was not the case since most people remained uneducated and dependent upon manorial estates. However, when the migration to urban centers and crafts and craft organizations of various kinds evolved in urban areas, exposure to more diverse categories of persons increased. As education was extended to non-elites with early industrialism, the diversity of ideologies experienced by virtue of exchanging diverse generalized symbolic media created somewhat less parochial outlooks that, in turn, could work against the meta-ideology legitimating the stratification system as a whole.

Mobility and Counter-Ideologies

These meta-ideologies still exist, of course, even in the most democratic and modern societies, but the paradoxical effects of multiple institutional cores has invited greater possibilities for alternatives. That is, while institutional cores and autonomy imply a new sphere of domination, something Weber was keenly wary of, they also dilute any one core's ability to dominate. While artists or athletes will never have the power or wealth of upper-echelon political party leaders or Fortune 500 CEOs, they are the afforded the opportunity to live affluently, but the value of *aesthetics* and *competition*, respectively, allow far more influence than an artist in the Renaissance or a gladiator in Roman times.

Furthermore, this mixing of generalized symbolic media has led to the formulation of counter-ideologies to the meta-ideology legitimating stratification, at least in some societies after the agrarian era of institutional evolution. The most prominent counter-ideology today rests on the combination of highly particular, localized media: *love/loyalty* and *sacredness/piety/morality*. For the vast majority of the world's inhabitants, life is shaped directly and indirectly by "distant" polities and amoral economies.

The former of which is usually rooted in geographic space, but whose political leaders are often cognitively distant in interests and values, whereas the latter is diffuse, global, and pernicious. Over the last two or three decades, the most prominent counter-movements to this *power/money* meta-ideology's hegemony have been hyper-traditional religious movements (Almond et al. 2003) that have arisen both because of basic demographics (less religious people have fewer children and vice versa) and because of the perceived moral decay and threats posed by these distant, "alien" media (Whitehead and Perry 2020). Consequently, a blending of *love* and *sacredness* in various communities has become a shield, of sorts, for the anomic (Hochschild 2016; Abrutyn 2021a), as well as recombined with *power* as new political parties emerge or old ones are reconfigured (Brint and Abrutyn 2009).

To be sure, this counter-ideology is not the only one. In the educational sphere, particularly higher education, the a meta-ideology predicated on democratized *knowledge* and *learning* and equity push back against the myth of meritocracy and against the structured patterns of mobility shaped by race, gender, and various other categoric distinctions. Many gains in status have been made through this counter-ideology, but the proliferation of counter-ideologies (e.g., environmentalism) and the persistence of old prejudice and discrimination underscore just how efficacious meta-ideologies are once crystallized.

A Note on Media as External Referents of Value

For the most part, we follow the literature that identifies media as cultural or symbolic things—language, ideologies, norms. However, media, as we have noted in passing in several places, also are manifest or imbued in physical and social objects with value and meaning; objects we would call *external referents of value* (ERV). That is, media also become tangible objects people can literally own and use, or they can also be things that belong—in terms of true property relations or as part of a collective history—to a collective. Like dollars or cents represent the abstract intersubjective value of *money*, facilitating exchange, other media emerge in physical things like roses given on an anniversary or money placed in a donation box in a church or synagogue. While ERVs serve important functions for smoothing relationships between diverse individual and corporate actors, our interest, here, is in their effects in stratifying institutional spheres and society more generally. In short, ERVs shape stratification patterns in two ways. (1) Some ERVs are scarce, and, therefore, create

a range of distinctions related to access, possession, and use that may be sharp (e.g., haves versus have nots) or more fine-grained (e.g., graduated haves and some proportion of have nots). (2) Some ERVs may be widely available, and yet *qualitative distinctions* may be discernible that differentiate actors into one categoric distinction or another.

In terms of the sharp distinctions, there are really two underlying reasons. One is ceremonial. As Bourdieu (1991:51–61) noted, some objects are central to initiation rituals, as totems drawing mutual focus during the ritual, things conferred or given through the course of the ritual, or as things accessible once initiated. In either case, those participating in the ritual (initiator/initiate) are distinguished from those who are not; where an audience observes, the boundary-making is amplified—some in the audience will have either experienced the ritual at some point or anticipate participating when the time is right, whereas some will not fit the appropriate criteria, whatever that may be, for participating and have the distinction between those allowed to use, possess, and acquire said ERVs versus those who are prohibited. Thus, a wedding ceremony, in theory, removes two individuals from the "marketplace" of *love*, whereas the process of becoming a life-time appointed judge is reserved for a subset of jurists and only those qualified. The second reason is a pragmatic reason: only a certain number of actors will have the means, desire, and ability to go through the process of training necessary to acquire more mundane objects. All doctors-in-training receive a white coat, but titles are unevenly distributed based on status-attainment, and special equipment is reserved for those with the appropriate skills. Only one hockey player can wear the embroidered "C" (Captain) on their sweater, indicating the highest level of *competition*, but, more generally, only a small proportion of aspiring athletes can become professional hockey players.

In the second case of ERVs facilitating stratification, we see more fine-grained distinctions. In the legal sphere, the sharp distinction between legal actors and clients or observers is always present, but within the legal entrepreneurial class are far more gradations. For instance, there are delimited numbers of positions at the upper echelon of the core. Only so many jurists can sit on the Supreme Court at a given time or teach at the top-tier law schools, thus, only a limited number of legal entrepreneurs can ever hope to possess key legal ERVs. To be sure, appellate judges are prestigious in the legal sphere, but they are not Supreme Court justices; just as the Chief Justice retains special privileges and expectations vis-à-vis his/her colleagues. The same is true, of course, of polity or economy, as well as other spheres. Titles, like Duke or endowed professorships, serve

similar functions. The logic of this argument is clear: it is by no means the case that an appellate judge or a non-endowed professor or a deputy secretary of defense are less intelligent, capable, or deserving; nor is it the case that these actors lack access to the relatively high levels of media in their respective spheres of activity. Rather, some actors simply have access to far more resources than others.

Pollution and Colonization

There is one more interesting dynamic related to media and stratification and the circulation of an "alien" medium in other spheres. As noted above, *money* or *power* commonly circulate within other spheres, but the circulation of these "cool" media (universal, fungible, generalizable ideologies) in "hotter" spheres, or those that tend to have highly particular structure and culture across locales, create unique dynamics: *corruption*, *pollution*, and *colonization*.

Corruption occurs when a foreign medium competes with the value of an indigenous medium, causing a subset of actors to interact, exchange, and communicate about feelings, thoughts, and actions in extra-institutional ways. For instance, a political actor would be expected, by both participants in an interaction and observers as well, to act within the logic of *power* where polities are autonomous. But, the circulation of *money* can change the calculus of an individual or even a corporate unit such that what we would expect to happen, happens differently. Of course, some of these flows are regularized, and thus corrupted behavior or decisions are not wholly unexpected, but are frowned upon even if tolerated. However, at times, individual cases or even regularized flows to and from the center come to be judged as a- or immoral vis-à-vis the standards of the indigenous sphere; that is, *money* or *power* pollute religious decision making or kinship attitudes. That is, we might expect a politician to take bribes, and the polity may even encode some bribes as something other than corruption, and yet egregious bribes will invite legal or extra-legal intervention to "cleanse" the center (e.g., Alexander 1988; also, Abrutyn 2015b). In these cases, the alien medium *subverts* the value of the indigenous medium, imposing a social logic of a more distant sphere; one that makes less sense and evokes negative emotions. Thus, for instance, *money* flows to the religious sphere in modern churches through a sacralization process of alms-giving (Mundey et al. 2011; Belk and Wallendorf 1990) and through the more benign pathway of dues. However, one of Luther's principal criticisms of the Catholic Church was the pollution of *sacredness* and *piety* by way of indulgences, or the wealthy's

exchange of *money* for entrance into purgatory. This is a polluting relationship, and invites disgust and revulsion.

Modernity, of course, is full of these moments where the lines between corruption and pollution blur. In professional sports, *money* (e.g., free agency, salary negotiation, holdouts) is reserved for the "off-season," when the recurring rituals (games) are paused. Talk of *money* remains opposed to the purity of *competition*, but is still allowed. When a player, however, holds out for better pay or lengthier term during the season, it is polluting, as emotions, attitudes, and actions during sacred sports time is reserved for the discourse of *competition* (Abrutyn 2018). Consequently, we see, then, two distinct consequences for stratification. The first is rooted in corruption: athletes or professors or politicians can be evaluated in terms and criteria of indigenous or foreign media, with the former leading to notions of integrity and character and the latter being deemed offensive to those most committed to the core. The second occurs when a foreign stratification system comes to dominate the indigenous one, calling into question the purity of the metric of evaluation and the value of the media itself.

The final dynamic, however, is perhaps most interesting. Borrowing from Habermas' (1973 [1976]) notion of "colonized life-worlds," we argue that in some times and places foreign media dominate, subordinate, or even replace indigenous media, returning stratification to a sharp, singular system with little mobility. The former Soviet Union, for instance, transformed the structure and culture of Russian society such that *power* and then *loyalty* were the most important media and, thereby, imposing scarcity on all other spheres. Justice in law became party loyalty first, power second, and then, distantly, legal principles around justice (Huskey 1982; Berman 1955, 1968). *Sacredness, piety, and morality* were forcibly removed from religion, as Stalin attempted to eradicate the Orthodox Church (Froese 2009)—with, of course, many unintended consequences. Thus, even when media were not dismantled, they were usurped as corollaries of the dominant media. The same patterns occur in other societies or social units, like cults, where *piety/morality* and *loyalty/love* are fused together in ways that subordinate and give different meaning to *power* or *money*.

While these dynamics deserve an entire chapter, they are beyond the scope of this chapter or this book. Interinstitutional dynamics become powerful and truly interesting just as our story ends in Chapters 13 and 14. Modernity sees polity, law, and economy becoming dominant while unlocking the potential for educational and scientific autonomy and pushing religious and kinship autonomy further into localized spaces. In

these large, highly differentiated societies, sociology was born *because of the myriad interconnections* between a diverse array of social orders and spheres. Thus, we put this discussion aside and return to the evolutionary pressures that stratification puts on institutional orders, reserving a full exposition on colonization or pollution for a later date.

Stratification as a Selection Pressure on the Institutional Order

There is a double irony in the fact that regulation and control worked as selection pressures driving institutional evolution that generated stratification which, in turn, increases selection pressures for regulation and control of potential conflict arising from inequality and stratification. For most of human history, right up to the present, the coercive and administrative bases of power in polity have been used to repress conflict, as has polity's control of much of the legal system. At times incentives have been used, and at other times, symbolic power has deployed, used to repress the rallying cry for more equality and less discrimination against particular categories of persons. It is obvious that, at best, this approach has worked for a while to mitigate conflict, but in the long run, inequalities generate tensions and arouse anger among those stigmatized and forced to the bottom rungs of the stratification system. The reaction of the middle and upper classes to the plights of those without access to valued resources has vacillated between support of, or to resistance to, institutional change; and while individuals are certainly better off in general in societies with dynamic economies and markets, democratic polities, and educated populations, most societies including those in the democratic West have high levels of stratification, save for the Scandinavian societies of northern Europe. Some societies have less, primarily because they are relatively small, as is the case for Western societies at the bottom of the Asian world like New Zealand and Australia, but most other societies in the world still reveal high levels of stratification, especially stratification by ethnicity and religion. Virtually all institutional spheres, from poor and dysfunctional families, through segregated schools in the educational system, and job opportunities in the economy and all other labor markets in other institutional spheres, to legal tenets in the institution of law and political actions that generally rely upon coercive threats and tight administrative control, all work to repress conflict and the change that conflict might bring to reducing inequalities. Thus, the evolution of the institutional systems of large-scale societies has reduced stratification somewhat, especially compared to the agrarian era (Lenski 1966), but

even with wide circulation of generalized symbolic media and the cultures generated by these media, only relatively modest improvements in stratification has ensued, thus assuring the institutional order of most societies will be under constant pressure.

Indeed, the modern world as well as the so-called premodern world are very different environs for humans. For several hundred millennia, kinship was the master organizational and cultural template. Change, to be sure, happened, but in an extraordinarily slow and episodic pace. There was little incentive to change what was working, and there were few pressures to erect larger social architecture when a group could simply split in half or thirds and divide up territory; or watch as one group sought new opportunities elsewhere. Settlement and social structures were not simply "social cages" as Maryanski and Turner (1992) labeled them, but they have also been the motor of non-Darwinian sociocultural evolution. It is perhaps most ironic that the forces working most hard towards conservation are truly the most dynamic sources of selection pressures imaginable. Once institutions like polity or religion began differentiating, human societies were no longer dealing with exogenous problems like natural disasters or the occasional hostile neighbor. The growing institutional sphere demarcating some activities and knowledge, some feelings, thoughts, and actions, some interests and goals or values and norms became an environment with its own logistical problems. Some, of course, remained caused or influenced by the biotic environment, as polities dealt with floods and famines. But, many were the outcome of bad, misguided, or uninformed decision making, and others intentional pressures brought on by inherent exigencies of organization.

Evolution continued on a slow pace, with the first autonomous polities taking about 5,000 years to evolve from the time humans began to take up permanent settlements everywhere. The next major phase only took a few thousand years, as the first autonomous religious spheres arose in the first millennium BCE. For the next 500–1,000 years, the polity and religious sphere co-evolved, as they adjusted, competed, co-opted, allied, and used each other in various ways. Once law and economy evolved reciprocally toward autonomy in the first few hundred years of the second millennium (CE), evolution accelerated at previously unimaginable paces. Within a few hundred years, polity reached unbelievable levels of autonomy with the nation-state and then the democratic nation-state, which gave rise to autonomous education and further strengthened the autonomy of law and economy. Meanwhile, law and economy begat science and medicine, while pushing for the de-evolution of religion and kinship. In the last

150–200 years, art, media/entertainment, and sport have strained towards autonomy too. Yet, ironically, more autonomy means more stratification and centers of domination but, at the same time, more creativity, adaptability, flexibility, and mobility. All of which is to say change has become the rule and not the exception.

Note

1 For broader reviews of this large literature, see Turner (2002: 170–220, 2007: 126–50, 2010b: 93–130, 2013: 602–44).

16
The Evolved Institutional Order and the West

Our story began by searching for the evolutionary roots—biological, neurological, and social—of the institutional order. For hundreds of thousands of years this order was built around the simple social structure of nuclear families lodged in nomadic bands of hunter-gatherers, allowing various forms of early humans, such as *Neanderthals*, *Denisovans*, *Homo sapiens*, and perhaps even *Homo naledi*, to adapt to habitats in Africa, Europe and Asia. Periodically, there were contractions, sometimes substantial, in the size of the human population due to environmental changes that were beyond the adaptive capacity of simple hunting and gathering technology and organization around just two corporate units, nuclear family and band. For such simple societies with limited technology would always be vulnerable to dramatic shifts in ecology. Yet, it is now clear that there were many subspecies of humans surviving and, moreover, interbreeding much more than was once thought. For example, the once ephemeral *Denisovans* may have been several subspecies as different as *Denisovans* were from *Neanderthals* and *Homo sapiens* (Wei-Haas 2019).

Still, changes in the ecology of a population generate selection pressures, and the most critical selection pressures in the evolution of late hominins and early humans was the pressures to become better organized, compared to the common ancestors that all humans shared with extant great apes today. The evolution of the nuclear family was not a "natural" form of social organization for evolving great apes or early hominins (Hill et al. 2011; Chapais 2013), but selection had to overcome the weak-tie biological propensity of great apes and early hominins to be individualistic, promiscuous, non-group oriented, and *without* a nuclear family structure (Nakahaski and Horiuchi 2012; Fletcher et al. 2015). Somehow natural selection worked to enhance emotions and attachments among late hominins that led to the first nuclear families, and hence, the first human institution. And, with this basic structure, organized into a bands of hunter-gatherers, humans could survive, however tenuously. As the evolved nature of humans outlined in Appendix II of Chapter 1 reveals, this simple social structure and its culture were highly compatible with human nature as it was inherited from the common ancestors of present-day great apes and, then, elaborated by

DOI: 10.4324/9781003224433-17

enhanced emotions and cognitions that, in turn, led to the evolution of spoken language and symbolic culture. Indeed, as Marshall Sahlins (1972) has famously noted, nomadic hunting and gathering was the "original Garden of Eden," revealing equality among band members and, for most of the time, an easy and relaxed life, at least until environmental disruptions would periodically pose severe adaptive problems. So long as kinship is the dominant structural and cultural organizing principle in a society, all of the other activities that would eventually evolve into new institutional domains were embedded in the structure and culture of kinship, as we analyzed in Chapters 5 and 6.

However, the story of the evolution of the first human institutions began with the differentiation of polity, at first within kinship and later outside of family; and once this second institutional system began to evolve (see Chapters 7 and 8), the first movement of other institutional spheres that had also been initially embedded within the kinship sphere began move towards greater autonomy, as we outlined in Chapters 9 through 14, revealing a sort of historical "phasing" rooted in the types of selection pressures faced by different human populations, eventually producing the dramatic growth in the scale of human societies by 5,000 years ago in India, Egypt, China, Iraq, meso- and southern America). Our story ends before the rise of modernity, however, because we wanted to emphasize the significance in the initial evolution of the first human institutional systems in setting the stage for the several thousand year movement to modernity. We have much less to say about the latter, but our story does suggest some answers or different directions for sociology's and other fields such as history's undying quest to explain the rise of the West (Weber 1927 [2002]; Wallerstein 1974; Hall 1985; Frank and Gills 1996; Chase-Dunn and Hall 1997). However, these threads, or informed theoretical speculations, are predicated on a more general theoretical framework of selection and institutional evolution. The premises to which we turn to first, and then shift gears and think about three big questions. (1) Why did parallel political evolution occur 5,000 years ago? (2) Why was there also a parallel religious evolution some 2,500 years ago? (3) What do these phases of institutional evolution tell us about the West and modernity? But first, let us turn to the importance of selection as a force of change in human societies.

Selection as the Driving Force of Institutional Evolution

The Nature of Selection and the Units Subject to Selection

From a sociological perspective, there are two fundamental types of natural selection. One is the selection described by Charles Darwin (1859

[2006]) and incorporated into the Modern Synthesis in biology in which the environment is seen as "blindly" selecting those variants of *individual* phenotypes of organisms that increase their fitness, thereby allowing them to survive in their environments and, thereby, reproduce themselves (see also Mayr 2001). Such selection is critical to understanding the evolution of humans *as a species*, as was examined in Chapter 1 on the evolution of those "human capacities" based upon the evolved biology of humans. A second type of selection is what we can view as *sociological selection* in which selection can come from both the biophysical or ecological environments *and* the sociocultural environments of a population, as well as from the evolved psychology of humans and, of course, from the nature of their constructed patterns of human sociocultural organization (Turner and Abrutyn 2017). Sociological selection is *not* blind because humans with their large brains and capacities for language and culture can engage in agential actions, diagnosing selection pressures and, then, potentially changing their behaviors and, even more importantly, their sociocultural phenotype so as to achieve increased fitness.

Consequently, humans can create *superorganisms*, or patterns of organization of human organisms regulated by constructed social structures and their cultures that allow them to survive in a given ecology (natural environment and sociocultural environment of other societies of humans) because all of the units of this superorganism have the capacity for reflective thought and agency to change behaviors and sociocultural formations. Humans are not always successful in these efforts, of course, but they have the cognitive capacity to plan and engineer new ways of behaving (as well as collectivizing ways of feeling and thinking) and organizing far beyond what any other animal can do. Moreover, while humans have an evolved biological nature (Turner 2021a), this evolved nature has far fewer bio-programmers than other higher mammals or, for that matter, probably any other mammal. Indeed, most species of mammals are locked into highly constrained ranges of action by bio-programmers that can prove maladaptive for most organisms when their environment changes. Humans do not have to wait for natural selection to impose its damage on the unfit, and, indeed, can re-imagine—through ideologies like humanism and bioethics—what constitutes fitness in the first place.

Thus, while there are parallels between biological and sociocultural evolution—the most prominent being (a) selection on (b) variations in phenotypes—the nature of selection is different, the phenotypes involved are more various and complex (biological, behavioral, *and* sociocultural), and the units evolving are different than in biological evolution. The human *biological phenotype* (and underlying genotype) evolves much as described

in the Modern Synthesis, as a pool of individual genotypes or *gene pool*, but behavioral and sociocultural phenotypes are constructed by agency and can be changed by agency in the face of selection pressures; and this makes human sociocultural evolution much different from biological evolution. In sociocultural evolution, there is nothing that is the equivalent of the notion of gene pool (notions of a "meme pool" make little sense in describing the sociocultural universe [Atran 2001]). Rather, it is not the organisms and their underlying genotypes that are evolving (although such evolution does occur at a biological level with humans), but rather *the institutional spheres that become the environments in which more and more thinking, feeling, and doing become patterned*. These "macro" structural and cultural formations become the survivor machines of human societies, capable of retaining extensive amounts of information—especially with the advent of storage devices, like writing, some information is actively used, and some dormant, potentially selected in times of need or by creative individual or collective actors. These are the protective sheaths around which human organisms, their genetic material, and their collective units like groups, organizations, and communities endure across indefinite periods of time.[1] At the same time, these sociocultural formations can also become a source of new selection pressures driving evolution toward new variants of sociocultural formation, if these new variants enhance fitness. Thus, humans not only have large effects on the bio-ecology to which they must adapt, the very nature of human social organization becomes an environment to which humans must also adapt, especially when patterns of sociocultural organization begin to generate selection pressures on existing social structures and their cultures.

It is, of course, difficult to outline in detail every institutional domain and every type of corporate unit and their relations within a domain; we have, of course, done this in more detail in each chapter. The same is true of all of the various categoric units from which stratification systems are built. Inequalities in the distribution of valued resources by the corporate unit from which all institutional domains are built always create tensions and potential for conflict which, in turn, can be seen as some of the most powerful selection pressures on existing institutional domains. Thus, human superorganisms, especially as they evolved and became more complex, are a breeding ground for problems of integration that can generate a large number of intense selection pressures that lead to the evolution of societies. Perhaps only with nomadic hunting and gathering was the human superorganism sufficiently integrated as to remain stable and adaptive for hundreds of thousands years, but, ironically, sociocultural evolution to solve one set of adaptive problems tends to generate new adaptive

problems arising from the organization of the superorganism, forcing further evolution of human institutional and stratification systems.

Thus, as we demonstrated through myriad cases, the growth, segmentation, differentiation, and modes of integration of new corporate units were also the driving force of institutional evolution. In particular, new structural assemblages (see Table 3.1) emerged or old ones were reconfigured and with it, new cultural elements or connections within the institutional sphere. Our focus on the institution and not the corporate unit, however, rests on the fact that institutional change inevitably forces the evolution of other institutions and categoric units, since change in one constituent unit in a superorganism is, in essence, a selection pressure on all those units in which it is embedded or with which it exchanges resources. At the very least, the change of one institutional sphere requires other spheres and their entrepreneurs to safeguard their autonomy, to protect the integrity of the core, and to maintain some control over the internal flow of resources. The end result, given the ever-changing nature of institutional spheres once the polity evolved autonomously some 5,000 years ago, is *constant* selection pressures driving new efforts at reducing selection pressures generated from with society itself. At times these can be minor, but near-constant change becomes the rule in large, institutional complexes comprised of diverse autonomous spheres of activity.

Of course, this omnipresent dynamic of pressure → adaptation → new pressure might appear pathological given the tendency of most systems in organic life towards homeostasis, at least for a time—a tendency that erroneously led structural-functionalists to presume system equilibrium was the norm and change or instability pathological. Yet, in large, differentiated human sociocultural formations, it is, in fact, just the opposite. A static society with the level of environmental complexity impinging on it from the biotic world, the inter-societal world, and the internal environments that comprise the institutional complex would surely collapse under its inflexibility, lack of creativity, and, ultimately, slow response to or identification of exigencies. Superorganisms can (and history is filled with many that did) die, just as human organisms do. And yet, even under collapse, the constituent units of a society, its people or population, may continue to live their normal life, but now without an encompassing superorganism or, alternatively, under the domination of another society or superorganism. But, it is not the genome that evolves under these conditions. Rather, in times of collapse, we see "retrogression" or, perhaps more accurately, the *re*-evolution of older structural and cultural formations with a twist. On the one hand, kinship and, often, religion, grow in size, scale, and complexity to protect and reproduce the local social unit, while on the other

hand, the collapse of a regional or imperial state does not simply make it vanish. Notions of political rule, ideology, and the social logic of *power* cannot be erased like the genetic pool of a group buried under the ashes of a volcano or wiped out by the violence of a genocidal war strategy. These elements can be combined at the local level into new modes of regulation and integration, or with the right ambitious person or corporate kin unit, be mobilized in the name of political entrepreneurship and statecraft (e.g., the various efforts in Europe following the fall of Rome to consolidate power, like the Carolingian dynasty [Le Goff 2005]).

Again, it is not the genome that is evolving; it is the sociocultural formations in which human phenotypes and genotypes play out their lives that is evolving. And in such a system, humans and all of the corporate units and categoric units that organize human activity all *have the capacity for agency*; and this simple fact fundamentally changes the nature of evolution with respect to the nature of selection, the units under selection, and the units that evolve. Again, we can see the parallels between the two universes—biotic and sociocultural—but once the specifics are analyzed, selection on different phenotypes—organisms versus superorganisms—and, most importantly, selection is not blind and the units under selection have agency and can change their structure and culture in response to selection pressures from any source.

Sources of Selection Driving Institutional Evolution

Selection on hominins and then humans pushed for capacities to increase sociality and bonding in groups in order to overcome the weakness of an individualistic animal that did not form permanent groups, nuclear families, and whose only bio-programmers for creating social structures was the home range or community of populations of about 150 conspecifics (Maryanski 1995). At the level of organismic phenotypes, this movement to the first more permanent corporate groups was the result of biotic or Darwinian selection on subcortical emotion centers of the hominin brain, followed by selection to increase the size of the neocortex that, in turn, allowed late hominins to use language and, eventually to possess the capacity for symbolic culture. Yet, even here, the mechanism by which humans form groups is not a bio-programmer but, instead, a generalized capacity for enhanced emotions that, in turn, created additional generalized capacities in cognitive thinking, language, and symbolic culture. These are not programmers directing particular behaviors but, rather, they are broad capacities that give human enormous flexibility in re-organizing their sociocultural environments and hence behaviors. With these capacities,

partially installed at the biological level by natural selection, late hominins and humans could begin *creating* more stable corporate units that could be the structural building blocks of simple societies of nomadic hunter-gatherers. These same capacities would also allow humans to *create* very large and highly differentiated societies organizing large populations. Once selection is no longer blind but filtered through the capacities for agency by highly intelligent life forms using language and symbolic culture, the nature of selection changes and evolution itself changes. The Modern Synthesis is no longer adequate to explain the evolution of sociocultural formations, or sociocultural phenotypes.

The psychology produced by these human capacities has also generated selection pressures in much the same way as (1) biologically based selection pressures for securing food, insulating bodies, protecting procreating females when pregnant, and protecting offspring to assure reproduction of the species; and (2) ecologically based pressures generated by biophysical ecosystems providing resources for sustaining life and sociocultural ecosystems composed of other populations organized as societies also drawing resources from the biophysical ecosystem. And, in fact, the selection pressures from humans' evolved psychology allowed humans to organize their populations into corporate units regulated by their cultures. Thus, the selection pressures from human biology, ecology, and psychology to which humans must adapt all represent what might be termed *first-order selection pressures* that also generate selection pressures on each other.

More significantly, the biology and psychology of humans as they adapted to their ecological habitats generated acute selection pressures for social structures and cultures. Eventually, as these structural and cultural formations crystallized into institutional spheres and, thereby, environments similar to the natural environment, they too generated selection pressures; or, what we might call *second-order* pressures. These pressures are secondary because they emerged as responses to the first order selection pressures, but as human-made pressures, they are qualitatively different from the natural exigencies the earliest humans faced (and, in many ways, still face today but at far greater magnitude). To be sure, second-order pressures have effects on first-order, sometimes reaching a crescendo that a given group cannot overcome.

In short, then, the sources of selection pressures are *many and constantly changing* as first-order pressures push second-order pressures to increase, which lead to further structural and cultural innovation and, subsequently, resolve or threaten to produce first- and second-order pressures. The fact that human societies remained relatively stagnant as nomadic hunter-gathering populations organized by two corporate units—nuclear families

in bands—signals that this adaptation met most of the psychological pressures that arise from humans' evolved nature, as well as selection pressures from humans evolved biology and from the habitats in which the first human societies were built up. It is likely that, despite some alterations in the ecology of human societies, the compatibility of nuclear families lodged inside of small bands of hunger-gatherers with our evolved nature was so high that there was little motivation to change this form of society. Changes in ecological niches, such as moving to a new niche, were far easier to effect than altering social structures that might increase the intensity of selection pressures than would simply finding a new location in which to continue nomadic hunting and gathering. There may well have been larger changes in social structures and cultures of early humans that we do not know about. It is clear that hunter-gatherers did settle at times near waterways, thereby growing the size of their populations because of the increased protein available from fishing which, in turn, may have initiated Big Man polities and even perhaps temporary horticulture.

Yet, these adjustments to new ecologies are less compatible than nomadic hunting and gathering with our evolved psychology, and in all likelihood, they were often abandoned—only to be picked up again by other populations as humans societies eventually began to move toward a horticultural profile.

Eventually, as described in Chapters 6, 7, and 8, humans left the Garden of Eden, so to speak, and with this exit came a host of new selection pressures. Concomitantly, the first autonomous institutions (e.g., unilineal kinship and, then within kinship, polity) evolved in response to these pressures, as political entrepreneurship became a near-constant force in human societies that were permanently settled and had a stable resource base. By 10,000 years ago, sociocultural evolution began to accelerate as political institutions intensified the feedback loops and created new second-order problems. Evolution, of course, is only linear when viewed from a bird's eye view, as the fission and fusion of kinship was the general pattern for hundreds of thousands of years, replaced by the rise and fall of polities that continues even today. The resilience of institutional spheres, however, is demonstrated by the continued evolution of human societies, first with the emergence of autonomous religious spheres (Chapter 9 and 10) and then, eventually, economy (Chapters 11 and 14), and law (Chapters 12 and 13). While nearly every species of ape has been wiped out by Darwinian selection, humans have not only survived, but they have radically altered what a human society looks like in size, scale, and diversity. And, much of this "success," if we can call it that, is owed to the creation of institutional survivor machines which, ironically, pose dangers to humans closest cousins

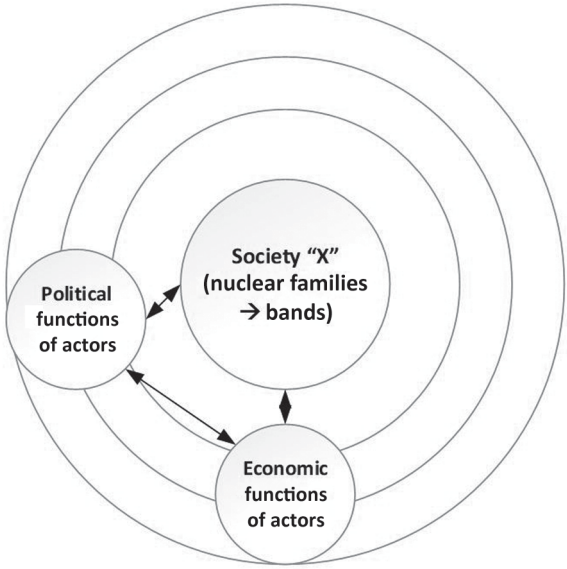


Figure 16.1 Kinship Dominance

with whom they share a very high proportion of genes. What mega societies have done to the biosphere is significant, but even more tragically, the survival of orangutans, gorillas, and chimpanzees, who are descendants of the common ancestors with humans, is probably doomed, at least in their natural habitats. And if such is the case, humans will have succeeded, literally, in caging their closest relatives.

As it turned out in the long run, humans are the only large mammal to create mega societies (Machalek 1992)—something that would not be an easy prediction given the long tenure of hunting and gathering as the primary mode of human adaptation. While a number of scholars have commented on this capacity to build up complex and layered survival machines that can sustain populations of millions and, in a few cases, billions of inhabitants (e.g., Moffett 2018; Henrich 2016), we have argued throughout that the potential for living in macro societies of such scale was potentially hard-wired into our genome. These hard-wired behavioral propensities—e.g., high levels of individualism, orientation to larger communities rather than local groups, capacities to role take and empathize with conspecifics, and so forth (see Appendix II on pages 41 to 48)—clearly made humans capable of living and, in fact, prospering in large scale societies organized by more fully evolved institutional domains. Indeed, by simply reading the traits listed in the cognitive, psychological, emotion,

interaction, and community complexes in Appendix II of Chapter 1, these traits that were elaborated by larger brains, capacities for language, and ability to create symbolic culture suggest that larger, complex, market-driven societies would be more compatible with humans' *evolved nature* than the caged societies of horticulture and agrarianism. If there was no turning back to hunting and gathering, going forward toward what we now term modernity may have been the best strategy for humans to pursue.

In sum, then, we offer a theory of the history of human societies, up to modernity at least, that emphasizes the invention of institutional spheres as the sociocultural equivalent to the human organism in this sense: They are the protective sheath over the most precious cultural material, be it abstract values and ideologies or concrete norms or goals, and the human genome. Human superorganisms are the ultimate survivor machine. They both allow for adaptation to biotic and social environments, and present an environment in which its denizens (and other institutions) must adjust when conditions change. And, given the organization of the substantive sections of the book on specific institutions and their evolution, they also suggest a historiography that is unique to sociology; one that locates the human story in the carving out and expansion of new spheres of institutional reality. That is, our story centers the reconfiguration of structural, cultural, and phenomenological social reality by way of the literal reconstitution of physical, temporal, social, and symbolic space by agents or entrepreneurs. We turn, with the last half of this chapter, to a brief recap of this story and its potential contribution to a much older sociological project—explaining the peculiar rise of the West.

Collapse, Opportunity, and Modernity

Our two basic premises are the following: First, institutional evolution follows a distinct historical pattern, though we would balk at thinking in terms of discrete stages lined up in a linear pattern. The pattern itself is predicated on the types of selection pressures any given group would phase under the same conditions, or what biologists call parallel evolution. We are not suggesting stages, though, because the emergence of a particular institutional form was not the underlying characteristic that classified a society. In Lenski's (1970) subsistence stage-model, for comparison, a society was classified by the primary technological form of biological reproduction—e.g., horticultural or industrial. The evolution of political autonomy in China was driven by *the same pressures* as those found in Mesopotamia, but what came to define these societies was the arrangement of polity in relationship to other institutional spheres—a fact that points to *divergent*

evolution following a period of parallel evolution. This point is even more salient when we consider the outcomes of religious evolution during the first millennium BCE, with China, India, Greece, and Israel all taking extraordinarily different pathways in how the polity and religious spheres were connected and their relationship to kinship, economy, and law.

Our second premise rests on the notion of collapse and opportunity. Rather than imagine institutional evolution as working in some step-like fashion (Nolan and Lenski 2010) or as one long gradual process (Frank and Gills 1996), we posit that human history is filled with a particular institutional sphere reaching a sort of apex in both its size, scale, dominance, and capacity to integrate and regulate without other institutional spheres being autonomous. Borrowing from Collins' (1981a) more specialized theory of geo-political expansion, we argue that modernity is only possible because of the diversity of autonomous spheres present in the U.S. or Germany or, even, China. Keeping in mind that autonomy is relative and does not imply that law or economy in China is the same as it is in the U.S., the logic is as such. If institutional spheres are, as we call them, the principal survivor machines for human societies, then they, like the biotic sphere, are niches with limited carrying capacities. While the biotic world places the true cap on biological reproduction, the social world expands this cap, while also providing the structural and cultural infrastructure upon which impersonal and, even, depersonalized mega-societies can form. Consequently, one way to view the story of human evolution is by the number of autonomous institutional spheres extant in a given time or place and, therefore, the artificial carrying capacity (in structural and cultural terms). When this capacity is reached, collapse becomes imminent; and when collapse happens in superorganisms, unlike in the biotic world where natural selection may very well may lead to extinction, opportunities to innovate in the vacuum are created by the sudden dissolution of infrastructure. Though not always the case, we would identify political collapse as perhaps the most dynamic of all institutional collapses, as it is the polity that is uniquely capable of marshalling the four bases of power and holding even the most diverse and conflict-ridden population together in ways that delimit opportunity. And even if there is such a collapse, a large portion of human beings are likely to survive and begin to search for new adaptive strategies, ultimately over time rebuilding the collapsed institutional domain.

To provide some concrete depth to this theoretical argument, we ask and tentatively answer three questions enumerated earlier: why did parallel political evolution occur 5,000 years ago, why did parallel religious evolution occur 2500 years ago, and what do these phases of institutional evolution tell us about the West and modernity?

Why the State?

Of these three questions, we have probably dealt most explicitly with the first (Chapters 8 and 9), and thus we will only briefly think through the answer. To begin, we are by no means the first to suggest primary state formation—that is, the rise of a state unrelated to previous states that may have served as a template—is a clear example of parallel evolution (Adams 1966; Sanderson 1999; Abrutyn and Lawrence 2010). Only six instances are on record: Mesopotamia, China, India, and Egypt some 5,000 years ago, and more recently, Peru and Mesoamerica. In Chapter 9, we detailed why these states rose in the first place, positing a feedback loop between population growth, resource scarcity, and pressure for some sort of mechanism capable of coordinating and controlling the production and distribution of resources and people (see Figure 16.2).

To this, we would add circumscription that is powerful enough to prevent mobility and restrict the options available to a given group. Thus, those populations that settled on and around the alluvial planes in northern China or in southern Iraq, became rooted to a land whose soil was rarely exhausted, but whose geographic coordinates were beset by various ecological barriers like disease, gradient forests (McNeill 1976), or deserts (Fagan 2004). Compounding these natural constraints against movement were social and military forms of circumscription. In terms of the former, the domestication of cereal grains radically altered the social organization of kinship, as villages continued to collectively own property. In some cases, such as Mesopotamia, the shift to the plow and animal labor radically altered the family structure, encouraging (and providing the necessary resources for) larger families, a sharper sexual division of labor, and stronger ties to the land. In China, rice farming also demanded collectivization of efforts while providing a consistent caloric diet. Cereal grain cultivation and intensive agriculture, much like the mass production of commodities in factories vis-à-vis the small mom-and-pop workshops of yore, invites hierarchical organization, especially when one considers the frequency of floods that would have destroyed many unlucky families who would face certain death if they did not choose indentured servitude. Servitude that would, over a generation or two, simply end in primitive accumulation and the consolidation of larger manors and an ascendant aristocracy that *needed* a political entity to protect their interests.

As these communities grew larger and wealthier, they became a target for both the nomadic people, whose territory they had displaced, and for marginal or marchland upstarts (Turchin 2003). On the one hand, raiding, which was a common form of subsistence production for much of human

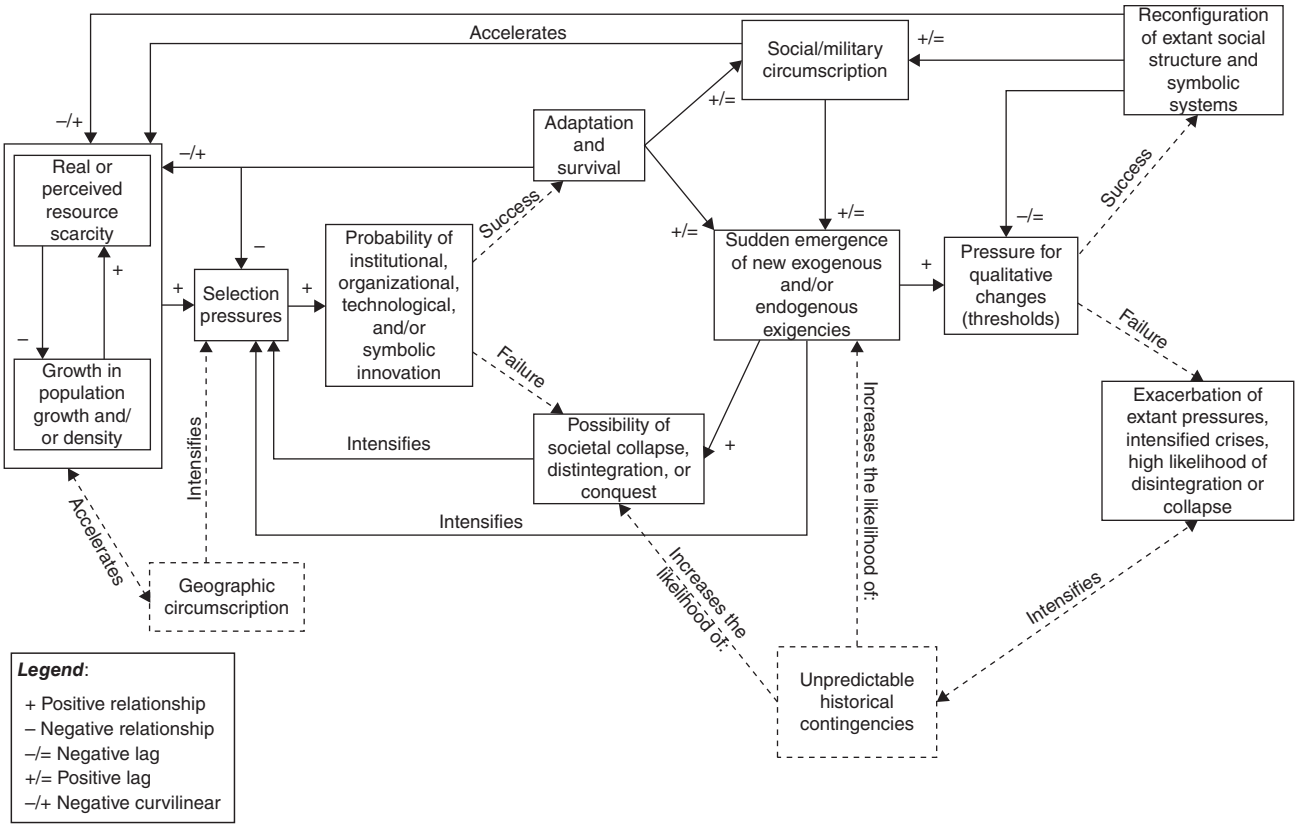


Figure 16.2 Integrated Model of Political Evolution

history, became increasingly frequent. The first empire, the Akkadian empire, was the consequence of "barbarians" raiding the civilized centers and assuming power (Weiss and Courty 1993). So too was the case of the Mongols invading China and deciding to stay and rule (Gernet 1982). The bigger the threat, the more concerted the effort to defend territory and the more embedded actors become to a place and polity because of military circumscription. Not only does this mean the erection of walls that serve as physical and symbolic boundaries, but it also means compulsory military service for men (in many cases) or the military providing one of the only routes of social mobility, as successful warriors, regardless of social rank, are rewarded with land, women, and titles.

Consequently, the polity evolves. But, why? Why not religion? The simplest answer to this revolves around the problems that arise when *any group*—even an informal peer group—grows in size, density, and, consequently, social distinction. Practically speaking, logistical problems related to coordinating member's activities and the division of labor, securing space for these activities, resolving conflicts, ensuring collective decisions are binding, delegating responsibilities, and so on are the first to arise. While a religious sphere can handle these problems, it can only do so by suppressing its most central function—communication with the supranatural—in favor of pragmatic expediency. This does not mean it cannot try to appeal to the gods, but that these appeals without material solutions will soon end in total collapse. Rather, the Temple-economies that dotted the Mesopotamian landscape 8,000–6,000 years ago (Lipinski 1979; Liverani 2006) were, in essence, polities more so than temples (in our current understanding of temples today). *Power* is the medium of interaction, exchange, and communication when groups face change, threat, or pressing needs for integrating diverse parts, not *piety* or *sacredness*; though, these latter media do smooth some of the negative effects of subordination.

Interestingly, political evolution—especially during the Bronze and Iron Ages—was characterized by the near constant rise and fall of polities. The basic pattern was the same: a polity grew in autonomy and, consequently, its entrepreneurs in ambition. Efforts were made to concomitantly stabilize its center (e.g., determine relationships between the royal elite and the aristocracy whose interests were rarely aligned perfectly) and expand its boundaries. At a time when the notion of wealth production was delimited by structural and cultural formations, political entrepreneurs had to use what Weber (1927 [2002]) crudely referred to as *venture* capitalism: or the accumulation of wealth through plunder and conquest. This method was limited in its capacity, as transportation and communication technologies *always* set the upper limit on expansion (Hawley 1986). For instance,

Sargon of Akkad famously declared himself the King of the Four Corners of the world. The world, however, was very likely 90 km in radius given the sharp constraints on moving men, water, food, and weapons (Mann 1986). Nonetheless, Sargon's grandson, Naram-Sin, did manage to expand Akkad's boundaries greatly, innovating militarily, organizationally, technologically, and symbolically (by declaring himself a God-King). The lust for aggrandizement, however, ended poorly for his grandson, as the edges of the empire could not be monitored and controlled effectively without extracting a severe price from the flow of resources to the center (and, therefore, the aristocracy and ruling family) and the redistribution of those resources (however inequitable) to the rest of the population. The result was Akkad being swept into the dustbin of history, leaving only its linguistic (Semitic) and stylistic (e.g., clothing, hair and beard styles) imprint on Mesopotamia, and the title: King of the Four Corners.

And yet, each successive polity was able to learn from some of the mistakes of the previous, innovate, and experience more or less luck. The same was true, for instance, of the successive dynasties in China and Egypt, and the rise and fall of various Mesoamerican polities (Tolmecs, Olmecs, Mayans, and Aztecs). Political collapse invited greater success as new entrepreneurs could build on the old, learn from them, and, through innovation, build far more autonomous, expansive polities than ever before. But, these had their limitations. Egypt, the ancient Indian empire, Mesopotamia, the Hittites, the Mycenaeans, the Incas and Aztecs, and many other polities have been reduced to museum relics and artifacts. Some, like the Incas and Aztecs, were destroyed by conquest, inviting "what ifs" that wonder if they would have evolved in ways similar to other states. The others, especially the "Old World" polities, could not get bigger, not without some other institutional infrastructure.

Why Religion Next?

That infrastructure, at least so far as the historical record indicates, came from the evolution of religion. This is not all that surprising, as we showed in Chapters 9 and 10 that priests were paramount to political entrepreneurs' claims to authority, even before autonomous religious spheres. Indeed, the head of the state was nearly always either a high priest, *the* high priest, or some sort of incarnate of a deity. The problem, ultimately, that political elite faced was balancing power with a religious entrepreneur whose independence strengthened their claims to monopolies over psychic violence. This could be perceived as a threat to the ruling elite's power, or it could be perceived as a necessary power-sharing agreement that enhanced both

political and religious authority. This is certainly the case for Hezekiah and Josiah in ancient Judah (Abrutyn 2015a), for Ashoka, emperor of the Mauryan empire (Bentley 1993), and for every Chinese emperor and governor beginning with the Han dynasty (Ch'en 1986). However, religion did not evolve in the first millennium because political elite *needed* it, nor did it evolve because of some societal level need for integration and cooperation. So, why did religion evolve then?

In Chapter 10, most of the basic selection pressures were presented, but we can briefly review them here. First, following the collapse of the Bronze Age around 1100 BCE, populations began to grow, exploding by the middle of the first century BCE (Taagepera 1978, 1979) alongside a second urban revolution (Abrutyn 2014a). Second, as iron technologies spread and became common, political entrepreneurs began intensifying agriculture (the iron plow, for instance) and warfare. The former contributed to the growing population and urbanization, while the latter invited warfare on scales previously unimaginable with far more violence (Armstrong 2006; Martin 2012). Third, the collapse of the old system of geopolitics soon gave rise to bigger, more cohesive, and more ambitious polities. The neo-Assyrian empire and Han dynasty, for instance, were massive and better organized than their predecessors. Consequently, farther flub territories were brought into contact with each other, while travel was far safer and easier as the polities built more roads, more security, and homogenized culture through state-sanctioned languages and standardized weights and measures. Under these conditions, the world changed rapidly, and like colonization in the 16th and 17th centuries, or globalization in the 20th century, time and space shrunk.

Against this backdrop, religious entrepreneurship was the most plausible form as they deal primarily in the sacred, morality, and, eventually, piety. The most educated group of individuals across the ancient world, they would have been confronted with a series of pressures that were built on *extant political and economic environments* and not the biotic world. Alongside the rapid re-emergence of geo-politics, empire, and urbanization came sharp inequalities. But, these inequalities would not have been as easily hidden, as urban spaces were bigger and denser, and religious actors more mobile. The Buddha wandered as did, for instance, Confucius. They would have been exposed to the horrors of an unjust political economy. They would have also heard stories and met survivors of war atrocities. The Assyrians, for instance, were known to skin the entire population of a town and line the outside walls with the skins as a warning to would-be resistors (Bleibtreu 1991). They regularly deported the conquered throughout their empire, enslaved many, and sometimes even stripped the land of its fertile

soil (Jonker 1995). Thus, the metaphysical problems of suffering and evil would have pervaded their world. Meanwhile, their ability to travel from one town to the next as well as the exponential growth in diversity would have put pressure on their messages about the sacred or about morality to be highly general. The moral community could not be tied to a piece of land or people, but rather, this larger cosmopolitan world they inhabited needed a boundary-less world, and thereby, so too did the supranatural which could not be grounded in the mundane or in a king or emperor's being.

One further unique attribute shaped religious evolution during the first millennium: it was the first set of cases of sociocultural evolution in which entrepreneurship was not just in reaction to the sociocultural environment. Rather their institutional projects and the outcome of their efforts was shaped as much by the response to their project by political entrepreneurs (Abrutyn 2015a), their struggle against competitors (Eisenstadt 1984), and the effort to sway a nascent, yet growing, middle class that offered a new audience and a new pool of human and material resources. Hence, religious evolution during the first millennium was built from the interests of competing entrepreneurs, existing power structures, and the unique demographic dynamics of each case.

As in the case of political evolution, part of the reason for human societies witnessing parallel transformative evolution was collapse the and opportunity it brought with it. The end of the Bronze Age ended the old order for the Near East and in the Indus Valley[2], while the Warring States period brought to a close the eight-century reign of the Zhou dynasty—the last three of which were characterized by the erosion of the central state's power and increasingly unstable social organization throughout (Hsu 1988).[3] Amidst these collapses, opportunities for localized polities—some built from the ashes of old ruling families and territories, some brand new—provided fuel to innovation throughout the world. Likewise, the rapid reassembly of power centers generated cross pressures. It was somewhere between decay and imperialism that the messages of social justice and protest, the claims by all religious elite that the god or gods were the ultimate judges of secular action (and, by extension, religious elite were judges too because of their special role as mediators between the supranatural and natural), and the ecumenical vision of community arose and became the foundational basis of distinct religious spheres. In many cases, these messages and these entrepreneurs were co-opted by the elite. The Han not only leveraged the Confucian academy for a pre-made bureaucratic class, but also tolerated Taoist and Buddhist religious societies. While Hezekiah and Josiah both seemed beholden to the scribal and priestly Israelite classes, it is clear that from the post-exilic Persian period

on, a henotheistic state—one in which Yahweh was the god of the state—was fused with a distinctive religious sphere (Grabbe 2004). Meanwhile, the Persian empire adopted Zoroastrianism as its state religion, while Ashoka elevated Buddhism to the Mauryan state religion. Unlike previous polities where religious entrepreneurs were the handmaidens of the ruling elite, they had achieved varying degrees of structural and symbolic independence, and flexed these muscles through the direct distribution of religious resources to the masses, or at least the middle class.

Why the West?

The question about the West has long vexed historical sociologists. We know that China, India, and the Caliphate Middle East were far more advanced politically, economically, and culturally (e.g., scientifically) than Europe. Following the fall of the Roman Empire, historians (mis)labeled the following centuries the "Dark Ages." Moreover, a century prior to the West beginning to colonize the rest of the world, disease struck the European continent so badly that one third of the population was lost in a short period of time. These events led Weber (1927 [2002]; also, Collins 1986a), for instance, to search for the key not in the material culture, but rather in the religious changes of the mid-16th century, seeing the Protestant Ethic as a train "switchman" that pushed an already moving western European urban locomotive down the "right" track. To Weber, everything prior to that period was too constrained by the magic, irrationality, and over-bloated bureaucratic apparatus of the Catholic Church (Stark 1968). While this explanation has some merit, at least in so far as the logic that Protestantism was the final nail in traditional authority's coffin—and as Chapter 13 makes clear—it was a coffin that had been built for centuries before Calvin and Luther hit the scene. So, how does our theory explain the rise of the West?

This story begins like that of our political and religious evolutionary story: with collapse. The disintegration of Rome, like that of previous empires, was both consequential in its reverberations throughout Europe and presented myriad opportunities for entrepreneurship. It is, indeed, surprising historical sociologists like Weber or Wallerstein paid little attention to Rome, despite its outsized importance in world history. Its collapse, however, was similar to the Bronze Age epoch when a sudden vacuum emerged, giving rise to localized polities. All that survived, and this is important, were kinship systems that were flexible enough to revert to the social cages characteristic of horticultural and early agrarian ages (Goody 1984, 2000; Gies and Gies 1986) and the religious system that was

monolithic in its beliefs and practices (Sharot 2001).[4] The Catholic Church's unique position was notable. First, regardless of the size of the polity, the Catholic Church until the time of Protestantism, was a singular source of political legitimacy. In previous empires, like the Assyrian or Egyptian, each city or seat of regional power had its own city deity and temple. To be sure, these gods were arranged in a hierarchy with the capital being the home of the most powerful god in the pantheon. Yet, regional cults and centralized polities were the inverse of most of the post-Roman European landscape where regional polities and a centralized religious center existed.

What makes this situation so unique, was that the Church rarely tried to monopolize physical violence, but was happy to hire mercenary armies (like the one from southern Italy that Gregory hired to stave off King Henry IV's assault on Rome) or charge them with religious duties (e.g., the Crusades). Thus, Europe was a highly decentralized secular world tied loosely together by a united religious sphere. Up until Protestantism, moreover, the Church was the center of myriad innovation (Brown 1996; Lindberg 2007; Southern 1970 [1990]), many of which were not political in nature, but rather cultural, philosophic, and scientific. As Chapter 13 illustrated, religious entrepreneurs set the stage for legal autonomy, contributed indirectly (by propelling the legal revolution) and directly to the rise of the city and, thereby, the motor of economic evolution, and, in short order, drove the emergence of the first educational entrepreneurs by sponsoring universities.

Thus, the collapse of Rome was key to "freeing" up the space for religious and then legal and economic entrepreneurship. Nothing on that scale happened in China, as one dynasty replaced another for two millennia. The Middle East eventually collapsed under the weight of the marriage of religion and state, and, eventually, was conquered by the West, making any future possibilities hypotheticals that can also be applied to the Mesoamerican and Incan cases, which, unfortunately, also suffered an even worse fate than the various Islamic states. The collapse of the Mauryan Empire and the rise of Brahmanic religion delimited political centralization as the religious sphere remained localized, yet dominant in the Indian social structure. Perhaps given more time, it may have changed course, but soon India was conquered by Muslims and then, later, the British. In this sense, than, Europe was exceptional, historically.

The rise of the Hanseatic League offers a clue to what was happening on a smaller scale all over the West (Cowan 2010; Nicolle 2015): fractured polity (by city, region) exerted local control, but was not hegemonic over a large territory, as had been the Roman Empire. Meanwhile, compulsory membership in a moral community (Catholicism) provided the foundations for

trust and uncertainty reduction in impersonal transactions, and the rise of a ubiquitous legal sphere in which consistent resolutions to conflicts added a powerful integrative and regulative layer on top of the religious sphere. Thus, commerce and trade increased across the whole of northern Europe, from Gdansk (Poland) to London (England), without an overarching polity but a common membership in a territory-less religious sphere. It was this religious infrastructure that paved the way for a legal infrastructure that, together, became the conduit along which true *money* could circulate in all of the ways Simmel (1907[1978]) expertly detailed—that is, to summarize, the religio-legal spheres allowed for frequent, ramified, accelerated depersonalized relationships that might otherwise be constrained by arbitrary political decision making and goals.

Thus, with some degree of legal regulation, supported by local polities in cities, and local religions (who were often given favorable treatment as "members" of the Hanseatic League), markets could flourish across a large portion of Europe in a way not possible during the imperial reign of Rome. With markets flourishing, money and the instruments moving money within and between regions (contract law, capacities to adjudicate disputes, and enforce rulings) could evolve, as could other kinds of services (banking, financing, insuring) associated with market dynamics. The creation of wealth that could be used to purchase commodities, including labor and other specialized traders, accelerated the build up of urban areas, city and regional (feudal) polities, and into national polities, but this time around with a dramatically expanded economy and legal system that had become autonomous and that, in turn, led to the further evolution of polities to a more autonomous level of state formation. By the end of the 15th century, the commercial revolution was under way, and polities had become sufficiently autonomous and, moreover, powerful that they could check the power of the Catholic Church, helped along, of course, by the Reformation. Moreover, the remaining institutional domains could now evolve—education, science, arts, sport—towards more autonomy (Abrutyn 2014a).

In short, the collapse of the Roman Empire was not an accident because there is too much evidence that large, centralized empires always suffer from logistical problems in sustaining themselves, especially as elite corruption generates internal conflict that make it difficult to defend the empire from external enemies (Collins 1981a). The wiping of the *sociocultural slate*, so to speak, by way of the de-evolution and decentralization of power opened a new path for the evolutionary dynamics that we have analyzed in this book. In Europe, it was the economy, law, and religion that were given space to evolve *before* polity could evolve and re-assert its

integrative power in creating the nation-states that would become Europe. The key breakthrough through was the freeing of humans to some degree from the cages of unilineal kinship and domination by polity; and while options in buying and selling commodities, including oneself as a labor commodity, is not the Garden of Eden of nomadic hunting and gathering, it still gives options and choice in the way only markets can. Additionally, once markets are dynamic and differentiating, they can only increase choice and options—something an evolved great ape like humans would certainly find preferable to the cages of kinship and coercive state power. And, while it is tempting to adopt the modern sociological critique that urbanization is unnatural for humans given the classics' adoration towards traditional, bucolic life, that inequality in the time of capitalism is as bad as it has ever been because of the exploitative nature capitalist-proletariat relationships, and that individuation runs against the grains of humans who are naturally communalists, our story pushes back against these unreflective commentaries. Indeed, it is just as plausible to suggest Europe took off precisely because these adaptations made in the interstitial spaces of a decentralized political system were compatible with the complexes of humans' evolved nature (Appendix II on pages 41 to 48). While societies today look nothing like the savanna upon which hominid evolution occurred, the relatively high degree of freedom, independence, and autonomy does look more natural than the oppressive nature of small town life or the truly exploitative nature of agrarian societies that consumed 99% of human life like a child's toy consumes the life of a battery. It is, of course, a tribute to the flexibility of humans to adapt to such sociocultural cages that violated their evolved nature for thousands of years, but once given an opening, as was the case with the final collapse of Rome, for re-setting the evolutionary clock and path toward modernity, the building out of mega-societies actually increased options and individualism and, ironically, in many cases freedoms.

Lest one misreads our argument, we recognize that modernity is not the Garden of Eden (though, we would also challenge Sahlins' idyllic view, too) for many reasons. Bigger societies, particularly those driven by capitalism, are endangering human survival by degrading and destroying the earth's ecosystem; many states, including those that purport to be free, are politically repressive towards segments of their population; inequalities remain very real, and over the last few decades, have grown considerably sharp; and, of course, weapon's technology remains a potential force of total destruction. Moreover, large, dense populations, as we re-learned in 2020–2021 with COVID-19, are practically inviting Malthus' horsemen or, alternatively, are clear evidence that they can and will begin to ride again

in the modern world. But, short of an improbable return to the Garden of Eden, modernity with its material comforts and markets provides a better home for a larger proportion of humans than was possible since humans left nomadic foraging. That the current state of social structure and culture is one of near-constant pressure and change, we can be assured that change will come. We offer no predictions, but recognize the fact that humans are remarkably adaptive, but often the rigidities of social structure or the extremes of the cultural systems (especially extremist ideologies) are also a weak point that, in the end, may be humans' undoing. We may have been too smart for our own good, much less for all other life forms on earth.

Conclusion

We are at the end of our analysis of the evolution of the first human institutions. Our goal has been to examine the emergence and evolution of these five institutions (kinship, polity, religion, economy, and law) in detail by focusing on the selection pressures operating on humans as they adapt to ever-changing environments by using their capacities for agency to build social structures and systems of culture attached to these structures. We have also sought to emphasize that these evolutionary dynamics do reveal broad parallels to evolution in the biotic universe—namely, evolution is a process of selection on variations in phenotypes. But, the phenotypes of the biotic and sociocultural universes are different, the mechanisms by which sociocultural and biotic variants on which selection operates are different, and the objects evolving are different. Thus, we should not fall into the trap of trying to have too much fidelity with the Modern Synthesis in biology. When we want to address the evolution of humans as biological phenotypes, *per se*, this is appropriate, but humans also create psychological, structural, and cultural environments through acts of agency to which they must adapt. Selection is operating here, but it is not "blind" because humans can perceive the nature of the selection pressures and alter the structures and cultures by acts agency.

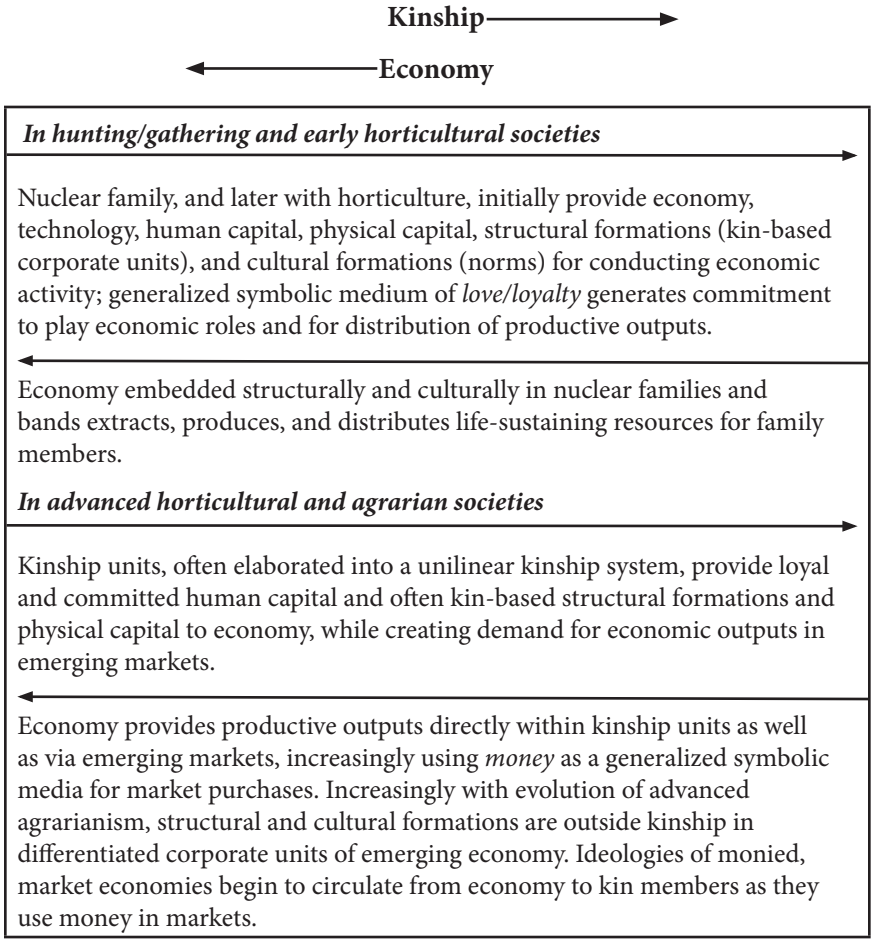
If we try to analyze these complex dynamics by the tenets of the Modern Synthesis, we will not generate much understanding of the evolution of the social universe. Dogmatic assertions can be made but they still do not explain what such statements often assert, and there is good reason for social scientists to be suspect of dogmatic statements about the isomorphism of explanations of the biotic and sociocultural universes. There are, of course, other ways to explain sociocultural phenomena than by evolutionary analysis, as we have done in this book. But, if we want to understand where human came from and where the sociocultural formations that they have

used to survive over the last 300,000+ years, an evolutionary analysis is a good starting point. And, indeed we can use ideas from the analysis of biotic evolution to understand the evolution of human phenotypes, as we did in trying to understand the properties of human nature outlined in the Appendix II of Chapter 1. But, once the human phenotype includes the elaboration machine of enhanced emotions, enhanced cognitive capacity, the capacity to communicate with symbolic language, which, as a result, activates the capacity to create symbolic culture, the nature of the "survivor machines" (Dawkins 1976) that humans build in order to survive is different from any other animal on Earth. And, the nature of human evolution changes in ways that are not amenable to the crude transaction of sociocultural reality into terms compatible with the Modern Synthesis. We need a *distinctive evolutionary sociology*, and that is what we have used in understanding humans' sociocultural origins (Turner and Machalek 2018).

We have taken the evolution of the first institutions only so far: to the point where other emerging institutions—education, science, arts, sports, etc.—have already become part of human societies but have not reached their full autonomy. It is the institutional base that we have outlined up to the latter part of the agrarian era that was critical for the emergence and evolution of all other human social institutions that, eventually, led to the contemporary social universe. Of course, the sociocultural universe is still evolving, and it is evolving by selection working on sociocultural phenotypes and, potentially, on organismic phenotypes (as is case with a pandemic), but even when there are selection pressures on the organism, these pressures are also on the sociocultural systems—groups, organizations, communities, and institutional domains—that organize human social life and that, in essence, are the evolved survivor machines of the species. Still, as we have emphasized, the evolution of human institutional domains is very different than the evolution of humans as a biological organism. There are parallels that make them both evolution—namely, variations in phenotypes under selections—but it bears to constantly repeat the mantra: the phenotypes are different, the nature of selection is different, and the units evolving are different than in biological evolution. Thus, sociological analysis of evolution cannot be reduced to the tenets of the Modern Synthesis. And so there are types of human evolution—one portrayed by the Modern Synthesis when we are studying the evolution of humans as a biological species. But when studying the sociocultural survivor machines—that is, institutional systems that make up societies—it is clear that humans created a new level of evolving reality to further insulate bodies from biological natural selection. And this new level of reality evolves differently than the evolution driving the emergence of humans as a species.

Appendix III

Evolution of Interchanges of Resources in the Institutional Order



Kinship ⟶

⟵ **Polity**

In hunting and gathering and early horticultural societies

Structure and culture of nomadic hunting and gathering delays emergence of polity; more settled hunting and gathering populations initiate polity with Big Man leaders and their allies. Horticultural societies begin to create structure and culture of polity through kinship rules specifying authority within and across communities.

⟵

Emerging kin-based polity generates generalized symbolic medium of *power* and franchised authority that now circulates through the kinship system and across communities, given to kin leaders and reciprocated by *love/loyalty* and *commitments* to emerging kin-based polity. Leaders of most inclusive kin units, such as clans and moieties, are often viewed as chiefs, with leaders of smaller kin units possessing franchised authority. Ideologies built around consolidation of bases of power and ideologies of unilinear descent system.

⟶

Generalized symbolic media of kinship, love/loyalty, is transmuted to commitments to abide by authority emanating kin units in exchange for franchised *power* to leaders of each layer of units. As these media are exchanged, the ideologies and norms of kinship and hierarchy of power and authority are blended using the structural hierarchies among corporate units comprising a unilinear kinship system.

In advanced horticultural and agrarian societies

⟵

As economy evolves and markets using money become more common, the generalized symbolic medium of money circulates through some families to polity as taxes supporting the consolidation of power increasingly outside of kin units (except perhaps for elite families holding power) in more autonomous bureaucratic corporate structures. With this emerging state, kinship corporate units (other than elites) are differentiated from the corporate units of the emerging state. *Loyalty,* often toned down to *conditional commitment*s, to the emerging state is exchanged for franchised authority to kin units, now revealing diverse patterns of corporate-unit organization as kinship begins to de-evolve back to a more nucleated form. The ideologies of polity and kinship circulate and begin to create a political culture built around state-family obligations.

In hunting and gathering and early horticultural societies

The generalized symbolic medium of *love/loyalty* is partially transmuted into beliefs about the commitment to supernatural that can be accessed by ritual activities bestowing *piety* and *access to the sacredness of supernatural beings and forces*. Such rituals occur in kin units or bands and, at times, led by kin or band members believed to have special powers.

Much the same exchange occurs in early horticultural societies, with religious specialists and places of ritual worship often differentiated from kinship. And with movement to advanced horticultural societies religious rituals, specialists, and places of worship become more clearly differentiated from kinship, while often being attached to the differentiating polity. Temples jointly used by political and religious elite mix *power* with *piety/sacredness* which, in turn, is exchanged with kin members for their *loyalty* and *commitment* to the supernatural and those priests who facilitate access to supernatural and who, by their ritual actions, allow access to the supernatural and, thereby, reduce kin members fears and anxieties. The ideology and beliefs codified by religious practitioners and the normative codes in these beliefs begin to mix with the norms and beliefs of kinship as an institutional domain, especially when circulating in a unilinear kinship system.

In advanced horticultural and agrarian societies

As kinship, religion, and polity become more differentiated as institutional domains, and as markets using money evolve, money often enters exchanges among institutional domains. For kinship, loyalty and commitment to religious beliefs and rituals is supplemented by material contributions, increasingly monetary, to religious temples and their incumbents to assure piety and access to the supernatural. And the more religion and polity differentiate, the greater the importance religion has for family members who seek access to the supernatural and, hence, anxiety reduction.


Kinship
Law
In hunting and gathering and horticultural societies
Law is deeply embedded in kinship rules with some rules inviting more formal responses of family and society members. With unilinear kinship systems, kin rules and additional rules mandated or legislated by chiefs and councils of kin elders take of a more legalistic character in that violations are adjudicated and punishments for violations are meted out by kin members with authority within the hierarchy of kin corporate units.
In advancing horticultural and agrarian societies
As polity evolves, it begins the process of creating a legal domain separated from kinship and religion, thereby using law as the symbolic base of its power and as a means to coordinate and control actors in all institutional domains. As kinship evolves back to a more nucleated structure, a body of formal laws, often accompanied by separate judges, courts, and enforcement personnel, emerges to replace the system of rules that had evolved in unilinear descent kinship systems.
In return of this external regulation and, also, the franchising of authority to family heads coordinating actions of families, kinship bestows *loyalty and commitment* to polity and to the legal system.
Law can also buffer relations between centers of power and religion by separating family law from Canons, criminal law, and merchant law, thus providing not only external regulation of family but also a buffer between the autonomy of the family and economy, polity, and religion that increases *loyalty* and *commitments* to law and polity.

Polity ⟶

⟵ **Religion**

In settled hunter-gathering and horticultural societies

⟶

As polity begins to evolve with Big Men in settled hunting and gathering societies, and then as it evolves further within the normative and corporate-unit structure of kinship systems, it moves to be more autonomous. As unilinear kinship declines with advanced horticulture, polity becomes more autonomous from kinship and begins to co-opt religion, which had been evolving around kinship as well. In the evolution toward more clear cut state-type bureaucracy, polity coopts religion to secure a basis for legitimation by the gods; in return polity gives religion more autonomy, even though religions often remains closely connected, with considerable exchange between heads of polity and religion and with the state providing some of its infrastructure to house religion.

⟵

In giving legitimacy to the state in exchange for more autonomy as franchised authority over religious matters, religion often seeks to sustain or increase its own bases of power as exclusive monitors of the supernatural and as having rights to engage in some political actions, such as administration of its adherents' personal matters and even being able to organize its own coercive force. These demands of religion often create tension and conflict between polity and religion.

In advanced horticultural and agrarian societies

⟶

The outcome of these tensions and, at times, open conflicts is polity giving religious corporate units more autonomy over spiritual matters (but not political and eventually economic matters) in exchange for giving polity exclusive rights to hold coercive and administrative power, and by orienting beliefs about the supernatural as also mandating that polity has coercive and administrative power (thus augmenting polity's symbolic base of power). In return for this concession, polity often begins to subside some religious activities through revenues collected by taxes. In this structure, the cultures of religion and polity can become combined with ideologies and generalized institutional norms being blended and with political leaders and religious leaders sharing ritual activities affirming each others "powers" over the members of a population

Polity ⟶

⟵ **Economy**

In settled hunter-gatherers and early horticultural societies

⟵

Settled hunter-gatherers begin to break away from egalitarian nomadic hunter-gatherers by generating a material surplus which, in turn, generates population growth that increase selection pressures for regulation and control. The result is a Big Man system in which an individual becomes a leader through charismatic actions, recruiting allies who support the concentration of authority.

⟶

Big men are always under obligation to make the correct decisions and to demonstrate their charisma and generosity, and so, if they hold economic surplus, they are expected to give in back in redistribution rituals demonstrating the "generosity" of the Big Man.

⟵

Horticultural populations engaged in gardening without the plow generate additional selection pressures for polity and for organizing larger populations living in communities. The result is the extension of kinship to be the structural and cultural base of not only kinship but also polity, organized in hierarchies of leaders of the kin units making up unilinear kinship systems. These leaders allocate at both the level of kindred and community the gardening plots, the grazing plots for husbandry, and even materials for housing of families within communities. They also organize the chronic conflict within horticultural populations. Eventually trade with other populations increases, and something like markets begin to evolve and, eventually, begin to use a generalized medium of exchange that eventually results in money used in buying and selling of products in markets. Markets and money, as they evolve in advanced horticulture create the capacity for polity to grow and begin to move out of kinship and develop its own corporate-unit structures and infrastructures. With money, kin units and economic actors can be taxed, with these revenues able to finance public works projects, warfare, state bureaucrats, and, at times, to be used to subsidize particular types of economic activity. Moreover, the coinage of money is often taken over by polity to assure its legitimacy and to regulate its supply. Thus, the invention of money and markets generates not only selection pressures for more regulation and coordination by polity, markets and money generate the wealth that allows the polity to grow and consolidate more power. Without money and markets generating wealth and tax revenues, the scale of polity will be limited.

⟵***Advanced horticultural and agrarian societies***

⟶

As markets expand, production increases, and polity can grow using the money to build up the infrastructures for increased economic activity, for warfare, and, most importantly, for the building out of the states and for consolidating coercive and administrative power (by paying soldiers and bureaucrats), by using monies to create incentives for certain kinds of activity and for creating a new basis for symbolic power using the generalized media of exchange to legitimate the consolidation. Moreover, money can be used to, in essence, buy off religion which, in advanced horticultural and agrarian systems, the only intersociety competitor for power, and thus receives further symbolic power by being sanctioned by the gods to have power. And once money is in play and circulating among all institutional domains, market demand differentiates and increases the scale and dynamics of markets, thereby stimulating more economic activity that yields wealth which can be taxed by polity. And eventually, the expansion of markets, with encouragement by polity, sets the stage for the commercial revolution necessary for the transition to modernity, once new sources of power can be attached to machines. As market economies expand, then, the exchange of franchised power to economic actors, and, at times, economic subsidies to economic actors who then pay taxes, blends the generalized symbolic media of economy and polity—that is, power and money—as well as the ideologies and normative systems of both institutional domains. This then provides considerable institutional integration since franchised authority and money, and their attendant ideologies and norms, now circulate through virtually all institution domains and, thereby, blend the generalized symbolic media and more general culture of all institutional domains with the generalized media of polity and market economies.

In Horticultural and Agrarian Societies

The economy allowing for the growth of polity also generates selection pressures for law to regulate and coordinate economic activity. At the same time, polity experiences selection pressures for how to regulate and coordinate ever-more complex transactions throughout a differentiating society. Polity consolidates coercive and administrative power, but it needs more indirect ways of coordinating transaction since monitoring every aspect of a society is complex, expensive, and probably not possible. Also, polity is always under pressure in advanced horticultural and agrarian systems to break away from religion as its symbolic base, which forces polity to share power and to engage in constant conflict with religious elites. The creation of a legal system gives polity much more control over law than religion and also solves many integrative problems in relations among corporate units in institutional domains. Thus, with the institutional structure of polity, efforts emerge in state formation to generate a legal system, often including distinct types of law, such as commercial or merchant law, family law, criminal law, and perhaps even some formalization under polity of religious law if there is a state religion. Polity thus finances judges, courts, enforcement agents, and legislatures, although law enacting bodies—from emperor to legislature—are generally tied to polity, as it is the coercive force in the enforcement part of a legal system.

Creation of a legal system involves the exchange of generalized symbolic media of law—*justice and coordinatio*n—for *franchised authority* to make laws, adjudicate disputes over law, make binding decisions, and enforce laws in diverse spheres of a society. If polity is willing to franchise authority and allow high levels of autonomy of law, then law can increase the likelihood of a more democratic polity, thereby blending not only generalized media but other cultural elements as well, such as ideologies and institutional norms. If law can achieve some degree of autonomy, it can also work to legitimate polity, especially if ideologies of polity and law can be blended, giving both diffuse legitimacy.

If law is effective in legitimating polity while managing the myriad of transactions and actions in terms of laws and their adjudication and enforcement, then law can become positivistic, responding to constantly changing forms of relationships among actors in diverse institutions, while mediating social relations in terms of universalistic rules that are not distorted by hot generalized media such as the morals of religious ideologies. And if law can work to buffer corporate units in institutional domains, while reconciling some of their ideologies, it can work to further legitimate polity and, more generally, integrate a society that in turn legitimates polity even further. Without this dynamic relationship between law, polity, economy, and other institutional domains, the first institutions cannot set a base for the transition into modernity.

Religion ⟶

⟵ **Economy**

In nomadic hunting and gathering

A nomadic hunting and gathering economy is generally free of high levels of anxiety and stress because it requires only 15 to 20 hours per week to gather and hunt necessary food. Only in times of severe environmental change, where resources become scarce, do hunter-gatherers experience high levels of stress. Since religion represents a response to selection pressures on humans, who are highly emotional compared to most mammals, from negative emotions like anxiety, fear, stress, and worry, the evolution of religion was generally embryonic, revealing a vague conception of supernatural and relatively few rituals directed at the supernatural. However, settled hunter-gatherers or those in difficult habitats all reveal a much clearer vision of the supernatural, its inhabitant forces and beings, and have clear rituals, often leading to early religious specialists like shamans designed to reduce negative emotions. The same is true of herding and fishing variants of settled hunter-gatherers, horticulturalists, and agrarian populations.

In horticultural and agrarian societies

Once conceptions of the supernatural emerge and become explicit, and once specialists leading rituals to appeal to the supernatural have also emerged, religion can often generate insecurities that, in turn, allow religions to expand. Yet, once humans leave nomadic hunting and settle down in communities, economic insecurities increase because gardening, farming, herding, and fishing can become problematic because human activities can damage ecosystems and because settled populations begin to compete for resources. The result is that economics generate anxieties to which religious leaders are willing to address. As anxieties are allayed because of ritual appeals to the forces of the supernatural, religion allows individuals and families to carry out needed economic activity. The basic exchange is access to the sacred powers of the supernatural and a sense of piety provided by religious leaders who increasingly are organized outside of kinship proper in exchange for commitment to religious beliefs and, when possible, economic contributions in support of religion as an evolving institutional domain.

The evolution of markets and money dramatically changes the nature of religion because its structures and infrastructures can be financed with money, and religious practitioners can, if desired, be paid with money from economic actors, polity, and kinship. Religion becomes increasingly autonomous and often, in exchange for commitments to beliefs and rituals, demonstrated by money from polity, kinship units, and economic actors, allows religion to expand and prosper, but such with the revenues made possible by a market-driven economy using money, sets the stage for religion to be compartmentalized by the secular nature of markets, by the profit motives of economic actors, and by the more secular orientations fo families.

Religion ⟶

⟵ **Law**

In hunting-gathering and simple horticultural societies

Religions all eventually develop moral codes for directing actions, not just in accessing the supernatural through rituals but for carrying out the daily routines of secular life. These can reinforce and even contradict norms in institutional domains, and these codes also are phrased and repeated in ritual actions as if they are legal commandments. In an emerging legal system, it is often that new laws are couched in religious terms to increase adherence to their dictates. And, as has been the case, religions have created their own system of law, the most notable and persisting system being that of Islamic law with its own legal codes, courts, and practitioners. But religious law is always moral law, even when it addresses secular actions and, as a result, is not highly compatible with market economies and with secular polities, whose leaders and entrepreneurs often want to reduce the power of religious leaders. These limitations create selection pressures for a more secular system of law regulating key points of transactions in a differentiating society.

In advanced horticultural and agrarian societies

Law is always most pushed by economic and political entrepreneurs, often first as an alternative to religious laws and, always, for the need to create a system of rules for economic and political conduct. If polity is not strong, then economic entrepreneurs have created merchant law guiding practices in markets. If polity is seeking autonomy, it will also have a vested interest in regularizing economic actions in order to secure it resources to build out polity and, at the same time, to reduce dependence on religious beliefs and, it it exists, religious law which might come into conflict with secular law and the needs of economic actors in markets or of political actors to consolidate all bases of power in polity. Historically, the trade-off is for polity to develop a legal system to better coordinate and control its populations, to stimulate market transactions using money that can be taxed to support the autonomy of polity, which then buys off religious entrepreneurs by giving them autonomy in the spiritual arena and, at the same time, often providing support with tax revues. Law also generally creates a set of rules sanctioning the rights of religious members of a population and their spiritual leaders in religion. In this way, religion has some autonomy but loses the power sought by polity and loses some of its capacity to over-moralized legal codes critical to the operation of larger, increasingly market-driven economic relations. Yet, the high principles and laws of societies often reflect moral principles espoused by religious entrepreneurs, but the details of coordinating social relations tend to be more secular, although in many societies law still contains a high degree of religious content in general value premises that become embodied in law.

Notes

1 Some would argue that the corporate units from which institutional systems are built are also survivor machines because they too are sociocultural phenotypes and often under selection. But, from the institutional perspective that we have taken in this book, we will for the present emphasize institutional systems, and the corporate units from which they are constructed, as the ultimate survivor machines (see Turner and Machlek 2018: 260–90).

2 The Bronze Age Harrappan civilization came to a close around 1300 BCE, beginning its decline some six centuries prior (Wright 2009).

3 The decline of the Zhou dynasty is also known as the Spring and Autumn period beginning in 722 BCE and ending in 479.

4 By this we mean to say that Catholicism was not competing with other competitors in size and scale. Variation in Catholic practice and belief surely was common from one parish to another until the Gregorian reformation and faced competition in highly local pagan religions.

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