

III. Aspects of Social Evolution

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Social Evolution: Alternatives and Variations (Introduction)*

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It has always been peculiar to evolutionists to compare social and biological evolution, the latter as visualized by Charles Darwin.¹ But it also seems possible and correct to draw an analogy with another great discovery in the field of evolutionary biology, with the homologous series of Nikolay Vavilov (1921, 1927, 1967). However, there is no complete identity between cultural parallelism and biological homologous series. Vavilov studied the morphological homology, whereas our focus within the realm of social evolution is the functional one. No doubt, the morphological homomorphism also happens in the process of social evolution (*e.g.*, in the Hawaii Islands where a type of the sociocultural organization surprisingly similar with the ones of other highly developed parts of Polynesia had independently formed by the end of the 18th century [Sahlins 1972/1958; Goldman 1970; Earle 1978; Johnson and Earle 2000; Seaton 1978]). But this topic is beyond the present article's *problematique*.

What is important for us here is that there are reasons to suppose that an equal level of sociopolitical (and cultural) complexity (which makes it pos-

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¹ See *e.g.*, Hallpike 1986; Pomper and Shaw 2002; Mesoudi *et al.* 2006; Auger 2006; Barkow 2006; Blackmore 2006; Mulder *et al.* 2006; Borsboom 2006; Bridgeman 2006; Cronk 2006; Dennett and McKay 2006; Fuentes 2006; Kelly *et al.* 2006; Kincaid 2006; Knudsen and Hodgson 2006; Lyman 2006; Mende and Wermke 2006; O'Brien 2006; Pagel 2006; Read 2006; Reader 2006; Sopher 2006; Tehrani 2006; Wimsatt 2006; on such comparisons, as well as our own ideas about similarities and differences between social and biological evolution, in more details see Grinin and Korotayev 2007a, 2009b; Grinin, Markov, and Korotayev 2008: 145–152; 2009. Note, however, that in fact frequently this was essentially Spencerian vision which was implied in such cases; that is the evolution was perceived as ‘a change from an incoherent homogeneity to a coherent heterogeneity’ (Spencer 1972 [1862]: 71).

sible to solve equally difficult problems faced by societies) can be achieved not only in various forms but on essentially different evolutionary pathways, too. Thus, it is possible to achieve the same level of system complexity through differing pathways of evolution which appeared simultaneously (and even prior to the formation of *Homo sapiens sapiens* [Butovskaya and Feinberg 1993; Butovskaya 1994, 2000; Butovskaya, Korotayev, and Kazankov 2000]) and increased in quantity throughout almost whole sociocultural advancement (Pavlenko 1996: 229–251; 2000). Diversity could be regarded as one of the most important preconditions of the evolutionary process. This implies that the transition to any qualitatively higher level of socio-cultural complexity is normally impossible without a sufficient level of variability at the preceding complexity level (among both the given culture's predecessors and contemporaries).²

Within the first level of analysis, all evolutionary variability can be reduced to two principally different groups of homologous series (Bondarenko 1997: 12–15; 1998a, 2000b; Bondarenko and Korotayev 1999, 2000b; Korotayev *et al.* 2000). Earlier these alternatives were distinguished either as 'hierarchical' vs. 'non-hierarchical' (e.g., Bondarenko and Korotayev 2000a), or 'hierarchical' vs. 'heterarchical' (e.g., Ehrenreich *et al.* 1995; Crumley 2001).

In one of the publications on the problem of heterarchy the latter is defined as '...the relation of elements to one another when they are unranked or when they possess the potential for being ranked in a number of different ways' (Ehrenreich *et al.* 1995: 3; see also Crumley 1979: 144). It is clear that the second version of heterarchy is more relevant for the study of the complex societies.

However, when we have a system of elements which 'possess the potential for being ranked in a number of different ways', it seems impossible to speak about the absence of hierarchy. In this case we rather deal with a system of heterarchically arranged hierarchies. Hence, it does not appear reasonable to denote the heterarchy alternative as 'hierarchy'. We would rather suggest designating it as 'homoarchy' which could be defined as the relation of elements to one another when they possess the potential for being ranked in one way only. Totalitarian regimes of any time give us plenty of examples of such a sociocultural situation when the ruled have no chances to get ranked above the rulers in any possible contexts. This stands in a sharp contrast with, say, an archetypal example of a complex heterarchical system – the civil community (*polis*) of Athens (the 5th–4th centuries BC) where the citizens ranked lower within one hierarchy (e.g., the military one) could well be ranked higher in many other possible respects (e.g., economically, or within the subsystem of civil/religious

² This can also be called *the rule of suddicient variability* (see Grinin, Markov, and Korotayev 2008: 68–71).

magistrates). Consequently, it was impossible to say that one citizen was higher than any other in any absolute sense.

On the other hand, it seems necessary to stress that it appears impossible to find not only any cultures totally lacking any hierarchies (including informal ones), but also any totally homoarchival cultures. Hence, though in order to simplify our analysis in this paper we speak about heterarchical and homoarchival evolutionary pathways for our analysis' simplifying, in fact we are dealing here with heterarchy-homoarchy axis along which one could range all the known human cultures. Within this range there does not seem to be any distinct border between homoarchival and heterarchical cultures; hence, in reality it might be more appropriate to speak not about just two evolutionary pathways (heterarchical and homoarchival), but about a potentially infinite number of such pathways, and, thus, finally not about evolutionary pathways, but rather about evolutionary probability field (see for details Korotayev 1992, 1999, 2003c, 2004; Korotayev *et al.* 2000). Yet, as was mentioned above, in order to simplify our analysis we speak about just two alternative pathways.

In particular, until recently it was considered self-evident that just the formation of the state marked the end of the 'Primitive Epoch' and alternatives to the state did not actually exist.³ All the stateless societies were considered pre-state ones, standing on the single evolutionary staircase squarely below the states. Nowadays postulates about the state as the only possible form of political and sociocultural organization of the post-primitive society, about *a priori* higher level of development of a state society in comparison with any non-state one are subjected to rigid criticism. It has become evident that the non-state societies are not necessarily less complex and less efficient. The problem of existence of non-state but not primitive (*i.e.* principally non- and not pre-state) societies, alternatives to the state (as the allegedly inevitable post-primitive form of the sociopolitical organization) deserves attention.

Of course, in no way do we reject the fact of existence and importance of the states in world history. What we argue, is that the state is not the only possible post-primitive evolutionary political form. From our point of view, the state is nothing more than one of many forms of the post-primitive sociopolitical organization; these forms are alternative to each other and are able in certain conditions to transform to one another without any loss in the general level of complexity. Hence, the degree of sociopolitical centralization and 'homoarchization' is not a perfect criterion for evaluating a society's evolutionary level, though it is regarded as such within unilinear concepts of social evolution.

³ Throughout the present article the state is understood as '...a sufficiently stable political unit characterized by the organization of power and administration which is separated from the population, and claims a supreme right to govern certain territory and population, *i.e.* to demand from it certain actions irrespective of its agreement or disagreement to do this, and possessing resources and forces to achieve these claims' (Grinin 1997: 20; see also Grinin 2000c: 190).

As Brumfiel wrote several years ago, ‘the coupling of [sociopolitical] differentiation and hierarchy is so firm in our minds that it takes tremendous intellectual efforts even imagine what differentiation without hierarchy could be’ (Brumfiel 1995: 130).⁴ Usually, even if the very existence of complex but non-homoarchical cultures is recognized, they are regarded as a historical fortuity, as an anomaly. Such cultures are declared as if capable to reach rather low levels of complexity only, as if incapable to find internal stability (Tuden and Marshall 1972: 454–456).

Thus, on the further level of analysis the dichotomy turns out not to be rigid at all as far as actual organization of any society employs both vertical (dominance – subordination) and horizontal (apprehended as ties among equals) links. Furthermore, in the course of their history, societies (including archaic cultures) turn out capable to change models of sociopolitical organization radically, transforming from homoarchical into heterarchical or *vice versa* (Korotayev 1995d, 2006; Korotayev, Kradin, and Lynsha 2000; Korotayev, Klimenko, and Prusakov 2007; Crumley 1987: 164–165; 1995: 4; 2001; Bondarenko and Korotayev 2000c; Dozhdev 2000; Kradin 2000a). Perhaps the most well known historical example of the latter case is Rome where the Republic was established and further democratized with the Plebian political victories. Note that in the course of such transformations the organizational background changes, but the overall level of cultural complexity may not only increase or decrease but may well stay practically the same (for example in ancient and medieval history of Europe, the Americas, Asia, see on this Korotayev 1995d, 1996b, 1996c, 1997, 1998, 2000c, 2000d, 2006; Korotayev, Klimenko, and Prusakov 2007; van der Vliet 1987; Ferguson 1991; Korotayev 1995a, 1996a; Levy 1995; Lynsha 1998; Beliaev 2000b; Chamblee 2000: 15–35; Dozhdev 2000; Kowalewski 2000; Kradin 2000a; Grinin 2004b, 2004c; 2007g, 2007h).

Nevertheless, vertical and horizontal links play different parts in different societies at every concrete moment. Already among the primates with the same level of morphological and cognitive development, and even among primate populations belonging to the same species, one could observe both more and less heterarchically/homoarchically organized groups. Hence, the non-linearity of sociopolitical evolution originates already before the *Homo sapiens sapiens* formation (Butovskaya and Feinberg 1993; Butovskaya 1994; Butovskaya, Korotayev, and Kazankov 2000).

Let us consider now in more details one of the most influential and widespread unilineal evolutionary schemes, the one proposed by Service (1971 [1962];

⁴ See also its fundamental criticism by Mann (1986), the most radically negative attitude to this scheme expressed in categories of social evolution ‘trajectories alternativity’ by Yoffee (1993), several collective works of recent years (Patterson and Gailey 1987; Ehrenreich *et al.* 1995; Kradin and Lynsha 1995; Kradin *et al.* 2000; Bondarenko and Korotayev 2000a), proceedings of recent international conferences (Butovskaya *et al.* 1998; Bondareko and Sledzevski 2000).

its outline is, however, already contained in Sahlins's well-known article [Sahlins 1960: 37]: *band – tribe – chiefdom – state*. The scheme implies that the growth of the political complexity (at least up to the stage of the agrarian state) is inevitably accompanied by the growth of the inequality, stratification, the social distance between the rulers and the ruled, the 'authoritarianism' and hierarchization of the political system, decrease of the political participation of the main mass of population *etc.* Of course, these two sets of parameters seem to be related rather closely. It is evident that we observe here a certain correlation, and a rather strong one. But, no doubt, this is just a correlation, and by no means a functional dependence. Of course, this correlation implies a perfectly possible line of sociopolitical evolution – from an egalitarian, acephalous band, through a big-man village community with much more pronounced inequality and political hierarchy, to an 'authoritarian' village community with a strong power of its chief (found, *e.g.*, among some Indians of the North-West Coast – see, *e.g.*, Carneiro 2000), and then through the true chiefdoms having even more pronounced stratification and concentration of the political power in the hands of the chief, to the complex chiefdoms where the political inequality parameters reach a qualitatively higher levels, and finally to the agrarian state where all such parameters reach their culmination (though one could move even further, up to the level of the 'empire' [*e.g.*, Adams 1975], see an example of such a line in Johnson and Earle 2000: 246, 304). However, it is very important to stress that on each level of the growing political complexity one could find easily evident alternatives to this evolutionary line.

Let us start with the human societies of the simplest level of sociocultural complexity. Indeed, one can easily observe that acephalous egalitarian bands are found among most of the unspecialized hunter-gatherers. However, as has been shown by Woodburn (1972, 1979, 1980, 1982, 1988a, 1988b) and Artemova (1987, 1991, 1993, 2000a, 2000b; see also Chudinova 1981; Whyte 1978: 49–94), some of such hunter-gatherers (the inegalitarian ones, first of all most of the Australian aborigine see also Bern 1979) display a significantly different type of sociopolitical organization with much more structured political leadership concentrated in the hands of relatively hierarchically organized elders, with a pronounced degree of inequality both between the men and women, and among the men themselves.⁵

⁵ James Woodburn and Olga Artemova deal almost exclusively with examples of 'non-egalitarian' Australian Aborigines and 'egalitarian' peoples of Africa (the Hadza, San, Pygmies), analogous to them by the socio-cultural complexity level. However, the evidence from other continents' societies confirm that organization of cultures of the same complexity level along either heterarchic or homoarchic lines is characteristic of the humankind from the typologically earliest ones (Bondarenko 2006). The examples of the peoples leaving in the same cultural area and basing their subsistence on similar means, like fishers of the Far East – the 'egalitarian' Itelmens and 'non-egalitarian' Nanais, are especially instructive (Krashennikov 1949; Lopatin 1922; see also Sem 1959; Smolyak 1970; Krushanov 1990; Shnirel'man 1993; 1994; Orlova 1999; Bulgakova 2001, 2002; Berezniitsky 2003; Volodin 2003).

On the next level of the political complexity we can also find communities with both homoarchical and heterarchical political organization. One can mention *e.g.*, the well-known contrast between the Indians of the Californian North-West and South-East:

The Californian chiefs were in the center of economic life, they exercised their control over the production, distribution and exchange of the social product, and their power and authority were based mainly on this. Gradually the power of the chiefs and elders acquired the hereditary character, it became a typical phenomenon for California... Only the tribes populating the North-West of California, notwithstanding their respectively developed and complex material culture, lacked the explicitly expressed social roles of the chiefs characteristic for the rest of California. At the meantime they new slavery... The population of this region had an idea of personal wealth... (Kabo 1986: 20).

One can also immediately recall the socio-culturally complex communities of the Ifugao (*e.g.*, Barton 1922; Meshkov 1982: 183–197) lacking any pronounced authoritarian political leadership compared with the one of the communities of the North-West Coast, but with a comparable level of overall sociopolitical and sociocultural complexity.

Hence, already on the levels of simple and middle range communities we observe several types of alternative sociopolitical forms, each of which should be denoted with a separate term. The possible alternatives to the chiefdom in the prehistoric Southwest Asia, heterarchical systems of complex acephalous communities with a pronounced autonomy of single family households have been analyzed recently by Berezkin who suggests reasonably Apa Tanis as their ethnographic parallel (1995a, 1995b, 2000). Frantsouzoff finds an even more developed example of such type of polities in ancient South Arabia in Wadi Hadramawt of the 1st millennium BC (Frantsouzoff 1995, 1997, 2000a, 2000b).

One of the present authors has pointed out elsewhere (Grinin 2007g) that probably some intertribal secret societies can also be considered as a form of political organization alternative to the chiefdom (see, *e.g.*, Kubbel' 1988a: 241), as well as, for example, complex age-grade systems that allowed creation of firm horizontal ties between separate communities within a tribe and between related tribes (on the role of such an age-grade system among some Naga tribes of mountainous North-East India see, *e.g.*, Maretina 1995: 83; on some other examples see Kalinovskaya 1976; van Gennepe 2002, *etc.*).

As an analogue to the chiefdom the organized groups of turncoats, adventurers or criminals of different sorts that do not recognize any official authorities can be considered too (see Grinin 2007g). Not infrequently such armed communities were created as counterbalance to the consolidating official power

of a new state. 'This part of the population that has separated itself and does not recognize laws often acquires considerable power due to freedom of being anyway restricted by the law..., as well as to respect of the bravest and poorest from the neighboring tribes' (Ratzel' 1902, vol. 1: 445).

Another evident alternative to the chiefdom is constituted by the tribal organization. As is well known, the tribe has found itself on the brink of being evicted from the evolutionary models (Townsend 1985: 146; Carneiro 1987: 760). However, the political forms entirely identical with what was described by Service as the tribe could be actually found in, e.g., medieval and modern Middle East (up to the present): these tribal systems normally comprise several communities and often have precisely the type of political leadership described by Service as typical for the tribe (Service 1971 [1962]: 103–104; Dresch 1984: 39, 41).

What is important, is that we are dealing here with some type of polity that could not be identified either with bands, or with village communities (because such tribes normally comprise more than one community), or with chiefdoms (because they have an entirely different type of political leadership), or, naturally, with states. They could not be inserted easily either in the scheme somewhere between the village and the chiefdom. Indeed, as has been shown convincingly by Carneiro (see, e.g., 1970, 1981, 1987, 1991, 2000), chiefdoms normally arose as a result of political centralization of a few communities without the stage of the tribe preceding this. On the other hand, a considerable amount of evidence could be produced suggesting that in the Middle East many tribes arose as a result of political decentralization of chiefdoms which preceded the tribes in time. It is also important to stress that this could not in any way be identified with a 'regression', 'decline', or 'degeneration', as we can observe in many of such cases that political decentralization is accompanied by the increase (rather than decrease) of overall sociocultural complexity (Korotayev 1995a, 1995c, 1995d, 1996a, 1996b, 1996c, 1997, 1998, 2000a, 2000b). Hence, in many respects tribal systems of the Middle Eastern type appear to be chiefdom alternatives (rather than chiefdom predecessors).

Large complex chiefdoms could have analogues too. First and foremost, those were large tribal confederations or federations. Not infrequently, however, in such cases the bottom structure was represented by a sort of chiefdom while the top one was formed by the tribal council without a permanent leader (the council of chiefs or elders). This was the case of some American Indians tribes' structure. The tribes of the Iroquois had another organization system: family-clan units were headed by clan elders (*sachems*) who were the tribal council members. At the same time the Iroquois confederation also had the supreme administrative level – the League council in which clan chiefs of each tribe were represented (fifty persons in total [see Fenton 1978: 122]) and in which consensus for making up decisions was necessary. As it organized

a great number of people and provided exceptionally high level of integration, we regard the Iroquois political system as an analogue (though incomplete) not to the chiefdom but to the early state (for details see Grinin 2007g; Grinin and Korotayev 2009b: Essay 5). Such analogues to the chiefdom as communities federations and confederations of, for example, the highlanders are also worth noting (see, e.g., Aglarov 1988; Korotayev 1995e, 1995f, 2006b; Grinin 2007g).

We have argued elsewhere (Korotayev 1995b, 1995c, 1995e) that in general there is an evident evolutionary alternative to the development of the rigid supra-communal political structures (chiefdom – complex chiefdom – state) constituted by the development of internal communal structures together with soft supra-communal systems not alienating communal sovereignty (various confederations, amphictyonies, etc.). One of the most impressive results of the sociopolitical development along this evolutionary line is the Greek *poleis* (see Berent [1994, 1996, 2000a, 2000b] regarding the statelessness of this type of political systems) some of which reached overall levels of complexity quite comparable not only with the ones of chiefdoms, but also with the one of states. The same can be said about its Roman analogue, the *civitas* (Shtaerman 1989). Note that *polis/civitas* as a form of sociopolitical organization was known far beyond the Classical world, both in geographical and chronological sense (Korotayev 1995b; Bondarenko 1998b), though quite a number of scholars still insist on its uniqueness.⁶

The ‘tribal’ and ‘*polis*’ series seem to constitute separate evolutionary lines, with some distinctive features: the ‘*polis*’ forms imply the power of the ‘magistrates’ elected in one or another way for fixed periods and controlled by the people in the absence (or near-absence) of any formal bureaucracy. Within the tribal systems we observe the absence of any offices whose holders would be obeyed simply because they hold posts of a certain type, and the order is sustained by elaborate mechanisms of mediation and search for consensus.

There is also a considerable number of other complex stateless polities (like the ones of the Cossacks of Ukraine and Southern Russia till the end of the 17th century [Chirkin 1955; Rozner 1970; Nikitin 1987; Shtyrbul 2006; Grinin 2007g: 179–180], the Celts of the 5th–1st centuries BC [Grinin 1997: 32–

⁶ It should be noted that contrary to the first and third authors of the present article, its second author regards the majority of Greek *poleis* and the Roman polity as early state of a specific type (see Bondarenko 1998b, 2000b, 2004b, 2006; Korotayev 1995b, 1995e, 1995f vs. Grinin 2004a, 2004b, 2006b, 2007g); however, we clearly deal with an alternative of social evolution in this case too: even if these polities are considered as early states, they definitely were early states of a very specific type (see also, however, note 14). Bouzek (1990: 172) is right both in his irony about endless academic debates and in representation of the Greeks' own distinction between their *polis* and other peoples' states: ‘The Greeks had fewer problems than we have with the definition of the state. They saw kingdoms and kings in all parts of the world where they met one ruler, and not the council of a *polis* or *ethnos*’.

33; 2003: 141–142; 2004c: 97–98; 2006b: 95–96; 2007a: 173; 2007g: 182–184; Grinin and Korotayev 2009b: 435–436; Kradin 2001: 149], or the Icelandic polity of the ‘Age of Democracy’ till the middle of the 13th century [Ol’geirsson 1957; Gurevich 1972; Steblin-Kamenskiy 1984; Hjaul’marsson 2003; Grinin 2003: 139; 2004c: 95; 2006b: 93; 2007a: 172; 2007g: 179; Grinin and Korotayev 2009b: 432) which could not yet be denoted with any commonly accepted terms, and whose own self-designations are often too complex (like *Kazach’e Vojsko*) to have any chance to get transformed to general terms.

There were a great many of historically and ethnographically known polities that a) surpassed considerably typical prestate socio-political forms (like simple chiefdoms, tribes, local communities) in size, complexity level and some other parameters; b) were not inferior to the early-state systems in size, socio-cultural and/or political complexity; c) at the same time, basically differed from the early state in their political order, power and administration structure (Alexeev *et al.* 2004; Beliaev *et al.* 2002; Bondarenko 1995a, 1995b, 2000a, 2000b, 2001; Bondarenko, Grinin, and Korotayev 2002, 2004; Bondarenko and Korotayev 2000a, 2000c; Bondarenko and Sledzevski 2000; Crumley 1995, 2001, 2005; Grinin 2000c, 2002a, 2002b, 2003, 2004c, 2007a, 2007b; Grinin *et al.* 2004, 2006; Korotayev 1995b; Kradin *et al.* 2000; Kradin, Bondarenko, and Barfield 2003; Kradin and Lynsha 1995; McIntosh 1999; Possehl 1998; Schaedel 1995; Bondarenko, Grinin, and Korotayev 2006; Bondarenko and Korotayev 2002; Girenko 1993; Grinin 1997–2001 [1997, № 5], 2001–2006, 2002c, 2006d, 2007g, 2007h, 2007i; Grinin and Korotayev 2009b; Korotayev 1995d, 1995e, 1996b, 1997, 2000c, 2000d, 2006; Kradin and Lynsha 1995; Kradin and Bondarenko 2002; Popov 1995a, 1995b, 2000; Shtyrbul 2006).

Elsewhere we have designated the non-state societies comparable to the state in complexity and the functions performed as **the early state analogues or alternatives to the state** (Bondarenko, Grinin, and Korotayev 2002, 2004; Bondarenko 1995b, 2000a, 2000b, 2005a, 2006, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c; Bondarenko and Korotayev 2000a, 2000c; Bondarenko and Nemirovskiy 2007; Grinin 1997–2001, 2001–2006, 2000c, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c, 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c, 2006d, 2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2007d, 2007e, 2007f, 2007g, 2007h, 2008; Grinin and Korotayev 2007a, 2007b, 2009a, 2009b; Grinin *et al.* 2004, 2006; Korotayev 2000c, 2003c; Korotayev, Kradin, and Lynsha 2000; Korotayev *et al.* 2000). We provide a classification of such societies below.

But let us return to the Service – Sahlins's scheme. There is another evident problem with Service's scheme. It is evidently pre-‘Wallersteinian’, not touched by any world-system discussions, quite confident about the possibility of the use of a single polity as a unit of social evolution. It might be not so impor-

tant if Service spoke about the typology of polities; yet, he speaks about the ‘levels of cultural integration’, and within such a context the world-system dimension should be evidently taken into consideration.⁷

The point is that the same overall level of complexity could be achieved both through the development of a single polity and through the development of a politically uncentralized interpolity network. This alternative was already noticed by Wallerstein (1974, 1979, 1987) who viewed it as a dichotomy: *world-economy* – *world-empire*. Note that according to Wallerstein these are considered precisely as alternatives, and not two stages of social evolution.

In this respect the examples of the Ancient Greek and especially Maya and Yoruba ‘peer polities’ are instructive (see Bondarenko 2005b: 7–8). The system of Greek *poleis* never transformed to an empire and remained heterarchic even in the time of the Delian League (see Golubtsova 1983). The case of the Maya and Yoruba interpolity networks is instructive even more so, as they, though consisted of societies organized along predominantly homoarchic lines, nevertheless did not transform to integrated empires too, notwithstanding domination of these or those polities within the networks in definite historical periods (see, e.g., Beliaev 2000a; Beliaev and Pakin 2009; Martin and Grube 2000; Kochakova 1968, 1986; Smith 1988).

Thus, as one would expect, we agree with Wallerstein whole-heartedly at this point. However, we also find here a certain oversimplification. In general, we would like to stress that we are dealing here with a particular case of a much more general set of evolutionary alternatives.

The development of a politically uncentralized interpolity network became an effective alternative to the development of a single polity long before the rise of the first empires. As an example, we could mention the interpolity communication network of the Mesopotamian civil-temple communities of the first half of the 3 millennium BC which sustained a much higher level of technological development than that of the politically unified Egyptian state, contemporary to it. Note that the intercommunal communication networks already constitute an effective evolutionary alternative to the chiefdom. For example, the sociopolitical system of the Apa Tanis should be better described as an intercommunal network of a few communities (incidentally, in turn acting as a core for another wider network including the neighboring less developed polities [chiefdoms and sovereign communities] – see Führer-Haimendorf 1962).

We also do not find it productive to describe this alternative type of cultural integration as a world-economy. The point is that such a designation tends to downplay the political and cultural dimension of such systems.

⁷ For our understanding of the World-System and the world-system approach see, e.g., Bondarenko 2009; Grinin and Korotayev 2009b.

Take for example, the Classical Greek *inter-polis* system. The level of complexity of many Greek *poleis* was rather low even in comparison with a complex chiefdom. However, they were parts of a much larger and much more complex entity constituted by numerous economic, political and cultural links and shared political and cultural norms. The economic links no doubt played some role within this system. But links of other types were not less important. Take, e.g., the norm according to which the *inter-poleis* wars stopped during the Olympic Games, which guaranteed the secure passage of people, and consequently the circulation of enormous quantities of energy, matter and information within the territory far exceeding the one of an average complex chiefdom. The existence of the *inter-poleis* communication network made it possible, say, for a person born in one *polis* to go to get his education in another *polis* and to establish his school in a third. The existence of this system reduced the destructiveness of *inter-poleis* warfare for a long time. It was a basis on which it was possible to undertake important collective actions (which turned out to be essential at the age of the Greek-Persian wars). As a result, the *polis* with a level of complexity lower than the one of the complex chiefdom, turned out to be part of a system whose complexity was quite comparable with that of the state (and not only the early one).

The same can be said about the intersocietal communication network of Medieval Europe (comparing its complexity in this case with an average world-empire). Note that in both cases some parts of the respective systems could be treated as elements of wider world-economies. On the other hand, not all the parts of such communication networks were quite integrated economically. This shows that the world-economies were not the only possible type of politically decentralized intersocietal networks. Actually, in both cases we are dealing with the politically decentralized civilization, which for most of human history over the last few millennia constituted the most effective alternative to the world-empire. Of course, many of such civilizations could be treated as parts of larger world-economies. Wallerstein suggests that in the age of complex societies only the world-economies and world-empires ('historical systems', i.e. the largest units of social evolution) could be treated as units of social evolution in general. Yet we believe that both politically centralized and decentralized civilizations should also be treated as such quite productively.⁸ One should stress again the importance of the cultural dimension of such systems. Of course, the exchange of bulk goods was important. But exchange of information was also important. Note that the successful development of science both in Classical Greece and Medieval Europe became only possible

⁸ As well as 'world-ideologies', 'world-politics' (see Grinin and Korotayev 2009b: 19) and similar formations that we have designated as 'spatial-and-temporal societies groupings' (Grinin 1997–2001, 1998; Grinin and Korotayev 2009b: 190).

through an intensive intersocietal information exchange between the constituent societies of respective civilizations, whereas the development of science in Europe affected, to a significant extent, the evolution of the Modern World-System.

It is important to stress that the intersocietal communication networks could appear among much less complex societies (Wallerstein has denoted them as ‘mini-systems’ without actually studying them, for a recent review of the research on the archaic intersocietal networks see Chase-Dunn and Grimes 1995; Chase-Dunn and Hall 1993, 1994, 1995, 1997; see also Grinin and Korotayev 2009b: Introduction). Already it seems possible to speak about a communication network covering most of aboriginal Australia.⁹ Again we come here across a similar phenomenon – a considerable degree of cultural complexity (complex forms of rituals, mythology, arts, and dance well comparable with the ones of early agriculturists) observed among populations with an apparently rather simple political organization. This could largely be explained by the fact that relatively simple Australian local groups were parts of a much more complex whole: a huge intersocietal communication network that apparently covered most of Australia (*e.g.*, Bakhta and Senyuta 1972; Artemova 1987).

Thus, it is possible to contrast societies that followed the pathway of political centralization and ‘authoritarianization’ with cultures that further elaborated and perfected democratic communal backgrounds and corresponding self-government institutions. However, such a culture as the Benin Kingdom of the 13th–19th centuries can make the picture of sociopolitical evolution even more versatile. In particular, it reveals that not only heterarchical but also homoarchical societies can reach a very high (incomparably higher than that of complex chiefdoms) level of sociocultural complexity and political centralization still never transforming to a state during the whole long period of existence. The Benin evidence also testifies that local community's autonomy is not a guarantee of complex society's advancement along the hierarchical pathway. We have suggested elsewhere to define this form of sociopolitical organization as ‘megacommunity’ (see, *e.g.*, Bondarenko 1994; 1995a: 276–284; 1995b, 1996, 1998c; 2000a: 106–117; 2001: 230–263; 2004a, 2005a; 2006: 64–88, 96–107). Its structure may be depicted in the shape of four concentric circles forming an upset cone. These ‘circles’ are as follows: the extended family, extended-family community (in which familial ties were supplemented by those of neighbor ones), chiefdom, and finally, the broadest circle that included all the three narrower ones, that is the megacommunity as such (the Benin Kingdom as a whole). The specific characteristic of megacommunity is its ability to

⁹ It was furthermore so, as not only intercultural communication but also primitive economic specialization and exchange could be observed within it (see, *e.g.*, Butinov 1960: 113, 119; Mulvaney and Kamminga 1999: 28–31; see also Christian 2004: 197).

organize a complex, 'many-tier' society predominantly on the basis of transformed kinship principle within rather vast territories.

Besides the 13th – 19th centuries Benin Kingdom, megacommunities in pre-colonial Africa can be recognized, for instance, in the Bamum Kingdom of the late 16th – 19th centuries in present-day Cameroon which as a whole represented an extension up to the supercomplex level of the lineage principles and organization forms, so the society acquired the shape of 'maximal lineage' (Tardits 1980). Analogously, in some other traditional kingdoms on the territory of that post-colonial state 'the monarchical system... is... in no way a totally unique and singular form of organization but displays a virtually identical structure to that of the lineage groups' (Koloss 1992: 42). Outside Africa megacommunities (although not obligatorily of the Benin, that is based on the kin-oriented local community, type) may be recognized, for example, in the Indian societies of the late 1st millennium BC – first centuries AD. Naturally, differing in many respects from the Benin pattern, they nevertheless fit the main distinctive feature of megacommunity as a non-state social type: Integration of a supercomplex (exceeding the complex chiefdom level) society on the community basis and the whole society's encompassment from the local level upwards. In particular, Samozvantsev (2001) describes those societies as permeated by communal orders notwithstanding the difference in socio-political organization forms. 'The principle of communality', he argues, was the most important factor of social organization in India during that period (see also Leljukhin 2001, 2004). In the south of India this situation lasted much longer, till the time of the Vijayanagara Empire – the mid-14th century when the region finally saw '...the greater centralization of political power and the resultant concentration of resources in the royal bureaucracy...' (Palat 1987: 170). A number of other examples of supercomplex societies in which 'the supracommunity political structure was shaped according to the community type' is provided by the 1st millennium AD Southeast Asian societies, like Funan and possibly Dvaravati (Rebrikova 1987: 159–163; see, however, Mudar 1999). The specificity of the megacommunity becomes especially apparent in its comparison with the 'galaxy-like' states studied by Tambiah in Southeast Asia (Tambiah 1977, 1985). Like these states, a megacommunity has the political and ritual center – the capital which is the residence of the sacralized ruler – and the near, middle, and remote circles of periphery round it. However, notwithstanding its seeming centripetality, a megacommunity culture's true focus is the community, not the center, as in those Southeast Asian cases. As heterarchic non-kin-ties-based megacommunities, or civil megacommunities, one can consider societies of the *polis* type (Bondarenko 1997: 13–14, 48–49; 1998b, 2000b; 2001: 259–263; 2004b; 2006: 92–96; Shtyrbul 2006: 123–135).

Still, another evident alternative to the state seems to be represented by the supercomplex chiefdoms created by some nomads of Eurasia – the number

of the structural levels within such chiefdoms appear to be equal, or even to exceed those within the average state, but they have an entirely different type of political organization and political leadership; besides, this type of political entities do not appear to have been ever created by agriculturists (e.g., Kradin 1992: 146–152; 1996, 2000a, 2000b). This is also confirmed by the history of Scythia. Being similar to supercomplex chiefdoms and an analogue to the early state (see Grinin 2007g: 187–188), it was transforming to an early state more and more obviously in the course of the Scythians' sedentarization. The growth of trade in bread, particularly with Bosphorus, contributed significantly to the development of statehood and consolidation of royal power (see Grakov 1971: 38).

Besides the megacommunity and nomadic supercomplex chiefdoms, the Indus, or Harappa civilization that exceeded considerably in size such pristine civilizations as Egyptian and Mesopotamian, can serve as an example at this point. According to Possehl, this civilization was an example of ancient sociocultural complexity without archaic state form of political organization, what testifies that ancient civilizations, vary in form and organization to a much greater degree than traditional unilinear evolutionary schemes can reflect (Possehl 1998: 291). Definitely, the variability of sociopolitical forms and alternativity of state formation process is demonstrated not only by ancient civilizations but also by different other complex societies of different historical periods.

Societies with thoroughly elaborated rigid cast system can also be a homoarchic alternative to the homoarchic (by definition see Claessen and Skalnik 1978: 533–596, 637–650; Claessen *et al.* 2008: 260; see also Claessen 2008: 13; Bondarenko 2008: 20–21, 32–33 [note 7]) early state (see, e.g., Quigley 1999: 114–169; Kobishchanov 2000: 64).

So, alternativity characterizes not only two basic macrogroups of human associations, *i.e.* homoarchical and heterarchical societies. Alternativity does exist within each of them, too. In particular, within the upper range of complexity and integrativity of the sociopolitical organization the state (at least in the pre-industrial world) 'competes' with not only heterarchical systems of institutions (e.g., with *polis*) but also with some forms of sociopolitical organization not less homoarchical than the state.

Among numerous factors capable to influence the nature of this or that society, the family and community type characteristic of it seems to deserve notice. The distinction in the correlation of kin and neighborhood (territorial) lines is in its turn connected with the dominant type of community (as a universal substratum social institution). A cross-cultural research conducted earlier (Bondarenko and Korotayev 1999, 2000b) has generally corroborated the initial hypothesis (Bondarenko 1997: 13–14; 1998b: 198–199) that the extended-family community in which vertical social ties and non-democratic value system are usually vividly expressed, given the shape of kinship relations (elder – younger),

is more characteristic of homoarchival societies.¹⁰ Heterarchical societies appear to be more frequently associated with the territorial communities consisting of nuclear families in which social ties are horizontal and apprehended as neighborhood ties among those equal in rights (Korotayev and Tsereteli 2001; Korotayev 2003b).¹¹

In the course of our cross-cultural research in the community forms, another factor important for determining societies' homoarchization vs. heterarchization was revealed. It appeared that probability of a democratic (heterarchical) sociopolitical organization development is higher in cultures where monogamous rather polygynous families dominate (Korotayev and Bondarenko 2000, 2001; Korotayev 2003a).

However, besides social factors (including those mentioned above), a set of phenomena stemming from the fact that political culture is a reflection of a society's general culture type, is also important for determining its evolutionary pathway. The general culture type that varies from one civilization to another defines the trends and limits of sociocultural evolution. Though culture itself forms under the influence of different factors (sociohistorical, natural, *etc.*) the significance of the general culture type for the sociopolitical organization is not at all reduced to the so-called 'ideological factor' (Bondarenko and Korotayev 2000c; Claessen 2000). It influences crucially the essence of political culture characteristic for a given society, 'most probably revealing itself as fully as economic, religious, artistic potential from the very beginning' (Zubov 1991: 59). In its turn, political culture determines human vision of the ideal sociopolitical model which correspondingly, may be different in various cultures. This way political culture forms the background for the development of character, types and forms of complex political organization emergence, including the enrolling of this process along either the homoarchival or heterarchical evolutionary pathways. But real, 'non-ideal' social institutions are results of conscious activities (social creativity) of people to no small degree, though people are frequently not capable to realize completely global sociopolitical outcomes of their deeds aimed at realization of personal goals. People create in the social sphere (as well as in other spheres) in correspondence with the value systems they adopt within their cultures in the process of socialization. They apprehend these norms as the most natural, the only true ones.

Hence, it is evident that the general culture type is intrinsically connected with its respective modal personality type. In their turn, the fundamental characteristics of modal personality types are transmitted by means of socialization practices

¹⁰ This appears to be especially relevant for those societies where extended families are dominated not by groups of brothers, but by individual 'fathers' (see, *e.g.*, Bromley 1981: 202–210).

¹¹ Note that among not only humans but other primates too the role of kin relations is greater in homoarchival organized associations (Thierry 1990; Butovskaya and Feinberg 1993: 25–90; Butovskaya 1993, 2000; Butovskaya, Korotayev, and Kazankov 2000).

which correspond to the value system generally accepted in a given society and can influence significantly its political evolution (see Irons 1979: 9–10, 33–35; Ionov 1992: 112–129; Bondarenko and Korotayev 2000a: 309–312; Korotayev and Bondarenko 2000, 2001; Korotayev 2003a; Grinin 2007g: 85) though scholars usually tend to stress the opposite influence, *i.e.* the influence of political systems on socialization processes and personality types.

The ecological factor is also important for determination of the pathway which this or that society follows (Bondarenko 1998b, 2000b; Korotayev 2003c; Korotayev, Klimenko, and Prusakov 2007; Grinin and Korotayev 2009b). Not only natural environment but the sociohistorical one as well should be included into the notion of ‘ecology’ in this case. The environment also contributes a lot to the defining of a society’s evolutionary potential, creating limits to its advancement along the homoarchival or heterarchical axes. For example, there is no predestined inevitability of transition from the simple to complex society (Tainter 1990: 38; Lozny 2000) or from the early state to mature one (Claessen and van de Velde 1987: 20ff.; Grinin 2007f).

Let us discuss now the implications of the approach discussed above for the study of the state formation processes and ‘politogenesis’ in general. The tendency to see historical rules always and everywhere the same results in gross perversion of historical reality. For example, concurrent political processes are declared consecutive stages of the formation of the state. Besides, the features of already mature state are illegitimately attributed to its early forms and in consequence of this it becomes impossible to find any ‘normal’ early state practically anywhere (for details see Grinin 2007f).

The notion of ‘politogenesis’ was elaborated in the late 1970s and 80s by Kubbel’ (*e.g.*, 1988b). However, Kubbel’, as well as many others using this notion today, equalized politogenesis to state formation exclusively (*Ibid.*: 3). This approach resulted from the dominant that time and still very wide-spread now, although out-of-date, unilinear ideas that: a) all non-state forms are pre-state by definition; b) the development of political institutions and forms led directly to state formation; c) any even the least developed state is naturally more complex than any non-state society; d) political relations appear with the rise of state only. However, it is impossible to reduce politogenesis to state formation at least because, as we have seen above, complex non-state societies, too developed to be called pre-state, existed alongside with states. Hence, it is necessary to ascertain substitution of a wider process of various complex political institutions and systems formation, that is of politogenesis, with a narrower (and later) one – of state formation. Meanwhile, as Lewis have fairly noted, there exist huge riches of organizational variety of non-state societies worldwide (Lewis 1981: 206). To avoid these stretches and errors, we have developed new approaches to the conception of politogenesis (see Bondarenko and Korotayev 2000a; Bondarenko *et al.* 2002; Korotayev *et al.* 2000; Korotayev and Bon-

darenko 2000; Korotayev, Kradin, and Lynsha 2000; Grinin 2003, 2004c, 2007e, 2007f, 2007g; Grinin and Korotayev 2006).

We suggest defining the term 'politogenesis' as the process of singling out of the political sphere in a society and formation of the political system as partially independent; as the process of rising of specific forms of power organisation in a society connected with concentration of power and political activity (both internal and external) in the hands of definite (including functional) groups or layers. In other words, it is possible to define politogenesis as the process of formation of complex political organisation of any type, what looks more well-grounded in the etymological respect: in ancient Greece the word politeia meant a political order of any type, not just the state.

In the English-language (and obviously Western in general) anthropology the notion of politogenesis is absent as political anthropologists regard that of *state formation process*¹² as sufficient. However, it would be very much desirable to distinguish these notions: politogenesis should be recognized as a broader one that describes the genesis of a complex society's political subsystem while state formation process should be seen as a politogenesis' specific type that leads just to the rise of statehood. That is why it would be productive if 'politogenesis' were added to the Western political anthropology's thesaurus (on this point see Bondarenko and Korotayev 2000a; Bondarenko *et al.* 2002: 66–67; Grinin and Korotayev 2009a: 56–57).

In the result of state formation administrative, violent, and legal methods applied by new types of military and civil professional administrators begin to play an ever-growing part. Clearly, state formation is 'younger' than politogenesis. Like politogenesis singles out of the general process of social (in the broader sense) development, state formation process separates from politogenesis at its definite stage. It is worth noting that as a rule, state formation demands larger territories, more population and resources for its start than other politogenetic processes that lead to the rise of the middle-range polities like simple chiefdoms and their analogues (see Grinin 2007g, 2009). Gradually state formation process becomes the leading and then dominant direction of politogenesis. Due to this one can get the impression that politogenesis is just the process of the rise of the state as a political institution. However, this im-

¹² Such capacious notions as *complex society*, *sociocultural complexity* and so forth, however, do not solve the problem completely. The lack of such division is rather strange, as far as the notion of *political system* has firmly established itself in the English-language literature at least after publication of *African Political Systems* in 1940 (Fortes and Evans-Pritchard 1987 [1940]). The very conception of political system and *classification of political system types* are well-elaborated (for details see Skalnik 1991). Probably it is explainable by the fact that, as Skalnik and others (see *Ibid.*) point out, basically the whole variety of political systems was rigidly, mechanically and non-dialectically divided into two major ideal types: stateless (acephalous) and state, what has resulted in complete ignorance of the possibility of distinguishing complex systems evolution without state formation.

pression is completely wrong. The state formation process is not just younger than politogenesis. Even after the first state's appearance the directions of politogenesis have never been reduced to the only – statehood – line. To the contrary, these lines were multiple, and at first that of statehood was an exception to the rule among them remaining a rare case long after its appearance.

One more point is important for understanding of the correlation between politogenesis and state formation process. Cycles of states' centralization and decentralization that were among the most significant historical processes in Antiquity and the Middle Ages (see, e.g., Nefedov 2007; Turchin 2007; Korotayev, Komarova, and Khaltourina 2007; Grinin 2007j), can be interpreted in some cases as trends, opposite to state formation and as instances of non-state politogenesis (Grinin 2007g). Indeed, the collapse of vast states (especially immature) into small parts resulted not infrequently in the rise of polities of the type that cannot be regarded as state because of those polities' small size, their administrative apparatus' weakness and uncertainty of sovereignty. For example, in pre-Hispanic Mexico and the Andes the debris of the early states are classified by different scholars either as chiefdoms or as 'small states', 'city-states' (see Chabal *et al.* 2004: 50). If the differences between the politogenesis and state formation processes are taken into account, the solution to the problem can be seen in another point: politogenesis has given rise to different political forms but in the course of time evolution usually returned to the road of state formation.

Therefore, the evolutionary pathway, within which the features of the state familiar to us are guessed retrospectively, is only one of the possible 'branches' of the politogenesis. But since later most alternative sociopolitical structures were destroyed by states, absorbed into states, or transformed to states,¹³ it might be reasonable to recognize retrospectively the 'state' branch of the politogenesis as 'general' and the alternative pathways as 'lateral'.

This, however, does not deny the fact that the alternative sociopolitical structures mentioned above cannot be adequately described as pre-state formations, that they are quite comparable with early states by range of their functions and level of their structural complexity. Therefore, it seems possible to designate them as *state analogues* (for details see Grinin 1997, 2000a, 2000b, 2002b, 2002c, 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2004c, 2006a, 2006b, 2006c, 2006d, 2007a, 2007d, 2007e, 2007f, 2007g, 2007h, 2008, 2009). The term *state analogue* underlines both typological and functional resemblance of such forms to the state and differences in structure. The introduction of this term makes it possible to describe the process of politogenesis more adequately.

¹³ However, such transformations could only happen when certain conditions were present. For example, this could happen as a result of the influence of neighboring state systems.

In the present article the analogue to the early state is defined as the *category that covers different forms of complex non-state societies comparable with the early state (but as a rule do not surpass the typical early state level) in size, socio-cultural and/or political complexity, the level of functional differentiation and the scale of the problems and tasks the societies face which, however, do not have at least one of the features enumerated in the early state definition.*

The following types of analogues have been singled out by us (for details see Grinin 2003, 2006c, 2007a, 2007d, 2007g, 2007h, 2007i, 2009; Grinin and Korotayev 2009b: Essay 5):

1. Some self-governed city and temple communities and territories (including settlement territories or colonies like Iceland of the 10th – 13th centuries) with population from several to tens of thousands.

2. Some large tribal unions with rather strong power of the supreme ruler (the ‘king’ and so forth) with population of tens of thousands (even hundred thousands or more in some cases). An example is given by some Germanic tribal unions of the Migration period.

3. Large tribal unions and confederations in which the ‘royal’ power was absent (had never been established or had been abolished) but the processes of social and functional differentiation were well noticeable and even surpassed the pace of political development. Examples of such tribal unions without royal power one can find among the Saxons and some Gallic peoples. The number of people they integrated usually amounted tens of thousand and even hundreds thousands in some cases.

4. Nomads' state-like polities, large and militarily strong, that look like large states (*e.g.*, Scythia or the Xsiungnu empire).

5. Many complex chiefdoms (especially very large), as they are not inferior to small and even middle states in size and complexity (for instance, the Hawaiian chiefdoms population was from thirty to one hundred thousand people [Johnson and Earle 2000: 246]).

Some of these analogues never became states. Others transformed to it but at an already rather high development level; so they transformed directly to large (not small or middle in size) states. We have described in detail elsewhere two basically different models of transition to the state (see *e.g.*, Grinin 2007f, 2007h, 2007i, 2009; Grinin and Korotayev 2009a, 2009b). One of those models is represented just by cases, in which states formed ‘vertically’ *i.e.* direct transition from pre-state to state societies took place. Most often this transition resulted in small states appearance, as it happened, for example, with the Betsileo of Madagascar in the 17th century (Kottak 1980; Claessen 2000, 2004; see also Orlova 1984: 178–179). Many such instances can be found in Ancient Greece where compelled resettlement from several small settlements to one for the sake of defense from military actions or from pirates was spread very widely and got

the name of synoecism (see Gluskina 1983: 36; Frolov 1986: 44; Andreev 1979: 20–21).¹⁴ However, there could be cases of large states' vertical formation.¹⁵

Thus, in order to find solutions to a certain range of political anthropology problems it is necessary to consider the genesis of early state in the general context of socioevolutionary processes coeval with it. This could make it possible to appreciate more exactly the correlation between general evolution and state formation processes. For example, it seems evident that the early state formation is finally connected with general changes caused by the transition from the foraging to food production. This generally resulted in the growth of sociocultural complexity. This led to the appearance of the objective needs in new methods of organization of societies and new forms of contacts between them. But in different societies it was expressed in different ways. So, over long periods of time, the growth of sociostructural complexity, the exploitation of neighbors, development of commerce, property inequality and private ownership, growth of the role of religious cults and corporations *etc.* could serve as alternatives to purely administrative and political decisions of above-mentioned problems. And in these terms, the early state is only one of forms of new organization of the society and intersociety relations, although later it became almost universal due to quite objective evolutionary reasons.

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¹⁴ Note, however, that even for those who recognize the *polis* socio-political model as a form of the early state the attribution as states of these or those historical incarnations of the *polis* model remains discussable (see, *e.g.*, Berent 2000c; Grinin 2007f: 67–118; Korotayev, Kradin, and Lynsha 2000; see also the discussion in *Social Evolution & History* journal in 2004–2006, *vide stricto*: van der Vliet 1987, 2005; Grinin 2004a, Berent 2006). See also note 6.

¹⁵ Probably this is just what happened to the Zulu who in a short time created (first under Dingiswayo and than under his successor Shaka) in the south of Africa in the early 19th century a very large power out of separate small chiefdoms. Note, by the way, that high degree of supracommunity institutions hierarchization and significant degree of the institutionalized hierarchy's stability were characteristic of this mighty polity (see, *e.g.*, Gluckman 1987 [1940]; Ritter 1955).

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Abstract

The article deals with important theoretical problems of social evolution. In the authors' opinion, a number of general evolutionary ideas, principles and conclusions formulated in the article may be significant for the study of not only social evolution but also of evolution as such.

The authors' basic ideas and principles are as follows: Evolutionary alternatives can be found for any level of social complexity. Different social and political forms co-existed and competed with each other for a long time and for some specific ecological and social niches the lines, models and variants lateral in the retrospect could turn out more competitive and adequate than those that became dominant later. The statements about an unavoidable result of evolution can be considered as true only in the most general sense (and given some conditions are observed). The point is that an evolutionary result usually is an outcome of long-lasting competition between different forms, their destruction, transformations, social selection, adaptation to various ecological milieus, *etc.* Thus such a result could be not inevitable for each and every particular society.

These ideas are concretized and proved at different levels including that of pre-state societies (the characteristic features of chiefdoms on the one hand and their analogues and alternatives on the other are compared). The notions of heterarchy and homoarchy as labels for ideal models of rigidly (invariably) and non-rigidly (in multiple ways), ranged social structures respectively, are also scrutinized. The authors argue that it can be possible to postulate heterarchic and homoarchic evolutionary trajectories that embrace all cultures throughout whole human history.

Special attention is paid to an analysis of the models of politogenesis in the course of which alternative models of transition to complex societies form. This idea resists the outdated representation about the transition from non-state to state societies as direct and unilinear. The authors show that this transition was multilinear, they introduce the notion of the early state analogues and propose their classification. The early state analogues are represented by them as complex non-state societies, comparable with early states in size, socio-cultural and/or political complexity, functional differentiation level, *etc.*, that, however, do not have some features typical of the early state.