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Collective action and cultural change: Revisiting Eisenstadt's evolutionary theory

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Abstract

Eisenstadt's most well-known contributions come primarily from his research on "multiple modernities." Less appreciated has been his evolutionary theory of cultural change. In this article, we revisit Eisenstadt's evolutionary theory in order to make explicit his potential contributions to the neo-evolutionary tradition and demonstrate where his contribution can be further appreciated. In short, Eisenstadt's theory supplements macro-level materialist and micro-level bio-psychological theories by (1) offering a group-level theory that takes agency and historicity seriously by calling attention to the role of *institutional entrepreneurs* and their projects for cultural change; (2) formulating a multi-linear, multi-directional theory of evolution that avoids determinist traps; (3) highlighting non-materialist crises such as the widespread breakdown in *trust*, the discontents of centralized and consolidated *power*, and the collapse of a shared sense of *meaning*; and (4) accounting for the possible conditions of success or failure. Historical examples are used to illustrate Eisenstadt's model.

Keywords

Eisenstadt, entrepreneurs, historical-comparative sociology, institutions, sociocultural evolution

Introduction

Although only a few years since S.N. Eisenstadt's passing, we believe an assessment of his contribution to the discipline continues to be a worthwhile project. Eisenstadt's work, spanning several decades, is formidable in many respects. Primarily, it was his later

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interests (e.g. Eisenstadt, 1986, 2000; Eisenstadt et al., 1987), what he termed "multiple modernities," that have deservingly received much attention (Alexander, 1992; Alexander and Colomy, 1990; Joas, 2012; Wittrock, 2005). In the article, we argue that his earliest work on sociocultural evolution (Eisenstadt, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1971) deserves a renewed focus, especially in light of the recent advances made in neo-evolutionary theory (Machalek and Martin, 2016) and the growing integration of cognitive and evolutionary psychology into sociology (Norenzayan, 2013; Slingerland et al., 2013). To our knowledge, evolutionary sociologists have mostly ignored or are unaware of Eisenstadt's evolutionary scholarship (Richerson and Boyd, 2005; Richerson and Christiansen, 2013; Runciman, 2009; Turner, 2003), and thus, bringing him into explicit dialogue with recent contributions may provide fruitful extensions of both Eisenstadt's own theory and the various strands of neo-evolutionary social science.

Since Wilson's (1975) tome on sociobiology, evolutionary sociology has rapidly evolved far beyond the stage models of 1960s sociology (Bellah, 1964; Lenski, 1966; Parsons, 1966). As Marion Blute (2010) notes, biologists differentiate between *developmentalism* and *evolution*, and thus, so should sociologists insofar as stage models are developmental theories. Another approach, which Turner has advocated (Abrutyn and Lawrence, 2010; Abrutyn and Turner 2016; Turner, 2003, 2010), is for sociology to return to selection pressures and the processes of selection so as to best incorporate evolutionary principles. Indeed, this strategy has become the standard as neo-*Darwinian* theorizing has emerged alongside various other neo-evolutionary theories like gene–culture interaction (Lenski, 2005; Richerson and Boyd, 2005), cross-species studies (Maryanski and Ishii-Kuntz, 1991), and neurosociology (Franks and Turner, 2013). Although these studies have done much to rescue evolution from the older nineteenth-century tendencies toward developmental progressivism (Sanderson, 2007), they tend to focus only on general evolution (Sahlins, 1960) while ignoring the details on the ground or the historically and socioculturally contingent forces that play a role in shaping specific cases (Boyd and Richerson, 1992). And while Eisenstadt moved away from evolutionism as the 1970s progressed, we believe not only does his theorizing improve upon neo-evolutionary work today, but conversely, neo-evolutionary work can speak directly to the spirit of his scholarly goals in the 1960s – that is, to challenge the Parsons (1966)/Bellah (1964) progressivist evolutionism, while giving teeth to a cultural perspective that supplements Lenski's (1966) overly materialist (subsistence technology) stage model.

In short, then, by focusing on Eisenstadt's updated version of Weber's (1946a) *charismatic carrier groups*, or what Eisenstadt called *institutional entrepreneurs*, these fine-grained details can be brought into alignment with a general theory of group-level selection (Abrutyn, 2014b, 2016b; Abrutyn and Van Ness, 2015) without having to resort to ad hoc adaptationalism, stage models, or other vague "unfolding" processes. Moreover, by considering the role of institutional entrepreneurs amid historical and sociocultural context, we can provide "teeth" to Turner's (2010, 2012) argument that sociology embrace *Durkheimian, Spencerian*, and *Marxian* selection as distinct from *Darwinian* selection (Abrutyn, 2014a, 2015c), without doing violence to the selection levels which are still shaped by conventional *Darwinian* patterns. Indeed, Eisenstadt's evolutionary theory – as a conscious break from Parsons' (1966) and Bellah's (1964) blind, unilinear, unidirectional models – can offer concepts and processes that build the scaffolding

necessary for understanding *why, how*, and *when* evolution works on the group-level (Wilson, 2001, 2002); its outcome is unpredictable because of the interests of competing collectives, as well as the growing existential discontent produced by ever-larger societies and institutional mechanisms of control that grew further and further away from the local, and heterogeneity that generates nearly limitless alternative societies.

Taking all of this together, our primary goal in this article can be understood as follows: to *synthesize* Eisenstadt's evolutionary work in order to *elucidate* concepts which we believe are particularly useful for a modern cultural approach to neo-evolutionary theory, and in order to facilitate this contribution, we engage in a *translation* of Eisenstadt's concepts with the terminology of more recent neo-evolutionary theorizing. In the following section, we attend to some basic definitional and conceptual work in Eisenstadt's theory. First, we address the implicit question of "what evolves" in Eisenstadt's theorizing. Following this, we discuss how Eisenstadt's institutional spheres – that is, macro-structural and cultural "sites" of social organization – offer a means of understanding sociocultural evolution as the qualitative transformation of societal configurations. Finally, we outline the role of frameworks, autonomy, and institutional centers in this transformative process. This definitional and conceptual work is necessary for a more robust understanding of the subsequent section, which addresses the role and importance of meso-level institutional entrepreneurs in evolutionary processes and dynamics. As we delineate the processes and dynamics, historical examples will be drawn from in similar style as Eisenstadt's own work. Although the systematic treatment of a single case would, perhaps, offer as effective of a method, it is the generalizability that we prefer to focus on.

Fundamental building blocks

Polity, religion, and the question of what evolves

Although Eisenstadt was never crystal clear in positing a *single* theory of evolution, we can look at two clues to best understand what he thought evolved. First, the bulk of Eisenstadt's historical research was focused on two specific epochs and processes: the evolution of political autonomy in agrarian states beginning some 5000 years ago (Eisenstadt, 1963, 1977; Eisenstadt et al., 1987) and the emergence of religious entrepreneurs (Eisenstadt, 1980, 1982, 1986, 1990) during the so-called Axial Age (ca. 800–200).[1] Abrutyn (2014a, 2016b) has argued that in both sets of cases, we find historical processes facilitating the emergence of specialized collectives (i.e. political and religious entrepreneurs), their pursuit of structural and symbolic independence, and their effort to reconfigure the physical, temporal, social, and symbolic space of society. Generally, each case presents a crisis or set of crises that "frees" one or more sets of entrepreneurs from the constraints of extant normative, symbolic, and organizational frameworks and gives these actors some "breathing room" to invent new frameworks and pursue their institutionalization (Colomy, 1998).[2] In the end, what we find are qualitatively transformed institutional systems: one or more institutional spheres (e.g. polity, religion) with greater autonomy (Eisenstadt, 1977, 1987); a reshaped, differentiated institutional landscape with new role-status positions and organizational units (Eisenstadt, 1986, 2012); and, on

a phenomenological level, new collective goals superimposed on self-interested goals (Eisenstadt, 1971, 1982). Or, put differently, Eisenstadt's implicit model considered the consequences of evolution across all three principal levels of analysis: macro, meso, and micro. From this briefest of explications, we can sketch out a working framework of what evolves.

Institutional spheres

The concept "institution" has long been used to mean *anything* that endures for some indefinite period of time and appears to the actors as eternal (Jepperson, 1991). A more narrow usage of the term has been employed by evolutionary-institutionalists (Abrutyn, 2009, 2014b, 2016a; Nolan and Lenski, 2010; Turner, 2003, 2010): macro-level structural and cultural frameworks organized by and around one or more universal human concerns and constituted by individuals, collectives, and clusters of collectives (e.g. niches, fields) whose position is relative to the spaces associated with producing and distributing (tangible and intangible) resources linked to the concerns. There are several ubiquitous institutional spheres (Turner, 2003) – kinship, polity, religion, law, economy – and many spheres which have more recently become autonomous and, therefore, discrete structural and cultural milieus inhabited by individuals and collectives – for example, science, medicine, art, and sport (Abrutyn, 2014b).

Institutional spheres are group-level "survivor machines" (Maryanski and Turner, 1992: 2).[3] They are enduring in a number of ways. First, they are the hidden source of social control and coordination which facilitate and constrain self-interested action, impose divisions of labor that harness collective power, and obfuscate inequities and domination. Second, they are the source of patterns of action, labels for emotions and feeling rules guiding expression, ideologies and vocabularies of motives for developing attitudes and appraisals, and procedures for making decisions for large swaths of the population. Finally, they are the material and symbolic storehouses of collective memories – both "official" elite memories and the material from which local memories are constructed – that provide actors with a sense of shared coherent reality, even when that reality, on the ground, varies tremendously. In short, institutional spheres are the mechanisms by which societies regulate and integrate actors while providing the underlying source(s) of legitimation for society. For Eisenstadt (1971), *institutional spheres are the domains of societal evolution*. It is at the institutional level that patterns of action, decision-making, goal setting, and collective power can be restructured and "taken for granted" by actors operating within those spheres' realms of influence.

Eisenstadt, like most functionalists (Luhmann, 2012; Parsons, 1966), saw the general pattern of sociocultural evolution as increasing population growth and density, differentiation as a means of resolving this growth and density, and, consequently, problems of integration and regulation that further required new solutions. To be sure, functionalists are not the only evolutionary thinkers to recognize this general social historical pattern of iterative growth, problem emergence/intensification, attempted problem-solving, and complexification (Abrutyn and Lawrence, 2010; Chase-Dunn and Hall, 1997; Chirot, 1994; Tilly, 1990). Even Weber (1946b) argued that macro-social orders like polity and

economy became highly bounded rationalized spaces whose boundaries were protected like "jealous gods" protect their people's purity.

Clearly, Eisenstadt felt there was something "adaptive" about institutional spheres, but we do not feel this is a necessary path to traverse – in part because importing biological evolutionary metaphors has its limits at some levels of sociocultural reality (Runciman, 2009; Turner and Maryanski, 2008). That is, it's enough to say institutional spheres are survivor machines insofar as they (1) allow cultural systems that appear coherent and provide actors with meanings that motivate them to live and do the things they should to persist over time; (2) give actors a shared sense of history and destiny that becomes the underlying basis for solidarious rituals, occasional collective effervescence, and an insider/outsider status; and (3) produce real or imagined stability for an indefinite number of generations in terms of resource production and distribution (even where inequitable and maladaptive for some proportion of the population), power relations, and patterns of daily existence.

Evolution, then, is not a process of *adaptation* at the institutional level of social reality, but rather the qualitative transformation of cultural systems and structural reality so that physical, temporal, social, and symbolic spaces are radically changed and, on a phenomenological level, everyday reality – for a *significant* portion of the population – is reconstructed (Abrutyn, 2013b, 2015c). For the biological sciences, evolution is premised on environmental changes generating natural selection that works on the frequency of phenotypic expression in a given population (Mayr, 2001). In the social sciences, while some have pushed solely for a neo-*Darwinian* model that emphasizes "memes" or, more recently, modules in the brain (for a review, see Blute, 2010), sociocultural evolution at a more macro-scale has been distinguished from other types of social change in terms of quantitative growth versus qualitative change (Abrutyn and Lawrence, 2010). Directly connected to qualitative change is the emphasis on selection, which unlike the biotic world involves purposive, concerted efforts (Abrutyn, 2013b; Runciman, 2009; Turner, 2003; Verkamp, 1991). Institutions become the warehouses or libraries that come to store the technological, organizational, and symbolic changes that *qualitatively* transform societies physically, temporally, socially, and symbolically. Mesopotamia and Egypt in the mid-fourth millennium BCE were not simply quantitatively different from the chiefdoms that preceded them or co-existed uneasily beside them; Eisenstadt recognized they were qualitatively different at the macro-level as polity grew discrete from kinship and came to penetrate and dominate local levels of kin organization (Yoffee, 2005), as well as on the meso-level with the emergence of new organizational (bureaucracies, priesthoods, warrior castes) divisions of labor (Adams, 1966; Flannery, 1972) and on the micro-level as political attitudes, actions, goals, and rules phenomenologically reoriented a significant swath of people's everyday reality (Abrutyn, 2013a). At the macro-level of social reality, adaptation is not the primary "reason" or outcome but the complete transformation of human societies.

Frameworks, autonomy, centers

If institutional spheres are what evolve, can we identify some major processes that clue us into evolution? That is to say, since institutional spheres are not in and of themselves

"observable," to what indicators can we turn to measure their presence, significance, and efficacy in social and cultural transformation? For one thing, Colomy (1998) has argued Eisenstadt's entrepreneurs worked to construct and crystallize new normative, symbolic, and organizational frameworks while concomitantly casting doubt on existing frameworks as unjust, immoral, and/or inefficient.[4] In a sense, institutional spheres are external "warehouses" composed of overlapping symbolic and structural frameworks that provide actors with schemas for perception and action, and the means to internalize these schemas (Vaisey, 2009). At the most basic level, then, sociocultural evolution is the selection process by which new frameworks are invented, crystallized, and institutionalized into macro-level structural and cultural milieu in ways that transform the everyday reality of a significant proportion of the population. However, it is not just the frameworks that constitute evolution; according to Eisenstadt, the level of "complexity" found *within* institutional spheres matters too.

Early on, Eisenstadt used the term differentiation to talk about complexity, but as he transitioned away from evolutionism into the Axial Age, he increasingly abandoned the process in favor of institutional autonomy (cf. Eisenstadt, 1986, 1990, 2012); more recently, Abrutyn (2009, 2014b) brought Eisenstadt into dialogue with Luhmann's (2012) usage of autonomy to underscore the process driving institutional domains to become more or less discrete structural and cultural milieus. The greater the degree of autonomy, the greater the degree to which (1) they are *realized* in physical and temporal space; (2) individuals, collectives, and clusters of collectives and, importantly, the relationships between them are distinguishable objectively and reflexively from other types of role-status positions or collectives; (3) the symbolic reality, constituted by specialized language, institutional logics, collective memory, and identity, is set apart from other symbolic realities and, therefore, makes *doing* polity or religion phenomenologically different from doing kinship or economy. Thus, sociocultural evolution is, in part, a process of either creating more autonomy or, conversely, reducing the level of autonomy found in one or more institutional spheres and the subsequent effects one institution's autonomy, or sudden lack thereof, has on other institutional spheres.

We especially see this in the political cases Eisenstadt (1963) was interested in, where, for example, political goals became discrete from "goals of other spheres or groups in society" in that their "formation, pursuit, and implementation became largely independent of other groups and were governed mostly by political criteria and by consideration of political exigency" (p. 19). The Axial Age, similarly, was a period in which the "common denominator of [the various religious cases] was their transformation into relatively autonomous spheres of society, regulated by autonomous criteria" (Eisenstadt, 2012: 279). Again, autonomy, for Eisenstadt, meant qualitative transformation at the macro-, meso-, and micro-levels of social reality, and although Eisenstadt never explicitly conceptualized it this way, the process of autonomy – and therefore sociocultural evolution – may also include the loss of autonomy (or what others might call dedifferentiation (Rueschemeyer, 1977) or "retrogression") as just as important as the emergence of greater and greater levels of autonomy (Abrutyn, 2009).

One of the defining features of autonomy is the construction and preservation of an institutional center. For Edward Shils (1975), the center of society was the locus of the central (a) value system, (b) institutions, and (c) system of authority. It was, in short, the

physical and cognitive source of "gravity" that drew the attention of the masses and made a large, impersonal society like a nation-state possible. We can easily adjust this over-functionalized ecology and argue instead that each autonomous institutional sphere has one or more centers. Some centers are physical spaces as big as Jerusalem (religion) or New York (economy) or as small as palaces or temples in agrarian states (Joyce, 2000) and chiefs' huts in horticultural societies (Earle, 1991). All centers, however, are cognitive in that the greater the level of autonomy, the greater is the degree to which a center *penetrates* the everyday reality of individual actors and, thereby, the more internalized the center becomes in the cognitive schema carried by each actor. It does not mean the role-identity associated with a given center is always salient or prominent in the individual's identity hierarchy, or in every situation; it means that the person is oriented to the center and the appropriate role-identity (and the various meanings attributed to the identity and institutional sphere) can be activated in certain settings. The cognitive internalization of centers also implies a degree of taken-for-grantedness in that the polity and its autonomy, for instance, come to be understood as "normal" and alternative institutional arrangements become more difficult to imagine.[5] Institutional centers, then, are cognitively causal not only in the deliberate and discursive sense but also at the pre-conscious, schematic, "extra-deliberative" level which motivates judgments and action below discursive awareness (Smith and DeCoster, 2000; Summers-Effler et al., 2015; Vaisey, 2009).

Yoffee's (2005: 17) examination of textual and archaeological evidence in Mesopotamia confirms Eisenstadt's conclusions, as well as our slightly modified version of Eisenstadt: "The emergence of a political center [occurred via] a generalized structure of authority [which made its actors] distinct from kinship, priestly, or other hierarchies" (see also Abrutyn, 2013a; Adams, 1966; Flannery, 1972). Hence, political evolution involved the creation of discrete social and symbolic space, in addition to physical ones (Abrutyn and Lawrence, 2010): the demarcation of public space and the erection of monuments stratified space "and hence the people who were allowed access to different space, creating and marking centers and peripheries … [which] gave members of new polities a ready-made store of understanding about the meaning of such architecture" (Joyce, 2000: 72). The same types of processes can be identified in many of the Axial Age cases that fascinated Eisenstadt. In ancient Judah/Israel, for instance, Abrutyn (2015b) draws from archaeological and textual evidence – including Biblical exegesis – to demonstrate how religious entrepreneurs leveraged the exile in Babylon (ca. 587–536 BCE) to work out new symbolic, organizational, and normative frameworks that could be implemented if and when they returned from the exile, rebuilt the second Temple, and imposed their vision of reality on the populace. And while Abrutyn notes that the evolution of Judaism was by no means complete, the freedom the priests and scribes had in the exile was key to creating a discrete religious sphere – that is, they did not have to obey a king or political bureaucracy and were freed from the daily Temple rituals. As one example, Ezekiel (40–48) conceptualized a future Israel in which the temple and the palace were physically and socially demarcated from each other – a radical idea given the typical organization of political and religious space in every society prior.

Thus, sociocultural evolution is the process by which new normative, symbolic, and organizational frameworks supplement or supplant older ones, become crystallized in

autonomous institutional spheres, and are both externalized and internalized in the distinct institutional centers that come to be the source of regulation and integration. As new institutional spheres become autonomous and new centers emerge, culture evolves insofar as there are greater numbers of distinct systems structuring day-to-day lives in addition to highly differentiated sets of individuals, roles, collectives, and relationships. Institutional evolution, for Eisenstadt, does not simply unfold as it often appears to do in many functionalist or neo-evolutionary accounts (Chase-Dunn and Hall, 1997; Turner, 2003). Eisenstadt's second contribution, besides locating the unit of evolution in the institution, is highlighting the nexus between collective agency, exogenous and endogenous exigency, and contingency.

Eisenstadt's evolutionism

In this section, we first discuss Eisenstadt's concept of institutional entrepreneurs, which he developed to provide particular attention to the role of collective action in generating social and cultural transformation. As we elaborate institutional entrepreneurship, we describe the various exigencies and crises which influence the likelihood of emergence, success, and failure. Making explicit Eisenstadt's implicit evolutionary argument, we then demonstrate how he distinguished between exogenously driven evolution (*Spencerian*) and endogenously driven evolution (*Durkheimian*). After differentiating the evolutionary mechanisms, we focus on three major crises that influence entrepreneurship outcomes: trust, power, and meaning. Finally, we focus on Eisenstadt's attention to nuanced and historical contingencies by centering our discussion on the influence of extant resource availability, power structures, and internal markets.

Institutional entrepreneurs

The abstract. Weber's (1946a, 1946c) great force of historical change centered on *charisma*, and in particular, the group that is able to (1) borrow charisma from its founding leader and (2) carry and sustain (and develop) the charismatic leader's cultural patterns over indefinite periods of time, that is, survival of the charismatic authority's new vision is the closest equivalent to biological "*fitness*" at the macro-level. Entrepreneurs are the "switchmen" of history, capable of reorienting people to a new worldview and, therefore, reshaping what people believed are their material and ideal interests and the appropriate means to achieving these interests. Eisenstadt argues that the group is more important than the leader for two reasons. He states, the "first meeting point between charismatic predisposition toward the destruction of institutions [i.e., change] and the exigencies of orderly social organization [i.e., routinization] is demonstrated" in the dilemma of "succession of its [charismatic group's] leadership and the continuity of its organization" (Eisenstadt in Weber, 1968: xv). Second, and because of this dilemma,

> the test of any great charismatic leader lies not in his [sic] ability to create a single event or great movement, but also in his [sic] ability to leave a continuous impact on an *institutional structure* – to transform any given *institutional setting* by infusing into it some of his [sic] charismatic

> vision, by investing regular orderly offices, or aspects of social organization, with some of his [sic] charismatic qualities and aura.
>
> (Weber, 1968: xv-I; emphasis added)

By utilizing Weber for inspiration, Eisenstadt is able to give his theory a sense of agency. All too often, Lamarckian evolution is dismissed or ignored when theorizing about some types of sociocultural evolution, despite Darwin's ([1871] 1994: see chapter 5 in particular) own belief that natural selection was not the sole form of selection at the cultural level. In this vein, Boyd and Richerson (1992) caution against ignoring the power of "guided, nonrandom" variation in which the spread of new means and/or ends is not purely one of diffusion (cf. Henrich, 2001). Eisenstadt suggests evolution can be generated by entrepreneurs creating new symbolic, normative, and organizational frames; imposing them through mechanisms of integration and regulation; and qualitatively transforming the meaning of society, of identity, and thereby of reality.[6]

Importantly, Eisenstadt's use of Weber provides one further advantage: contingency. As Colomy (1998) has argued, entrepreneurship is never a linear project of change – nor does it take place in a static environment. Nascent entrepreneurs face resistant elites to whom they must manipulate, appease, accommodate, or defeat. As entrepreneurs strategize, formulate, and deploy projects in order to replace existing elites or to carve new institutional space, it is always a possibility that these projects will remain incomplete and partially enacted (Abrutyn, 2009).[7] Incomplete projects create new vulnerabilities and conditions which may generate new emergent problems (Turner, 2010). In rare cases, these projects may be co-opted and completed by existing elites (Abrutyn and Van Ness, 2015), thereby making an effort toward autonomy all the more difficult. As entrepreneurs focus on enacting their projects, they must also be cognizant of internal maintenance of the collective. This tenuous balance between navigating extant conditions, the potential for incomplete or co-opted institutional projects, and the need to manage the collective reflects some of the many contingencies that Eisenstadt was keen to integrate into his historical analyses.

The empirical. While Eisenstadt often made sweeping historical generalizations, he expressed considerable clarity in his analysis of religio-cultural entrepreneurship during the Axial Age. For instance, he argued that one of the key forces of religious evolution was the emergence of competing entrepreneurs at the margins of civilizations (Eisenstadt, 1982, 1984). In some cases, like the Israelites, these actors were on the physical margins of sprawling imperial states like Assyria, Babylon, and Egypt, while in other cases such as the various ascetic movements in ancient India, the margins were far less sweeping and, in many ways, were cognitive-cultural more than geographic (Humphreys, 1975). At the edges, the temporary freedom Colomy (1998) asserts is essential to both inventing new frames and articulating them in ways that allow them to be selected through diffusion across communities or elevation by extant elites. In an earlier example, the ancient Israelite entrepreneurs were briefly discussed in this regard. Abrutyn (2015b) highlights three key historical moments in which entrepreneurs were given a degree of freedom and maximized the structural opportunities.

First, when Israel was destroyed by Assyria (722–1 BCE), a contingent of northern actors, high in human capital relative to existing southern counterparts, fled to the southern kingdom of Judah. Judah, a political backwater at the time, was suddenly flung into the political and economic orbit of Assyria while also being forced to absorb a massive influx of refugees from the north – enough to triple the population (Finkelstein, 2013). With political, economic, and cultural exigencies pressing against the small polity, King Hezekiah appears to have exploited the skills of some of the northern priests and/or scribes, which, in turn, allowed these actors the freedom to graft northern religious and cultural ideas onto existing southern ones (Smith-Christopher, 2002). Second, a generation later, these actors had fallen out of privileged position when Hezekiah's son Manasseh rolled back his father's reforms and returned to older political and religious patterns; when he died, the religio-cultural entrepreneurs who had gained the support of a growing upper-middle class killed Manasseh's son and placed a 9-year-old boy (Josiah) on the throne (Smith, [1971] 1987). When he turned 18, the high priest "found" a "lost" scroll (generally assumed to be the core of Deuteronomy, chapters 12–26) containing a set of laws given to Moses in Exodus. As many scholars have remarked, the scroll was likely invented during Josiah's earliest days, but was treated by priest, prophet, and scribe alike as authentic (Blenkinsopp, 1995; Dever, 2001). Third, when Judah, Jerusalem, and the Temple were destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar and the elite exiled to Babylon (ca. 587/6-536), priests and scribes carried many of the traditions with them and were given a high degree of religious autonomy (Pearce, 2006), under which they appear to have worked out key aspects of a future Israelite society with a religious sphere distinct from the polity and kinship (Abrutyn, 2015b). All three examples show both the importance of continuities and discontinuities in understanding institutional evolution. The initial project was primarily a political one based on political expediency. The latter two projects were religious in nature, but the second remained political too as Jerusalem and the office of the king remained a material reality. Furthermore, all three cases show how entrepreneurship is both constrained and facilitated by external factors such as other elites and entrepreneurs (and their sometimes conflicting, sometimes complementary interests), as well as internal factors such as extant traditions that cannot be ignored or erased.

Selection processes

The abstract. While there are different levels of selection and types of selection processes, entrepreneurs are subject to two eponymous selection processes: *Spencerian* and *Durkheimian* (Turner, 2012; Turner and Maryanski, 2008). Spencer's model was rooted in a sort of Lamarckian evolution, which saw structural and cultural innovation as the logical outcome where existing solutions were unable to handle old or new exigencies. That is, when existing solutions fail, actors are likely to act creatively in ways that attempt to ease whatever problems they perceive. Thus, the types of entrepreneurs discussed above are the products of *Spencerian* selection. These entrepreneurs can be differentiated between *endogenous* and *marginal* types. The former – or those Eisenstadt (1964) labeled *secondary* entrepreneurs – are authorized by existing elites who are purposively trying to resolve real or imagined problems in order to, at least, sustain the status quo, whereas the latter are problematizing the existing social order and proposing to

reconstitute it for various reasons (Abrutyn, 2014b). In both cases, it is the failure of structure or culture to adequately resolve integrative, regulative, or legitimative pressures. In some cases, latent crises already exist and are suddenly recognized or made salient in light of the pressures and/or efforts of the entrepreneur trying to seize the opportunity. Additionally, entrepreneurs can intentionally *create* the conditions that will amount to a problem requiring innovation (Abrutyn and Van Ness, 2015). These conditions may be real or simply perceived. For instance, they may make efforts to convince people that there is some crisis already present needing resolution – even if this crisis is not objectively real – and that their resolution is the best remedy.

For Eisenstadt, then, adaptation and selection occur on the group-level, while evolution is multi-level. On one hand, entrepreneurs alter their projects to accommodate reactions by other strata, especially elites, as well as assimilate elements of competitor's projects. On the other hand, evolution is most transformative when entrepreneurs succeed in reconfiguring particular institutional centers by carving out physical, temporal, social, and symbolic space for their projects, interests, and resource flows (Abrutyn, 2014b). Thus, evolution proceeds on the group and institutional level. Meso-level institutional entrepreneurs are the *architects* of macro-level spheres of social action, exchange, and communication.

Conversely, *Durkheimian* evolution is that which occurs *within* the confines of an already autonomous sphere and, like *Darwinian* evolution, is driven by competition between social units over scarce institutional resources (cf. Aldrich and Ruef, 2006). Rueschemeyer (1977) has noted, for instance, that newly differentiated social units often set goals incommensurate with the center. In addition, as population ecology research shows, organizations compete within fields or niches all the time for limited resources. In some cases, the outcome leads to new niches and gradual growth occurs, whereas in other cases, aspiring entrepreneurs may emerge within a niche and attempt to transform the niche into its own autonomous institutional sphere, both of which are found in Chaves' (2004) work on congregational niches. Additionally, Eisenstadt's (1982, 1984, 2012) work on heterodoxies would fit into *Durkheimian* selection, as competition within a pre-existing institutional framework was a dynamic historical force in many cases such as the Indian and Israelite Axial Age, as well as the gestation of Christianity in the face of Gnostic and other competitors.

Thus far, the basic tension of entrepreneurial projects has been alluded to throughout. In essence, successful entrepreneurs must find a way to balance self-interest with collective-oriented goals. It is not enough to "pretend" to have a larger proportion of the population's interests at heart; eventually, this façade will be the entrepreneur's undoing. Conversely, totalistic collective-orientations fail too because entrepreneurs are loathe to monopolize the resources necessary to carve the physical, temporal, social, and symbolic space to serve their interests. Thus, balancing the collective-oriented side and the self-interested side becomes a tenuous balance. The decisions elites make at one point may come back to haunt them later or may force them to swing the other direction quite rapidly. Likewise, successful entrepreneurship can bring about immediate or prolonged cultural and structural shifts. These changes might create holes or opportunities by which future entrepreneurs can capitalize; thus, entrepreneurs must continually assess their "fit" in the environment to not only preserve their position but also to defend against

vulnerabilities (Rueschemeyer, 1977). Therefore, until entrepreneurs are able to institutionalize their cultural assemblage, they are inherently unstable as the needs of the group and the needs of the followers and potential recruits sit on a razor-thin precipice.

The empirical. Examples of selection pressures abound. Christopher Chase-Dunn and colleagues (Chase-Dunn et al., 2008; Chase-Dunn and Hall, 1997) have shown the earliest city-states faced population pressures related to natural growth, state planning, and immigration/emigration. His "iteration" model includes various other forces such as resource scarcity, ecological degradation, and internal or external conflicts that result from population pressures as well as intensify them. As pressures ramp up, so to speak, a threshold is reached (Abrutyn and Lawrence, 2010) under which these societies (and even societies today) face crossroads: evolve politically or risk external conquest from better organized groups or collapse (Yoffee and Cowgill, 1988). Archaeological and textual evidence clearly shows both the successful and unsuccessful methods political entrepreneurs employed under these pressures, including the generalization of culture to better integrate increasingly disparate populations (e.g. religious pantheons), improvement in transportation and communication technologies to regulate and coordinate social units, and the use of redistributive economic mechanisms to create a degree of dependency on the state and its services (Adams, 1966). To be sure, creating a standing army and improving military technologies further facilitated the evolution of human societies and political autonomy (Carneiro, 1978), but only as handmaiden to the other innovations as coercion is always unstable over the long-run.

A second example can be drawn from the evolution of an autonomous legal sphere in its earliest stages. In the eleventh century CE, a set of entrepreneurs in the Catholic Church coalesced around a plan to carve out a truly discrete religious sphere like none before it (Abrutyn, 2009; Berman, 1983). The Church, prior to the Gregorian Reformation, led by the eponymous Pope Gregory VII (1073–1085), was severely delimited by the decentralized nature of European chief and kingdoms (Southern, 1970). Seizing the opportunity, religious entrepreneurs actively sought to "create" a distinct religious sphere vis-à-vis the European polities and local, tribal kin systems (Jellenbach, 1945). On one hand, the Pope declared himself separate from the Holy Roman Emperor (Henry IV) and all other kings, positing that the Bishops serving each king could only be elected by the Church. This was a radical departure from tradition insofar as the king had the sole authority to select who was the Church representative in his court. On the other hand, the Church sought to extend its influence to its local parishes, which included making priests celibate (and, thus, expropriating the priest's claims to land and property) (Goody, 1984), subsuming local gods into the Catholic tradition by way of sainthood (Sharot, 2001), and making marriage a sacrament and, therefore, of principal concern to the Church (Gies and Gies, 1986). Driving these changes was the authorization of a new set of entrepreneurs: legal scholars, exemplified by Gratian ([1582] 1993), who invented both the techniques associated with modern legal argumentation and research as well as began the process of professionalizing a body of legal scholars devoted to law and *conflict resolution/justice*. In the process of religious entrepreneurship, a whole host of selection pressures conspired to generate the type of environment conducive to legal entrepreneurship and legal autonomy (Abrutyn, 2009).

For one thing, conflict intensified between the political and religious spheres, culminating in Henry IV's famous Walk of Canossa. When armed conflict failed and the two spheres were formally accepted as discrete by both sets of elites, there were pressures for other ways to resolve conflicts. Quite rapidly, legal entrepreneurs filled the void, taking their training in Canon law to invent Royal, Manorial, Urban, and then Mercantile law (Berman, 1983). They became indispensable "weapons" in struggles between courts, between court and Church, between merchants and royal actors, and between gradually growing autonomous cities and the old gentry (Weber, [1927] 2002). As the internal complexity of legal knowledge grew, universities popped up in Paris, Bologna, and Salerno to not only fill the demand for lawyers but also to handle the pressure for organizing legal knowledge (Rashdall, 1936). In short, a set of unpredictable exigencies created the opportunities for legal evolution, and legal entrepreneurs took the reins and ran. To be sure, legal autonomy fluctuates across time and space. In the United States, for example, the Supreme Court as one barometer of legal autonomy cycles from staunchly independent to politically motivated as demonstrated by *Madison v. Marbury* establishing judicial review, the *Dred Scott* case and the Taney court that was in the southern state's political pocket, and the Warren court which sided more often against the state's interests (Irons, 1999). There is never a time of complete independence, but law is clearly a distinct sphere in the United States.

Crises as contingency

Eisenstadt saw crises as the underlying engine driving entrepreneurship and, thereby, making sociocultural evolution a possibility. This is perhaps not surprising, as many macro-level evolutionary theories posit – using many different metaphors – that crises are engines of evolutionary processes; what differs, however, is that Eisenstadt's crises are *sociocultural* – meaning they are endogenous to a society or larger civilizational unit. Hence, we can tentatively classify a typology: environmental-ecological crises like droughts, famines, or disease (Diamond, 2004); demographic-material crises wrought by population pressures or inter- or intra-societal conflict (Turner, 2003); and, finally, the sociocultural crises identified by Eisenstadt and revolving around integration (Abrutyn and Turner, 2011), regulation (Turner, 2010), or meaning (Abrutyn, 2014b). To be sure, his cultural crises may result from external or internal material causes which *shape the texture and direction* of innovation, yet entrepreneurs experience and frame their projects in the language of cultural dilemmas. In analyzing the Axial Age, for instance, Eisenstadt (2012) remarked that "charismatic tendencies are more likely to arise in periods of social turmoil or disintegration," but the solutions were found in religio-cultural innovation (p. 285). Thus, while the "natural" crises produce *Darwinian* types of selection and the second type seems related to "ultimate" causes, the sociocultural crises are the fuel that drives institutional evolution. Organizational, symbolic, and normative innovation are, in essence, inventions meant not to reduce population pressures but to impose a just, efficient, and moral order on a social environment perceived as lacking or losing order.

In short, crises are akin to the *selection pressures* many contemporary neo-evolutionists speak of as driving innovation and decision-making (Turner, 2010, 2012). Crises, by no means, have readily available solutions, nor should we expect that all crises will be

perceived or resolved efficaciously when perceived in the short- or long-run. Rather, for Eisenstadt, crises placed pressure on actors to mobilize and organize charisma to make sense of and resolve whatever the entrepreneurs came to believe was the underlying problem. Because there is a phenomenological component to crisis, there is no reason to believe that some cases of sociocultural evolution weren't due to "radical" entrepreneurs *creating* a crisis, or sense of crisis, by capitalizing on free-flowing resources and using them in a way to mount a significant challenge to the status quo. Whether objectively real, or subjectively felt, Eisenstadt highlights three crises that may be able to create, magnify, or frame qualitative transformation: *trust, power, and meaning.*

Trust. Durkheim's work was centered on the production of trust and commitment and, ultimately, solidarity. Although he initially looked for the causes and consequences of trust in social structure – for example, in human mutual interdependence and the division of labor – he would reject this idea later in his career and turn toward the social psychological dynamics associated with interaction rituals and emotion. More generally, what Durkheim revealed was the tenuous balance in any relationship, group, network, or larger social unit – like a community, institution, or society – between individual goals and desires and the group's goals and need for cooperation, self-sacrifice, and altruistic behavior. Experimental social psychology (Lawler et al., 2009) and interaction rituals theory (Collins, 2004) have confirmed Durkheim's suspicions that trust is inseparable from the symbolic dimensions of social life, especially in relationship to generating, reproducing, and sustaining affect.

At the macro-level, the problem of trust becomes especially salient and challenging as larger groups are inherently stratified vertically (hierarchically) and horizontally (functionally), which puts pressure on elites to prevent conflict, regulate competition, and encourage appropriate interaction, exchange, and communication (Abrutyn, 2014b). Crises of trust are often rooted in real or perceived deviance on the part of certain actors. We often assume, for instance, that members of a group will take certain dispositions and orientations and not act (overly) self-interestedly; when they do, they potentially tear the normative fabric, problematize collective interests in maintaining social order, and, in effect, call into question their own dedication to the center. Crises emerge where heterogeneity grows untenable, conflict resolution is inefficacious, and basic guidelines for interacting are lacking. As such, trust is often generated through normative mechanisms like *generalized symbolic media* which standardize interaction patterns, exchange rules, and communication and, thereby, pre-contractually induce basic levels of trust between strangers (Abrutyn, 2015a; Abrutyn and Turner, 2011; Luhmann, 2012).

Power. Integrative mechanisms are also mechanisms of social control intended to regulate interaction, exchange, and communication; therefore, they are also sources of *power*. Power becomes problematic because there are (1) four bases of power – coercive/military, political/administrative, economic, and ideological/symbolic (Mann, 1986); (2) centralization within any one network of power engenders winners and losers, and domination and natural opposition; and (3) attempts to consolidate multiple networks run against the interests of within-network centralization (Turner, 1995). Thus, while centralization and consolidation of power appear to be necessary conditions for societal

growth and complexity, there are tensions inherent in power dynamics between superordinates–subordinates and elites across networks (Tilly, 1990). Indeed, Boehm (1999) claims the relationship between power and human nature to be the ultimate antagonism: on one hand, humans work hard to resist authority and hierarchy, while, on the other hand, hierarchies naturally form as population size and density increase and emerging problems demand coordination. Hence, crises rooted in regulation and power emerge when either (a) power is too consolidated and/or centralized and the appropriation of resources in the center is so imbalanced that the margins grow weak and people no longer commit to the center; (b) power differentials are exposed or defined by marginal actors as inefficacious, unjust, and immoral; or (c) factions within the elites, or between elites and newly minted rivals or competitors, draw resources and attention away from governing and refocus it on costly struggles over power.

To elaborate, when the over-consolidation of resources and power is perceived, peripheral entrepreneurs are likely to radically innovate in an attempt to overthrow the center as they feel completely "shut-out" from traditional channels of access. When elite cleavages emerge within the center, new alliances might develop between elites and nascent entrepreneurs (Tarrow, 1998). These entrepreneurs may come from the periphery – wherein these new coalitions funnel resources for radical innovation – or through more centrally embedded, reform-oriented entrepreneurs. This is to say, real or perceived crises in power provide the conditions for the potential emergence of entrepreneurs.

Meaning. Finally, crises emerge around the production of a sense of shared meaning. Although materialists often reject the need humans have for meaning, clearly ontological security and the search for a relatively coherent cosmology cannot be ignored, lest *anomic terror*, as Berger (1969) labels it, spreads through the community and destroys the morale and energy of the group. Cultural generalization, of course, contributes greatly to preventing anomie (Parsons and Bales, 1955: 359–363). By producing generalized symbolic mechanisms of integration, like specialized media, a perception of consensus can be erected (Abrutyn, 2015a). Also, the formalization of rules, authority, and accepted social practices in the form of institutional logics simplify a complex, differentiated reality as traditional and legal-rational authority look to encode meaning in the taken-for-grantedness of routine, whether it rests on nearly habitual action or rule-governed, sphere-delimiting formal codes of conduct (Thornton et al., 2012). Leadership, charisma, and power, for example, become routinized, symbolic, external representations of the group (Weber, 1968). But entrepreneurs must also impose their vision of reality on others through ceremonial and mundane rituals that consciously and unconsciously indicate to the performer(s) and the observer(s) acceptance of a set of rules and beliefs about what is good, right, and moral (Alexander, 2004; Goffman, 1967). Crises in meaning can emerge where extant meaning structures fail to continuously make sense of external reality and, in turn, fail to prevent ontological insecurities (Giddens, 1984); where counter-ideological frames label existing power structures as unjust and immoral (Almond et al., 2003); or where factions appear within the power-elite that threaten to pull back the proverbial "curtain" and threaten trust (Skocpol, 1977). When trust breaks down, previously taken-for-granted meanings are called into question – therein providing the conditions for alternative world visions.

Sociocultural contingency

Entrepreneurship, for Eisenstadt, is the ultimate contingency in history. Entrepreneurs are not inevitable characters in the drama of social change, but rather potential energy waiting to be unleashed when historical and sociocultural conditions intersect with what may best be termed structural holes (Burt, 2004) or opportunities (McAdam, [1982] 1999). That being said, entrepreneurs are not entirely passive but can facilitate the conditions providing the potential for success. Eisenstadt argued that three conditions were central forces that governed the success entrepreneurs might expect and, more importantly, whether evolutionary processes will even emerge – after all, selection is not a constant because variation, for numerous reasons, is not always salient.[8]

Resource availability. More than anything, entrepreneurs need resources to sustain organization, realize goals, and expand. Eisenstadt recognized the tremendous limitations resources put on entrepreneurs. For example, there may simply be a shortage of human and/or material resources. Political entrepreneurship becomes excessively difficult where a surplus of material goods cannot be marshaled, while the religious entrepreneurship of the Axial Age could not have occurred earlier where populations were smaller, urban environments fewer, and local cultures more insulated. Furthermore, the flow of resources may be highly restrictive and monopolized by the center, which reduces the likelihood marginal actors will be able to organize and mobilize. Unlike the first dilemma of scarcity, the flow of resources can be reconfigured – though not without a struggle and risk.

Entrepreneurs are not simply resigned to needing human and material resources. Symbolic resources are equally as important for success. Entrepreneurs need to be able to mobilize and monopolize, for example, coherent cosmologies and ideological frames, insignia and emblems, and "vocabularies of motives" that contribute to communication. Although not strictly symbolic, they need to tap into "charismatic fervor … rooted in the attempt to come into contact with the very essence of being" to establish contact with the sacred and, thus, to pursue projects of ultimate ends (Eisenstadt in Weber, 1968: xix). Finally, as the social movement's literature and social psychology have demonstrated, they must mobilize *emotional resources*. These mobilized emotional resources charge symbols that allow sustained fervor and commitment to the group (Collins, 2004). In any given society, emotions become stratified resources and, thereby, pursued and hoarded. Entrepreneurs can nurture intra-movement emotional climates in distinct ways which might become alluring for new recruits and followers (Jasper, 1997) or provide the resources necessary to persevere through failure (Summers-Effler, 2009; Summers-Effler and Kwak, 2015). Other adherents may experience righteous indignation or experience morality in bringing the entrepreneur's vision to fruition. The cultivated emotional climate may foster stronger commitment within the group as it deepens trust between members (Lawler et al., 2009) while also extending the possibility of attributing blame to an external target for the experience of negative emotions (Mackie et al., 2009). Furthermore, particularly strong emotional climates generated by otherwise-sidelined groups may generate "fringe effects," whereby energized emotional reactions to crises in the public sphere serve as magnets through which groups embed their cultural messages in public discussions and collective memories (Bail, 2012).

Extant power structures. Most evolutionary theories identify existing power arrangements as crucial to opportunity structures (Turner, 2010). Where power is highly consolidated and centralized into a few hands, threats – whether real or perceived – posed by entrepreneurs can be dealt with swiftly and with few repercussions. The consolidation of power and resources also presents potential entrepreneurs with a measuring stick indicating just how many resources they will need to mobilize efficaciously and achieve their goals. Of course, a dialectical process always threatens sharply distinguished power structures, rendering a sense of impenetrability moot. That is, as the ambitions and needs of elites grow, they naturally generate greater complexity that requires new internal order to resolve (Rueschemeyer, 1977). For instance, the formation of new or more ambitious goals puts pressure on leaders to create more bureaucracy to more efficiently handle the organization and realization of these goals. Balancing power and efficiency often leads to irrationalities in the structure, as newly differentiated political units may become corrupt, pursue goals incommensurate with the center, or develop their own goals that run counter to the efforts of political elites. For these reasons, Eisenstadt recognized secondary elites – or the subsidiary collectives that are either authorized by the primary elites to handle new problems or who grow increasingly indispensable to the primary elites – as potential pools of nascent entrepreneurship. Put differently, these secondary elites could become the evolutionary force working to alter the existing institutional sphere or, more radically, to carve out a new institutional sphere to protect and realize their interests vis-à-vis the elites that created them (Jenkins and Perrow, 1977).

Internal markets. Finally, Eisenstadt felt that the number, size, and level of differentiation among intra-societal markets played a major role in entrepreneurship. On one hand, an economic stratum with some wealth has always been influential for entrepreneurial efforts as they become a potential base of material support. On the other hand, markets facilitate the flow of resources and information, which means that more markets create more dynamism and weaken centralized control (Collins, 1990). Economic or non-economic markets encourage intense, frequent, and accelerated social exchanges. Ideas spread faster, innovations diffuse quicker, movements form rapidly, and counter-ideologies take hold more readily. Markets are dynamic forces, and as Collins shows, can be layered on top of each other to form meta-markets that penetrate everyday reality even more.

Not surprisingly, Eisenstadt (1971) saw institutional spheres, in part, as *generalized markets of exchange*: that is, institutional spheres allow for new media of exchange and communication to emerge and reorient the emotions, attitudes, and actions of a greater proportion of the population; generate and sustain a generalized set of means-ends relationships, decision-making processes, themes of discourse, and value-orientations; and, ultimately, give entrepreneurs the opportunity to monopolize the production and distribution of media, like *money* and/or *sacredness* (Abrutyn, 2015a). Moreover, these markets open the possibility for *creating demand*, as the greater are the number of markets, the greater is the familiarity and comfortability the general population has with generalized symbolic media.

Conclusion

Arguably, Eisenstadt's most well-known contributions primarily come from his research on "multiple modernities." This work has influenced research in both cultural sociology

and comparative historical sociology. Less appreciated has been his evolutionary theory of social and cultural change. In this article, we revisited Eisenstadt's evolutionary theory in order to make explicit his potential contributions to the neo-evolutionary tradition to most clearly demonstrate where his contribution could be further appreciated. In order to facilitate this integration, we synthesized Eisenstadt's evolutionary work and translated his terminology with more recent neo-evolutionary developments; this translation, we believe, will help contemporary scholars hone in on potential contributions within current debates. Additionally, we dimensionalized many of his insights while supplementing his abstract contributions with concrete, empirical historical case studies.

In particular, most social scientists, biologists, and psychologists interested in sociocultural evolution have remained ardently committed to a *Darwinian*, natural selection framework despite Darwin's own reticence about the ubiquity of natural selection on the individual level in societies (for a critique, see Turner, 2012). Those that do advocate for other forms of selection often take for granted the role actual actors and historical/sociocultural contingencies play in evolution. Eisenstadt, in his effort to move beyond the unfolding cultural evolution of Parsons and Bellah, went back to Weber and highlighted the effects entrepreneurs had on qualitative transformation. By leveraging his meso-level model, we focused on his unit of analysis whereby evolution happens: institutional spheres. After articulating where he saw evolution take place, we made explicit where he saw evolutionary processes select upon. By integrating Weber's work on charismatic carrier groups with Durkheim's ecological-evolutionism, he developed his concept of *institutional entrepreneurs.* This integration provided a more dynamic model of sociocultural evolution grounded in empirical historical cases with a particular attention to historical contingencies, structural and cultural conditions, and the potential for innovation. Importantly, by focusing on selection processes at the meso-level, he re-centered purposeful agents as the engine of social and cultural change. We provided both a theoretical understanding by focusing on the more abstract while also providing empirical examples with references to more concrete case studies, such as in our explanation of religio-cultural entrepreneurs during the Axial Age. Without losing historical nuance, Eisenstadt integrated into his work an attention to crises of trust, power, and meaning, as well as the constraints and opportunities inherit in resource availabilities, existing power structures, and internal markets.

Although beyond the scope of this article, we believe there are a few specific ways which future research can benefit from this renewed focus on Eisenstadt's neo-evolutionary contribution. Most notable is the potential contribution to social movement and collective behavior research. Social movement research has a tendency to privilege *political* change, with less of a focus on social and cultural change in other spheres of social life (for similar critiques, see Jasper, 1997; Snow, 2004). Eisenstadt's theory of institutional entrepreneurs affords researchers an opportunity to make sense of agentic change in other spheres beyond the polity, such as religion and economy.[9] His work also allows for interesting comparisons between collectives mobilizing from different structural positions. With advances in communication technologies, peripheral entrepreneurs are afforded greater potential for comparatively autonomous mobilization with an increased ability to appeal to and mobilize dormant resource bases (see Castells, 2012; Earl and Kimport, 2011). Additionally, new technology affords entrepreneurs greater accessibility

to institutional projects in disparate domains which provides an increased opportunity to emulate and creatively combine mobilization strategies in new contexts (see Abrutyn and Van Ness, 2015).

Additionally, because his empirical cases were rooted in historical data, Eisenstadt's contribution can be extended by future research through the integration of microsociological approaches to social and cultural change. In this respect, social movement research can extend his theory by choosing a social movement organization working toward institutional change, form testable hypotheses for organizational project success or failure, and therefore account for particular movement outcomes in a systematic fashion by juxtaposing observed events with expected events according to the insights explicated above. Furthermore, Eisenstadt's meso-level theory can be supplemented by micro-level research from new social movements (e.g. Gamson, 1989; Melucci, 1985) and the cultural turn (e.g. Jasper, 1997; Polletta, 1998) in order to explicate how identities and cultural meanings are mobilized and contested on the ground. This approach should also critique or extend Eisenstadt's research in relation to gender, class, and race – issues which Eisenstadt was not particularly attentive to in his work. In this regard, historical and ethnographic research from the second wave of feminism, civil rights, student movements, and other recent research may add these important dimensions. All said, we believe there is much to appreciate in Eisenstadt's theory of sociocultural evolution and see great value for future research.

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Notes

1. The latter epoch is noticeably different from the former in that Eisenstadt had already begun to abandon evolutionary concepts when examining the religious changes that occurred in the first millennium BCE.
2. Social movement researchers, particularly those in the political process tradition, have explicitly focused attention on such openings as "structural opportunities" (Goodwin, 2001; McAdam, [1982] 1999; Meyer and Minkoff, 2004). Others have emphasized that the most important factor of these openings depends on the *perception* of an opportunity rather than objective conditions (e.g. Kurzman, 2004; Summers-Effler, 2002).
3. We begin by considering some of the major building blocks of Eisenstadt's model with a brief, but necessary, aside on concepts. On one hand, a re-examination of a scholar's work should be articulated on his or her terms. On the other hand, much of the terminology Eisenstadt

drew from is currently out of use and/or draws us back into debates surrounding functionalist models of social change. Rather than wade into the morass of these debates – terrain which has been more than tread upon for decades now – we look to fresh concepts that mirror Eisenstadt's thinking without losing the generalizable insights; moreover, by subtly shifting our vocabularies, Eisenstadt's work is more easily grafted onto extant neo-evolutionary thought. For example, Eisenstadt's work grew out of the Parsonsian system logic, where subsystems like polity, economy, and culture (e.g. religion) were the dominant macro-structural phenomena (Parsons and Smelser, 1956). While neo-system's theory has worked to rehabilitate the weaknesses of Parsons' systems models (Luhmann, 1995), these models are ahistorical and not very useful empirically. Returning to the classics, Jonathan Turner (2003, 2010) has supplanted systems with *institutional domains*, or macro-social spaces like polity or religion that do not fit into a fourfold functionalist model; rather, they emerge from ethnographic, historical, and archaeological evidence (Nolan and Lenski, 2010). Additionally, switching out the master functionalist process of differentiation with that of autonomy, which Abrutyn (2009, 2014b) has argued allows for a stronger cultural theory that considers culture independently of (yet interrelated to) structure, opens the theory up to a whole host of advances such as those found in the institutional logics perspective (Thornton et al., 2012).

4. While Eisenstadt used the term "premises" in place of frameworks, by, once again, subtly shifting our language, we can draw direct connections with Colomy's work on entrepreneurship as well as bring his work into dialogue with a rich social movements literature that has co-opted Goffman's "frame" metaphor in talking about how movements articulate their projects (Benford and Snow, 2000; McVeigh et al., 2004; Snow et al., 1986).
5. It is beyond the scope of this article, but there is no reason to assume that *all* actors internalize every center to the same degree. Some actors, individual and/or collective, find themselves further from the center and its resource base and, thereby, are less likely to care about the center, let alone have the relevant role-identity activated. But the center remains a reality in that it can mobilize agents that impose the role-identity under certain circumstances or, where resistance to playing the role-identity emerges, are authorized to sanction offenders. Where this authority is lacking, the institutional sphere must also be lacking autonomy. Moreover, as societies get larger and more impersonal, stability becomes even more tenuous as alternative models of society are ever-present sources of change and tension.
6. To be sure, not all sociocultural evolution is a product of this, but some cases fit this model (Abrutyn, 2015c; Berman, 1983; Wilson, 2002).
7. For a more complete discussion on institutional projects, see Abrutyn and Van Ness (2015).
8. Again, the list of conditions is neither exhaustive nor meant to be. It is Eisenstadt's theory we are interested in, not a general theory of evolution.
9. This is not to say social and cultural change in other spheres has been completely unstudied, however. For some examples of mobilization in the economic sphere, see King and Pearce (2010), King and Soule (2007), and Soule (2009) and for religious change, see Zald and McCarthy (1987), Chaves (1997), and Wilde (2007).

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