

Editorial Foreword

WORK AND SOCIAL ROLES. The concept of social roles is deceptively easy to understand, but the roles themselves are difficult to define. Important because they persist, their persistence requires flexibility and looseness. Even the cultural norms that presumably support them need not be explicit. Social roles, in short, must be identified by patterns of behavior that can be extended, altered, or violated. Work roles, on the other hand, which arise out of precise tasks tied to tangible objects, are deceptively easy to define; but the question of how in any particular society they have come to be assigned eventually encounters many of the subtle complications associated with social roles. Benefiting from a clear point of attack, the analysis of work roles invites comparison as it moves from modes of production and formal organization to the larger methodological challenge. Three studies in this issue take up that challenge, meeting it in quite different ways. Paul Thompson concentrates on the special case of women's roles in fishing villages. Those communities, he argues, are sufficiently isolate (and therefore diverse) while similarly dependent upon the economic and natural environment (and therefore comparable) to constitute a kind of continuing social experiment. His approach permits unusually wide comparisons attentive to social context. The comparison of women's work (and see Guyer, *CSSH* 22:3, and Mintz, 13:3 on the economic roles of women in Africa; Scott and Tilly, 17:1, and Minge-Kalman, 20:4, on women and early industrialization in Europe) leads, through family and village life, beyond economic pressures to regional cultures and religion. Thompson finds great diversity but common explanatory patterns in the frequent absence of men, the forms of exploitation, and cultural traditions. Leslie Moch and Louise Tilly look at three cities in France, comparing them to each other as a means of sorting out the factors—the local economy, employer preferences, immigrant and native populations, and household composition—that largely determined who did what work. (On the relation of households to economic change, see Roberts on the Maraka textile industry, 26:2; Kuznesof on São Paulo, 22:1; and Sanjek on Adabraka, 24:1.) These are not isolated communities, and in the data studied here recent immigrants prove central to the creation of a hierarchy of work that leaves manufacturing in native hands (on the culture of French workers, compare Reddy and Sewell in 21:2). The difficulty of mobilizing workers across lines of status and skill is the issue Jeffrey Haydu encounters in asking how British and American workers came to concentrate on economic demands rather than on the control of work itself. He looks at heavy industry in Coventry and in Bristol, Connecticut, during World War I, a comparison precise enough to make the similarities of union tactics, management policy, and government

pressure all the more striking given larger differences (Keller's comparison of English and American politics, 22:3, provides that context; also see Remlinger, 2:3, on the legitimation of protest). For all their differences of style, concerns, methods, and evidence, each of these three essays in controlled comparison illuminates the multiple connections that reach from the organization of work to economy and culture and the social roles men and women accept.

BUREAUCRATS AND STATE BUILDING. In general terms no topic is more traditional, and currently none is more fashionable, than state building. The term is significant, directing attention to the state (with implications of structures, conflict, and power) rather than to the nation and to building as a process that is more deliberate than mere development. In that framework, bureaucracies are less likely to be assessed for their Weberian neutrality than as the advancing hoplites of the state. But states, we all know, can be very different; and Metin Heper suggests that we take the measure of those differences by looking at bureaucracies. How they recruit, what they do, and with what authority must reflect the history of a state's formation and express its relation to civil society. With that in mind, Heper proposes a model that seeks not only to capture these differences but to project from its early history the state's later form. In this effort he is after all in the grand tradition (although rather different in his approach to bureaucracy from Eisenstadt, 1:1; Armstrong, 14:1; or Markoff, 17:4). Richard Kraus and Reeve Vanneman, who do not attempt any particular model, have a more radical proposition: not only must bureaucracies and states be sharply distinguished, they may often have conflicting interests. Although they do not study any single state in depth, they provide enough suggestive instances to make one want to look again at individual cases (in *CSSH* that might include Akhavi on Iran, 25:2; Brennan on the Rampur State, 23:3; Carvalho on Brazil, 24:3; Samoff on Tanzania, 21:1; Smith on Egypt, 22:4; Tardanico on Mexico, 24:3; and de Vere Allen on Malaya, 12:2, among others).

DEVIANCE AND SOCIAL CONTROL. Mary Elizabeth Perry's sensitive discussion of the legalization of prostitution touches on themes of society and state that appear in all the articles in this issue. It has to do, of course, with views of women (and thus adds to many of the issues discussed by Ross and Rapp, 23:1), and with community, religion, and the economy. Its focus, like its evidence, comes from the application of the law (compare Rosen on the role of law in new societies, 20:1). Legal records are standard historical fodder. While addressing specific problems, laws state general principles; and their inconsistent enforcement can be as revealing as any witness. Recently, however, social historians have returned to legal history with new techniques and different questions. In discussing some of this work, Cynthia Herrup comments on the promise and the pitfalls inherent in sending scholars to court in search of society.