

# Editorial Foreword

**SYSTEMS OF CONSANGUINITY AND AFFINITY** Kinship, so prominent in the previous issue, returns in this. **Gillian Feeley-Harnik** reevaluates Lewis Henry Morgan and his works, seeing his pioneering anthropological kinship studies and his researches on the beaver as aspects of a unitary vision comprehending the landscape and its inhabitants. She proposes a “natural history of kinship,” the aim of which is to break out of the box which Durkheim built and David Schneider dismantled, in the critique of Morgan’s supposed biological notion of kinship: the impossible project of asserting that kinship is purely social, abstracting humans from their landscapes, their animal relatives, their bodies. She finds that Morgan’s ideas of relationships were more linguistic and social than physiological, but also entangled with a wide range of geological and zoological phenomena, earthy and watery. Understanding his work in his own terms, “his example may inspire us to search for new ways to integrate phenomenological, political-economic, and ecological analysis into the study of how people understand their life processes.”

**ISLAMIC INSTITUTIONS OF LEARNING** Muslim colleges of law (*madrasa*) and the endowments (*waqf*) that sustain them are salient points of entry through which to examine an exceptionally wide range of issues, as the next two essays show. (See also Dale F. Eickelman, “The art of memory: Islamic education and its social reproduction,” 20:485–516 [1978].)

**Said Amir Arjomand**, revising and extending the studies of George Makdisi on the early history of the madrasa, examines its later history in relation to civil society and social agency. In eastern Islam under the Seljuqs, civil society ceded social agency to the patrimonial state in the creation and endowment of madrasas. Following the Mongol invasions of the thirteenth century, two paths emerged: In eastern Islam (Il-Khanid, Timurid), civil society recovered some of its agency under the patronage of high officials, and the madrasas were not especially politicized; while in western Islam (Mamluk Egypt), the opposite was true and the endowment of madrasas was used by rulers as a lever for the control of patrician houses. Over the long run, the madrasa, which had arguably been the model for universities in the medieval West, failed to become an independent institution, not because of “Oriental despotism”—the author makes a vigorous case for the presence of legally constituted civil society in Islamic countries—but “the absence of the legal concept of corporation”.

**Muhammad Qasim Zaman** brings the story of the madrasa up to the present, examining its history in colonial and post-colonial South Asia. He finds that the defense and the reform of the madrasa has been intimately entwined with

arguments about the place of religion in Muslim society. The idea that religion occupies a distinct sphere is peculiarly modern for Muslims and was set in motion during British rule, leading to the separation of religious and secular schools. Defenders of the madrasa in contemporary Pakistan both embrace the idea of a distinct religious sphere, requiring schools for specialists, but also claim unlimited scope for Islamic religion. Though the ulama speak of the decline of religion, the number of students in madrasas in Pakistan has grown ninefold in the last thirty-five years.

**WORKERS OF THE WORLD** What Elizabeth Perry calls “the global popcorn effect”—the tendency of strikes and other forms of resistance to occur at the same time in distant places—is the subject of the next two essays. (Somewhat analogous is the work of Juan R.I. Cole on urban riots: “Of crowds and empires: Afro-Asian Riots and European expansion, 1857–1882,” 31:106–133 [1989].)

**Michael Torigian** explores the commonalities between the highly successful Paris factory occupations of 1936 and the Flint sit-down strike of 1937. These include the election of favorable governments (the Popular Front, the Roosevelt presidency, and Frank Murphey governorship) that held back the strikebreaking power of the state, the vulnerability of new mass production techniques to bottleneck stoppages, the invulnerability to scabs and goons of strikers inside an occupied factory. Once successful, though, the union leadership whose power it consolidated took a dim view of the sitdown strike and ceased to occupy the commanding heights of labor action immediately upon gaining them.

**Elizabeth J. Perry** examines the role of workers in major political agitations of twentieth-century Shanghai, in a wide-ranging essay that has many provocative things to say about the translational connections of strikes, the self-positioning of workers as citizens in these broad protest actions, and the comparative features of general strikes and strike waves. While the protests that were the milestones of the Republican period were carried out by workers and students combining together, under the Peoples Republic, labor action loses its student involvement and its broad social objectives.

**MAKING BORDERS** **Michael Biggs** contributes to the discussion of border-making as an art of modernity initiated by the likes of Benedict Anderson, J.B. Harley, Peter Sahlins, Thongchai Winichakul, and others. Modern cartography (especially cartographic boundary-making) and the modern state are mutually constituting and emerge, gradually, together. They replaced the unmapped and unflappable dynastic state and its welter of overlapping jurisdictions, enclaves and enclaves with “homogeneous and uniform space, demarcated by linear boundaries.”