

Editorial Foreword

The Grew Years. It is astonishing that CSSH, now entering its fortieth year, has had only two editors in its entire existence till now, our founder Sylvia Thrupp and Raymond Grew (with an assist from Eric Wolf for one year). Ray Grew's editorship was the longer, having begun with volume 16 in 1974. As he steps down and returns to the bosom of the Editorial Board against all entreaties to continue in the role he has performed so intelligently and with such grace for twenty-four years, we salute his editorship by dedicating this volume to him.

Forms of Property. Property is "good to think" as an analytic key to social forms, for while it appears to be concerned with the relations of persons to things, it is really concerned with the relations of persons to persons. Following the forms of property is as fruitful an analytic strategy today as it was when the social sciences were first being sketched out by Hobbes, Locke, Montesquieu, and Rousseau, as the first two essays ably illustrate.

Beshara Doumani shows how the endowment (*waqf*) has been used to shelter the family from the fragmenting effects of the Muslim law of inheritance. Endowments structure the family in two quite opposed ways in two nineteenth-century Arab cities of the Ottoman Empire, Tripoli and Nablus. One favored the progeny of both sexes against more distant agnates; the other promoted the solidarity of the agnatic lineage at the expense of the daughters. Differences of ecology and economy (urban agriculture of citrus groves versus trading firms based on lineages) yield differences in kinship and gender relations. The author's nifty grid of basic patterns for designating beneficiaries in family endowments, from most to least egalitarian, will have wide applicability where Muslim law obtains. (Of related interest in CSSH: Jack Goody, "Strategies of Heirship" (1973) 15:3–20; David S. Powers, "Orientalism, Colonialism, and Legal History: The Attack on Muslim Family Endowments in Algeria and India" (1989) 31:535–571; and Caroline B. Brettell, "Kinship and Contract: Property Transmission and Family Relations in Northwestern Portugal" (1991) 33:443–465.)

David Guillet focuses not on the family but the irrigation authority (*presa*) of a particular region in Spain. The study of water rights provides access to this local institution with legal powers that provide less costly and more intelligent mechanisms for the reconciliation of rights and interests than state institutions can through the courts. This essay has the ambition of marrying two approaches in legal studies, the law-and-economics and the law-and-society movements.

Forms of Resistance. Two essays study forms of resistance to more powerful forces, economic and political. In both cases collective action involves newer, larger solidarities formed out of smaller ones.

Keith Breckenridge employs Habermass's concept of the public sphere to capture the way in which mineworkers in South Africa contributed through mass political

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meetings to the formation of a racial and nationalist identity that encompassed vast distances and many ethnic and linguistic divisions. For a time, the reasoned critique of power and articulation of grievances by South African mineworkers had a power of its own whose history the author rescues from the oblivion into which it has been thrown by the tendency to cast the earlier period as a prelude to apartheid. (Compare E. Valentine Daniel, "Tea Talk: Violent Measures in the Discursive Practice of Sri Lanka's Estate Tamils" (1993) 35:568–600.)

David Cleary is concerned with a similar rescue operation on another continent. To understand the Cabanagem, a bloody civil war that gripped northern Brazil in the early nineteenth century, he believes, one must understand the formation of a detribalized free Indian population in the period following the expulsion, in 1757, of the Jesuits and their Indian missions. The revolt of the *cabanos* (those living in huts, mostly Indians but including African slaves) was widely viewed as an anti-white movement by those who put it down. Racialized means of repression followed in its wake. Descent-based views of race gave way to conceptions founded in bodily signs. (For another treatment of the intersection of colonialism and ethnicity, see Ann Laura Stoler, "Rethinking Colonial Categories: European Communities in Sumatra and the Boundaries of Rule" (1989) 31:134–161.)

Explanation in the Social Sciences. The final two essays address problems of explanation. One of them is directed to an historical event, the Iranian revolution; the other, a philosophical inquiry into the kinds of explanatory differences that simmer beneath the surface of the sociological writing.

Asaf Bayat asks why it is that Iran had an Islamic revolution. He seeks to show that the answers hitherto given are too facile by setting up a comparison with Egypt to examine why this poorer, politically more open state, with a stronger Islamic movement, went in a reformist rather than a revolutionary direction. Comparison in this case serves to deepen the answer by deepening the problem. (Also on the Iranian revolution: Shahrough Akhavi, "The Ideology and Praxis of Shi'ism in the Iranian Revolution" (1983) 25:195–221; and by way of further comparison, see Subrata Kumar Mitra, "Desecularising the State: Religion and Politics in India after Independence" (1991) 33:755–777.)

George Steinmetz wants to flush out into the open a conflict between extremes of constructivism (or, postmodernism) and positivism (or, modernism) in the social sciences and to identify an intermediate space for "critical realism," expanding on the position of philosopher of science Roy Bhaskar. The natural sciences and social sciences both presume the real existence of its objects of study independent of the observer, but there is the profound difference of the "concept-dependency of social life," the self-consciousness of human agents in their actions. Corresponding to the ontological difference is an epistemological one, rendering (among other things) true experimentation impossible in the social sciences and heightening the advantage of historical sociology over other approaches.