

# Editorial Foreword

*The Migration of Gendered Categories.* The topic seems at first straight forward: the prominence of poorly paid immigrant women in the garment industries of Paris and New York. As Nancy Green points out, however, multiple explanations have been offered, each credible and even satisfactory in itself, for the lot of these women who labored in shop and home. Combining her own research with some of the most fruitful findings of current social science, she works through arguments about women's work and gendered familiarity with the needle (in *CSSH*, see also Bandettini, in 2:3; Scott and Tilly, 17:1; Parr, 30:3; Jordan, 31:2; and McMurray, 34:2) ethnic affinities for certain kinds of work, the economy of immigrant families (see Cohen, 27:4; Morawska, 31:2), and segmented labor markets (compare Lockman, 35:3). Her analytic comparison establishes the limits of interpretations based in a single field of study while dispatching residual hints about female dexterity or the cultural predispositions of Jews and Italians. Instead, putting these explanations together and attending to changes over time, she emphasizes the special nature of the garment trade itself (note Simmons and Kalantaridis, 36:4) and for remembering the shifting meanings of socially constructed categories. Jeane DeLaney focuses on a single gendered category, the Argentinian gaucho, whose stereotypical qualities were once understood as signs of backwardness and ignorance but came to be interpreted as manly manifestations of Argentinian national character (compare Klein, 34:3). DeLaney shows that these changing constructions were intellectual and social responses to immigration that reflected a rising distaste for modernity, the decline of a certain kind of liberalism (strong from independence, see Felsteiner, 25:1, to the end of the century, see Needell, 37:3), and a redefined nationalism (compare Smith, 37:4, Østergård, 34:1, Greenfeld, 32:3). In Buenos Aires, as in Paris and New York, a common response to immigration was to repack the old identity kit.

*Techniques of Social Control.* Breaking away from familiar typologies of state making and bureaucracy, Karen Barkey identifies an unexpected resource in the Ottoman state (see also Mardin, 11:3; Keddie, 26:4; Deringil, 35:1): its use of time. Differing cycles of appointment, each interrupted with increasing frequency, kept agents of local power from combining against the state or forming effective local ties. The state, drawing on multiple traditions, discovered in these rotations—moving administrators, judges, and militia in and out of authority and from place to place—a way to forefend against the political combinations latent in the collective experience of landed interests, Islamic courts, peasant unrest, and mercenary armies. Behind the exploitation, cor-

ruption, and banditry emphasized by Western observers lay a technique of power that helps explain the Ottoman state's longevity. George Vincentnathan also combats Orientalist perceptions in his account of contemporary lower-caste conflict in an Indian village (consider Kumar, 4:3; Freitag, 22:4; Yang, 22:4). Communal violence operates as a local form of social control in response to another form, the state's effort at increasing equality through affirmative action (note Jayawardena, 10:4). The story, revealing and tragic, is rife with troubling implications for much of the modern world.

*Family Trees.* These are studies of two very different societies, each of which uses detailed and technical knowledge to discover the ways in which metaphors of family trees were acted out over space and time. One starts from the trees themselves and goes on to the social landscape, the other begins from the instability of a European princely lineage and moves on to the shifting sources of political legitimacy (see de Battaglia, 5:1; Lindholm, 28:2). As essays about inheritance, custom and power, both come to emphasize the effect of symbols, adaptable yet enduring, in establishing general values. Nancy Peluso's is an affectionate account of the meaning of trees in Borneo, of how they are planted and named and honored as symbols of life and of generations (on forest ecology, see Grove, 35:2; and Sivaramakrishnan, 37:1; on other societies close to their environment: Thompson, 27:1; Wylie, 35:2; and van Ginkel, 38:2). Through rules of widening descent, complex practices of inheritance spread the ownership of these trees, and custom dictates how their fruit is shared. That adaptable system, which tied people to each other and to the land, is increasingly at odds with the intrusions of rubber trees and rice, with government reforestation programs, and with modern markets. In Italy, too, families were described in terms of roots and vines and trees, although Renaissance princes are remembered more for Machiavellian calculations. There, the environment that mattered most was one of ruthless politics; yet Jane Bestor's achievement is to show that the Este, one of the most famous of ruling families, although most remembered for merciless skill and high culture, developed an extraordinary system of succession (for other solutions in other societies, compare Dixon, 33:1; Khazanov, 35:3; Gulbrandsen, 37:3). Sensitive to symbol as well as self-interest, that system sustained a shifting conception of legitimacy. Solutions to the problem of succession, however bizarre, were justified in terms of general values; and those values in turn were gradually codified within the political culture. A study thus identifies a significant process applicable elsewhere, while explaining how, after centuries of success with carefully selected bastards, the dynasty resorted to legitimate primogeniture.