history, or, as Taylor phrases it, put more history into it. It is our hope that, by strengthening the analytical tools of social history, by continuously enlarging its field of vision, and by pursuing the search for causes and connections, a new creative synthesis will be written.

NOTES

1. Jacques Le Goff and Pierre Nora, eds. *Faire de l'histoire*, 3 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1974), 1:xi.
2. Claude Lévi-Strauss, "Histoire et ethnologie," *Annales: Economies, sociétés, civilisations* 38 (Novembre–Décembre 1983): 1231; initially delivered at the fifth Conférence Marc Bloch of the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales.
3. Lawrence Stone, "The Revival of Narrative: Reflexions on a New Old History," *Past and Present*, no. 85 (November 1979): 3–24.
4. François Furet, *L'atelier de l'histoire* (Paris: Flammarion, 1982), 29; trans. as *In the Workshop of History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).
5. Eric R. Wolf, *Europe and the People without History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

CHAPTER 1

RETRIEVING EUROPEAN LIVES

BY CHARLES TILLY

Why Go Back?

How did Europeans live the big changes? In different European regions and eras, what were the connections—cause, effect, or correlation—between very large structural changes such as the growth of national states and the development of capitalism, on the one hand, and the changing experiences of ordinary people, on the other? The complex second question merely amplifies the first. In its muted or its amplified form, this question defines the central mission of European social history.

Many experts think otherwise. Despite appearances, in the first place, my definition is rather modest. For social historians incline to imperial definitions of their field. In the preface to his enormously popular *English Social History*, G. M. Trevelyan offered one of the best-remembered definitions. "Social history," he declared, "might be defined negatively as the history of a people with the politics left out." Trevelyan argued for a three-layered analysis: Economic conditions underlie the social scene, which in turn provides the foundation for political events. "Without social history," he continued, "economic history is barren and political history is unintelligible."[1]

Perhaps because Trevelyan defined his social history negatively, latter-day practitioners of the art have commonly announced more

I am grateful to audiences at Keene State College and at the University of Virginia for raising questions concerning oral presentations of parts of this text and to the contributors to this volume for their vigorous criticism.

positive programs. But those programs have been equally massive. Social history "might be defined," comments Peter Burke, "as the history of social relationships; the history of the social structure; the history of everyday life; the history of private life; the history of social solidarities and social conflicts; the history of social classes; the history of social groups 'seen both as separate and as mutually dependent units.' These definitions are very far from being synonymous; each corresponds to a different approach, with its advantages and disadvantages."[2] Some group of scholars has opted for each of these approaches, and others still.

Yet most of these definitions of social history make hopelessly ambitious claims. The "history of social relationships," for example, encompasses almost any subject any ordinary historian might claim to study, plus a great deal more. After all, politics, diplomacy, war, economics, and important parts of cultural production consist of social relationships. What is more, social relationships extend throughout the domains of the social sciences and into the study of other animals than *homo sapiens*.

To the extent that people who define social history as the history of social relationships mean what they say, they are claiming an empire. In the Netherlands today, a number of social historians attach themselves to a discipline called *Maatschappijgeschiedenis*: the history of society. Dutch imperialism is apparently alive after all; the very name declares an exceedingly ambitious program. (Dutch historians have not gone to sea alone, however; some German historians similarly aim to build a *Gesellschaftsgeschichte*, while their French neighbors escalate with a claim to *histoire totale*.) Taken seriously, an effort to construct a full history of "society" will surely destroy itself.

To be sure, two competing meanings of the word "history" confuse the issue. On the one hand, we have history as the connection of experiences in time; on the other, history as the analysis of that connection. In the first sense, social relationships certainly have a history; they have connections over time. In the second sense, however, it is not humanly possible to construct a coherent analysis of the history of all social relationships; the object of study is simply too complex, diverse, and big.

Social history has other less ambitious versions as well. Some social historians try to supply deeper explanations of major political events, institutions, movements, or changes than straightforward political history ordinarily provides. They want to place politics in its social context. Others hope to recapture an ethos, an outlook, a rhythm of everyday life in much the manner that a professional traveler portrays exotic climes and peoples. They give us sketches of an age, of a city, of a social class. Still others rake the coals of the past for evidence bearing on present-oriented theories: theories of fertility decline, of capital accumulation, of authoritarianism. They then produce studies that differ little in texture from contemporary analyses of the same phenomena.

All of these efforts qualify as social history. All of them, at times, produce outstanding work: Richard Trexler's fresh interpretation of public life in Renaissance Florence uses social history deftly to give meaning to well-known political events.[3] Our understanding of European social life would be the poorer without Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie's *Montaillou*, an essentially ethnographic account of a fourteenth-century Pyrenean village.[4] Ron J. Lesthaeghe's analysis of fertility decline in nineteenth-century Belgium provides a telling empirical critique of standard notions about the transition from high to low fertility.[5] Social historians can claim these accomplishments proudly. Nevertheless, a social history composed entirely of studies like those of Trexler, Le Roy Ladurie, and Lesthaeghe, for all its scintillation, would lack a common core. What makes social history a coherent field of inquiry?

As a distinct enterprise, social history grew up in opposition to political history, defined in terms of statecraft and national politics. In France, for example, the *Annales* of Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre (inspired to some extent by Emile Durkheim's program for a regal sociology and François Simiand's search for suprahistorical rhythms to account for the ebb and flow of historical experience) called for a global history that would surpass and explain mere events.[6]

In England, likewise, Marxists and other materialists sought to construct histories resting firmly on changing modes of production and corresponding shifts in popular life; well before World War II, the works of Sidney and Beatrice Webb, of J. L. and Barbara Hammond, and of R. H. Tawney exemplified the contributions of English radicals to social history.[7] In Germany, Max Weber and his followers typified the effort to place the history of European states in a broad context of social experience.[8]

Although all these enterprises (not to mention their counterparts elsewhere in Europe) formed in opposition to narrow political history, each of them implies a somewhat different alternative: global

history, the history of material life, the comparative study of societies, and so on. What is more, social history branches into a set of specialties, each typically concerned with a particular social structure or process: family history, urban history, agricultural history, demographic history, the history of crime and punishment, the history of social movements, and many more. The field as a whole also overlaps with other long-established specialties, such as labor history and economic history.

Finally, the negation of existing political histories frequently engages social historians of a given country in the acceptance of the prevailing questions concerning that country, and in battling on behalf of a competitor to the prevailing answers. Thus, as Jürgen Kocka points out, German social historians find it difficult to escape a compelling pair of questions: Why did the Social Democrats fail? Why did the Nazis come to power?[9] Similarly, social historians of Russia, both inside and outside the Soviet Union, have invested a large share of their effort in studying the background of 1917's revolution. Ronald Suny reported that at a meeting of American specialists in Russian labor history:

> Some dissatisfaction was expressed by those who remained convinced that "real" social history was not well served by the concern with politics and consciousness. Indeed Russian labor history has not had many practitioners interested exclusively in issues such as family patterns, fertility, and daily life; rather the brevity of the period 1870–1917 in which the Russian working class emerged and the volatility of its engagement in political life have encouraged its historians to deal with the points of contact between workers, intellectuals, managers, capitalists, and state officials.[10]

In Germany, Russia, and other countries the hope of explaining major political events, movements, or transformations animates a significant part of social historians' work. As a result, to some extent each country has its own branch and brand of social history.

A Program for European Social History

As actually practiced, then, European social history includes a wide range of enterprises, not all of them consistent with each other. Its boundaries are unclear. European social history resembles a strong-poled magnetic field: Most of the work that has a clear rationale pivots around a single core. European social history's central activity, as I see it, concerns reconstructing ordinary people's experience of large structural changes.

The statement has a descriptive side and a normative side. As a matter of description, the search for links between small-scale experience and large-scale processes informs a large share of all the work European social historians actually do. As a matter of prescription, that linkage identifies the one enterprise to which all the others connect, the one enterprise to which social historians have the greatest opportunity to enrich our understanding of social life. Neither the effort to construct "social" explanations of major political events, the attempt to portray a full round of life, nor the search for past evidence bearing on present-day social-scientific theories—for all their obvious value—motivate the sustained, cumulative, and partly autonomous inquiry entailed by asking how people lived the big changes. That inquiry, the central quest of European social history, will occupy most of this essay.

Need I say that this program is controversial? Readers of David Cohen's splendid chapter on African social history, elsewhere in this very book, will find him skeptical of proposals to organize studies of that continent's past around large structural changes, for fear of imposing simple, alien categories on a complex experience. Among European historians, a vocal minority reject the entire program as not merely useless, but dangerous. The English historian of France, Tony Judt, for example, has called the sort of social history I am advocating a repellent imposter, a "clown in regal purple."[11] Others tolerate the clown's existence, but prefer more modest attempts to reconstruct one corner or another of social life. The proposal to organize social history around big changes and their correlates in routine social life (even if it does, as I claim, describe what the majority of European social historians are already doing) will certainly stir up dissent among the professionals.

Which big changes deserve attention? Taken back to the ages we can reach only through archeology and extended to the continent's outermost limits, European social history's "big changes" include the rise and fall of the Roman Empire, the creation of a vast Christian church, the growth of Islamic empires around the Mediterranean, the seafaring of the Normans, the repeated armed invasions from Central Asia,

the shift of trade and civilization from the Mediterranean toward the Atlantic, and much more. These changes will figure little, or not at all, in my survey, and I will concentrate on Western, Central, and Northern Europe since about 1500.

Two great circumstances distinguish that block of European life from life anywhere at any other time: (1) the exceptional power of the distinctive organizations we call national states and (2) the prevalence of work for wages under conditions of expropriation. Throughout the world, principalities and empires have risen and fallen throughout the world for seven millennia. But national states—large, specialized, centralized organizations exercising monopolistic control over the principal concentrated means of coercion within sharply bounded territories—only became the dominant European structures after 1500. Again, many forms of forced labor on means of production not belonging to workers have arisen through the same seven millennia, but the combination of formally free wage labor and concentrated, expropriated means of production marks off from all others the capitalist era since 1500 or so.

To be sure, a number of other characteristics also distinguish our era from all others: the complexity of technology, the wide use of inanimate sources of energy, the threat of nuclear war, the proliferation and power of huge organizations, the speed of communication, the prevalence of high life expectancy and still other markers of modern times. Statemaking and the development of capitalism count as more profound changes than the emergence of these other conditions on two grounds:

1. To the extent that we can distinguish them, the formation of national states and the development of capitalism touched the lives of ordinary people more directly and deeply than the other changes on the list. In terms of the allocation of activities among hours in the day, for example, the expansion of salaried, scheduled work in factories and offices far from home—a direct consequence of the development of capitalism—made more difference than any other change. Via conscription, taxation, registration, surveillance, the institution of elections, and the organization of social services, similarly, national states reached directly into the daily lives of ordinary people.
2. Broadly speaking, the development of capitalism and the formation of national states underlay all the other changes. The makers of states, for example, created the largest, most powerful organizations of all, and determinedly pushed toward more and more deadly means of destruction. Although all such influences are mutual, the development of capitalism likewise promoted high-energy production and large organizations rather more strongly and directly than those two phenomena promoted capitalism.

Modern European social history has no reason to neglect complex technologies, the shift to inanimate sources of energy, and other great changes. But capitalism and statemaking provide its largest frame. The unifying, motivating task of European social history since about 1500 is this: connecting the changing experiences of ordinary people to the development of capitalism and the formation of national states.

Bad Ideas

In order to discover the connections between the experiences of ordinary Europeans and the big changes—especially the formation of national states and the development of capitalism—social historians have to fight their way past plausible but bad ideas about social change. The strongest of these bad ideas originated in the very encounters of nineteenth-century European observers with the big changes. As European burghers, aristocrats, and intellectuals faced the facts of a growing proletariat, of vast, unhealthy industrial cities, of concentrating capital, labor, and population, of militant popular movements, they fashioned for themselves a set of mistaken analyses of what they saw.

The central arguments run roughly as follows: Under normal circumstances the world divides up into distinct, coherent societies each having its own unifying beliefs and institutions. Those societies remain coherent through a balance between the extent of their differentiation and the strength of their integrating beliefs and institutions. Social change generally proceeds through increasing differentiation. When differentiation occurs slowly and evenly, it leads to social advancement. But when it becomes rapid and irregular, change exceeds the integrative capacity of existing beliefs and institutions.

That gap, according to the standard argument, causes trouble. As

a result of declining integration—detachment of people from unifying beliefs, weakened ability of institutions to control their members, and so on—disorder spreads. Disorder ranges from individual pathology and crime to collective conflict. In the face of rapid differentiation, at the extreme, drastically declining integration produces revolution. But normally a society faced with social change develops new beliefs and reformed integrating institutions; after a period of disorder associated with excessively rapid social change, a new equilibrium between differentiation and integration comes into being.

In commonsense forms, these ideas became the bases of standard nineteenth-century bourgeois discussions of the problems of cities, of crime, of the poor, of popular rebellion. Refined, abstracted, and attached to regularized observations, they formed the backbones of multiple sociologies and programs of social reform. They also provided a major basis for social historians' interpretations of nineteenth- and twentieth-century social change.

These ideas are seductive. They are widely held. Yet they are wrong. They are bad ideas, both because they rest on a series of unfortunate fictions and because they contain empirical propositions that fail to fit reality. The fictions include the notion of distinct, coherent, integrated societies, the supposition of integrating institutions and ideas, the postulation of a general process of change through differentiation. These fictions are unfortunate because they encourage explanations of social phenomena in terms of the functioning—or malfunctioning—of the fictitious systems, which are no explanations at all.

The empirically incorrect propositions include the assertion that a rapid pace of social change promotes more disorder than a slow pace of change, the thought that collective conflict and individual pathology spring from similar causes, the expectation that drastically declining commitment to existing beliefs and institutions causes revolutions. By now, we have strong evidence that these propositions are simply wrong.[12]

Although some social historians still hold bad nineteenth-century ideas, cumulative empirical critique via the actual practice of social history has little by little destroyed their credibility. No single alternative has supplanted them. Yet on the whole today's European social historians lean toward organizational realism: toward the idea that states, corporations, families, associations, parties, plus a great many

other groups exist and act, but that "societies" are at best convenient fictions.

Organizational realism sometimes aligns social historians with Karl Marx's historical materialism, sometimes with Max Weber's structural idealism, sometimes with John Stuart Mill's rationalistic individualism, sometimes with other major traditions of social thought, and sometimes with a sort of eclectic pragmatism. In the last case, the social historians involved usually lack a coherent scheme, and content themselves with partial theories about particular kinds of organizations or with agnostic descriptions of social situations. Despite the loss of a certain unity, however, European social historians are better off for having abandoned the basic nineteenth-century scheme.

Social History Forms and Reforms

Although the distinctive enterprise of European social history reaches back into the nineteenth century, it began flourishing as never before following World War II. One sign is the set of historical publications featuring social history. While such journals as *Past and Present*, *Quaderni Storici*, *Annales: Economies, sociétés, civilisations*, and *Comparative Studies in Society and History* frequently printed social history, others made it their main business: *Social History*, the *Journal of Social History*, *History Workshop*, the *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, *Passato e Presente*, *Società e Storia*, *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* stood beside more specialized journals such as *Annales de Démographie Historique*, the *Journal of Family History*, or the *Journal of Urban History*. Learned societies, conferences, courses, collective volumes, handbooks, and critical essays likewise proliferated. More important, European historians trained their sights on a wide range of social experience, especially concerning the period since 1700.

The flourishing of social history did not merely add another specialty to the European historian's division of labor. It also expanded the range of an attitude that had been rare in previous histories: a belief that within limits ordinary people make their own history. Of course, as a preface to more serious matters the chapter or book concerning popular customs and daily life dates back to the Greeks. To be sure, romantics such as Jules Michelet had long since written history as the work of an abstract People, and Marxist historians such

as Jean Jaurès had portrayed the working class as a major historical actor. Nevertheless the effort to retrieve past experience by reconstructing the lives of ordinary people and connecting them to great structures, crises, and changes came into its own with European social history following World War II.

One name for the program was "history from below." As practiced by E. J. Hobsbawm, George Rudé, and many others, history from below took up crucial historical events by building up portraits—individual and collective—of their rank-and-file participants.[13] It argued the meaning of those events, at least in part, as a function of the characteristics of their participants. George Rudé's *Crowd in the French Revolution*, for example, examined a series of Parisian events before and during the Revolution of 1789–1799: the struggles over food in 1775, the popular opposition to the government in the fall of 1788, the attacks on manufacturers Reveillon and Henriot in April 1789, the search for arms that preceded the invasion of the Bastille in July 1789, and so on.

In each case, Rudé assembled such biographical material as he could from arrest records and similar documents; he then used detailed accounts of the action to establish its sequence, direction, geography, and rationale. Rudé sought to make revolutionary crowds coherent, meaningful historical actors by actual reconstruction of their membership and action rather than by assigning them *a priori* some grand (or diabolical) historical role.

In one version or another, that sort of populism inspired a whole generation of European social historians. Temma Kaplan, for example, treats the politics of Andalusia's little people seriously. She roots Andalusian anarchism in the nineteenth-century experience of artisans and proletarian winegrowers who faced an alliance of large landowners and merchants with a corrupt state.[14] For Kaplan, the moves of rural people elsewhere in Europe toward collectivist and capitalist solutions serve as implicit markers of alternative roads from the nineteenth century.

Rainer Wirtz's treatment of nineteenth-century German conflicts likewise illustrates the populism of social historians.[15] Attempting to construct a contemporaneous analysis of "violent social protest" in Baden from 1815 to 1848, Wirtz seizes on E. P. Thompson's metaphor of a *field of force* defining the relations among classes. Describing 101 incidents over those years, Wirtz works out from the events to questions about their social setting. He makes a plausible case that

1848 marked the disintegration of a whole system of rights, understandings, and class relations, a "moral economy" giving poor people claims on the powerful.

By no means all populist social historians share the broadly Marxist interpretations of Rudé, Kaplan, and Wirtz. John Brewer, for example, vividly portrays the eighteenth-century mock election at Garrat, a village south of London. "The mock elections," he reports, "were boisterous and exuberant, like a carnival. Drink flowed freely, there was dancing and music in the streets, men and women accompanied the ludicrous candidates dressed as zanies or merry andrews . . . or in their best holiday finery."[16]

During the 1760s, Brewer notes, the long-established mock election became the object of struggle, in the press and on the stage as well as in Garrat's streets, between radicals and their opponents. A London theatrical presentation of the ceremony attracted national attention, and drew thousands to the village each year. But its following declined radically in the 1790s.

Brewer uses his well-told tale to make three points: (1) that eighteenth-century popular politics did not merely have a theatrical side; to an important degree it *was* theater; its dramatic discourse united plebeians and powers; (2) that nevertheless the attempt of radicals to appropriate political theater to a national cause exposed them to their opponents, who could easily evoke the elite contempt and fear stirred by the identification of the cause with riotous popular festivals; (3) that in the age of the French Revolution, the sober radical search for respectability encouraged activists to turn away from suggestions of irresponsible spontaneity and debauch; political theater therefore declined. Brewer makes these points persuasively. He makes them by appealing implicitly to his readers' understanding of what came before and after: "The Garrat election therefore represents both a particular moment in the history of English radicalism, and a particular phase in the development of class relations in eighteenth-century England."[17]

Social historians in Brewer's vein reject Rudé's framework of class conflict. But they tend to agree with Rudé in (1) resisting the reduction of popular collective action to a faceless, irrational crowd and (2) seeking the secret of that action by means of close study of real participants and their actual behavior. Essentially similar attitudes—rejection of condescending attributions of irrationality, insistence on the direct study of everyday participants—characterize a wide range

of social history: Family history, demographic history, urban history, and many other histories have taken on a populist cast.

Collective Biography and Systematic Comparison

One general procedure became the emblem of all these social histories: collective biography. Collective biography consists of the assembly of comparable files concerning the lives of many individuals, followed by the regrouping of those files into a collective portrait of the population involved. Rudé's tallying of arrest lists for distributions of ages, occupations, and geographic origins illustrates collective biography at its simplest. The obvious next step is to search out further information concerning the individuals identified by the arrest list in other sources: censuses, parish registers, and so on. Full-fledged collective biography usually involves compiling biographical information on many individuals systematically from more than one source.[18]

The most comprehensive and successful uses of collective biography have appeared in historical demography. There, historians have painstakingly abstracted individual parish registrations of births, deaths, and marriages (more exactly, of baptisms, burials, and weddings) into skeletal family histories, and thence into estimates of fertility, mortality, and nuptiality for whole populations—local, regional, or even national.[19]

Historical demographers have moved from individual vital events to aggregate population dynamics over two different paths: via *families* and via *localities*. On one side, they have grouped observations by family, concentrated their attention on those families that lived out their lives (and therefore their demographic histories) within the locality under study, and aggregated information on the women who had completed their childbearing into estimates for the population as a whole. This is the painstaking method of "family reconstitution."

Family reconstitution has disadvantages: It excludes mobile families and is enormously time-consuming. Its advantages, however, are to be extremely precise within the population it covers and to permit close comparisons among different types of individuals. Thus, examining the population of Caen from 1740 to 1789, Jean-Claude Perrot establishes that (despite very low illegitimacy and infrequent pre-nuptial conception) Protestants averaged higher fertility than Catholics. That was due, he goes on to show, not to the large size of Protestant families, but mainly to the fact that the married Catholics of Caen went completely childless more often than their Protestant neighbors.[20] Reconstituting families of nearby Rouen from 1670 to 1789, Jean-Pierre Bardet shows that completed family size declined in all social classes, but that notables led the way with a drop from 7.2 live births per married woman from 1670 to 1699 to 4.1 live births from 1760 to 1789.[21] The findings on Rouen and Caen help us understand how their province of Normandy became one of Europe's earliest regions of long-term definitive fertility decline. Painstaking family reconstitution made such findings possible.

On the other side, demographic historians sometimes bypass the family to accumulate observations of births, deaths, and marriages for whole communities. Then typically the series yield annual rates, while characteristics of communities—rich or poor, agricultural or industrial, and so on—substitute for variation in household characteristics. The most salient disadvantages of this aggregative method stem from the uncertain relationship between the vital events and the population at risk; with no change in behavior patterns, for example, the selective out-migration of young people tends by itself to depress the birth rate.

The advantages of aggregative methods are their relative efficiency and their sensitivity to year-to-year changes. Thus in their massive analysis of England's population history from 1541 to 1871, E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield aggregate births, deaths, and marriages from 404 Anglican parish registers, then correct and augment those series for internal bias, various forms of under-registration, and the absence of non-Anglicans.[22] (They also check some of their estimates against results of a dozen English family reconstitutions.) They are then able to show, among a great many other things, that English marital fertility actually rose during the eighteenth century, that fluctuations in marriage played a very important part in annual fertility fluctuations, and that marriage rates themselves responded strongly to changes in wage levels; rising wage levels encouraged more people to marry young. Malthus's Positive Check—the rise in death rates when population overran subsistences—had much less effect than most people have believed. Collective biography took Wrigley and Schofield through dry-as-dust technical procedures to the dynamics of marriage and birth.

Essentially the same procedures yield estimates of occupational

mobility, of the social composition of political movements, or of the distribution of wealth. In studying the laboring classes of Renaissance Florence, for example, Samuel Kline Cohn, Jr., reconstructed workers' and patricians' networks of personal association from baptismal registers and marriage contracts, then integrated the results with evidence from criminal prosecutions to reveal the activation of citywide coalitions of workers in the time of the Ciompi insurrections (1342–1383).[23] In quite a different vein, Kristian Hvidt transcribed from police registers the characteristics of 172,000 Danes who emigrated from 1868 to 1900; his analysis demonstrated, among other things, the intimate interdependence of rural-urban migration *within* Denmark and the great flight to America. In essence, regional and transatlantic migration formed a single system.[24]

Although in these cases the units observed are most often single individuals, collective biography sometimes deals with households, firms, properties, even events. John Bohstedt, for example, based his study of community politics in England and Wales from 1790 to 1810 on a catalog of 617 events found according to a standard definition in the *Annual Register*, two newspapers, and the general domestic correspondence of the Home Office.[25] The logic is the same as in collective biography of individuals: comparable observations on multiple units compounded into systematic collective accounts of unity and variation.

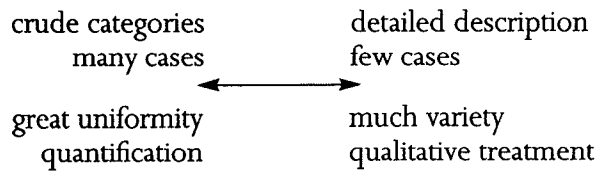
How systematic, however, is a question that has divided European social historians. The beauty of collective biography, in principle, is that it permits its practitioners to retain all the idiosyncrasy of personal experience while identifying uniformities and variations across many personal experiences. In practice, the beauty fades somewhat; the simplification required to identify uniformities and variations—for example, Rudé's reduction of the many occupations of arrested persons to a limited number of categories, or Wirtz's grouping of Baden's manifold violent incidents into a handful of types—often suppresses particularity. If the historian has many instances to examine, he or she is likely to adopt a crude simplification: hand tallying into two or three categories at the extreme, punches in cards representing choices among nine or ten mutually exclusive categories as a slightly more refined version of the tallying procedure.

At the other extreme, some European social historians have abandoned the search for common properties and systematic variations in favor of the loving reconstruction of exemplary individual lives.

An outstanding example is the English historian of France, Richard Cobb.[26] Cobb's early work fell into the sort of collective biography inspired by the great French revolutionary historian Georges Lefebvre; while George Rudé examined revolutionary crowds, while Albert Soboul and others did collective biographies of *sans-culottes*, Cobb studied the volunteer revolutionary armies that played such an important part in mobilizing young men to the revolutionary cause and in enforcing the decisions of revolutionary activists. As compared with Soboul, Rudé, and many other students of revolutionary activists, Cobb never showed much enthusiasm for taxonomies or statistics. Nevertheless, his studies of army units did catalog the officers and describe the men in great detail, characterizing both their origins and their behavior.

Then Cobb moved increasingly toward the portrayal of single individuals who illustrated some principle of revolutionary action, or who simply lived interesting lives. He came to disapprove of the approaches of Soboul and Rudé. Speaking of Colin Lucas's remarkable work, Cobb commented that Lucas "has proposed collective definitions and groupings that are far more sophisticated than the crude jumble sale of Soboul's *mouvement de masse* or Rudé's wearisomely repetitive *Crowd* (always 'tending' to do something or other, spending all its time 'tending,' whether to riot on a Monday, or to get drunk in a wine-shop, or to destroy a threshing machine if it did not like a threshing machine, or to riot on or near a market, if there were a market day, or on or near a grain port, if there were a lot of grain coming through.)"[27] Instead, Cobb took up portrayals of individuals suffering or profiting at the Revolution's margins. Cobb's scintillating portraits led the way out of collective biography.

In principle, with great effort, a social historian can both retain individuality and deal with uniformity or systematic variation; all it takes is a refined recording system and a way of relating well-described individuals to the distribution of all individuals. Few have had the patience, the expertise, or the resources to build such a system. In practice, European social historians have commonly stationed themselves somewhere along this continuum:



Having chosen a position on the continuum for a particular analysis, they have stuck to it. As compared to George Rudé's, John Brewer's studies of popular politics generally take up the detailed qualitative description of a few cases varying considerably from each other.

An unnecessary but understandable division arose among people who had chosen different positions on the continuum—broadly, a division between "collectivists" and "individualists." Collectivists tended to group many cases into crude categories, attempting to examine uniformities among their cases by quantitative means. Individualists tended to provide detailed descriptions of a few cases, stressing their variety via qualitative comparison. With the incessant creation of new specialties, whole subjects clustered near a single point on the continuum. The study of the adoption of new technologies, for example, came to concentrate near the "collectivist" end of the range, while the attempt to do psychohistory, to use contemporary psychological categories to label and explain historical actions, settled near the "individualist" end of the range.

The German program of studying *Alltagsleben*, everyday life, illustrates the division. Criticizing Hans-Ulrich Wehler, Alf Lüdtke complains of the view that "everyday life is almost necessarily marked by its distance from the forces and battlefields of the historical process; everyday life comes to signify merely the 'private' sphere."[28] Lüdtke sees that segregation and relegation of everyday life as a correlate of overzealous quantification. "Rigorous statistics of production, consumption, and life chances," he counters, "only become meaningful together with a qualitative account of the various modes of production and of the nature of the social relations of production."[29] The special feature of the analysis of everyday life, as he sees it, is "its attempt to expose the contradictions and discontinuities of both the modes and relations of production, in the context of the life-style of those affected; to make these evident and to explain them."[30]

Lüdtke illustrates the counterprogram with his study of work breaks in German factories at the end of the nineteenth century. The analysis itself falls clearly at the "individualist" end of the continuum. Lüdtke distinguishes between the breaks built into the schedule as a consequence of worker/boss struggles, and those breaks workers took illegally, at their own initiative:

> The permitted breaks served mainly the function of physical reproduction and so were directly related to the business of physical survival. Even here, though, there were moments of 'mere' togetherness, the beginnings of personal and collective identity. In the illegal breaks such moments were predominant: the capacity for action and the possibilities of expression could be tested and developed; there were further opportunities to be alone and to be with others—to push back the forces of the factory, even while not directly fighting them.[31]

Lüdtke regards the mere counting of breaks, or the study of strikes in which the issue of breaks came up, as at best secondary and at worst misleading. That is because the meaning and use of work breaks, or of any other feature of daily work life, loom much larger for him than do the brute facts of their distribution in time and space.

That the choice is false, however, appears from a good look at another outstanding work in labor history, Michelle Perrot's *Les ouvriers en grève*.[32] Perrot painstakingly assembled information concerning every strike she could find anywhere in France from 1870 to 1890. She found about 3,000 strikes. She prepared a crude machine-readable description of each one, and tabulated the incidence of strikes by industry, region, year, issue, outcome, and a number of other characteristics. Perrot thereby constructed a comprehensive descriptive grid for strike activity fom 1870 to 1890. She built the means of identifying uniformity and variation by means of a special sort of collective biography.

If Perrot had stopped there, she would have provided a useful body of evidence for other historians of the period, but would have left herself vulnerable to the accusation of ignoring the strikes' meaning and use. But Perrot used her quantification largely to specify what must be explained: Why, for example, did sudden strikes without prior warning occur more often in industries with large worksites, yet decline in importance as big industry grew? Her discussion of that subject begins with the statistics, but soon leaves them behind; it ends with the conclusion that the unionization of big industry reduced the scope for workers' spontaneity. It moves from statistics to conclusion via numerous individual examples displaying the variety of mechanisms by which strikes actually began, as well as the different ways in which union leaders sought to contain them. Perrot put the bulk of her effort into the close examination of cases falling into different positions within her descriptive grid: the actual content of

grievances concerning hours of work, the conditions for workers' victory, loss, or compromise in strikes, and so on.

Michelle Perrot did not simply find a happy midpoint on the continuum from quantitative/many cases, and so on to qualitative/few cases, and so on, or spring gracefully between two happy positions, one at each end. Nor do other first-rate social historians. Keith Wrightson and David Levine, for example, use a combination of demographic analysis and local history to reconstruct the experience of a single Essex village from 1500 to 1725.[33] During the sixteenth century, they detect rapid population growth due to relatively early marriage and resulting high fertility. After 1625, they discover a slowing of population growth as fertility declined and "extra" children had fewer chances to stay in the village. The demographic findings hereby raise precise questions about social change in the village.

Searching out that change, Wrightson and Levine show the creation of a sharp division between a small, dominant property-holding class and a large, subordinate class of land-poor and landless workers, with a religious ideology, a complex of social definitions, and a set of legal controls that reinforced the division. Reading Wrightson and Levine, we watch the local version of capitalism emerge as a contingent product of struggle between the few and the many.

Such work demonstrates that the continuum from "individualist" to "collectivist" is itself an illusion, an unfortunate simplification. The illusion results from placing oneself along the diagonal of the space shown in Figure 1.

Work is easier along the diagonal than above it. Most results below the diagonal are not very useful. The utility of results rises more rapidly with a move toward refined variety than with a move toward many cases. Yet, in principle, the most useful results come from stationing oneself not at the upper right-hand corner (few cases, refined variety) but near the upper *left* corner (many cases, refined variety). Michelle Perrot's work pushes above the diagonal toward that corner. With an effort, we can go even farther in that direction.

The program of "social science history" seeks to push social history above the diagonal. The term itself covers a variety of efforts; they run from the incorporation of sound historical evidence into contemporary social-scientific investigations to the use of social-scientific concepts as interpretive devices in standard historical investigations. The core of social science history, however, has three distinguishing features: (1) the explicit statement of falsifiable arguments; (2) the

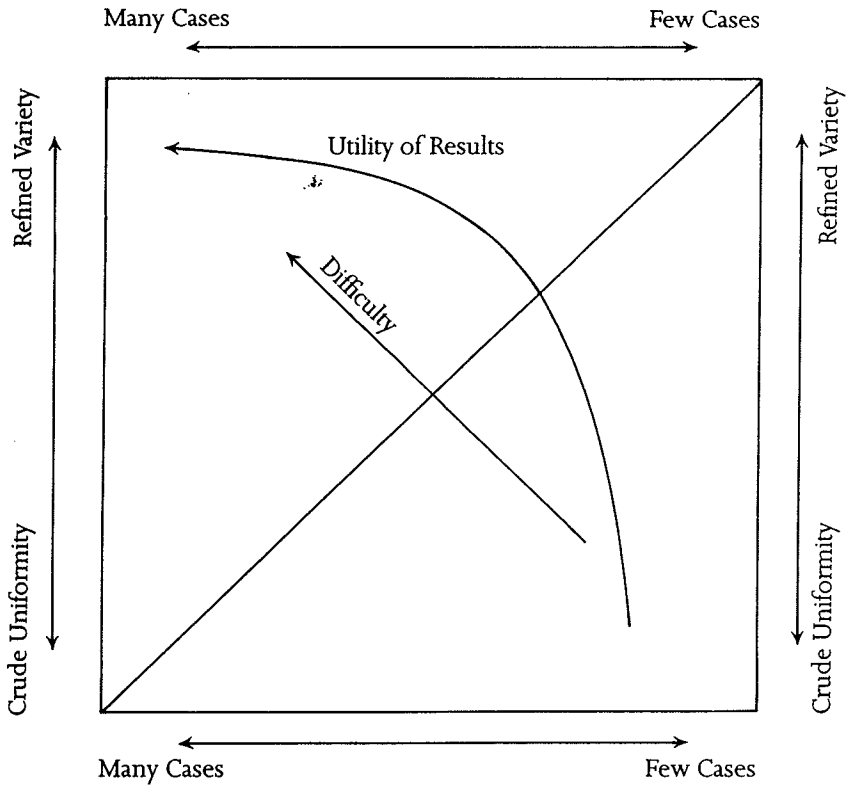


Figure 1. Difficulty and Utility of Variety and Multiplicity in Social History

generation of evidence bearing on the validity of those arguments by means of rigorous measurement; (3) the use of systematic comparisons among cases to verify or falsify the arguments in question. These features establish two different sorts of ties between contemporary social science and social history: First, they point to the distinctive features of social science in general. Second, the "falsifiable arguments" in play are quite likely to come from those disciplines that specialize in the contemporary equivalents of pressing social-historical questions, the social sciences.

Thus we find social science historians:

* Asking how and why various European populations proletarianized, using ideas about the logic of capitalistic production;[34]

* Seeking to explain regional and temporal variations in fertility, using ideas about the demographic transition;[35]
* Examining the correlates and effects of women's employment in different European cities, using ideas about household economic strategies;[36]
* Studying the spread of literacy among classes and communities, combatting standard ideas about modernization;[37]
* Reviewing historical patterns of rural-urban migration in Europe, drawing on ideas developed in the analysis of contemporary Third World migration.[38]

All these adventures, and more, profit from their casting in a social-scientific mold.

A case in point comes from the study of literacy. On the one hand, abilities to read and write vary enormously in contemporary Europe; not only the technical skills but also the meanings and consequences of the activity differ from one person to the next. No simple standard—so many years of school, ability to sign one's name, or perhaps purchase of printed matter—captures the variations in skill, meanings, and consequences of literacy. Yet Europeans on the whole clearly have become much more literate during the last century or two. It is hard to escape the feeling that the ability to read and write (and the increasing demand that citizens, employers, soldiers, drivers, and other whole categories of people be literate) altered people's daily experience. But how to translate that feeling into historical research?

For the period since national churches and state bureaucracies began intervening actively in the daily lives of ordinary people, European social historians have drawn their evidence about popular literacy mainly from the by-products of those interventions. Signing of documents, enrollment in school, and screening for admission to military service, prison, or some other bureaucratized institution provide the most abundant evidence. Using such sources for different regions of France, then delving into memoirs and inspection reports, François Furet and Jacques Ozouf show that the skills of reading and writing spread somewhat separately from each other; French Protestants, for example, commonly learned enough reading to decipher verses from the Bible, but did not necessarily learn to write. Writing skills connected closely with commercial activity.[39]

In Sweden, a national Lutheran church, strongly backed by the state, monitored the ability to read closely; pastors regularly tested (and recorded) the skills of their parishioners at reading and interpreting scripture. From the eighteenth century onward, many unschooled Swedes learned to read at home. According to studies of church examination registers, military recruitment records, school statistics, and other sources by Egil Johansson and his collaborators, elementary reading ability became quite general in Sweden before the end of the eighteenth century, but the ability to write only generalized with the extension of formal schooling after 1800.[40]

In the French and Swedish investigations of literacy, the conclusions resulted from close examination of thousands of instances. The sheer scale of the inquiries pushed the researchers toward the methods of the social sciences.

The risks of a relationship between history and contemporary social science are obvious: wholesale exportation from contemporary frames of models, concepts, arguments, and methods that fit historical experience badly; subordination of fundamental historical questions to the agenda of contemporary social science; building of false analogies between contemporary and historical experience or evidence. Yet these risks are avoidable. And the potential benefits are great.

Tasks of Social History

Whether practiced in a social-scientific mode or otherwise, the fundamental work of European social historians remains the same. It consists of (1) documenting large structural changes, (2) reconstructing the experiences of ordinary people in the course of those changes, and (3) connecting the two.

Documenting large structural changes involves a miscellany of activities, from the compilation of government statistics to the collation of observers' opinions. The available documentation itself reflects the course of European history: produced mainly by the agents of states and secondarily by the agents of churches; consisting largely of residues from taxation, conscription, civil registration, policing, and other efforts at controlling subject populations; increasing enormously in volume over time as a result both of expanding bureaucracy and of sheer survival of more recent records; crystallizing into

regularly reported series monitored by specialists chiefly in the nineteenth century. An important part of social-historical expertise has gone into using the disparate evidence available from the period before censuses, surveys, and statistical services to extend the standard recent series back into the eighteenth, seventeenth, or earlier centuries. Myron Gutmann, for example, studied the impact of war on the population of the Basse-Meuse, a region straddling today's Dutch and Belgian borders, between 1620 and 1750. In that prosperous area, he found that war perturbed the population and the economy in characteristic but surprisingly moderate ways. In order to arrive at detailed analyses of war's consequences, however, he had first to construct long series of observations concerning "normal" fluctuations of taxes, agricultural production, food prices, religious practice, births, deaths, marriages, and more. In each case, furthermore, he had to construct his series by means of proxies and approximations: baptisms for birth, burials for deaths, communion-taking for religious practice, and so on. It was heroic, painstaking work.[41]

As Gutmann's research also illustrates, social historians have made their most original contributions to the second task: *reconstructing the experiences of ordinary people*. The greatest discovery was no discovery at all; it was the realization that if ordinary people left few narratives of their lives, innumerable documents of great diversity bore traces of those lives. The traces could, with care and expertise, fit together into skeletal histories of a great many lives. Religious registers, notaries' files, judicial proceedings, tax records, cadasters, censuses, voting rolls, city directories, account books, and many other routine residues of contacts between individuals and large organizations all provided voluminous information on many people outside the elite.

Long before World War II, people who were tracing their ancestors had used many of these same sources to locate individuals. Collective biography made the transition from single individuals to whole populations; one of the critical moments for social history, indeed, arrived when demographer Louis Henry realized that genealogies would, if properly analyzed, yield estimates of changes in vital rates: fertility, mortality, and nuptiality.[42] (Other demographic processes, notably migration, came later.)

Although collective biographies of Roman senators, of British parliamentarians, and of other elites long preceded the reconstitution of family demographic histories from genealogies and from parish records of births, deaths, and marriages, it was the extension of collective biography to run-of-the-mill families that released the creativity of social historians. The sources available for popular collective biography rarely made it possible to assemble richly anecdotal histories of individual lives. But they permitted a much closer approximation to a standard life history for ordinary people than ever before.

Connecting the aggregate observations of structural change with the social experiences sets the most difficult challenge. On the whole, European social historians have met the challenge with less imagination than they have brought to the first two tasks. When they have not settled for impressionistic interpretations of the social experience, they have commonly relied on crude correlations: dividing the entire population into several rough categories to establish that their social experiences differed, using local populations as proxies for distinct social groups, or pointing to a broad correspondence between the fluctuations in time of the measured social experience and of a large structural change. For example, many European urban histories divide up their cities into parishes, then use carefully assembled evidence to show that parishes containing many poor people also have relatively high mortality, more criminal offenders, more foundlings, and so on—important information, to be sure, but a far cry from an analysis of causal connections among the phenomena.[43]

Such crude methods of making the connection between big processes and small-scale social experience entail a double loss. First, they reduce the possibility of any strong statements of causal priority: What causes what? Second, they ignore the precious information contained in the variation from one experience to the next. It is hard to make mousse with a cement mixer.

Nevertheless, social historians sometimes use fine variation in time and space to their great advantage. Some do it by taking a small number of instances, and then making fully documented and precisely controlled comparisons among them. David Gaunt, for instance, looked at the varieties of family structure in central Sweden during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by close comparison of just five parishes. He did not choose the five places as a representative sample; he chose them because they had significantly different economic bases, and because they had rich sources, including obituaries of their parishioners. One parish included many miners and small-scale metalworkers, another consisted largely of peasants who hauled goods in the off-season, and three housed large estates which employed many day laborers. Gaunt's comparison of the parishes

brought out the great population mobility of the estate-dominated parishes. Of the people over 60 who died in the parishes, only 5 to 26 percent had been born in the same parish. In the peasant and semi-industrial parishes, the percentages native were 59 and 67. The peasant and semi-industrial parishes, furthermore, had substantially larger households, more complex households (including adult offspring), and more single people. Gaunt relates the differences effectively to the household's control over its own land and livelihood.[44]

Other social historians sacrifice some of the richness, but still carry out fine comparisons over large numbers of observations. That almost always requires quantification. Sooner or later, almost all analysts of industrial conflict find that in order to keep their grip on the many factors causing strikes to occur and endure they are better off using quantitative comparisons among industries, localities, and periods. Again, the national studies of fertility decline in Europe carried on by Ansley Coale and his associates have generally followed a set of small geographic areas covering an entire country from census to census for a century or more; only quantification has made that effort feasible.[45]

Still others do some of each: They combine a moderately rich analysis of variation over many cases with a very rich analysis of variation among a small number of cases, in hopes that the two analyses will complement and confirm each other. Tracing variations in Hungarian household structure, Rudolf Andorka and Támas Faragó undertake comparisons among eleven scattered communities for which household listings are available. For different subsets of the communities, they compare overall household composition, age distributions of different kinds of household members, and kinship relations within households. Then they use censuses to compare whole counties over most of Hungary. Like David Gaunt for Sweden, they establish in Hungary a strong relationship between control of property (although in Hungary the wealthier peasants were often technically serfs) and large, complex households. Contrary to widespread opinion, they also find indications of more extensive birth control and lower fertility in large, complex households. Their large-scale and small-scale analyses combine to portray the complex household as an arrangement that stabilizes the connection between a lineage and its land by strong constraints over the marriage, migration, and work opportunities of its members.[46]

In all these cases, social historians find themselves documenting large structural changes, depicting ordinary people's experiences, and connecting the two. Result: incorporation of everyday life into the great movements of history.

Retouching the Portrait

As a result of recent decades' work in social history, our picture of general changes in European life over the last few centuries has altered greatly. Not long ago, historians thought, and taught, a Europe peopled mainly by an immobile, traditional peasant mass, dominated by church and state, which broke apart after 1750 with an industrial revolution followed by a series of democratic revolutions.

Witness the 1950 edition of Robert R. Palmer's first-rate survey, *A History of the Modern World*.[47] Palmer's presentation of modern Europe outside of Italy begins with the fifteenth-century New Monarchs (Henry VII, Louis XI, and others) who established royal power and stable government, and thus laid a political foundation for a Commercial Revolution. The Commercial Revolution includes an expansion of cottage industry, in which rural people produced at home on orders from local merchants. As a result of rising prices, peasants prospered and landlords faltered in western Europe; in eastern Europe, however, landlords themselves retained control of production, thereby taking advantage of price rises while subordinating manorial workers to their personal control.

Palmer's reconstruction continues: As monarchs fortified their states for war, conquest, and internal control, worldwide exploration and the growth of scientific thinking combined to generate prosperity and modern ways:

> . . . the greatest social development of the eighteenth century, with the possible exception of the progress of knowledge, was the fact that Europe, or the Atlantic region of Europe north of Spain, became incomparably more wealthy than any other part of the world. The new wealth, in the widest sense, meaning conveniences in every form, was produced by the increasing scientific and technical knowledge, which in turn it helped to produce; and the two together, more wealth and more knowledge, helped to form one of the most far-reaching ideas of modern times, the idea of progress.[48]

Palmer points out that the new wealth did not depend on concentrated industry, but "represented the flowering of the older merchant capitalism, domestic industry and mercantilist government policies. . . ."[49] Then came the nineteenth century:

> The processes of industrialization in the long run were to revolutionize the lives of men everywhere. In the short run, in the generation following the peace of Vienna, the same processes had pronounced political effects. The Industrial Revolution, by greatly enlarging both the business and the wage-earning classes, doomed all attempts at "reaction," attempts, that is, to undo or check the consequences of the French Revolution. Industrialization made the flood of progress too powerful for conservatism to dam up. It hastened the growth of that world-wide economic system whose rise in the eighteenth century has already been observed. And since industrialization first took place in western Europe, one of its early effects was to widen the difference between eastern and western Europe, and so to weaken the efforts made, after the defeat of Napoleon, to organize a kind of international union of Europe.[50]

This "industrial revolution," in Palmer's account, centered on the shift to machine production in factories. The combination of industrialization and the French Revolution "led after 1815 to the proliferation of doctrines and movements of many sorts."[51] The "isms" began; European political history took the shapes of liberalism, radicalism, republicanism, socialism, conservatism, nationalism, and occasionally humanitarianism. In the West, the bourgeoisie triumphed, and faced a mass of estranged workers.

These changes, according to Palmer, occurred in the context of rapid population growth:

> All students agree in attributing the increase to falling death rates rather than to increasing birth rates. Populations grew because more people lived longer, not because more were born. It is probable that a better preservation of civil order reduced death rates in both Asia and Europe. In Europe the organized sovereign states, as established in the seventeenth century, put an end to a long period of civil wars, stopping the chronic violence and marauding, with the accompanying insecurity of agriculture and of family life, which were more deadly than wars fought by armies between governments. . . . In Europe, sooner than in Asia, other causes of growth were at work beyond the maintenance of civil peace. They included the liberation from certain endemic diseases, beginning with the subsiding of bubonic plague in the seventeenth century and the conquest of smallpox in the eighteenth; the improvement of agricultural output, beginning notably in England about 1750; the improvement of transportation, which, by road, canal, and railroad, made localized famine a thing of the past since food could be moved into areas of temporary shortage; and, lastly, the development of machine industry, which allowed large populations to subsist in Europe by trading with peoples overseas.[52]

Thereafter Europeans—the French first of all—began to control births, a small-family system came to prevail, and population growth slowed. Fast urbanization and vast emigration complemented the fertility decline. The huge, impersonal, anonymous city epitomized the new society that emerged from the industrial revolution.

Palmer's deft summaries of European social history, as understood in 1950, provide us with a baseline for examining what social historians have accomplished since then. A Palmer writing in 1985 would make significant changes: He would acknowledge the contribution of fertility increases to eighteenth-century population growth, stress the proletarianization of the "peasant" population before 1800, and date a number of changes in family structure well before the industrial concentration and fertility decline of the nineteenth century. He would less confidently assert Europe's eighteenth-century economic superiority to the rest of the world. A 1985 Palmer would reduce the importance of the nineteenth century in the creation of secular proletarian life, and shift emphasis from technological toward organizational change. Social historians have offered major revisions to 1950's knowledge.

Some of the revisions are essentially technical. As a consequence of social-historical research, for example, we now know that European populations recuperated very quickly from the great shocks of mortality occasioned by famine and disease—not to mention that in the great famines after 1500 people rarely starved to death, but instead became more vulnerable to various diseases. Crises accelerated the deaths of the kinds of people who already had relatively high risks of death. In the aftermaths of crises, marriages generally accelerated and

fertility rose. The most plausible explanation is that the heightened mortality opened up niches—farms, jobs, household positions—permitting marriage to people who would otherwise have married later, or not at all.

That series of discoveries does not contradict any major understanding of the modern era, but it does give the lie to two common notions: first, that before recent centuries European populations declined or grew mainly as a result of the presence or absence of wars and other demographic disasters; *second*, that in the absence of crisis European preindustrial populations were breeding at the limit of their capacity. Thus, a technical revision significantly affects our sense of the misery of social life and limits the explanations we may plausibly offer for popular action or inaction.

Some of the revisions are chiefly factual. Social historians have established, for example, that before 1800 many European villages had rates of population turnover well above 20 percent per year; rural areas with many wage laborers had an especially strong tendency to lose residents. The fact contradicts any depiction of "preindustrial" populations, especially of rural populations, as stodgily immobile.[53] The finding therefore raises doubts about accounts of nineteenth- and twentieth-century popular political movements as responses to rising mobility and to the breaking up of self-contained, immobile communities. Since such accounts abound, the factual revision makes a difference to historical understanding.

Some recent social history, furthermore, has directly attacked prevailing interpretations of European historical experience. A generation of "historians from below," for example, have not succeeded in creating a unified popular history. But they have effectively destroyed the old characterization of European workers and peasants as a dumb, slow-moving mass that reacted mainly to extreme hardship and only developed political awareness with the various mobilizations of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Social historians have replaced that characterization with a multiplicity of peasants and workers, each group following a relatively well-defined path of changing interests, each acting or failing to act as a function of those changing interests.

In the very process of arguing over the proper distinctions, over the incidence of crucial changes in production and reproduction, and over the exact conditions promoting action or inaction, social historians have generally adopted a broadly Marxist conclusion: that

changing interests rooted in transformations of production account for major alterations in the collective action of Europe's subordinate classes. Here no single fact or technical discovery is at issue; social history has implanted a new interpretation of a major set of changes.

At the broadest level, European social historians have dislodged two fundamental ideas about European history since 1500: (1) the idea of a single sharp break with the traditional past, dividing history into before and after, a technologically driven industrial revolution; and (2) the idea of a general process, followed in country after country, in which an inexorable logic of differentiation, depending on the expansion of markets and the advance of technical knowledge, impels social evolution—whether "advance" or "decline"—and thus poses repeated problems of integration to rapidly changing societies. Those connected ideas, once the chief devices for ordering the recent experiences of the European populace, are the principal casualties of social history's victories.

Increasingly, then, research in social history has forced a recognition of the great mobility of European rural life before 1750; of substantial swings in the rates of birth, death, and marriage long before our own time; of extensive rural involvement in regional, national, and international markets; of widespread manufacturing and significant proletarianizaton in the countryside well before the day of factories and steam power; of struggles between expanding states and populations that fought statemakers' demands for more and more resources; of the rooting of demands for popular sovereignty in resistance to the aggrandizements of states and capitalists.

Capital and Coercion

Another shift in orientation follows from the last few decades' work in European social history: a diminution of the nineteenth century's place as the pivot of modern social change. The move toward implosion and centralization, on the one hand, and the sheer quantity of displacement, on the other, certainly marked off the nineteenth century as a critical period of change. Yet the statemaking of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the proletarianization of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the organizational expansion of the twentieth century all rival the nineteenth century transformations in their impact on routine social life.

The drama of "before" and "after" serves poorly as an organizing principle for European social history, whether the pivot is the industrial revolution, the onset of modernization, or something else. The true problem falls into three parts:

(1) specifying the character, timing, and regional incidence of (a) the growth of national states, (b) the development of capitalism, (c) the interaction between them (the specification must keep sight of the fact that the phenomena called "states" and "capitalism" themselves altered radically between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries, and that therefore neither the growth of national states nor the development of capitalism constitutes a unilinear, quantitative progression over the entire period since 1500);
(2) tracing through time and space the varying experiences of small social units: individuals, kin groups, households, neighborhoods, shops, communities, and others; and
(3) establishing the cause-and-effect connections between the two sets of changes.

That is a large program.

Before reviewing the facts of nineteenth-century change, let us consider the theoretical problem. Theoretically, what does the three-point program entail? Capitalism is a system of production in which people who control capital make the basic decisions concerning the productive use of land, labor, and capital, and produce by means of labor power bought from workers whose households survive through the sale of labor power. In general terms, the development of capitalism makes three conflicts salient: (1) the opposition of capital and labor; (2) the opposition of capitalists to others who claim control over the same factors of production; and (3) market competition: buyers-buyers, buyers-sellers, sellers-sellers. All three conflicts can divide an entire population in two.

The growth of national states means the increasing control of the resources in a relatively large, contiguous territory by an organization that is formally autonomous, differentiated from other organizations, centralized, internally coordinated, and in possession of major concentrated means of coercion. Like the development of capitalism, statemaking follows a triple logic: (1) the extraction of resources from the subject population; (2) competition between agents of the state and agents of other governments inside and outside the territory; and

(3) competition among organizations that are subject to the state for resources controlled by the state. Again, all three conflicts can, in principle, produce fundamental divisions of the entire population.

If capitalism and statemaking were to proceed simultaneously, we might reasonably expect accommodation between capitalists and statemakers. Here is an idealized sequence:

> *early*: capitalist property created as statemakers struggle to extract resources and check rivals; major themes of conflict: expropriation, imposition of state control, imposition of capitalist control, and resistance to all of them;
> *late*: within an existing state and established capitalist property, major themes of conflicts: capital-labor opposition, market competition, attempts to control the state and its resources.

These are tendencies. Rather than a rapid transition, we might expect a gradual shift of the bulk of conflicts from type 1 to type 2. In addition, the pattern should depend on the relative rapidity of the two processes; where capitalism comes early and statemaking late, for example, we may reasonably expect to find capitalists themselves opposing relatively effective resistance to the state's expansion of its extractive and coercive power. Where statemaking leads, in contrast, we are likely to find more intense popular resistance to extraction, if only because capitalists have done less to expropriate and monetize the factors of production.

So, at least, runs the theory. These statements fall far short of a documented historical account. Indeed, they contradict accounts that many people have found plausible—notably the classic nineteenth-century accounts in which rapid social change, driven by differentiation and technical innovation, disrupts stable, immobile societies and thereby promotes disorganization, disorder, and protest. My account makes the conflicts that accompany capitalism and statemaking intrinsic to their development, consequences of opposing interests built into their very structure.

European social history here sets yet another challenge: To adjudicate between the sort of interest-oriented account of statemaking and capitalism I have sketched and classic change-disorder accounts of the same changes.

What Happened in History

Nineteenth-century observers who articulated the classic change-disorder accounts were right on one count: Great alterations in social life were occurring. Let me offer a rapid summary of the changes brought by the nineteenth century, without guaranteeing that most European social historians would agree with my account.[54]

For several centuries before the nineteenth, industrial expansion occurred mainly in small towns and rural areas. Small capitalists multiplied rapidly. They did not work chiefly as manufacturers in our sense of the word. They operated instead as merchants, giving out work to formally independent groups of workers, most of them organized in households. The social relationships between capitalists and workers ranged from various "purchase" arrangements in which producers owned the tools, premises, raw materials, and finished goods to various "putting-out" arrangements in which the merchant owned some or all of them; on the whole, the less workers owned, the greater the power of merchants. These systems accumulated capital, but set serious limits on its concentration. The multiplication of semi-independent producers in households and small shops therefore accounted for most of manufacturing's large increase.

Contrary to later prejudices, the European populations involved in these merchant-dominated forms of manufacturing and in commercial agriculture moved a great deal. They moved, however, mainly within regional labor markets or in large systems of circular migration. Both regional labor markets and long-distance circuits left some migrants in cities, but altogether migration, fertility, and mortality produced only modest rates of urban growth. Cities increased and lost population largely as a function of levels of activity in their hinterlands.

The nineteenth century changed many of these traits. Capital concentrated. Individual capitalists and organized firms began to control much greater productive means than they had previously commanded. Capitalists seized hold of productive processes. Instead of continuing to organize manufacturing around supplies of self-sustaining labor, they increasingly placed production near markets and sources of energy or raw materials. Production began to edge out exchange as the pivot of capitalist social relationships.

As a result, the active sites of proletarianization shifted from country to city. More and more production went on in large firms employing disciplined wage earners. Workers migrated from dispersed industrial hamlets, villages, and towns.

This urban implosion of capital and labor accelerated rural-urban migration, spurred urban population growth, deindustrialized large sections of the countryside, and accentuated differences between town and country; the division between industrial cities and their agricultural hinterlands reappeared with a vengeance. Mechanization of production facilitated the concentration of capital and the subordination of labor.

The coincidence of implosion and mechanization created the illusion of an "industrial revolution" driven by technological change. Although new technologies certainly contributed to the fixing, disciplining and intensification of labor, much of the nineteenth-century expansion of production preceded the spread of the factory and assembly line, occurred without substantial changes in the actual techniques of production, and depended mainly on alterations in the social relations of production. In textiles, chemicals, and metal production, technical innovations promoted dramatic increases in the scale and intensity of production. But for manufacturing in general, two essentially social innovations played a larger part in transforming production: (1) the grouping of workers in large shops under centralized time-discipline; and (2) the monopolization of means of production by capitalists.

At the start of the nineteenth century, many capitalists worked essentially as merchants, buying and selling the products of workers. No need to exaggerate: In some branches of textiles and metals, full-fledged industrial capitalists ran large mills and employed full-time wage workers. In cottage industry, merchants often owned the looms and the raw materials worked by poor cottagers. In capitalized segments of European agriculture, the daily or yearly wage already provided the principal income of millions of households. Nevertheless, relatively few capitalists knew how to produce the goods they sold, and many workers did. During the nineteenth century, in industry after industry, capitalists and workers struggled over knowledge and control of detailed production decisions. By the end of the nineteenth century, many capitalists knew how to make a whole product, and few workers did. The capitalists had won.

Workers, however, received some consolation prizes. Toward the end of the nineteenth century—with great variation by region and trade—workers' real income began to rise, and some workers even

began to accumulate wealth in the form of housing and household goods. An illusory *embourgeoisement* occurred: In material possessions, leisure, and personal style the apparent differences between bourgeois and proletarians diminished, as workers' control of productive capital continued to decline. To some extent, workers' organizations gained legal standing, financial strength, and the right to bargain with capitalists. Thus workers acquired a stake in the capitalist system while losing control of the means of production.

As capitalism entered a new phase of concentration and control, European *states* were also undergoing great alterations.[55] By the later eighteenth century, zealous princes, ministers, and generals had made national states the dominant organizations in most parts of Europe. The chief exceptions were the urban-commercial band extending from Northern Italy across the Alps, down the Rhine and into the Low Countries, and the southeastern flank of the continent, along which tribute-taking empires, powerful lineages, and Islamic peoples concentrated.

Where national states held sway, preparations for war became extensive and costly; military expenditure and payment for war debts occupied the largest shares of most state budgets. The strongest states built great structures for the extraction of the means of war: supplies, food, conscripts, and money.

Paradoxically, the very construction of large military organizations reduced the autonomy of military men and created large civilian bureaucracies. The process of bargaining with ordinary people for their acquiescence and their surrender of resources engaged the civilian managers of states willy-nilly in establishing perimeters to state control, limits to state violence, and regular routines for eliciting the consent of the subject population. In sixteenth-century England, Tudor monarchs succeeded in disbanding their great lords' private armies, in snatching most fortresses from private hands, and in radically reducing the settlement of disputes among nobles by force of arms. Yet even the seizure of property from churches and rebellious lords did not free Tudor monarchs from financial dependence on Parliament. Eventually, the consent of Parliament became essential to royal war-making, and thus to state expansion itself.

The bargaining process had a different history in each state. But overall it led to the state's civilianization, and to the establishment of regular mechanisms for consulting representatives of the governed population.

Up to the nineteenth century, European states continued to rule indirectly. For routine enforcement of their decisions, collection of revenues, and maintenance of public order, they relied chiefly on local powerholders. The powerholders did not derive their tenure or their power from the good will of superiors in a governmental hierarchy. They retained room for maneuver on behalf of their own interests. Much of the work of national authorities therefore consisted of negotiating with regional and local powerholders. Ordinary people carried on active political lives, but almost exclusively on a regional or local level. When they did involve themselves in national power struggles, they ordinarily did so through the mediation of local powerholders, or in alliance with them.

In the nineteenth century, this system disappeared from much of Europe. War kept getting more expensive and deadly, but it increasingly involved conquest outside of Europe rather than struggles among European powers. Revolutionary and reformist governments extended direct rule into local communities. The French revolutionaries of 1789 and thereafter were the first Europeans to succeed in that effort at the scale of a large state; revolutionary committees, revolutionary militias, and eventually a revolutionary bureaucracy brought individual citizens face to face with the national state. The Napoleonic Empire solidified these revolutionary practices. The French Revolution was precocious and unique. But most European states soon underwent their own transitions to direct rule—many of them, in fact, as a result of conquest by French armies.

As they bargained with local people for even greater resources, statemakers solidified representative institutions, binding national elections, and a number of other means by which local people participated regularly in national politics. Here the variation ran even wider than in the institution of direct rule. At the end of the nineteenth century, the Swiss federation, the British parliamentary system, the Italian state (formally very centralized, informally very fragmented), and the bureaucratized Russian Empire represented very different alternatives.

Under pressure from their constituents, managers of most states took on responsibilities for public services, economic infrastructure, and household welfare to degrees never previously attained. On the whole, they also moved from reactive to active repression: from violent reactions against rebellion and resistance after they occurred toward active surveillance of the population and toward vigorous

efforts to forestall rebellion and resistance. These activities shoved aside autonomous local or regional powerholders, and put functionaries in their places. As a consequence, powerholders lost much of their strength and attractiveness as intermediaries in the attempts of ordinary people to realize their interests. Those were the nineteenth century's great changes.

Or so it seems to me. It is only fair to warn that my synthesis remains unproven and contestable in a number of regards. Consider, for example, the question of mobility and connectedness before and after the nineteenth century. When Eugen Weber seeks to determine how France's multiple peasantries coalesced into a common Frenchness during the nineteenth century, he fixes on awareness of nationality, involvement in national politics, and responsiveness to opportunities outside the locality as the phenomena to be explained. Weber lays out the materials of folklorists and travelers brilliantly; he shows us a nineteenth-century rural France fragmented in language and custom, then much stirred by the arrival of the railroad, of obligatory primary education, of widespread military service. "Between 1880 and 1910," concludes Weber, "fundamental changes took place on at least three fronts. Roads and railroads brought hitherto remote and inaccessible regions into early contact with the markets and lifeways of the modern world. Schooling taught hitherto indifferent millions the language of the dominant culture, and its values as well, among them patriotism. And military service drove those lessons home."[56] In Weber's view a congeries of immobile rural societies broke open, connected, and began to move.

Yet Weber's basic argument is not convincing. It is debatable how much more intensely French rural people of 1900 were involved in national affairs than were their ancestors of 1800. The vast systems of temporary migration portrayed by Alain Corbin, Abel Châtelain, and Abel Poitrineau, for example, established intense ties between Alpine villages and Marseille, between impoverished farms of the Limousin and central Paris.[57] Those systems thrived in the eighteenth century, and atrophied in the nineteenth. In certain respects, the integration between those distant rural places and the rest of France actually declined. That is one of my reasons for doubting the classic account of mobilization, even when presented with the richness and sublety of Weber's analysis. But the presence of Weber's analysis and the credence many historians have given it testify that my alternative account is not self-evident.

Or take the extent of proletarianization before the nineteenth century. The evidence on European people's—and especially whole households'—employment throughout the year is quite fragmentary. It could turn out that the majority of people who worked in cottage industry before 1800 actually spent so much of their years (or their lives) cultivating their own land that the term "proletarian" describes them badly.

A lot depends, in any case, or how stringent a definition of "proletarian" we adopt: If, for instance, we insist on full-time wage earners holding closely supervised positions within large organizations, wage earners who have no other employment, then proletarianization concentrates by definition in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

The effect of minimizing employment in cottage industry before 1800 and adopting a very demanding definition of "proletarian" is to maintain my statements about trends but to displace the bulk of European proletarianization into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. (In that case, we must invent a new terminology to designate the millions of European households *before* the nineteenth century, in manufacturing and agriculture alike, that came to depend for survival on wage-labor under capitalist supervision, but did not work in large firms under time-discipline, and so on.) The same sort of debate—partly factual, partly definitional—can easily arise about other elements of my summary. The general trends, nevertheless, now seem well established.

Conclusion

Not that social history has settled everything. Far from it! In challenging old ideas of popular involvement in big structural changes, European social historians have renewed and displaced the debate, but have by no means ended it. These days social historians of Europe are disagreeing about whether a modern, affectionate, egalitarian family formed, and if so how, when, and why. They are worrying about the conditions, if any, under which social classes defined by the relations of production became significant actors. They are pitting against each other alternative explanations of the general European decline in fertility. They are considering the virtues and vices of oral history, of ethnographic approaches to historical analysis, of quantification, of narrative, of most of the procedures I have described

as accomplishments of social history. In very recent years, it has become much clearer that social-scientific interventions in social history, where successful, have served mainly to specify what is to be explained and to eliminate bad explanations rather than to supply new and more convincing explanations; that realization has come as a disappointment to historians who hoped for closure. In all these regards, and more, European social history remains a rough, contested terrain.

Yet European social history has much to celebrate. First, it has shown the way to renew our understanding of collective historical experience by systematic collation of many, many individual experiences; historical demography provides a dramatic example of renewed understanding through collective biography. Second, European social history has humanized and historicized those rather abstract and timeless social sciences that have come into its scope; sociology, political science, and even economics have emerged more historical from their encounter with European social history. Third, the practitioners of European social history have radically reduced the plausibility of general histories portraying ordinary people as apathetic, irrational, or stupid masses. Finally—and most important—European social history has built new accounts of the development of capitalism and the formation of national states, accounts that treat capitalism and states as concrete daily realities rather than vast abstractions, accounts in which the experiences and actions of ordinary people stand in center stage.

NOTES

1. G. M. Trevelyan, *English Social History* (London: Longman, 1944), 1.
2. Peter Burke, *Sociology and History* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1980), 31.
3. Richard Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence* (New York: Academic Press, 1980).
4. Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou, village occitan de 1292 à 1324* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975).
5. Ron J. Lesthaeghe, *The Decline of Belgian Fertility, 1800–1920* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).
6. See Luciano Allegra and Angelo Torre, *La Nascità della storia sociale in Francia: Dalla Commune alle 'Annales'* (Turin: Fondazione Luigi Einaudi, 1977); Traian Stoianovitch, *French Historical Method: The "Annales" Paradigm* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976).
7. Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *English Local Government*, 7 vols. (New York: Archon Books, 1963); J. L. and Barbara Hammond, *The Village Labourer, 1760–1832. A Study in the Government of England Before the Reform Bill* (London: Longman, 1911); R. H. Tawney, *The Agrarian Problem in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Longman, 1912).
8. Max Weber, *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft. Grundriss der verstehenden Soziologie* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1972; 5th ed.; first published in 1921).
9. Jürgen Kocka, "Theory and Social History. Recent Developments in West Germany," *Social Research* 47 (Autumn 1980): 426–75; see also Kocka, *Sozialgeschichte. Begriff—Entwicklung—Probleme* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1977).
10. Ronald Grigor Suny, "Russian Labor and Its Historians in the West: A Report and Discussion of the Berkeley Conference on the Social History of Russian Labor," *International Labor and Working Class History* 22 (Fall 1982): 50.
11. Tony Judt, "A Clown in Regal Purple: Social History and the Historians," *History Workshop* 7 (Spring 1979): 66–94. For comments on Judt's and other critiques of social history, see *Theory and Society* 9 (September 1980), special issue on social history.
12. For a review of ideas and evidence, see Charles Tilly, *Big Structures, Large Processes, Huge Comparisons* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1985).
13. E.g., E. J. Hobsbawm and George Rudé, *Captain Swing* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1969); George Rudé, *The Crowd in the French Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959); Albert Soboul, *Les sans-culottes parisiens en l'an II. Mouvement populaire et gouvernement révolutionnaire, 2 juin 1793–9 Thermidor an II* (Paris: Clavreuil, 1958). For a sample of more recent work, see Louise A. Tilly and Charles Tilly, eds., *Class Conflict and Collective Action* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1981).
14. Temma Kaplan, *Anarchists of Andalusia, 1868–1903* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).
15. Rainer Wirtz, *'Widersetzlichkeiten, Excesse, Crawalle, Tumulte und Skandale.' Soziale Bewegung und gewalthafter sozialer Protest in Baden, 1815–1848* (Frankfurt a/M: Ullstein, 1981).
16. John Brewer, "Theater and Counter-Theater in Georgian Politics: The Mock Elections at Garrat," *Radical History Review* 22 (Winter 1979–1980): 8.
17. Ibid., 37.
18. For reviews, see Lawrence Stone, "History and the Social Sciences in the

Twentieth Century," in *The Future of History*, ed. Charles F. Delzell (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1977), 3–42, and Charles Tilly, "The Old New Social History and the New Old Social History," *Review* 7 (Winter 1984): 363–406.

19. For reviews, see Arthur Imhof, *Die gewonnenen Jahre* (Munich: Beck, 1981); Charles Tilly, "The Historical Study of Vital Processes" in *Historical Studies of Changing Fertility*, ed. Charles Tilly (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1978); J. Dennis Willigan and Katherine A. Lynch, *Sources and Methods of Historical Demography* (New York: Academic Press, 1982).

20. Jean-Claude Perrot, *Genèse d'une ville moderne. Caen au XVIIIe siècle*, 2 vols. (Paris: Mouton, 1974).

21. Jean-Pierre Bardet, *Rouen aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles. Les mutations d'un espace urbain* (Paris: SEDES, 1983), 1:279.

22. E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, *The Population History of England, 1541–1871: A Reconstruction* (London: Arnold, 1981).

23. Samuel Kline Cohn, Jr., *The Laboring Classes in Renaissance Florence* (New York: Academic Press, 1980).

24. Kristian Hvidt, *Flight to America: The Social Background of 300,000 Danish Emigrants* (New York: Academic Press, 1975).

25. John Bohstedt, *Riots and Community Politics in England and Wales, 1790–1810* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983).

26. Richard Cobb, *Les armées révolutionnaires, instrument de la Terreur dans les départements*, 2 vols. (Paris: Mouton, 1961–1963).

27. Richard Cobb, *Reactions to the French Revolution* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), 121.

28. Alf Lüdtke, "The Historiography of Everyday Life: The Personal and the Political," in *Culture, Ideology and Politics*, ed. Raphael Samuel and Gareth Stedman Jones (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), 42.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid., 47.

32. Michelle Perrot, *Les ouvriers en grève. France, 1871–1890*, 2 vols. (Paris: Mouton, 1974).

33. Keith Wrightson and David Levine, *Poverty and Piety in an English Village: Terling, 1525–1700* (New York: Academic Press, 1979).

34. For reviews and syntheses, see David Levine, ed., *Proletarianization and Family Life* (New York: Academic Press, 1984) and Charles Tilly, "Flows of Capital and Forms of Industry in Europe, 1500–1900," *Theory and Society* 12 (March 1983): 123–42.

35. E.g., O. W. A. Boonstra and A. M. van der Woude, "Demographic Transition in the Netherlands. A Statistical Analysis of Regional Differences in the Level and Development of the Birth Rate and of Fertility, 1850–1890," *A. A. G. Bijdragen* 24 (1984): 1–58; John C. Caldwell, "The Mechanisms of Demographic Change in Historical Perspective," *Population Studies* 35 (1981): 5–27; Michael W. Flinn, *The European Demographic System, 1500–1820* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981); John Knodel, "European Populations in the Past: Family-Level Relations," in *The Effects of Infant and Child Mortality on Fertility*, ed. Samuel Preston (New York: Academic Press, 1978), 21–46; Wolfgang Köllmann, "Zur Bevölkerungsentwicklung der Neuzeit," in *Studien zum Beginn der modernen Welt*, ed. Reinhart Koselleck (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1977), 68–77; David Levine, *Family Formation in an Age of Nascent Capitalism* (New York: Academic Press, 1977); Kenneth A. Lockridge, *The Fertility Transition in Sweden: A Preliminary Look at Smaller Geographic Units, 1855–1890* (Umeå: Demographic Data Base, Umeå University, 1983).

36. For review and synthesis, see Louise A. Tilly and Joan W. Scott, *Women, Work, and Family* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1978).

37. For review and synthesis, see Harvey Graff, *The Literacy Myth. Literacy and Social Structure in the Nineteenth-Century City* (New York: Academic Press, 1979).

38. For review and synthesis, see Charles Tilly, "Migration in Modern European History," in *Human Migration: Patterns and Policies*, ed. William H. McNeill and Ruth S. Adams (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), 48–72.

39. François Furet and Jacques Ozouf, *Lire et écrire: L'alphabétisation des français de Calvin à Jules Ferry*, 2 vols. (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1977).

40. Egil Johansson, "The Postliteracy Problem—Illusion or Reality," in *Time, Space and Man. Essays in Microdemography*, ed. Jan Sundin and Eric Soderlund (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1979), 199–212.

41. Myron P. Gutmann, *War and Rural Life in the Early Modern Low Countries* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980).

42. Louis Henry and Yves Blayo, "La population de la France de 1740 à 1860," *Population*, numéro special (Novembre 1974): 72–122.

43. E.g., Pierre Léon, *Géographie de la fortune et structures sociales à Lyon au XIXe siècle (1815–1914)* (Lyon: Centre d'Histoire Economique et Sociale de la Région Lyonnaise, 1974).

44. David Gaunt, "Pre-Industrial Economy and Population Structure: The Elements of Variance in Early Modern Sweden," *Scandinavian Journal of History* 2 (1977): 183–210.

45. Ansley Coale, Barbara Anderson, and Enna Harm, *Human Fertility in Russia since the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979).

46. Rudolf Andorka and Támas Faragó, "Pre-Industrial Household Structure in Hungary," in *Family Forms in Historic Europe*, ed. Richard Wall, Jean Robin, and Peter Laslett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

47. Robert R. Palmer, *A History of the Modern World* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1950).

48. Ibid., 264–65.

49. Ibid., 264.

50. Ibid., 432.

51. Ibid., 441.

52. Ibid., 569.

53. E.g., Sune Åkerman, Hans Christian Johansen, and David Gaunt, eds., *Chance and Change: Social and Economic Studies in Historical Demography in the Baltic Area* (Odense: Scandinavian University Press, 1978); Ingrid Eriksson and John Rogers, *Rural Labor and Population Change: Social and Demographic Development in East-Central Sweden during the Nineteenth Century* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1978); Sture Martinius, *Befolkningsrörlighet under industrialismens inledningsskede i Sverige* (Gothenberg: Elanders, 1967); John Patten, *Rural-Urban Migration in Pre-Industrial England* (Oxford: School of Geography, 1973; Occasional Papers, no. 6).

54. In ideas, sources, and text, this section draws heavily on Charles Tilly, *Big Structures, Large Processes, Huge Comparisons.*

55. For background, see Charles Tilly, ed., *The Formation of National States in Western Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975).

56. Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen. The Modernization of Rural France* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976), 493–94. For a critique of Weber, see Charles Tilly, "Did the Cake of Custom Break?" in *Consciousness and Class Experience in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, ed. John M. Merriman (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1979), 17–44.

57. Alain Corbin, *Archaisme et modernité en Limousin au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Marcel Rivière, 1975); Abel Châtelain, *Les migrants temporaires en France de 1800 à 1914*, 2 vols. (Villeneuve d'Ascq: Publications de l'Université de Lille III, 1976); Abel Poitrineau, *Remues d'hommes. Les migrations montagnardes en France, XVIIe–XVIIIe siècles* (Paris: Aubier, 1983).

CHAPTER 2

THE SYNTHESIS OF SOCIAL CHANGE

REFLECTIONS ON AMERICAN SOCIAL HISTORY

BY OLIVIER ZUNZ

The "new" social history began to affect the course of American historiography in the 1960s. Although it emerged in the United States significantly later than it did in Europe, its rise to prominence was swift, and the changes it brought with it were pervasive. It replaced the romantic and essentially undefined vision of "the people" that had satisfied historians for so long with detailed accounts of ordinary men and women who had heretofore no voice in the historical record. It displaced the conventional divisions that political historians

I wish to thank the contributors to this volume for their insightful criticisms of earlier drafts of this essay. I am grateful for the advice I received from my colleagues at the University of Virginia, especially Lenard Berlanstein, Robert D. Cross, Charles Feigenoff, Michael F. Holt, Stephen Innes, and Joseph F. Kett. Other friends have also helped me formulate my ideas on social history. Thomas Dublin and Michel de Certeau organized a most stimulating discussion of an early version of this chapter at the University of California, San Diego. In their turn, John Bodnar and Stephan Thernstrom criticized my section on assimilation at the 1984 meeting of the Organization of American Historians and presented alternative views in a forum of the *Journal of American Ethnic History* 4 (Spring 1985). And John Higham stimulated the writing of the essay by enlisting my participation in a session on "the problem of synthesis in American history" at the centennial meeting of the American Historical Association (1984), and by giving the chapter a close and critical reading.