



Heather A. Haveman: *Magazines and the Making of America: Modernization, Community, and Print Culture, 1741–1860*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015. 432 pp. \$45.00, cloth.

Émile Durkheim wondered how a modern society made up of people in diverse occupations, with little in common, could build social solidarity. This has been an enduring question for historians and social scientists ever since. Durkheim thought that the shared features of peasants' lives produced solidarity under feudalism but that as *métiers* proliferated, people felt tribal solidarity with their occupational brethren, and societal solidarity was founded on interdependence—carpenters need shoes and cobblers need roofs. Later, Eugen Weber (1976) described how for a century after the revolution, far-flung French communities were not integrated but maintained local languages and cultures until roads, railroads, and schools helped them participate in a shared national reality and identity. Anderson (1983) charted the deliberate use of founding myths and symbols to join people to the nation in the Americas and then the spread of these strategies around the globe to create gigantic modern tribes comprising millions of strangers. Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983) argued that modern chiefs create shared traditions out of whole cloth to bind people to the nation. And Watkins (1991) showed that by building political and market institutions, European leaders achieved national convergence not only in the mythic patterns of the mind but in the demographic patterns of the life course.

Haveman contributes vital insights to this tradition by showing how religious groups, social crusades, and occupational communities were stitched together across the sparsely populated terrain of America. The magazine industry began by serving general-interest news and fiction to local elites but came to create distinct identity groups through journals devoted to Methodism, reform of prostitutes and seamen (separately), and farming. In charting the content of the first national media, Haveman gives us not only the evolving ecology of the magazine industry but also the ecologies of the religious sects, social crusades, and trades that magazines served. What people read helped to constitute their identities, and thanks to the rapid growth of the postal service and favorable rates in the Postal Act of 1794, magazines achieved national scope when the vast majority of Americans still worked far-flung farms. Backwoods Disciples of Christ could build a reality with coreligionists they would never meet. Isolated abolitionists could join a virtual movement by subscribing to the *Anti-Slavery Record*.

Haveman's story challenges Marx's implicit view of identity in the transition to modernity. He expected people who worked the land to recognize their shared interests and band together. Peasants may have found common cause

in parts of Europe, but in the United States, grangers affiliated with all sorts of religious movements and social crusades. At the start of Haveman's story, colonists were but a million strong and divisions were weak. At the end, America was 30 million strong, and most people still worked the land, but magazines had helped divide them into Seventh-Day Baptists, Quakers, and Mennonites; abolitionists, teetotalers, and spelling reformers. Some brought their religions from Europe, but many were converted and tied to new sects thanks to monthly religious tracts.

By tracing American history through the biweekly and quarterly, Haveman comes to different conclusions than Anderson, who depicted founding myths as creating a strong and singular national identity. The New World drew immigrants of all sorts—religious refugees and moral outcasts, fortune seekers and fugitives—and the flourishing specialty magazine market of the early nineteenth century helped them find kindred souls or create new identities. Up to the time of the Civil War, when Haveman's story ends, identities did not converge—they proliferated. Meanwhile magazines published in ten European languages kept immigrants from the melting pot.

Haveman takes issue with Durkheim's contention that the industrial revolution created a proliferation of different types of work and that for the first time nations were held together not by the uniformity of lived experience but by an ecology of different groups. For Haveman, distinct identities arose around religious movements and social campaigns in the United States, and thus social solidarity was built on an ecology of groups, but not of occupational groups. Religious and political schisms did not tear the country apart; they stitched the country together in a patchwork of group solidarities.

Magazines and the Making of America is a treasure trove for students of social movements and political history, for it chronicles the scores of movements, from anti-dueling to Indian rights to free love, that swept the nation. The strange history of American religious schism is chronicled brilliantly. The first religious magazine appeared in 1743, and in most years, more religious magazines were published than magazines of all other types combined. The disestablishment of state religions—Anglican or Congregational—beginning with New York in the year after the Revolution proved a boon to religious diversity. Many Americans were keen to find religions of their own and to reject everything that smacked of George III. Thus began the great American market for adherents, with magazines playing a key role in both proselytizing and sustaining converts.

The early journals that Haveman describes wouldn't be called magazines today. Circa 1750, the typical magazine consisted of four pages of general-interest stories and political news hawked to elites. Few survived infancy. A century later, over 1,000 magazines were published. Most were national in scope, lived past infancy, and would be recognizable as magazines by today's *Guns & Ammo* subscribers.

Magazines fueled the rise of modern literature first by introducing the public to fiction and the novel. Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was serialized in the anti-slavery weekly *The National Era* and went on to become the best-selling novel of the nineteenth century. Second, by the middle of the century, magazines were paying contributors, which made writing a viable occupation. Edgar Allan Poe fancied himself a book writer but made ends meet by publishing widely in rags like the *New York Mirror* and literary quarterlies like

the *New York Review*. Third, magazines for teachers and Sunday-school leaders spread pedagogical techniques, boosting literacy and the print market.

Magazines and the Making of America is a bright star to guide others applying the new methods of social science to historical topics. Haveman has a penchant for coding and counting everything in sight. She tracks each broadside and circular from before the dawn of the nation, and thus we get much more than an impressionistic romp through the history of the genre. The book is chock full of figures and analyses that substantiate the argument, and the narrative is followed by well over a hundred pages of appendices and bibliography. Haveman describes the time span of the project as somewhere between *l'histoire de la longue durée* and *l'histoire événementielle*. But the mind-boggling collection of magazine data was surely a project of *longue durée*.

Tocqueville called America a nation of joiners, and students of early religious sects, social crusades, and trades may not be surprised at the incredible diversity of groups that established their own magazines. Yet Haveman's marvelous book illuminates the role of print culture in creating a nation of joiners beyond the urban hubs of the East Coast. Her story helps to address the conundrum of American Marxism: why was there no socialist revolution in one of the first countries to industrialize? Because Americans were divided by religious and political movements even before factories drew workers from farms. The book depicts an early form of organic solidarity based not in the ecology of occupations that Durkheim described but in an ecology of religious groups and social campaigns formed under the dual banners of freedom of religion and of speech.

It is not lost on Haveman that the Internet and social media now compete in the space that magazines created. New groups are forming at unprecedented rates and with wider participation than ever before. The patchwork is becoming richer, even while splinter groups threaten to rip the quilt apart. Individuals now build identities around multiple groups with orthogonal, or conflicting, missions. There is the identity politics of the Venn diagram, exemplified by Log Cabin Republicans. There is also the option of identifying with any combination of groups. On the Internet, you can be whoever you want: transgender, Catholic, prepper, *and* coder. The continuing proliferation of identities that are created in public media, and then embraced far and wide, makes this history of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries strikingly relevant today.

Frank Dobbin

Department of Sociology
Harvard University
Cambridge, MA 02138
frank_dobbin@harvard.edu

REFERENCES

Anderson, B.

1983 *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.

Hobsbawm, E. J., and T. Ranger (eds.)

1983 *The Invention of Tradition*. London: Cambridge University Press.

Watkins, S. C.

1991 *From Provinces into Nations: Demographic Integration in Western Europe, 1870–1960*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Weber, E.

1976 *Peasants into Frenchman: The Modernization of Rural France, 1870–1914*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.