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# Magazines and the Making of America: Modernization, Community, and Print Culture, 1741-1860

## Introduction

Media have tremendous impacts on society. Most basically, books, newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and the Internet provide us with facts about our world that shape our understanding and our actions: details of political races and sports contests; prices for goods and services; statistics and forecasts about weather and the economy; news of advances in science and medicine; and stories about notable accomplishments, happy occasions, and shameful events. In addition to "just the facts," the media offer us opinions that subtly influence what we know and how we behave: commentaries on politics and the economy; reviews of the arts and literature, entertainment, fashion, and gadgets; praise and criticism of prominent individuals and groups; and advice about health, finances, work, hobbies, romance and family. Last but not least, the media entertain us with a mix of fact and fiction, tragedy and comedy. By transmitting facts, opinions, and entertainment, media literally mediate between people, weaving "invisible threads of connection" (Starr 2004: 24) that connect geographically dispersed individuals into cohesive communities whose members share knowledge, goals, values, and principles (Park 1940; Anderson 1983 [1991]).

My focus on media leads me away from the view that communities are collections of people with common interests and identities in *particular localities* (towns, cities, or neighborhoods), which is how urban sociologists tend to define community (*e.g.*, Duncan *et al.* 1960; Warner 1972; Fischer 1982). Instead, I am interested in how media like magazines make it possible to build *translocal* communities – collections of people with common interests, beliefs, identities, and activities, and who recognize what they have in common, but who are geographically dispersed and cannot easily meet face-to-face. Their interactions are literally mediated by media (Thompson 1995).

Media support a realm of social life that lies in-between the state and the individual, which has been labelled variously "civil society" (Ferguson 1767) or "the public sphere" (Habermas 1962 [1991]). This realm of social life is constituted by openly accessible information and communication about matters of general concern; it springs from conversation, connection, and common action. In this realm, people assemble to discuss and engage with politics and public policy, an exercise that is essential for the functioning of democracy. Starting with Tocqueville (1848 [2000]), many scholars

have argued that the higher the quality of discourse and the larger the quantity of participation in this realm, the stronger the bonds between citizens and the better democracy is served.[1]

But media are involved in many more realms of social life than formal politics. They also deliver educational content in the arts and humanities, the social and natural sciences, medicine and health, business, and engineering and technology; information for people in many different occupations, professions, and industries; and material designed to appeal to members of particular ethnic groups, religions, and social-reform movements, as well as to sports enthusiasts, lovers of literature and the arts, and hobbyists. In all these realms, which lie outside formal politics and which are the focus of this book, media collectively create and sustain diverse communities of discourse, many of which transcend locality and knit large numbers of people together across vast distances. Thus, the development of media helps propel the transition from a traditional society composed primarily of small, local communities to a modern one composed of intersecting local and translocal communities (Higham 1974; Bender 1978; Eisenstein 1979; Thompson 1985; Starr 2004).

I study America because by the early nineteenth century, the United States was the leader in mass media, even though it was sparsely populated and possessed a small, relatively primitive economy (Starr 2004). Moreover, the United States was always an uncertain union. In 1776, it was just barely possible to imagine a federation of 13 disparate colonies – if not a fully imagined community, then a community of partial inclusion, centered on white male property-owners – only because the colonies were strung along the eastern seaboard, connected by rivers and the Atlantic, and migration between the colonies had, by the mid-eighteenth century, engendered an intercolonial creole elite whose members shared an "American" mindset. But even then, the United States was a daring project: an uneasy amalgam of 13 societies that varied greatly in terms of religion, ethnicity, politics, and economic organization and that were only loosely bound into a federation with a central government whose powers were quite limited. The new nation covered far more territory than any earlier republic and, compounding the difficulties created by distance, it was fringed by a vast

[1] But see Riley (2010) for a more skeptical view of how and under what circumstances civil society contributes to democracy *versus* authoritarianism.

wilderness that had not yet been wrested from the grasp of natives or European powers. Political elites fretted that this republic might dissolve (Nagle 1964; Wood 1969; Wiebe 1984). One founding father's words neatly summarize the situation:

> The colonies had grown up under constitutions of government so different, there was so great a variety of religions, they were composed of so many different nations, their customs, manners, and habits had so little resemblance, and their intercourse had been so rare, and their knowledge of each other so imperfect, that to unite them the same principles in theory and the same system of action was certainly a very difficult enterprise. (John Adams to Hezekiah Niles, 13 February 1818, quoted in Koch 1965: 228-229)

Elites' concern about the fragility of the new nation was well founded. Just three years after the Constitution was ratified, the Whiskey Rebellion broke out to contest federal excise taxes on distilled spirits. More generally, state legislators quickly began to formulate mercantilist policies to support their own local economies by blocking inflows of goods and money from other states, based on the assumption that different states in the American "common market" were competing over capital, labor, and entrepreneurial ingenuity (Scheiber 1972). This concern persisted until after the War of 1812. As Henry Adams (1921: 219) remarked in his History of the United States, "Until 1815, nothing in the future of the American Union was regarded as settled. As late as January, 1815, division into several nationalities was thought to be possible." Political elites, such as Secretary of the Treasury Albert Gallatin and Congressman John C. Calhoun, argued that a national plan of internal improvements – an extensive network of roads, canals, and later railroads – was necessary to overcome the nation's disintegrative tendencies (Larson 1987; Sellers 1991).

If the original 13 colonies could be conceivably, if optimistically, unified into a single society, by the middle of the nineteenth century the task of maintaining national unity was far more difficult. The nation had expanded tremendously: the Southwestern Territory was created in 1790, Louisiana was purchased in 1803 and Florida in 1821, Texas was annexed in 1845 and Oregon purchased in

1846, and the southwestern territory (comprising New Mexico, Arizona, California, Nevada, Utah, western Colorado, and part of Wyoming) was acquired between 1849 and 1854. As a result, the landmass of the US increased almost three-fold, from 823,000 square miles in 1790 to 1.72 million square miles in 1803, 2.5 million in 1846, and 3.0 million in 1860. Forging a single community from citizens of 33 states and several territories spread over such a vast and varied terrain was almost too much to expect, especially given the lack of east-west waterways, and the presence of several mountain ranges, and this era's primitive communication and transportation technologies,. It is not surprising, then, that regional differences in culture and community emerged, separating North from South, East from Midwest and West, and urban from rural. These cultural schisms were fed not only by immense territorial expansion, but also by sparse patterns of settlement along the frontier, which made possible the development of novel community structures, including experimental communal groups such as Zoar in Ohio, Nashoba in Tennessee, and St. Nazianz in Wisconsin, many of which were launched as anti-modernist responses to industrialization (Kanter 1972; Hindle and Lubar 1986). Industrialization in the Northeast, which contrasted sharply with the largely agricultural and extractive economy that prevailed elsewhere, contributed directly to cultural heterogeneity.

This grand experiment in nation-building merits our attention now, as social scientists ponder the future of heterogeneous nation-states (*e.g.*, Paul, Ikenberry, and Hall 2003) and pan-national systems like the European Union (*e.g.*, Fligstein 2008). The last century has seen many nations cleaved by civil war, scores of smaller states emerge, recurrent rumblings of discontent among sectarians in a dozen hot spots, the dismantling of the Soviet Union and the breakup of Yugoslavia, steps toward the unification of Europe into a transnational community, the possibility of that community being dismantled, and most recently, unrest in the Middle East and Eastern Europe that may redraw many national boundaries. These events, and the surprise with which both their inhabitants and external observers often respond to them, demonstrates a clear need to understand how a diverse nation can grow and thrive, and what role media play in maintaining or undermining comity among subgroups.

**Why Focus on Magazines?**

Scholars have until recently paid far less attention to magazines, especially in the early years of their history, than to newspapers and books.[2] This neglect may be due to the contemporary consensus on early magazines, which was neatly summed by one scholar as:

> …a kind of literary hinterland or vast record of not-so-exciting attempts to institutionalize literacy in the colonies and the early republic vis-à-vis correspondence and news from Europe; amateurish, heavily didactic essays and poems; reprinted speeches and dry historical biographies; and numerous extracts and miscellaneous trifles concerning a range of topics as diverse or leaden as "sleep," German etiquette, Congressional proceedings, or the condition of the Flamborough Man of War and its 20 swivel guns in 1789. In short … inaccessible, boring, or simply irrelevant. (Kamrath 2002: 498-499)

But magazines, even the earliest ones, are worthy of greater attention, for five reasons. First, compared to newspapers, magazines' contents are quite varied, so they forge social ties in realms that extend far beyond politics and public policy. Such variety in contents is fitting, as the word "magazine" is derived from the Arabic word for storehouse, *makazin*. Thus, studying magazines makes it possible to analyze a wide array of communities – not just political but also religious, literary, reform, professional, artistic, and ethnic. Second, because their contents are likely to be of more lasting interest than that of newspapers, magazines are not discarded as quickly and so have a more enduring impact. That is why magazines have long shelf lives, as a visit to any library will attest. Even in the earliest years of the magazine industry's history, publishers anticipated that their products would be bound and kept for future reference. To that end, they used better paper stock than was used for newspapers and offered subscribers indices, published at the end of each volume, to include when subscribers bound each volume for their personal libraries. Some publishers even

[2] Notable recent studies of magazines in this time period, most of which focus on literary life, include McGill (2003), Okker (2003), Nord (2004), and Gardner (2012).

offered late-arriving subscribers a full complement of past issues so they would not miss any part of a volume.

Third, because magazines circulate beyond a single town or city, they reach geographically wider audiences than most newspapers. Fourth, because helping readers interpret facts, rather than merely presenting them, magazines are excellent platforms for oppositional stances on many issues. Finally, magazines are serial publications, which allows them to develop rich reciprocal interactions with their readers, something that newspapers can do but books cannot (Okker 2003; Gardner 2012). Their serial nature not only allows magazine publishers to respond to opponents' salvos and adjust their messages to accommodate feedback from readers, it also allows them to manage impressions and modify their images to match shifts in readers' tastes and concerns, and to forge strong ties to readers through repetition. Moreover, it allows readers to be active participants in magazines, by contributing letters and other content. Thus, by the nature of their publishing cycles, magazines and readers mutually construct communal identities.

In sum, magazines' varied contents, relative permanence, broad geographic reach, interpretive mission, and serial nature endow them with the power to influence many aspects of social life: politics, commerce, religion, reform, science, work, industry, and education. In short, magazines are a key medium through which people pay attention to and understand the things that affect their everyday lives. It is not surprising that early magazine editors recognized these advantages of magazines over other print media. For instance, in his inaugural address, Thomas Condie, publisher-editor of the *Philadelphia Monthly Magazine* (1798) proclaimed magazines "the literature of the people" (Condie 1798: 5.). More grandiosely, Hugh Henry Brackenridge, editor of the *United States Magazine* (1779) declared that his publication would "in itself contain a library, and be the literary coffee-house of public conversation" (Brackenridge 1779b: 9).

**Magazines, Modernization, and Community in America**

The story of magazines, modernization, and community requires us to understand both society and culture – both the social relations surrounding goods and services, and the patterned

meanings people attribute to those goods, services, and social relations. Political scientist Karl Deutsch (1953: 92, 95) observed:

> Societies produce, select, and channel goods and services. Cultures produce, select, and channel information. … There is no community nor culture without society. And there can be no society, no division of labor, without a minimum of transfer of information, without communication.

Magazines are central to modernization and community. They are the social glue that brings together people who would otherwise never meet face-to-face, allowing readers to receive and react to the same cultural messages at the same time and, in some cases, encouraging readers to contribute to shared cultural projects.

Magazines can be both instruments of social change and tools of social control that reinforce the *status quo*. Whenever and wherever the press is free, as it has been in America since the Revolution, magazines are relatively easy to establish. As long as printers have unused capacity, any individual or group with information to disseminate, a point of view to promulgate, a community to build, or a cause to promote can arrange to publish a magazine. Thus magazines, like other communications media, can either reinforce or revolutionize social and cultural patterns (Schudson 1978; Meyerowitz 1985; Fischer 1992; Nord 2004). To the extent that start-up costs are low, magazines are accessible to people in many strata of society, not just socioeconomic elites, as tools of communication and community-building.

The story told here begins with the publication of the first magazines in America in 1741 and continues to 1860, the eve of the Civil War, that great cleaving of community, that terrible conflict between a modernizing impulse and a stubborn traditionalism. This temporal scope allows me to trace the institutionalization of this new cultural good, to see how magazines evolved from their first appearance, when they were doubtful ventures beset by seemingly intractable problems of supply and demand, into a major communications industry with its own material practices and social conventions. By 1860, magazines had assumed approximately their contemporary print form, as

booklets with bound covers, issued at regular intervals, containing a wide variety of reading matter, both verbal and pictorial, that are of more than passing interest and that can be variously narrative, descriptive, explanatory, critical, or exhortative (Wood 1949; Tebbel and Zuckerman 1991). Like their twenty-first-century counterparts, magazine editors in this period identified and wooed authors and illustrators, and worked to improve authors' contributions. Starting in 1819, writers and illustrators were increasingly likely to be remunerated. Publishers throughout this era financed production, sold advertising, managed subscriptions and newsstand sales, and oversaw distribution, while printers created the physical products. Readers paid in advance for subscriptions carried in the mail or purchased magazines when they appeared in local stores, and advertisers paid publishers handsomely to promote their goods and services to readers.

The emergence of the American magazine industry was part of the "rage for reading" (Cavallo and Chartier 1999: 26) that had begun in Europe and the British colonies in North America by the eighteenth century.[3] The proliferation of books, newspapers, and magazines engendered a modern style of reading: extensive than intensive, secular rather than religious, and seeking useful knowledge or entertainment rather than moral uplift (Cavallo and Chartier 1999; Griswold 2008).

Magazines in this era constituted an increasingly extensive network for transmitting a wide array of information and opinions; they were passed from reader to reader, and their contents were discussed in private homes and at social gatherings (Mott 1930). Magazines were an especially important source of social cohesion in this era, as the scarcity of long-distance transportation systems and the primitive state of other telecommunications media made building community over any distance an arduous task. Thus studying magazines in this era allows us to observe the modernization of America, in particular the development of translocal communities. Indeed, as one

[3] The timing of this transition is debated. Some scholars place the transition in Europe to the late Middle Ages, with the rise of scholasticism (Cavallo and Chartier 1999), others in the fifteenth century, following the development of the printing press (Eisenstein 1979). More fundamentally, whether this transition constituted an abrupt revolution or merely a gradual evolution in reading style and substance is debated (*e.g.*, Koek 1999).

historian noted, magazines fostered a nation-wide community of magazine publishers and editors: publishers served as each other's agents, exchanged copies, and did personal favors for each other:

> It was their shared status as publishers of magazines that bound these printers together … and allowed them to create a network of exchange and value around the peculiar currency of their periodicals. They bound each other's magazines, promoted them along with their own, and used them as currency to secure both credit and access to markets far beyond the reach of their local agents. They magazine allowed them to image a *national* literary culture for the first time, and if the realities on the ground lagged behind the vision, it did not prevent them from inhabiting this brave new world together. (Gardner 2012: 100; emphasis in the original)

Studying magazines in this era allows us to observe the shift toward a "society of organizations" (Perrow 1991), an "organizing society" (Meyer and Bromley 2013). The growth of magazines necessitated the development of formal organizations to manage publication and distribution. Putting out a magazine requires sustained, coordinated effort on the part of writers, illustrators, editors, printers, and publishers, which in turn requires formal organizations to manage ongoing, interdependent tasks. Moreover, magazines both benefitted from and provided benefits to affiliated organizations: churches, colleges, agricultural and educational societies, literary groups, professional bodies, and reform associations. These organizations provided readers, contributors, and financial support; in turn, magazines provided platforms for broadcasting news and opinions, thereby solidifying bonds between organizational members. Therefore, focusing on the magazine industry in this era offers great insight into the creation and entrenchment of formal organizations in American society as it moved from a traditional social order to a more modern one.

In terms of temporal scale, this study is located between *l'histoire de la longue durée* and *l'histoire événementielle* (Braudel 1980); accordingly, it can shed light on the critical conditions that gave rise to the mosaical nature of American society, as well as its melting-pot qualities. Because the starting

point is 1741, 35 years before the Revolution, the study will provide insights into the origins of contemporary translocal social groups in the professions and other specialized occupations, education, religion, social reform, and literature and the arts. Because the ending point is 1860, 120 years later, the study will demonstrate that this structuring of society into many distinct groups is a slow process and that, as Braudel (1980: 31) noted, social structures "get in the way of history, hinder its flow, and in hindering it shape it." This study's concern for historical context also fills a gap in sociological research on organizations, where history usually plays only a shady role (Zald 1990, 1996), even though most recent organizational research is oriented toward questions of time and change: grounded in longitudinal data and focused on how organizations are founded, persist, and change.

To explain the simultaneous development of a distinctive, pluralistically integrated American society containing different communities, I craft an institutional demography of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American magazines. My first concern – demographic – is to describe magazines' vital rates and the distribution of magazines along important dimensions of difference. Rates and distributions are the natural focus of demography; although most demographic work centers on individuals and families, sociologists have adopted its tools to study the evolving number and nature of organizations and their products (see Carroll and Hannan 2000 for a review). My second concern – institutional – is to describe the evolution of social, cultural, and legal institutions in this era, and to explain the mutual influences of magazines and these institutions. Sensitivity to institutions is required because history – time and place – is of fundamental important to the related processes of magazine-industry development and social modernization. This approach allows me to move beyond the rich but necessarily limited conclusions drawn from magazine histories covering short time periods or particular industry sectors (*e.g.*, Stearns 1932; Demaree 1941) and from criticism of particular literary movements or authorial communities (*e.g.*, Simpson 1954; Gardner 2012). It also transcends standard histories of the magazine industry (Mott 1930, 1938a, 1938b; Tebbel and Zuckerman 1991) by conducting quantitative analysis of a virtually complete list of magazines, supplemented by quantitative and qualitative analysis of magazines chosen randomly

from that list. The conclusions drawn from this kind of analysis are more truly representative of the industry than are conclusions drawn from analysis of nonrandom samples, such as the most prominent magazines. Studies that focus on elite-supported or large-circulation magazines provide only a limited, and often biased, picture. For example, if we focus solely on religious magazines affiliated with elite mainline Protestant denominations, we would fail to engage with the dramatic upheaval in American religion that was reflected in and supported by magazines affiliated with upstart religious groups such as the Baptists and Disciples of Christ (Hatch 1989).

Magazines, like all media, indeed all technologies, both shape their surroundings and are shaped by them (Bijker, Hughes, and Pinch 1987; Boczkowski 2004; Starr 2004). Therefore, my treatment of magazines probes reciprocal causal processes: I examine how developments in American society supported and constrained magazines, as well as how the growing number and variety of magazines promoted and directed modern community-building in America, as well as anti-modern reactions to that process. Because this analysis is concerned with the *reciprocal* influence of organizations and society, it answers calls for a return by to studying how organizations shape society (Stern and Barley 1996; Perrow 2002). In modern societies, where organizations wield tremendous power and distribute innumerable benefits: all interests – economic, political, and cultural – are pursued through formal organizations (Coser 1974). It is only through organizations that large-scale co-ordination – for modern states, capitalist economies, and civil societies – become possible. To understand the development and structuring of modern societies, then, we must understand organizations. But we generally study how organizations themselves are shaped by their environments, rather the reverse. Those who have studied the impact of organizations on society have tended to focus on large organizations (*e.g.*, Coleman 1974; Bagdikian 1983 [2004]; Perrow 2002; McChesney 2004) and to ignore the impact of small organizations (for a notable exception, see Starr 2004).

The analysis reported here is based on original data collection on over 5,362 magazines published between 1741 and 1860. The data were gathered from nine primary and over 90 secondary sources, which are described in Appendix 1. These data include virtually all magazines

published during this era, according to estimates made by Mott (1930, 1938a, 1938b), whose three-volume history of the industry is still a standard reference work. Data on magazines are complemented by data on key features of American society that affected and were affected by magazines: rapid population growth and urbanization; breakthroughs in printing and paper-making technologies; the development of magazines' principle distribution infrastructure, the postal network; the burgeoning number of religious communities and social-reform movements; the evolution of the legal, ministerial, and medical professions; and the growth of educational institutions, the increase in commercial exchange, and the rise of scientific agriculture. Appendix 1 describes how I gathered and prepared data, while Appendix 2 explains how I conducted quantitative data analyses.

Before outlining the book, I want to make sure we are (literally) on the same page. To that end, review scholarship on modernization and community, and explain how these concepts apply to America in this era.

**The Modernization of America**

"Modernization" and "modernity" are complex and often ambiguous phenomena. One historian summarized the process of becoming modern neatly as:

> …the movement away from small, localistic communities where family ties and face-to-face relationships provide structure and cohesion, toward the development of a large-scale uniform society bound together by belief in a common ideology, by a bureaucratic system, and by the operation of a large-scale, developed economy. (Brown 1976: 6-7)

As this definition indicates, modernity is an omnibus concept that is associated with many related phenomena: rationality, individualism, secularism, mechanized power, large-scale manufacturing, the exchange of goods and services in markets for money, an extensive division of labor and a highly

differentiated array of social statuses, and large, bureaucratic organizations.[4] Modernity is often contrasted with tradition. In traditional societies, which were largely hunter-gatherer or agrarian, people were members, by right or custom, of three communal institutions: the family (both kin and kith), the monopolistic religion, and the feudal or monarchical state (MacIver 1917; Weber 1968 [1978]). In modern societies, which are to varying extents manufacturing- or service-based, people are members of associative institutions, which bring together individuals who may have no connection by birth or custom but who seek to achieve common goals. Because formal, bureaucratic organizations are the most common and most important kind of associative institution, they are the fundamental building blocks of modern societies (Weber 1968 [1978]; Galambos 1970; Coleman 1974, 1981; Perrow 1991; Meyer and Bromley 2013).

The modernization of America, which began before the mid-eighteenth century and continued long after the outbreak of the Civil War, proceeded along five related axes. The first was economic. The economy shifted away from family-owned farms where people produced much of what they needed, consumed much of what they produced, bartered some of the rest, and sold the remainder for cash. Instead, the economy began to evolve toward a capitalist system of industrial production – a private, profit-seeking system where both ownership and capital investment were formally organized and where markets dictated prices (North 1961; Larson 2010). Observing western Europe, Karl Marx (1846 [1947]: 57) characterized this transformation as one in which "natural relationships" dissolved "into money relationships." The monetary system adopted by the United States after the Revolution itself reflected a modernizing temperament: the decimal currency adopted through the Coinage Act of 1792 was highly modern and rational, especially in comparison to the ancient and arcane British system of pounds, shillings, and pence (Linklater 2002).

[4] Modernization is a contested term; some scholars object to it on the grounds that it is invoked in teleological theories of social change, which have an often-unsubtle normative tone. I do not hold such a simplistic and prescriptive view. Instead, I conceive of modernization as a complex process, one that proceeded haltingly and was not by any means ineluctable or uniformly beneficial to cultural, economic, or political relations, and that may not be complete even today.

The second axis of modernization was demographic and geographic: the shift away from living on farms and in small towns toward living in larger urban areas. In many rural areas, vast sections of the nation's growing landmass were organized in an essentially modern geographic pattern. Congress's land ordinances of 1785 and 1787 directed that in the new states in the West, land was to be divided into sections precisely one mile square, with 36 sections forming a township (Treat 1910; Commager 1973; Linklater 2002). This land was distributed through sold in public auctions – modern market exchanges.

The third axis of modernization, which is closely related to the second, was social (Tönnies 1887 [1957]; Durkheim 1893 [1984]; Cooley 1909 [1923]; MacIver 1917; Weber 1968 [1978]). Social relations shifted away from undifferentiated, holistic, and personal connections rooted in common values, sentiments, and norms between people who were in similar social positions in small local settlements; they shifted instead toward differentiated, impersonal connections between people who were in different interdependent positions in large, often translocal, communities. Just as work was increasingly divided among distinct but interdependent occupations and productive effort was increasingly divided among chains of specialized enterprises, thought and action was increasingly differentiated: home was increasingly separated from work, production from consumption, the sacred from the secular, art from utility, and private life from public life. But differentiation in social relations was countered by the concentration of people, capital, and trade in a small number of large urban areas, a process that Charles Tilly (1984: 49) described as "the implosion of production into a few intensely industrial regions."

The fourth axis of modernization was technological, which was essential for both the emergence of modern social relations and the development of the modern market-based economy. technology and the modern capitalist economic system are an *ensemble* – although technology and economy are analytically distinct concepts, they cannot be fully disentangled empirically because technological change drives economic change, and economic change drives technological change (Braudel 1984: 543). Key technological changes implicated in the modernization of American society are the development of communication and transportation systems, such as the magazine

industry, as well as the rise of bureaucratic organizations, such as schools, religious organizations, reform associations, and business concerns.

The fifth axis of modernization was cultural. At the core of this cultural change was Americans' understanding of time, which shifted away from conceiving the past, present, and future as simultaneous-along-time (omni-temporal) toward conceiving of these temporal states as links in an endless chain of cause-and-effect (the past was radically separated from the present) (Inkeles and Brown 1974; Brown 1976; Anderson 1983 [1991]: 22-26). Moreover, impelled by advances in transportation and communication technologies – canals, steamships, railroads, the postal network, and, of course, magazines – the place of time in society evolved away from local and shared by community members toward translocal and standardized by outside authorities (Giddens 1990; Zboray 1993). For example, paying people to work at interdependent tasks in artisanal shops and industrial factories focused owners' and workers' attention on time, resulting in novel and highly explicit temporal constraints on everyday life – what E.P. Thompson (1967) termed time discipline. Outside the economic sphere, educational institutions inculcated in their pupils the virtues of punctuality and regularity – another form of time discipline.

A broader shift in mentality attended this shift in temporal understanding, as people moved away from fearing change toward accepting, even welcoming, it (Bellah 1968; Inkeles and Smith 1974). "Modern" people believe they can improve their circumstances, they are open to new experiences; they are ambitious for themselves and their children, so they plan and conserve time; and they are less dependent on traditional authority figures (Inkeles and Smith 1974). Thus "modern" people are calculatingly, instrumentally rational – they work toward long-term goals that are chosen in relation to larger systems of meaning, calculating both the means to their desired ends and the ends themselves (Tönnies 1887 [1957]; Weber 1968 [1978]; Swidler 1973). "Modern" people are also fundamentally individualistic (Tönnies 1887 [1957]; Cooley 1909 [1923]): in modern societies, "…the social unit … is not the group, the guild, the tribe, or the city, but the person" (Bell 1976: 16).

In sum, the modernization of America involved five related transitions: economic, technological, demographic and geographic, social, and cultural. But, as my repeated use of the words "shift away from" and "toward" indicate, these transitions began in some parts of the British colonies before 1740 and ended in most parts of the United States long after 1860 – indeed, some parts of the United States may be said, even today, to follow highly traditional ways of life. Given the great cross-sectional heterogeneity in the American experience of modernization and the lack of a smooth modernizing trajectory over time, I strive to confine my analysis to carefully delineated time periods, spheres of social life, and geographic regions, and make only the most tentative generalizations about America as a whole.

**Modernization and Community in America**

I am specifically interested in how the media create community – in particular, in how they create the kinds of geographically dispersed, *translocal* groups that characterize modern societies. The idea of community is particularly important to sociologists because it is "the most fundamental and far-reaching of all sociology's unit-ideas" (Nisbet 1966: 47). Early sociologists, from Ferdinand Tönnies (1887 [1957]) to Émile Durkheim (1893 [1984]), Charles Horton Cooley (1909 [1923]), Robert Morrison MacIver (1917), and Max Weber (1968 [1978]), were concerned about the nature of community, although they differed greatly in their assessment of the causes and nature of the social bonds holding community members together.[5] They generally agreed that in modern societies, social connections were affiliative, differentiated, and often impersonal, and linked people

[5] Early sociologists gave the two types of what I am calling community different, sometimes confusingly oppositional, labels. In the following list, the traditional category is given first and the (more) modern one second: community [*gemeinschaft*] versus society [*gesellschaft*], held together by organic *versus* mechanical solidarity (Tönnies); traditional society held together by mechanical solidarity *versus* modern society held together by organic solidarity (Durkheim); primary *versus* unlabeled (but presumably secondary) groups (Cooley); community (integral, locational) *versus* association (partial, intentional) (MacIver); and communal institution [*vergemeinschaftung*] *versus* associative institution [*vergesellschaftung*] (Weber). Throughout this book, the term "community" can mean a traditional or modern one, something in-between, or a complex combination of the two. I will strive to be clear about the characteristics the specific communities I discuss.

who were in dissimilar but interdependent positions in social structure, and often in very different geographic regions. They contrasted this to community in traditional societies, where connections were communal, undifferentiated, holistic, and personal, and where common values, sentiments, and norms linked people who were in similar social positions in the same small local settlement. My analysis will reveal that the evolution of community in America from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century was more complex and contingent than these early scholars predicted.

Overall, history generally supports these pioneering scholars' predictions. In the wake of the five modernizing transitions described above, the nature and meaning of community was altered in America between 1740 and 1860. In 1740, 95% of Americans lived on farmsteads or in small villages and towns; in these small, geographically localized communities, members were bound together by familial relations and face-to-face interactions. By 1860, not only did 20% of Americans live in large urban areas, but most Americans, including many inhabitants of rural areas, were members of large (sometimes national) translocal communities connected by shared goals, knowledge, values, and principles. These communities were active in many different arenas of social life: specialized occupations, education, religion, social reform, commerce, and literature and the arts. Moreover, by 1860, Americans' interactions in these translocal communities were increasingly mediated by formal organizations – and by magazines. Yet most early sociologists said nothing about media's holding these communities together. Only Charles Horton Cooley (1900 [1923]) made communication media an explicit focus, arguing that mass communication was critical to this transition.

Building on the work of early sociological theorists, many later scholars who studied America in this time period assumed that a largely localized, personal, and communally affiliated society (Tönnies's *gemeinschaft*) began to be transformed into a translocal, market-oriented society connected through diverse, cross-cutting impersonal affiliations (Tönnies's *gesellschaft*) (*e.g.*, Handlin 1959; Wood 1969; Rothman 1971). But this assumption of a highly teleological sequence does not accurately reflect the complex dynamics of American society. The reality is that at every point in this time period, both forms of social interaction, *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft*, were present – albeit in

different degrees and affecting different aspects of social life for people in different geographic locations and social positions (Brown 1976; Bender 1978; Rutman 1980; Tilly 1984; Prude 1983 [1999]). Localized and highly personal communal relations were not at all times, in all locations, or in all arenas of social life replaced with translocal and impersonal associative relations; instead, the development of *gemeinschaft* at some times, in some locations, and in some arenas of social life actually reinforced *gesellschaft*. For example, Frederick Law Olmsted, who is now best known as the codesigner of new York City's Central Park but was also an insightful social critic, observed in his tour of the South between 1853 and 1861 that most whites in Mississippi still wore homespun clothes and most whites in Tennessee went barefoot in winter (Olmsted 1862 [1953]). Change coexisted with the absence of change: as Fernand Braudel (1981: 28) argued, there is a "layer of stagnant history" that persists in all modernizing societies and resists the penetration of *gesellschaft* (see also Braudel 1982: 229). Or, as one American historian put it, the transition from traditional to modern "was always taking place but never quite completed when the country as a whole is considered" (Tryon 1917: 243).

In the decades before the Revolution, as the colonies became more settled and "civilized," traditionalism began to re-emerge (Brown 1976). On the frontier, the earliest settlers quickly reverted to traditional forms of activity: hunting and subsistence farming, making virtually all of what they needed at home rather than purchasing it from merchants, buying and selling little, if anything, in purely local markets. In political life, the Sabbatarian movement became "America's first great anti-modern crusade" (John 1990: 564) in the early nineteenth century. In the rapidly industrializing towns of New England, old and new ways of living and working co-existed in an uneasy tension (Prude 1983 [1999]).

A shift away from modernity and toward tradition was especially noticeable in the South (Genovese 1961 [1989]; Fox-Genovese and Genovese 1983). As cotton supplanted tobacco on Southern plantations, the old quasi-aristocratic system was reinforced and revived (Chaplin 1993). The Southern plantation elite came to view agriculture and rural life as ideal and commerce, industry, and urban life as vulgar (Coulter 1930), a decidedly anti-modernist sentiment that they shared with

the European nobility, who a century earlier had rejected bourgeois claims that economic success should count as much as birth, honor, and tradition (Berger 1986). The growing population of slaves was excluded from modernization: almost all were agricultural laborers or household servants who rarely left the confines of their masters' plantations and thus had highly localized webs of social relations; the few slaves who worked outside agriculture were confined to traditional labor-intensive crafts like carpentry and masonry. Some have argued that the Civil War was, fundamentally, a crisis caused by incompatible social trajectories, with the rapidly modernizing, urbanizing, and industrializing North pitted against the stubbornly traditional, rural, and agrarian South (Luraghi 1972; Foner 1980).

**The Path Forward: Outline of the Book**

I tell the story of magazines, modernization, and community in America in two parts. The first, which is laid out in chapters 2 to 4, examines the history and operations of American magazines – their nature and the determinants of their successes and failures.

*Chapter 2: History.* The earliest American magazines were both few in number and highly precarious ventures. Not until after peace was restored did the industry gain a firm foothold on America. By the 1820s, the industry was flourishing (Tebbel and Zuckerman 1991), growing explosively and becoming popular as tools for social organizing. By 1860, over 1,000 magazines were in print; many had long lives and some attracted large nation-wide followings.

From their original base in three Atlantic cities, Philadelphia, Boston, and New York, magazines expanded across the continent. The industry became geographically dispersed in part because dramatically advances in printing technology and the spread of printing presses across the continent lowered barriers to entry and made it possible to publish magazines almost anywhere. But, at the same time, magazine publishing became concentrated in New York City, due to the metropolis's deep pools of cultural and financial resources: by the 1850s, it was home to 25% of the magazines then in print.

American magazines in this era were highly eclectic in two regards: the contents of the typical magazine were varied, and many different genres of magazines were published. Moreover, the composition of the magazine industry changed greatly over time. In the eighteenth century, most magazines were general-interest periodicals that published short articles and longer essays on politics, religion, manners and society, literature and art, science and education, and history and geography, as well as poetry and sketches. By the 1820s, religious magazines had come to outnumber general-interest magazines, and the number of literary magazines and specialty medical journals had increased dramatically. At mid-century, religious magazines continued to dominate, followed by general-interest magazines, and agricultural magazines had outgrown literary magazines and medical journals; they were augmented by sizeable numbers of magazines devoted to social reform, business, natural science, music, law, and humor.

*Chapter 3: Material and cultural support for magazines.* Perhaps the most fundamental fact standing in the way of an American magazine industry in the eighteenth century was that the potential audience for magazines was tiny. The colonies were sparsely settled, and only a few inhabitants lived in urban areas near the printers who produced magazines and the merchants who sold them. Moreover, the potential reading public had little spare cash or leisure time to spend on such ephemera as magazines. Over the next 120 years, the population exploded, from less than one million in 1740 to over 30 million in 1860, while the number of urban areas (places with over 2,500 inhabitants) rose from 36 in 1760, the first year reliable data are available on urbanization, to 422 in 1860. This phenomenal increase in the potential reader base made it possible for a wide variety of magazines to thrive.

The evolution of basic production and distribution technologies – specifically, printing technology and the postal system – also facilitated the magazine industry's expansion. In the earliest years, the scarcity of printing presses greatly hampered publishing efforts. The situation was exacerbated by the fact that mid-eighteenth-century printing presses were slow, cumbersome, manually powered mechanisms. By the 1830s, smoothly operating, high-volume steam-powered presses had spread to every state and several territories. The earliest magazines' circulations were

highly local because they were distributed primarily through nearby merchants. But after passage of the Postal Act of 1794, magazines were increasingly carried through the mails. Wide distribution was facilitated by the exponential growth of the postal network, from 31 offices and fewer than 1,500 miles in 1740 to over 28,000 offices and 240,000 miles in 1860 (Kielbowicz 1989; John 1995). Improvements in the speed and reliability of mail transport kept pace with growth of the postal system, as transportation shifted from horseback over unpaved pathways to horse-drawn carriages over better-maintained roads, and as the postal system came to rely more and more on steamboats, canals, and railroads.

The development of copyright law and cultural and economic responses to those changes also affected the magazine industry. Copyright law was nonexistent before 1790 (Bugbee 1967; Patterson 1968; Everton 2005) and almost never applied to magazines until long after the Civil War (Charvat 1968; Haveman and Kluttz 2014). This presented early magazines with both an opportunity and a problem: although they benefitted from the freedom to "extract" much of their contents from other publications and so gain access to a wide variety of free material, they had no legal protection for any original material developed by their contributors, and so could not easily differentiate themselves from rival periodicals. This situation was exacerbated by the fact that in the eighteenth century, the few Americans who were authors were conceived of as gentlemen-scholars, not paid professionals. But following cultural shifts in Britain, which were promoted by the development of copyright law there, American writers grew in numbers and began to conceive of themselves as professionals who deserved both respect for their skill and remuneration for their output. This cultural shift led magazines to pay authors for their contributions, starting in 1819. In turn, this economic innovation provided magazines with a wealth of original material and made them important outlets for aspiring professional authors.

*Chapter 4: Magazine operations.* The men (no women) who launched magazines in the eighteenth century were a select few, part of the socioeconomic elite – men like printers Benjamin

Franklin and Isaiah Thomas, and Methodist Bishop Francis Asbury.[6] But by the time magazines had become a well-established part of American life, their founders had become much more like "everyman" – not only members of the socioeconomic elite, but also many people of middling social stature, like novelist Timothy Shay Arthur and spiritualist Uriah Clark, who used magazines to make their reputations and (for a lucky few) their fortunes. Moreover, magazine entrepreneurship became an increasingly organizationally sponsored activity, which reflects the rise of formal organizations created by people banding together in religious, reform, educational, literary, and professional communities.

Magazine founders' espoused goals for their new ventures evolved over time. These goals were expressed in prospectuses and editorial statements, which were aimed at convincing both the reading public and potential contributors of magazines' value and so reveal the cultural schemas underpinning magazines. The vast majority of magazine founders asserted that they sought to benefit society at large or support a particular community. Only a tiny fraction admitted that they sought to earn a profit or otherwise benefit themselves; so strong was the distaste for self-benefit that some sought to demonstrate selflessness by promising that any profits their magazines earned would go to a good cause. While early magazine founders sought to benefit society at large, later ones promoted the interests of particular communities – usually defined in terms of geography or religion, more rarely in terms of demography, occupation, or politics. Thus, although magazines started out as forces for the unification of the colonies into a single society, they soon reflected divisions in this society along geographic, religious, demographic, occupational, and political lines.

Magazine founders used a variety of tactics to legitimate their new ventures. Most basically, they provided detailed explanations of what their publications would contain and why these contents would be valuable to potential subscribers. Such explanations often focused on the enduring value of what magazines would contain. Some magazines were legitimated by explicating ties to

[6] Printers had high social status during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries: they were highly skilled craftspeople, published official documents for state authorities and often served as postmasters, and were well remunerated, with earnings similar to merchants and others in non-manual occupations (Wroth 1931; Bailyn 1960; Botein 1981).

prominent others – politicians, learned clergy, and college professors – which made observable the "invisible communities" (Park 1940) of subscribers, thereby solidifying the bonds between them and enticing outsiders to join them. Others published encomiums from prominent people; such endorsements allowed founders to "borrow" status from the prominent people who vouched for them and their publications.

The second part of the story of magazines, modernization, and community focuses on the push and pull reflected in and sustained by magazines – the centripetal movement toward a common center and the centrifugal movement toward many distinct, often intersecting, sometimes opposing sub communities. This analysis highlights the role that magazines played in promoting discourses replete with principles, symbols, and ideas that community members used to "solve" problems of identity and meaning (Swidler 1986). To elucidate this process, chapters 5 through 7 examine three of the most important areas of social life influenced by magazines – religion, social reform, and the economy – and reveal magazines' role in fostering the pluralistic integration that characterized American society in this era: the awareness and acceptance (sometimes grudging) of others who are different from you (Higham 1974). Magazines supported a society that was, paradoxically, unified in a basic way by its distinctiveness from European societies; in doing so, this part of the book will answer long-standing calls to analyze the making of public culture, which stands at the center of the American historical narrative (Bender 1986: 122).

*Chapter 5: Religion.* Religious heterogeneity has long been the hallmark of America. Before the Revolution, America was home to a wide array of faiths. Although nine of the thirteen British colonies had established (state-sanctioned and state-supported) churches in 1776, a large minority of inhabitants belonged to over a dozen "dissenting" denominations. Religious diversity in America became even greater after the Revolution when state churches were disestablished, making it easier for other faiths to gain adherents. Waves of immigration brought more Catholics, Anabaptists, and Lutherans into the mix. Finally, three series of religious revivals further increased the number of distinct faiths, as the leaders of revivalistic religious movements clashed with established religious

authorities and seceded from their communities to found dozens of new faiths. Religious participation increased as new upstart churches and counter-movements within existing churches aggressively courted adherents.

Because of the wide variety of denominations in America, religion in this era was replete with disputes about the nature of faith, which took the form of struggles over meaning, authority, and boundaries. The high level of religious rancor prompted Timothy Flint, prominent western minister and author, to charge that "Nine pulpits in ten in our country are occupied chiefly in the denunciation of other sects" (Flint 1830; quoted in Mott 1930: 369). Religious magazines proved to be powerful platforms for religious partisans. Vicious battles were fought in an ever-increasing number of scholarly theological reviews and newsy magazines for the laity. These debates produced a torrent of talk about faith: news, loud praise and even louder denunciations, emotional exhortations, and eloquent arguments, which generated much material for the religious press. Revivalists were particularly likely to use magazines to reinforce their messages, as these leaders of new religious movements sought to reinforce their charismatic authority over recent converts. Indeed, over half of the religious magazines in this era that had an explicit denominational connection were affiliated with revivalist faiths like the Methodists, Baptists, and Disciples of Christ. By 1830, religious periodicals had become "the grand engine of a burgeoning religious culture, the primary means of promotion for, and bond of union within, competing religious groups" (Hatch 1989: 125-126).

Religion was a modernizing force in this era (Bellah 1968): the Protestant denominations that dominated the field of religion in nineteenth-century America pioneered the development of nation-wide communities in two ways (Goldstein and Haveman 2013). First, they built modern bureaucracies, with nested national, regional, and local structures, to manage clergy, recruit and retain members, and preach to the unchurched in what became a nationally organized field of religion. Second, they created large and well-funded formal organizations to produce and distribute magazines, tracts, and Bibles across the nation; these were the second example of bureaucracy in

America, after the post office and before the railroads, and they pioneered the modern non-profit corporation (Hall 1998; Nord 2004).

Religious communities competed both locally and nationally by publishing magazines to recruit and retain adherents. Moreover, competitive mobilization through magazines depended on the extent to which rivalries between faiths played out simultaneously in multiple markets. The analysis presented in this chapter shows that three related trends – the development of a pluralistic nation-wide field of religion, the competition engendered by pluralism, and the rise of internal competition from schismatic groups – had independent effects on the growth of denominational magazine publishing. But this analysis also shows that magazine-publishing efforts grew faster when and where both competition and resources were high: the impetus to mobilize in the face of competition drove religious groups to act only when and where they had the capacity to mobilize substantial resources.

*Chapter 6: Social Reform.* Between 1740 and 1860, America witnessed a proliferation of associations that advocated a wide array of social reforms: abolition of slavery; temperance in the consumption of alcohol; reform of prostitutes and seamen; strict observance of the Sabbath; protection for widows and orphans; support for Indians and free blacks; relief for debtors and paupers; care of the insane, blind, and deaf and dumb; political and economic rights for women and workers; non-violence and an end to war; reform of the penal system and elimination of capital punishment; and vegetarianism. Struck by this, Tocqueville famously stated that "Americans of all ages, all conditions, and all minds constantly unite…if it is a question of bringing to light a truth or developing a sentiment with the support of a great example, they associate (Tocqueville 1848 [2000]: 489).

The supporters of virtually all social-reform causes followed the example set by religious groups by seizing on magazines as tools to mobilize the populace in support of their causes. Specialized social-reform journals, religious magazines, and general-interest magazines all conveyed information about meetings and public events; confessions of former slave-owners, meat-eaters, and drunkards; articles bemoaning the plight of slaves, widows, orphans, the poor, the blind, the deaf,

and the families of drunkards; fiery essays demanding that those who were wronged be righted; inspirational poetry, moving short stories, and serialized novels; and updates on legal initiatives.

Social-reform movements supported the magazine industry in three ways. First and most directly, social-reform associations launched magazines. Second, social movements built large bases of interested readers, as the members of social-reform associations were, by virtue of their connection to associations, subscribers to association publications. Third, reform-association magazines published poetry, fiction, and non-fiction that vividly captured the plight of the unfortunate, which stimulated demand for magazines. Perhaps the most famous example is Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, which was serialized in the anti-slavery weekly *The National Era* before it was issued in book form.

For their part, the magazines affiliated with social movements helped modernize them. Magazines helped frame and thus theorize movements – they helped observers make sense of the principles on which movements in this era were built, and so made movement goals appear both appropriate and acceptable (Strang and Meyer 1993). In doing so, magazines reflected as well as created cultural frames around social structures and the ways they might be reformed (Gamson *et al.* 1992; Gamson and Wolfsfeld 1993). In addition, magazines bound together far-flung communities of activists, making possible modern social movements – those that are sustained, formally organized, transcend neighborhoods, and aimed at distant targets such as the state (Tilly 1986, 1995; Tarrow 1998).

A quantitative analysis focused on the anti-slavery movement, one of the most important in this era, shows the independent effects of religion and magazines on social-movement organizing, and reveals that magazines had substantial effects on social-reform organizing net of their support from social-reform associations. Thus, the development of magazines was a cause, not merely a consequence or companion, of the growth of antislavery organizations. Second, this analysis extends our thinking about the relationship between religion and reform from a narrow focus on the *strength* of religious belief to include the *content* of religious beliefs. Specifically, churches with

different theological orientations had different relationships to antislavery societies: this-worldly churches supported them, while other-worldly churches undermined them.

*Chapter 7: The economy.* Between 1740 and 1860, the American economy expanded greatly, propelled by the shift from a mostly traditional agricultural and trading economy toward a modern mixture of commerce, manufacturing, and agriculture (North 1961; McCusker and Menard 1985). The path forward was highly turbulent, punctuated by numerous panics, recessions, and embargoes. Although agriculture was always, during this period, the largest sector of the economy, it became less dominant by 1860, in terms of both the value of production and the number of Americans involved. Agriculture also became increasingly intertwined with commercial markets in urban areas and with industrial manufacturing – not just for farm implements but also for household goods. For its part, industrialization proceeded unevenly – first and fastest in the Northeast, later in the West, and very haltingly in the South. On the eve of the Civil War, the manufacturing concerns that had sprung up had changed Americans' personal trajectories, as farmers' daughters flocked to factories in New England, and farmers' sons and immigrants to iron works in the Middle States and meatpacking plants in the West. The development of a national market for agricultural products and the rise of artisanal and industrial manufacturing to produce goods for personal and farm use was accompanied by a rise in long-distance commercial exchange.

Both business and agricultural magazines played roles in American economic development during this period. But business magazines were few in number and of limited importance until the 1850s; the only exception was bank note reporters and counterfeit detectors, which had mixed effects. On the one hand, this subgenre facilitated commerce and by helping bankers, merchants, farmers, artisans, manufacturers, tradespeople, and consumers assess the quality of the bewildering array of bank notes they were offered, most of which were issued by the hundreds of state-chartered banks and which were easily counterfeited (Dillistin 1949; Mihm 2007). Thus, this subgenre wove webs of social relations between many different types of economic actors that often covered large territories. On the other hand, these periodicals undermined economic actors' trust in a basic medium of exchange, and in doing so created barriers to modern commerce.

Agricultural magazines had considerable impact on the economy, in part because agriculture was throughout this time period the largest sector of the economy, but also because, starting in the 1820s, agricultural magazines were numerous, broadly distributed, and widely read. The rise of an almost-modern "scientific" agriculture to boost production and keep previously cleared farmland in use – which involved rotating and fertilizing crops, tilling to reduce the erosion of precious topsoil, using new mechanical equipment like rakes and reapers to speed up work, and careful breeding of plants and animals – was supported by almost 400 magazines, some with large nation-wide circulations.[7] For instance, the *American Agriculturist* (1842-1931) had 80,000 subscribers in 1860, while *Country Gentleman* (1852-1955) had over 20,000. In addition to practical advice and information, many agricultural magazines offered farmers and their families an eclectic array of entertainment. Dozens of magazines were launched to meet the needs of the increasing number of farmers who specialized in particular crops and livestock, like silk growers, cotton planters, and fruit orchardists.

**Conclusion**

Magazines both reflected and effected slow and gradual changes to American society rather than abrupt and radical ones. The emergence and expansion of the magazine industry between 1740 and 1860 was made possible by a series of related contextual shifts that together entrenched magazines in American print culture: population growth, especially the concentration of people in urban areas, increasing numbers of whom participated in market-based monetary exchanges and worked in specialized occupations; advances in printing technologies and the postal system; the gradual development of copyright law, the emergence of the cultural conception of the author-as-professional, and the practice of paying authors for their contributions. Several other trends fostered magazines' growth and legitimization: the disestablishment of state religions, waves of immigration, and outbreaks of religious revivalism that together created a pluralistic but highly

[7] Circulation figures were generally reported by publishers and editors, and so are likely to be biased upward. But they are all that are available, since the Audit Bureau of Circulations (now the Alliance for Audited Media) did not start work until 1914.

competitive national religious field; the efflorescence of a wide array of voluntary social-reform societies and the modernization of social-reform movements, many of which were supported by religious institutions and theologies; the growth of commerce; and the rise of proto-scientific agriculture.

In turn, magazines changed three key areas of American social life: religion, reform, and the economy. These changes came slowly, as the costs of manufacturing and distributing magazines dropped and the postal distribution network expanded and became cheaper, as elites figured out what to do with magazines (argue about politics and culture), and as non-elites figured out how magazines could be used to promote their own activities and interests (religion, social reform, agriculture, commerce, specialized manufacturing occupations, cohesion among non-English-speaking immigrants, and new developments in science and industry). It was non-elites who pushed the magazine industry away from politics and serious literature toward religion, social reform, agriculture, ethnic cohesion, and occupational and scientific development. But elites did not abandon magazines; instead, they continued to promote their own agendas through them.

The complex and highly contingent nature of modernization in America over the 120 years surveyed here has implications for our understanding of community. Social solidarity did not disappear as modernization proceeded; instead, it was transformed: individuals joined groups that were often parochial in their interests (communities of faith or practice), sometimes local in geographic scope (communities of place), and other times universal or cosmopolitan in their interests and scope (nation-wide communities of faith and purpose). Most importantly, membership in these groups was often literally mediated by magazines: magazines were the social glue keeping many different communities together, especially when they could not meet face-to-face because they were so numerous and geographically dispersed.