political influence.” Motives end up playing a secondary role; indeed, much like in resource mobilization theory, grievances appear to be held more or less constant, except in that they are shaped by organizational “scripts” and “logics of appropriateness.” Means, however, by which Clemens intends organizational capacity and innovation to pursue such motivations, are the lynchpin of this story. In the end, her argument that interest-group politics emerges out the efforts of women, farmers, and labor groups to abandon strict party allegiance in favor of voting in accord with policy preferences, is convincing.

Nonetheless, this ends up being a tough story to tell, in part because it is not a story at all, but a bunch of stories (of three different groups in three different states) that had to be cut and pasted together. The somewhat odd result of Clemens’ efforts to get these stories to converge is a typology of state polities. One would have expected the stories to cohere around groups rather than states, given the earlier emphasis on the unusual success of women in the policy arena and the thematic hypothesis that this success resulted from women’s groups’ greater capacity for organizational innovation. With this later emphasis on variation between states, Clemens allows political opportunities to steal the (causal) show, and undercuts her argument that organizational innovation between groups is most significant in explaining differential policy outcomes. This shift would have been less problematic had Clemens taken more advantage of recent efforts by Kriesi, Tarrow, McAdam, and others to bring conceptual clarity to the broad notion of political opportunities; her use of the term is somewhat fuzzy. In addition, the relationship between opportunities and innovation could have been better developed to balance the early theoretical claims and the later analysis.

Nonetheless, even if the narrative and the causal pathways are sometimes difficult to follow, Clemens has written an important and illuminating book. Her basic empirical claim, that ordinary but organized citizens played a key role in transforming U.S. politics from a party to an interest group basis, is a significant contribution to U.S. political history. Moreover, the progress she makes toward the development of a theory of institutional change is impressive; this book will likely serve as a useful model for future work in historical and political sociology.

Nation and Commemoration: Creating National Identities in the United States and Australia.

Reviewer: CONNIE L. MCNEELY, Arizona State University

The idea of having a nationality is typically taken for granted today, to the extent that national identity is seen as “natural.” Indeed, it is considered a basic “right” in
the contemporary world community. But what makes a nation; i.e., what constitutes a national identity? In *Nation and Commemoration*, Lyn Spillman explores this issue through a comparative historical examination of national identity formation in Australia and the United States. Framed by the concept of "imagined community," her insightful analysis tracks the discourse associated with commemorative celebrations as representations of national identity over time.

Most views on nation building and identity formation come from experiences of older European and newer post-colonial nation-states. This book adds to our understanding by drawing on the historical experiences of "settler" countries. In settler countries, such as Australia and the U.S., "we can see more clearly the way nations become meaningful forms of social organization, and the conditions that make plausible symbolic repertoires expressing national identities."

Explaining national identity in terms of cultural production, Spillman combines three aspects of cultural analysis — symbolic repertoire, context of production, and discursive field — to examine similarities and differences in the development of Australian and U.S. national identities. Her approach is based on the notion of a cultural center characterized by a "dominant repertoire" of symbols, practices, beliefs, rhetorical tropes, emblems, and values that represent and constitute the nation. The analysis itself centers around four events: the centennials in the U.S. in 1876 and Australia in 1888, and bicentennials in the U.S. in 1976 and Australia in 1988. "Shared spectacles," or public celebrations, such as centennial and bicentennial commemorations, can be seen as representations and affirmations of collective identity. In fact, although we are told how general models are drawn upon in the cultural production of nationality, more direct discussion of the forces behind the celebrations would have been useful, providing background for understanding nation building as both a general and specific process. Spillman assumes the holding of commemorations and appearance of organizers, but who made the decisions to hold these celebrations, and with what motivations? The organizers were discussed in somewhat "operative" terms without much reference to the underlying impetus for the celebrations. While not the focus of the study per se, a brief discussion of this issue would help to explain nation building as an institutionalized process and, also, would provide a foundation for delineating the context of national identity formation and change that is central to the analysis.

Spillman's examination of persistence and variation in national identity reveals how talk about what it means to be a nationality is drawn from particular repertoires of meaning. She effectively demonstrates that, at various times, emphasis was differentially given to land, elites, liberty and prosperity, assimilation and diversity, and founding moments. Also, changing meanings of "rhetorical markers" (e.g., diversity) were reflected over time. Commemoration organizers employed symbolic repertoires as expressions of national identity accordingly. For example, international recognition, founding moments, general history, political culture, the land, diversity, and spectacle were symbols of national identity in Australian
and U.S. bicentennials. Tracking these elements, Spillman shows how the symbolic repertoires differed between the two countries more in the bicentennials than in the centennials.

She also shows that some expressions remained salient over time. However, the nonpresence of particular elements (e.g., identification with powerful others) was sometimes interpreted as indications of their implausibility as national identifiers. Yet, continued existence of related cultural markers outside of the commemorations suggests caution about such encompassing assessments. On occasion, Spillman's language was not as exacting as it might have been, that is, indicating nonpresence of some elements whereas, in fact, relative emphasis was the issue. However, her point is well taken; emphasis was placed on some elements as opposed to others at different times. Moreover, differences in meanings attached to the “nation” were “matters of connotation rather than denotation, plausibility and richness rather than truth or falsity.”

Spillman suggests two reasons for similarities and differences in Australian and U.S. expressions of national identity over time: comparative production context, or changes in center/periphery relations in the production of talk about national identity, and comparative salience of world position and integration, or differing relevance in concerns about national integration and geopolitical standing. In both centennials and bicentennials, talk of national identity was formed within a discursive field marked by geopolitical relations and shared national qualities and experiences. These dimensions constituted the imagined community of the nation. By placing them in comparative historical context, Spillman offers us an understanding of differences and similarities in Australian and U.S. national identities, and of national identity formation in general.

Fate and Fortune in Rural China: Social Organization and Population Behavior in Liaoning, 1774-1873.


Reviewer: WANG FENG, University of California, Irvine

This is a landmark study that breaks new ground and establishes new standards in several fields: social history, historical demography and sociology, and the studies of the Chinese society. It asks and simultaneously answers fundamental social science and demographic questions in a manner that is both theoretically exciting and empirically sophisticated. It, for the first time, provides a detailed and systematic profile of the basic features of the Chinese peasants demographic behavior during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It also links these demographic behavioral features to social organizations, and, most fascinatingly, elegantly demonstrates