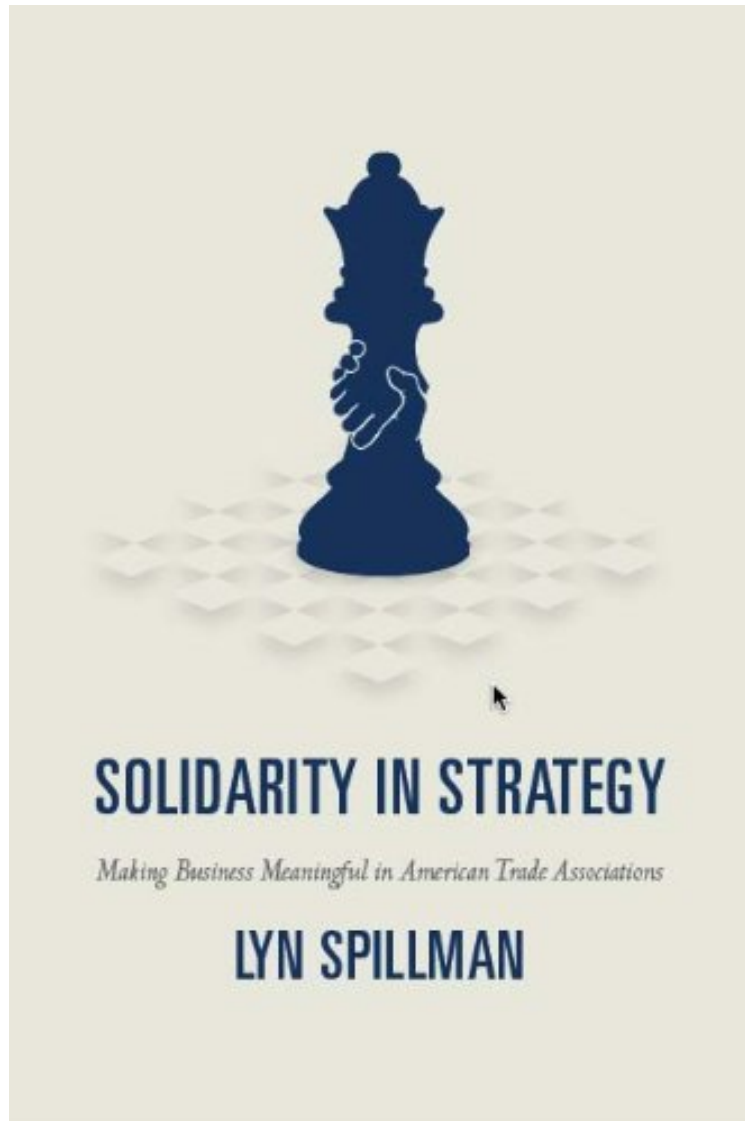


# Solidarity in Strategy: Making Business Meaningful in American Trade Associations

*Lyn Spillman*

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**Lyn Spillman : Solidarity in Strategy: Making Business Meaningful in American Trade Associations** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Solidarity in Strategy: Making Business Meaningful in American Trade Associations:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Excellent Book!By Richard SwedbergThis book is important because it brings attention to a phenomenon in U.S. life that so far has been largely ignored, namely business associations. It also does this in a theoretically innovative way that suggests a new - and more sociological - way of

looking at the way capitalism operates. The research is based on a Guggenheim. Spillman's data on the approximately four thousand business associations that stand at the center of her study allows her to explore what turns out to be a very complex phenomenon. She excels in interpreting and making sense of this complexity in a number of ingenious ways, drawing not only on ideas about solidarity (sociology) but also on interest (economics). The decision to take interests seriously, but to do so from a deeply sociological/cultural view, is very impressive. The end result suggests that not only business associations but also capitalism operates in a far more non-stereotypical way than the usual analysis suggests. Yes, profit and interest are involved; but so are meaning and culture and solidarity.

Popular conceptions hold that capitalism is driven almost entirely by the pursuit of profit and self-interest. Challenging that assumption, this major new study of American business associations shows how market and non-market relations are actually profoundly entwined at the heart of capitalism. In *Solidarity in Strategy*, Lyn Spillman draws on rich documentary archives and a comprehensive data set of more than four thousand trade associations from diverse and obscure corners of commercial life to reveal a busy and often surprising arena of American economic activity. From the Intelligent Transportation Society to the American Gem Trade Association, Spillman explains how business associations are more collegial than cutthroat, and how they make capitalist action meaningful not only by developing shared ideas about collective interests but also by articulating a disinterested solidarity that transcends those interests. Deeply grounded in both economic and cultural sociology, *Solidarity in Strategy* provides rich, lively, and often surprising insights into the world of business, and leads us to question some of our most fundamental assumptions about economic life and how cultural context influences economic.

“Lyn Spillman does for trade associations what Alexis de Tocqueville did for civic ones, carefully investigating a wide range of associations in the United States—with surprising results. In describing how these associations band members together and give rise to group identities, *Solidarity in Strategy* breaks new ground in the discussion of the cultures of capitalism.”