

Book Review

July 2015

Community and the Politics of Place

Kemmis, Daniel, The University of Oklahoma Press, 150 pages, 1990.

Summary
Published Reviews

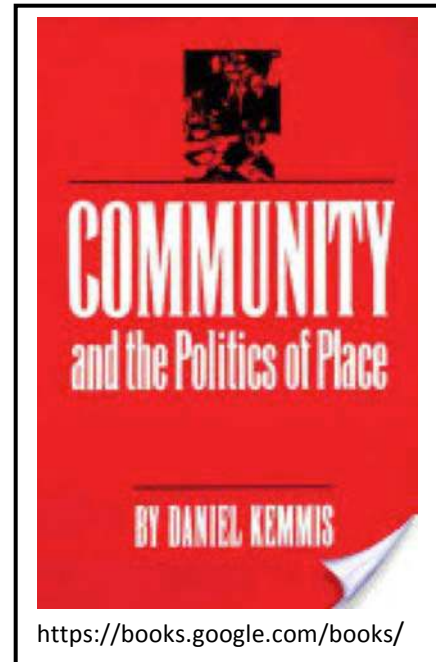
Summary

Daniel Kemmis comes at his book from the perspective of a Montanan. He is a former elected official, city and state, an author and a thoughtful person with a sense of history and its relationship to contemporary politics. This short book is long on stimulation.

Mr. Kemmis believes that place matters and the sense of place drives the sense of community and politics, as his title suggests. His book is highly readable in a short sitting so the summary will focus on key points rather than catalogue his many thoughtful and provocative ideas.

He opens by presenting the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution and noting its similarity to the constitution of the State of Montana. He adds: "But before getting down to the nitty gritty [of the Constitution], the people of Montana had something else to say: 'We the people of Montana, *grateful to God for the quite beauty of our state, the grandeur of its mountains, the vastness of its rolling plains, and desiring to secure for ourselves...*'". He asks why did the authors of the state's constitution give thanks for their landscape? He opines that the added language is not gratuitous verbiage but a sincere statement of their appreciation for the place of their being.

His conclusion is the "No real culture...can exist in abstraction from place." His discussion of the place-based differences of the Founders and the implications for public policy is profound and enlightening. A good read for city-builders.



Daniel Kemmis (born c. 1946) is an [American attorney](#) and the [author](#) of several books including:

- *Community and the Politics of Place*, University of Oklahoma Press, 1990. [ISBN 0-8061-2227-7](#)
- *The Good City and the Good Life: Renewing the American Community*, Houghton Mifflin, 1995. [ISBN 0-395-68630-X](#)
- *This Sovereign Land: A New Vision for Governing the West*, Island Press, 2001. [ISBN 1-55963-842-7](#)

He was born and raised on a [farm](#) in [eastern Montana](#). He is a graduate of [Harvard University](#) and the [University of Montana School of Law](#). He has formerly served as [mayor](#) of [Missoula, Montana](#) (1990–1996), [speaker](#) and [minority leader](#) of the [Montana House of Representatives](#) (1983–1985) and director of the [Center for the Rocky Mountain West](#) at the [University of Montana](#).

In 1995, he was named as one of [Utne Reader's](#) 100 Visionaries.^[1]

Source:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daniel_Kemmis

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Community and the Politics of Place

by [Daniel Kemmis](#)

4.08 of 5 stars 4.08 · [rating details](#) · 38 ratings · 5 [reviews](#)

“Thomas Jefferson envisioned a nation of citizens deeply involved in public life. Today Americans are lamenting the erosion of his ideal. What happened in the intervening centuries? Daniel Kemmis argues that our loss of capacity for public life (which impedes our ability to resolve crucial issues) parallels our loss of a sense of place. A renewed sense of inhabitation, he m [...more](#)”

http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/577330.Community_and_the_Politics_of_Place

Making Community and Place: Commonalities and Contrasts in the Work of Daniel Kemmis and Christopher Alexander

David Seamon

“As illustrated by the ideas of political activist Daniel Kemmis (1990, 1995) and architect Christopher Alexander (1985, 1987; et al., 1977), there is a practical movement afoot in public policy and environmental design that attempts to understand useful societal change from the viewpoint of wholes healing themselves.”

http://www.arch.ksu.edu/seamon/alex_kemmis.htm

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