

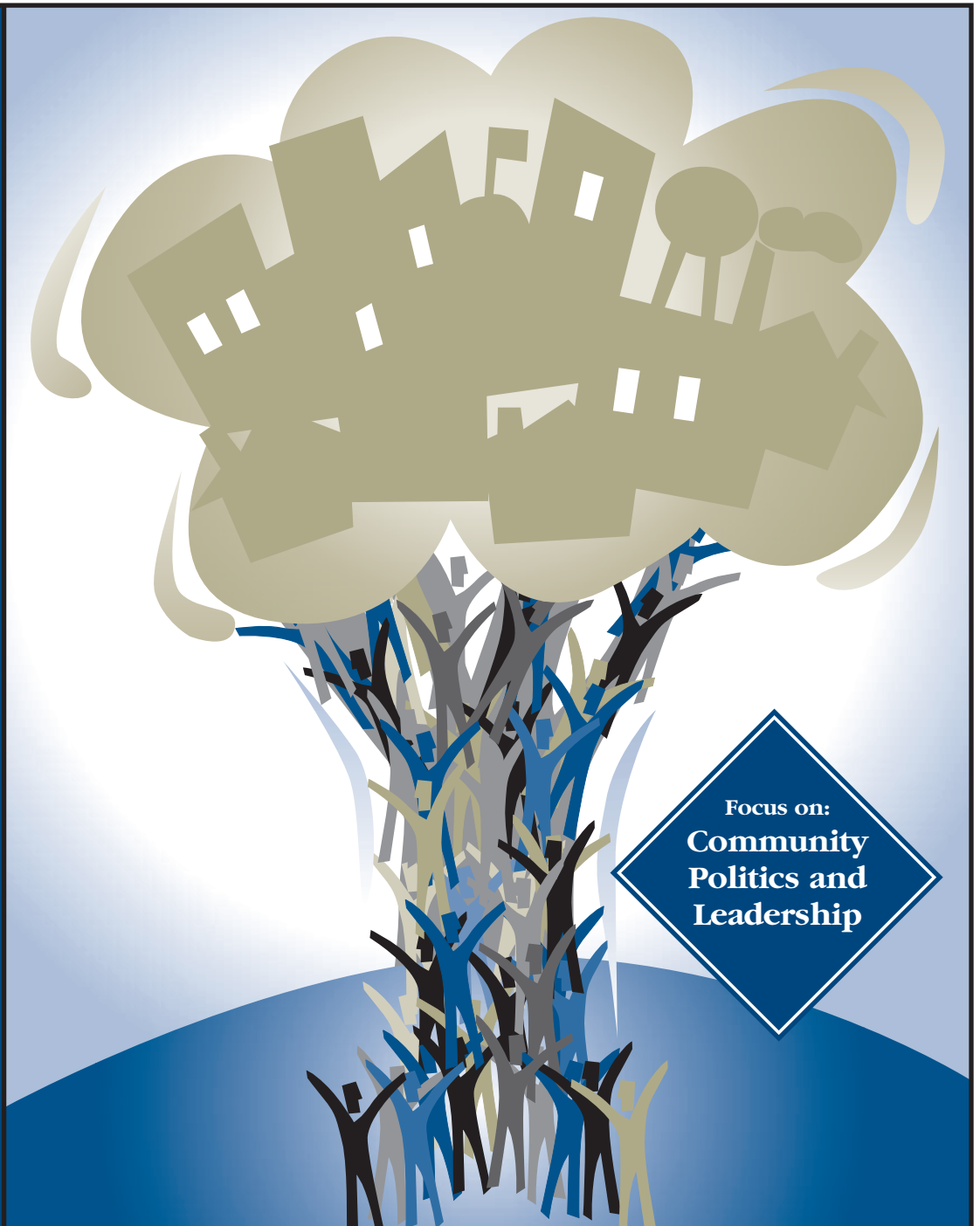
CONNECTIONS

VOLUME XIII

ISSUE 2

March 2003

- **The Little Republics of American Democracy**
.....page 2
- **A Question Revisited: What's in a Name?**
.....page 7
- **Reflections on the Practice of Community Politics**
.....page 9
- **Inactive Communities: Lessons from Rebuilding**
.....page 13
- **Shared Learning with Uniontown: Lessons in Community Development**
.....page 16
- **From Dialogue to Action in Tajikistan**
.....page 19
- **Catalysts for Change: Toward Leaderful Communities**
.....page 23
- **Make the Leap**
.....page 26
- **Books Worth Reading**
.....page 29



Books Worth Reading

The Kettering Foundation's researchers, associates, and program staff seek to keep abreast of current literature on public life and democratic culture. Following are a few recently published books that we have found to be relevant to the foundation's work.

All of these books are available at bookstores, libraries, or directly from the publishers.

This Sovereign Land: A New Vision for Governing the West

By Daniel Kemmis

Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2001

Hardcover \$22.95 ISBN 1-55963-842-7

ment. In *This Sovereign Land: A New Vision for Governing the West*, Daniel Kemmis takes a new look at the politics of land management and environmental protection in the western United States.

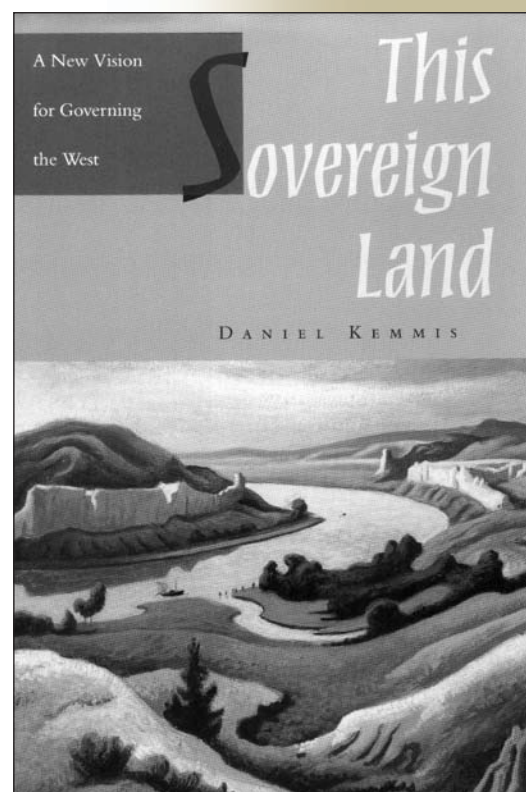
Many Americans in the East never question what Kemmis cites as one of the primary challenges of the West: changing the imperial nature of the existing land management system. He argues that federal management of lands in the West is a legacy of the naturalist and imperialist policies of Presidents Thomas Jefferson and Theodore Roosevelt and is supported by the mythology of the West created by western writers such as Bernard DeVoto. Kemmis uses this book as an opportunity to examine closely the history of land management in the West, how the system that exists today came to be, and some of its glaring inadequacies.

There is hope for the West, however, as Kemmis points out. He suggests that today's changing global political climate offers new opportunities for westerners to become personally responsible for the lands on which they have sustained themselves and to create "institutions appropriate to a democratic people inhabiting a unique landscape." He cites numerous authors, such as Joel Garreau, Robert Kaplan, and Kenichi Ohmae, who suggest that globalization is making local accountability and regional cooperation more important than arbitrarily drawn national and state boundaries. Kemmis also examines numerous regional partnerships for land and water management, including the Toiyabe Wetlands and Watershed Management Team in Nevada, the Applegate Partnership in southern Oregon, and the Malpai Borderlands Group in Arizona and New Mexico, all of which demonstrate the capacity for regional action. Several of these partnerships challenge old myths about westerners and their capacity to govern themselves and their land, and introduce a new way of maintaining sustainable ecosystems and local economies.

This book is an insightful look at a part of the country that for many holds the sort of mystical power that Kemmis claims makes the West unique. The depth and breadth of information on the deep roots of the "irrepressible conflict" between stakeholders in land management issues is staggering, but presented in a way that is inviting and easy to assimilate. The book concludes with several suggestions about how political parties and individuals in the West can further cooperate to create space for local land-use management.

These examples provide students of community-based politics concrete examples of bottom-up planning and coordination with governmental entities. Lessons learned here could be applied to other circumstances in which powers are devolved to states and local governments and communities find themselves with new responsibilities or in cases where local groups must contend with federal bureaucracy. These new forms of cooperation demonstrate that the West is shaking old regional stereotypes and will continue to come into its own politically.

Few issues in modern political debate have proven as contentious as environmental protection. Often the debate is framed as a typical polemic of environmental crusaders versus evil money-grubbing corporations or local communities against an imperialist govern-



— Kelvin Lawrence

Making a Place for Community: Local Democracy in a Global Era

By Thad Williamson, David Imbroscio,
and Gar Alperovitz

New York: Routledge, 2002

Hardcover \$29.95 ISBN 0-415-93356-0

In *Making a Place for Community: Local Democracy in a Global Era*, the authors argue that current community revitalization and local democratization movements fail to fully consider the importance for healthy, engaged communities of local economic stability. In addition, community revitalization efforts often fail to take into account economic and political policies that hinder a community's economic stability.

The authors argue, with sound theory and empirical evidence, that the stability of democracy depends on the stability of the community economy. They identify three key threats to community health: (1) globalization; (2) the movement of capital and jobs within the U.S.; and (3) suburban sprawl. Part I draws on interdisciplinary theory and research to elucidate the links between these three threats and community economic stability. The remainder (and majority) of the book is dedicated to describing practical ways to counter these threats.

The first chapter offers an excellent primer on the impact of globalization on community health and democracy, with critiques of the free trade ideology and the doctrine of comparative advantage. In essence, the authors argue that globalization and the attendant capital fluidity increase the power of firms relative to states and workers. This imbalance of power compromises local political autonomy and creates economic instability at the community level.

The second threat to community economic stability is the "chase for jobs," or the movement of jobs within the U.S. due to business relocations. Local and state governments often operate under the assumption that relocations are not based on market factors, but rather on which locality can offer the best "welfare" package in the form of relocation incentives. (The book includes a list of common tax and loan incentives offered by cities and states.) The authors call into question the wisdom of this practice, citing research that finds tax incentives are not the primary reason — or even among the top five reasons — for company relocation.

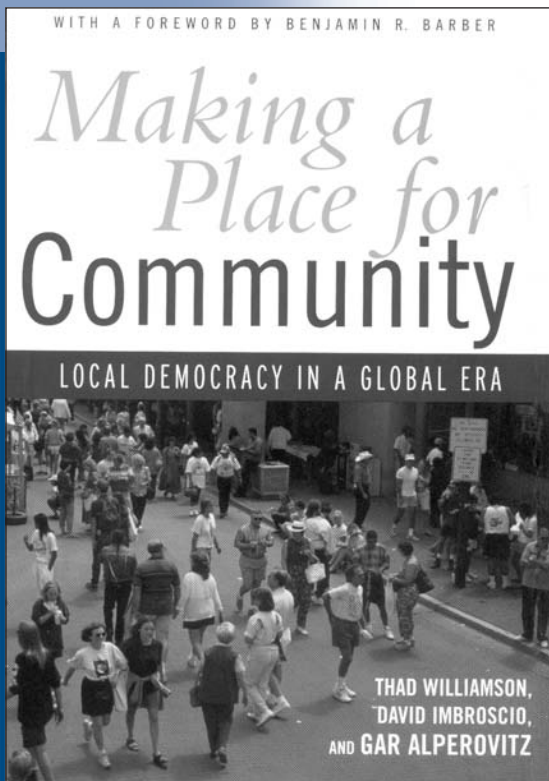
They argue that the number of jobs created is often overestimated and the cost to the locality is often underestimated. The jobs created by such relocations are also devalued because they are unstable; there is little to prevent relocation again in the future to another part of the country or world. The authors conclude that the resources devoted to chasing jobs would be better spent investing in locally grown business, infrastructure, and education.

The third threat to community identified by the authors is suburban sprawl. They offer an excellent overview of the hidden costs and consequences of sprawl, as well as a discussion of the causes, which focuses on the often-neglected policy initiatives and public subsidies that drive suburban expansion and acknowledges

the private market choice involved.

Throughout the remainder of the book, the authors successfully link strong interdisciplinary academic research to praxis. They describe dozens of broadly based approaches to stabilizing local economies through confronting the three threats. The strength of this monograph lies in the breadth and holistic approach of the place-based policy alternatives described. Potential policy changes at the community, state, federal, and international levels are discussed. Examples of successful (but small-scale) institutions and practices supportive of community economic stability leave the reader hopeful and optimistic, for the most part. However, the recommendations are at times overly ambitious, particularly at the international level. For example, one recommendation is for an "overhaul of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to put an end to structural adjustment policies."

That said, most of the recommendations are practical and well thought-out. The authors call for the expansion of already successful place-based development programs, such as the Ohio Employee Ownership Center. Such centers fund worker-ownership feasibility studies before a fac-



tory or plant is closed. In many cases, such studies persuaded owners to keep the facility open. A 15-page appendix lists dozens of “resources for rebuilding,” such as nongovernmental organizations concerned with urban sprawl, employee ownership, microenterprise, community development, and corporate accountability.

In general, while the book provides no new revelations, it does provide an outstanding synthesis of current research and thus serves as an excellent resource for citizens and officeholders interested in community health as it relates to global, national, state, and local political economy.

— Lisa Morrison

The Last Best Hope: A Democracy Reader

Edited by Stephen John Goodlad

San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001

Paperback \$24.95 ISBN 0-7879-5681-3

tensions between democracy and markets, education and the external political environment, law and justice, and “democratic character” and the “mass” man.

The Last Best Hope is divided into seven different parts that moves from a discussion of whether democracy is a good thing, through a discussion of citizenship and democratic character, to a conclusion that focuses on democracy’s future.

Throughout this discussion there are several very strong chapters that provoke critical thinking. Among those chapters are two timely contributions on the danger of corporate power to a democratic society from Noam Chomsky and Howard Zinn. In the wake of recent revelations of corporate excesses, these two chapters cause us to refocus on the inherent tensions between the market and democracy.

Two important themes in the book are worth noting. The first is the danger of balkanization when building a democratic society and the second is the role of the university to challenge our fundamental beliefs.

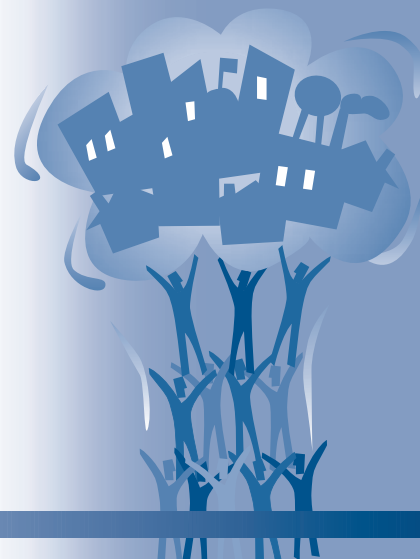
Examples of the first theme are demonstrated by Wendell Berry and Philip Green. Berry challenges the university to focus on nurturing citizens and citizenship and away from the parochial interests of academics. He argues that the “commodification” and “compartmentalization” of education is detrimental to civic values. Green, on the other hand, takes on those interested in identity politics. His claim is that a focus on the unique identity of various groupings makes it difficult, if not impossible, to develop what Putnam refers to as “bridging” capital — the ability to break out of like-minded groups and to connect with those groups that are different.

Examples of the second theme are found in the contributions by Boyd H. Bode and Martin Buber. Both authors point out that educators fail their students and the goals of a democratic society by not challenging students’ deeply held values. This is especially timely in light of the recent controversy on the campus of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill over the requirement that incoming freshmen read Michael Sells’ book *Approaching the Qur’an: The Early Revelations* (Ashland, OR: White Cloud Press, 1999).

Stephen Goodlad has edited a book that is appropriate for any college course on democratic theory or practical politics as well as organizations and individuals that are interested in the study of how to build stronger democratic practices.

— Christopher Kelley

Stephen Goodlad has given us a much-needed contribution in the study to understand why a democracy is important and what conditions either contribute to or take away from building a democratic society. The book, which consists mostly of contemporary writers on democracy, explores the important connections between democracy and education, the ten-



THE LAST BEST HOPE

★ A ★
DEMOCRACY READER



STEPHEN JOHN
GOODLAD
EDITOR

Kettering Foundation
200 Commons Road
Dayton, OH 45459-2799

Nonprofit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Dayton, OH
Permit No. 638

The Kettering Foundation, chartered in 1927, is an operating foundation — not a grant-giving foundation — rooted in the American tradition of inventive research. Its founder, Charles F. Kettering, holder of more than 200 patents, is best known for his invention of the automobile self-starter. He was interested, above all, in seeking practical answers to “the problems behind the problems.” The foundation today continues in that tradition. The objective of the research now — the study of what helps democracy work as it should. Six major Kettering programs are designed to shed light on what is required for strengthening public life. Kettering is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) research corporation supported by a \$250 million endowment.

How to Order Kettering Foundation Publications

To request a *KF Publications Catalog*, call 1-800-600-4060, send a FAX to 1-937-435-7367, or write:

Kettering Foundation
Order Department
P. O. Box 41626
Dayton, OH 45441

Name _____

Title _____

Organization _____

Street _____

City _____

State _____ ZIP _____

Phone (____) _____

For more information about KF research and publications, see the Kettering Foundation's Web site at www.kettering.org.

Connections is published by the Kettering Foundation, 200 Commons Road, Dayton, Ohio 45459-2799.

Unless expressly stated to the contrary, the articles in Connections reflect the views of the authors and not necessarily those of the foundation, its trustees, or officers.

Those who contributed to producing this issue include:

Editor...

Amy Harper

Editorial board...

Maxine S. Thomas

Carolyn Farrow-Garland

Graphic Design

& Desktop Publishing...

Long's Graphic Design

Art Director, Production...

George Cavanaugh

Copy Editor...

Betty Frecker

Assistant to the Publisher...

Valerie Breidenbach

Publisher...

Robert E. Daley

*Kettering
Foundation*

© Copyright 2003 by the Kettering Foundation

200 Commons Road, Dayton, Ohio 45459-2799 (937) 434-7300
444 North Capitol Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001 (202) 393-4478
6 East 39th Street, New York, New York 10016 (212) 686-7016