



The Careless Society: Community And Its Counterfeits

By John McKnight

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Amid all the hand-wringing about the loss of community in America these days, here is a book that celebrates the ability of neighborhoods to heal themselves from within. John McKnight shows how competent communities have been invaded and colonized by professionalized services—often with devastating results. Overwhelmed by these social services, the spirit of community falters: families collapse, schools fail, violence spreads, and medical systems spiral out of control. Instead of more or better services, the basis for resolving many of America's social problems is the community capacity of the local citizens.

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Editorial Review

From the Publisher

An illuminating look at how the experts' best efforts to rebuild and revitalize communities are in fact destroying them.

From the Back Cover

Amid all the hand-wringing about the loss of community in America these days, here is a book that celebrates the ability of neighborhoods to heal from within. John McKnight tells how the experts' best efforts to rebuild and revitalize communities are in fact destroying them. McKnight focuses on four "counterfeiting" aspects of society: professionalism, medicine, human service systems, and the criminal justice system. Because in many areas the ideological roots of service grow from a religious ideal, the book concludes with a reflection on the idea of Christian service and its transformation into carelessness. Reforming our human service institutions won't work, McKnight writes. These systems do too much, intervene where they are ineffective, and try to substitute service for irreplaceable care. Instead of more or better services, the book demonstrates that the community capacity of the local citizens is the basis for resolving many of America's social problems.

About the Author

John McKnight is the coauthor of a guide for community development entitled *Community Building from the Inside Out*. He is the director of the Community Studies Program at the Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research at Northwestern University, where he also teaches. He lives in Evanston, Illinois.

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