

1. Record Nr.	UNINA9910482012303321
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Titolo	Critical Pluralism, Democratic Performance, and Community Power / Paul Schumaker
Pubbl/distr/stampa	University Press of Kansas, 1991 Lawrence, Kan. : , : Univ. Pr. of Kansas, , 1991 ©1991
ISBN	0-7006-0439-1
Edizione	[1st ed.]
Descrizione fisica	1 online resource (XVIII, 258) : Diagramme
Collana	Studies in government and public policy
Disciplina	320.8/09781/65
Soggetti	Entscheidungsprozess Gemeindeverwaltung Fallstudiensammlung Gemeindedemokratie - USA Gemeindedemokratie - Kanada Gemeinde - Entscheidung (Politik) - Kanada Entscheidung - (Politik) - Gemeinde - Kanada Gemeinde - Entscheidung (Politik) - USA Entscheidung - (Politik) - Gemeinde - USA Representative government and representation Municipal government Cultural pluralism Community power Representative government and representation - United States Municipal government - United States Cultural pluralism - United States Case studies. United States
Lingua di pubblicazione	Inglese
Formato	Materiale a stampa
Livello bibliografico	Monografia
Nota di contenuto	Cover -- Series Page -- Title Page -- Dedication -- List of Tables and Figures -- List of Acronyms -- Preface -- 1. Evaluating Democratic

Performance in Community Policymaking -- 2. Three Ideals of Pluralist Democracy -- 3. A Comparative Analysis of Twenty-nine Lawrence Issues -- 4. Competing Principles and Urban Ideologies -- 5. Challenging Existing Institutions and Leadership -- 6. Developing the Local Economy -- 7. Protecting the Neighborhoods -- 8. Restricting Individual Choices -- 9. Providing Public Services and Welfare -- 10. Saving the Downtown -- 11. Political Culture: Principles, Preferences, and Policies -- 12. Political Power: Participants, Citizens, and Democracy -- 13. Political Justice: Divisions, Standings, and Complex Equality -- 14. Critical Pluralism and the Rules of the Game -- Appendix: Determining the Principles at Stake on Concrete Issues -- Notes -- References -- Index -- Back Cover.

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## Sommario/riassunto

A central question in political science is who governs and how. Typically political scientists attempt to answer this question by relying upon either empirical analysis, which explains existing political practices, or normative analysis, which prescribes ideal political practices. Political scientist Paul Schumaker rejects this distinction between empirical and normative theory. Instead, he wedges the two approaches to create the new analytical mode he calls critical pluralism. With it he can measure variances in government from pluralist/democratic ideals and still provide theoretical explanations of why the variances occurred. Schumaker uses critical pluralism to describe, explain, and evaluate variations in three key measures of democratic performance: responsible representation, complex equality, and principle-policy congruence. To test his framework and methodology he analyzes 29 community issues that arose in Lawrence, Kansas, between 1977 and 1987. The results of his study—one of the most comprehensive databases ever in the study of community politics—will be of interest to those who study community power. The conceptual framework itself and methodology used in assessing democratic performance will have a lasting impact on the way community government is studied.

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