

LOCALISM

a review by David W. Cooney
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Earlier this year, Dale Ahlquist of the [Society of G. K. Chesterton](#) and Michael Warren Davis of [The American Conservative](#) presented a book titled [Localism: Coming Home to Catholic Social Teaching](#).¹ The Society of G. K. Chesterton has proposed using Localism as a new name for the Distributist movement. While I don't agree with completely abandoning the name Distributism, I acknowledge the confusion and difficulty that name causes and agree that Localism is a good way to introduce the principles of the movement to the world at large. It is undoubtedly easier, and will probably be more successful, to introduce the concepts as a localist movement and eventually get around to discussing the more difficult concept of distributive justice and how it isn't a call for government redistribution. Distributism is, after all, an essentially localist movement. That is the purpose of this book. The authors (including myself) give a modern presentation of the classic distributist idea emphasizing the localist aspects of those ideas. It should be understood that localism isn't a rejection of, or isolation from, wider economic and political realities. It is a view that emphasizes the importance of the local aspects of these realities to individual daily lives. A country filled with economically and politically stable local communities is a country that has greater economic and political stability and freedom.

I think this is the best aspect of the book. It challenges the reader to really consider local community and economics as something important to their every day lives and the lives of their friends and neighbors. This is what gives real meaning to the concept of localism and reveals the importance of local jobs, local businesses, local agriculture, local government, local finance, local investment, and many other things that have a far greater impact to the daily lives of the average person than a large corporation which has headquarters and decision makers who have no idea about the real needs of your local community.



2024, Practical Distributism

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¹ Available at <https://sophiainstitute.com/product/localism/>