

that local organizations and officials can do a better job of community development because they are more sensitive to the local culture and hence more aware of local problems and opportunities. This is based on the belief that the local social order within which people make lives for themselves shapes the culture of a community--roughly, the things that define the special nature of that particular place. And the local social order is shaped in turn by the local economic base. As Himmelfarb (1982) has summarized the argument, the local economy shapes not only the economic and social well-being of the residents, it shapes their view of the world.

Thus, because of their varying economies different types of single industry communities--mining towns, textile towns, sawmill towns, and so on--have different cultures calling for different approaches to community problem-solving, approaches that can best be formulated at the local level.

The responsibility for community development has increasingly been devolved in Canada since the early 1980s. This is at least in part because of the failure of traditional regional development policy (Savoie 1986). But it is also because innovative community strategies have become more critical in light of the economic and social changes of the recent past. Local governments and CBOs have tried to seize the initiative, often with provincial support. Their goal is usually to reverse economic decline through self-development projects aimed at increasing income to the locality and/or generating or saving local jobs (Galaway and Hudson 1994).