



# Community, Culture, and Economic Development, Second Edition: Continuity and Change in Two Small Southern Towns

*Meredith Ramsay*

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## **Community, Culture, and Economic Development, Second Edition: Continuity and Change in Two Small Southern Towns** Meredith Ramsay

*Newly updated comparative study of economic development policy, and its relationship with local power structures and cultural and social relations, in two Maryland towns.*

*Community economic development is conventionally explained using one of two models: a market model that assumes individuals always attempt to maximize their wealth, or a growth model that assumes land use is controlled by real estate developers who invariably pursue outside investment as a way of increasing land values and creating jobs and opportunities. In the first edition of *Community, Culture, and Economic Development*, Meredith Ramsay's close study of two small towns on Maryland's Lower Shore demonstrated that neither model can explain why these communities, alike in so many ways, responded so differently to economic decline or why archaic hierarchies of race, class, and gender remain deeply embedded and poverty seems nearly intractable. Ramsay showed how the lack of economic progress in Somerset, Maryland's poorest county, can best be explained by factoring history, culture, and social relations into the investigator's research. In this second edition she discusses changes that have taken place in the county since the early 1990s, including the dramatic legal victory of the "Somerset Six" and the Maryland ACLU, which ultimately paved the way for the election of an African American to a top county position for the first time in history.*

"Ramsay's excellent new book opens up some fascinating questions and very importantly does vividly demonstrate that political culture exists, its core values/elements can be sustained for hundreds of years, and can strongly affect economic development in the present day." — *Journal of Applied Research in Economic Development*

### Praise for the First Edition

"This is a fascinating and sophisticated account of rural politics that is much more than anecdotal. The book is unique in applying theories developed in the study of urban policy (market, growth machine, regime) to the politics of rural places. The analysis rings true; it is both theoretically interesting and factually revealing. It may be the best account of small-town politics since the classic *Small Town in Mass Society*." — Alvin D. Sokolow, University of California Davis

"On rare occasions a book has such depth of insight and freshness of presentation that it breaks down conventional distinctions among facts, values, and theory. Meredith Ramsay's account of two rural communities is such a study. It incorporates all three in a seamless account. This is a book about everyday people engaged in real struggles, and it never loses sight of the context in which they operate. Ramsay makes social and historical embeddedness come alive and inform in a way that few authors can." — Clarence Stone, University of Maryland

Meredith Ramsay is a former faculty member of Political Science at the University of Massachusetts Boston. She is retired and lives in Brinklow, Maryland.

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