



# Black Baltimore: A New Theory of Community

*Harold Mcdougall*

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## **Black Baltimore: A New Theory of Community** Harold McDougall

Through extensive neighborhood interviews and a compelling assessment of the problems of unraveling communities in urban America, Harold McDougall reveals how, in sections of Baltimore, a 'New Community' is developing. Relying more on vernacular culture, personal networking, and mutual support than on private wealth or public subsidy, the communities of black Baltimore provide an example of self-help and civic action that could and should be occurring in other inner-city areas. In this political history of Old West Baltimore, McDougall describes how 'base communities' small peer groups that share similar views, circumstances, and objectives have helped neighborhoods respond to the failure of both government and the market to create conditions for a decent quality of life for all. Arguing for the primacy of church leadership within the black community, the author describes how these small, flexible groups are creating the foundation of what he calls a New Community, where community-spirited organizers, clergy, public interest advocates, business people, and government workers interact and build relationships through which Baltimore's urban agenda is being developed. Author note: Harold A. McDougall is Professor of Law and Director of the Law and Public Policy Program at Catholic University.

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