

Public Abstract

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Economic development policy is an important topic for legislatures across the country. The contemporary trend of economic development policy has spread throughout the country in response to the political and economic changes of the last 30 years. A side effect of this focus has been the increased competition for investment between individual states and also between the various municipalities inside the states.

Economic development policy is a tool that signifies a change in power relations and larger social structures. The expressed purpose of this thesis project is to highlight how the use of economic development policy has adjusted to larger national and international changes in private, political and economic organization.

This work will utilize a case study methodology which focuses on the state of Missouri, while looking to place the state in a larger context outlined in Gordon, Edwards & Reich's Social Structures of Accumulation Thesis (1982/Wallace & Brady extension 2001). The main contention derived from this thesis is that economic development policies are social structures of accumulation that have become institutionalized because of macro-level changes in the economic and political environment. This work will highlight how the emphasis of location, business climate and public/private cooperation are all outgrowths of this contemporary trend.