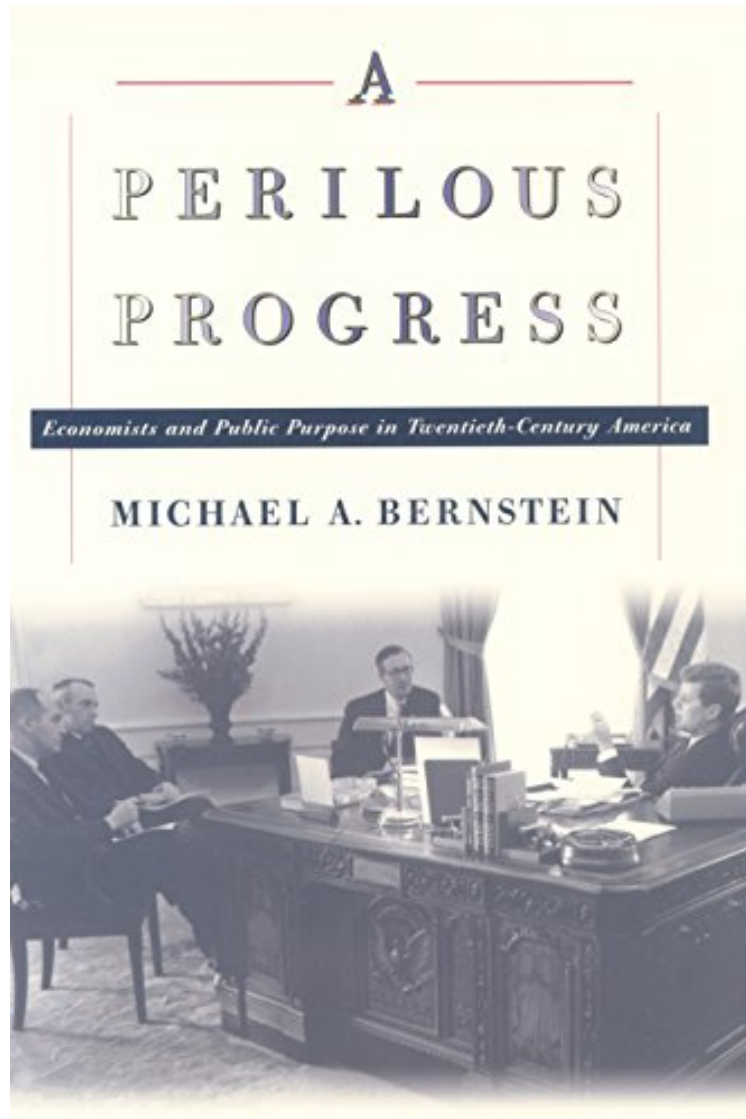


[Read now] A Perilous Progress: Economists and Public Purpose in Twentieth-Century America

A Perilous Progress: Economists and Public Purpose in Twentieth-Century America

Michael A. Bernstein

ebooks / Download PDF / *ePub / DOC / audiobook



DOWNLOAD



+

READ ONLINE

#2013175 in eBooks 2014-08-12 2014-08-12 File Name: B00LG0OLDK | File size: 59.Mb

Michael A. Bernstein : A Perilous Progress: Economists and Public Purpose in Twentieth-Century America before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Perilous Progress: Economists and Public Purpose in Twentieth-Century America:

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. Indispensable for understanding contemporary economics By J. P. Thulin What Bernstein sets out to do in this 190 page book is to trace the rise of economist as a profession. Starting with the formation of the AEA in the late 19th century, Bernstein traces this process all the way up to modern times, though

the lion's share is dedicated to the years leading up to the sixties. The prose of the book is great, flowing easily without losing rigour. The historical details and the depth of the research is purely amazing. For me however, what is most marvelous about this book is the way in which it manages to show how neoclassical economics won out against other competing schools of thought as a direct result of WWII. Not Popperian scientific progress, but rather Kuhnian revolutions and McCloskey's rhetorics explain why the neoclassical approach, with its emphasis on rigorous mathematics, came to rule supreme. There are a few books on why economics became mathematical out there (Weintraub, Mirowski). In my opinion, this book is the best. This is a must read for anyone interested in the modern history of economic thought or the economic profession as such.

The economics profession in twentieth-century America began as a humble quest to understand the "wealth of nations." It grew into a profession of immense public prestige--and now suffers a strangely withered public purpose. Michael Bernstein portrays a profession that has ended up repudiating the state that nurtured it, ignoring distributive justice, and disproportionately privileging private desires in the study of economic life. Intellectual introversion has robbed it, he contends, of the very public influence it coveted and cultivated for so long. With wit and irony he examines how a community of experts now identified with uncritical celebration of "free market" virtues was itself shaped, dramatically so, by government and collective action. In arresting and provocative detail Bernstein describes economists' fitful efforts to sway a state apparatus where values and goals could seldom remain separate from means and technique, and how their vocation was ultimately humbled by government itself. Replete with novel research findings, his work also analyzes the historical peculiarities that led the profession to a key role in the contemporary backlash against federal initiatives dating from the 1930s to reform the nation's economic and social life. Interestingly enough, scholars have largely overlooked the history that has shaped this profession. An economist by training, Bernstein brings a historian's sensibilities to his narrative, utilizing extensive archival research to reveal unspoken presumptions that, through the agency of economists themselves, have come to mold and define, and sometimes actually deform, public discourse. This book offers important, even troubling insights to readers interested in the modern economic and political history of the United States and perplexed by recent trends in public policy debate. It also complements a growing literature on the history of the social sciences. Sure to have a lasting impact on its field, *A Perilous Progress* represents an extraordinary contribution of gritty empirical research and conceptual boldness, of grand narrative breadth and profound analytical depth.

"Michael A. Bernstein has produced a first-rate analysis of the professionalization of social science. His book is not only a well-informed history of the American economics profession but also an insightful analysis of its relationship with government and a philippic against what Bernstein sees as the profession's recent self-prostitution."--Thomas K. McCraw, *Journal of American History*"Bernstein details a largely unknown and even unsuspected history of how our professional associations and journals strove from the beginning to engage the important questions, and of how they in the end lost the ability to do so."--James K. Galbraith, *The Washington Monthly*"This book is an impressive achievement."--William J. Barber, *EH.Net*From the Inside Flap"Michael Bernstein reveals the ironic development of modern economics. On the one hand, he explains how American economists have depended on the growth of democratic government coping with the instability of the twentieth century. On the other hand, he shows how they have denied the social setting of economic problems, and of the origins of their profession. In the process, Bernstein gives us the best history we have of the economics profession in the United States."--W. Elliot Brownlee, University of California, Santa Barbara "A Perilous Progress explains the curious trajectory of the discipline in economics: as it gained a commanding place in American public and political life, its growing power led to its intellectual constriction and, in the end, to declining prospects for its power and influence. By examining the discipline most critical to the modern American political economy, Michael Bernstein freshly recasts the history of modern America itself."--Michael Sherry, Northwestern University, author of *In the Shadow of War: The United States Since the 1930s*"Professor Bernstein has written brilliantly on a subject central to the history of politics and political economy in America. The author has found a stunning amount of important and previously unexploited material in archival sources. He analyzes that material in light of the public record in a sure-handed way, reflecting his command of economic theory as well as his mastery of the historical literature. The book gives new substance and depth to our understanding of several major interrelated themes in twentieth century American history, but it also offers new insights into the more general history of economics as that discipline has been mobilized--for good or otherwise--in modern public policy processes."--Harry N. Scheiber, University of California at Berkeley "A stunning book. Reading it, one appreciates the clarity of the narrative drive and the deftness with which many and various themes are pulled together. Historians of economic science have looked at the bits and pieces of information that Bernstein utilizes, and have like the blind man and the elephant found imperfect and partial papers to write. A Perilous Progress interweaves an intellectual history, a social history of the profession, and a political history of the interconnections of economists with public affairs. It will define, for the next several decades, what economics (at least in America) can be taken to have meant."--E. Roy Weintraub, Duke UniversityFrom the Back Cover"Michael Bernstein reveals the ironic

development of modern economics. On the one hand, he explains how American economists have depended on the growth of democratic government coping with the instability of the twentieth century. On the other hand, he shows how they have denied the social setting of economic problems, and of the origins of their profession. In the process, Bernstein gives us the best history we have of the economics profession in the United States."--W. Elliot Brownlee, University of California, Santa Barbara

"A Perilous Progress explains the curious trajectory of the discipline in economics: as it gained a commanding place in American public and political life, its growing power led to its intellectual constriction and, in the end, to declining prospects for its power and influence. By examining the discipline most critical to the modern American political economy, Michael Bernstein freshly recasts the history of modern America itself."--Michael Sherry, Northwestern University, author of *In the Shadow of War: The United States Since the 1930s*

"Professor Bernstein has written brilliantly on a subject central to the history of politics and political economy in America. The author has found a stunning amount of important and previously unexploited material in archival sources. He analyzes that material in light of the public record in a sure-handed way, reflecting his command of economic theory as well as his mastery of the historical literature. The book gives new substance and depth to our understanding of several major interrelated themes in twentieth century American history, but it also offers new insights into the more general history of economics as that discipline has been mobilized--for good or otherwise--in modern public policy processes."--Harry N. Scheiber, University of California at Berkeley

"A stunning book. Reading it, one appreciates the clarity of the narrative drive and the deftness with which many and various themes are pulled together. Historians of economic science have looked at the bits and pieces of information that Bernstein utilizes, and have like the blind man and the elephant found imperfect and partial papers to write. *A Perilous Progress* interweaves an intellectual history, a social history of the profession, and a political history of the interconnections of economists with public affairs. It will define, for the next several decades, what economics (at least in America) can be taken to have meant."--E. Roy Weintraub, Duke University