Review of: Beyond the Wasteland: A Democratic Alternative to Economic Decline by Samuel Bowles, David M. Gordon, and Thomas E. Weisskopf

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Beyond the Wasteland: A Democratic Alternative to Economic Decline by Samuel Bowles; David M. Gordon; Thomas E. Weisskopf
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that policy for scientific research and development can be made outside of the realm of politics.

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Being Governor: The View from the Office.

The editors, who are also the principal contributors, rely heavily on questionnaire data, complemented primarily by interviews with 15 former governors, to characterize the several roles of the contemporary American governor. There are 18 chapters; many are less than 10 pages. The book is divided into assessments of the political, managerial, legislative, and structural roles of the governor.

Much of the narrative addresses the 39 tables that display questionnaire data. Thus, there is less texture to the writing style than in, for example, Alan Rosenthal's description of contemporary American state legislatures (Legislative Life, Harper & Row, 1981).

Being Governor should prove useful to teachers of state government. It should also be available in college libraries, for there are several chapters such as "A Day in the Life of a Governor," that would make good reserve desk assignments for state governments courses. In addition, candidates for governor and their prospective staffs would benefit from perusing the book, especially the several chapters that offer pithy lessons learned from former governors and their staff members. For example, staff members provide a list of "Thou shalt nots" for the appointment process; "Do not consult too widely; Do not delay, thereby letting pressures and expectations build; Do not let applicants or their supporters see the governor personally..." (p. 117).

There are excellent chapters in this uneven book. Robert Dalton's chapter, "Governors and Ethics," is valuable. It helps us to appreciate the ethical ambiguities of gubernatorial and staff decisions in a setting where varied favor exchanges provide a useful way to facilitate action.

Perhaps the most illuminating chapter is by Muchmore on the topic of science advice to governors. In addressing the question of where a science advisor or science advice should be located in the executive branch, Muchmore makes broader observations. The governor's office should be viewed as "a separate organization that is distinct from the bulk of the executive branch" (p. 183). The heavy and conflicting demands placed on a governor cause most to become satisficers who will "expend time and effort to find an acceptable decision, but having done so will not commit additional resources to find an optimal decision" (p. 184).

The book displays the deficiencies associated with heavy reliance on questionnaire data. Did the governors respond for themselves, or did staff handle this assignment as well? And perceptions do not always represent reality. While two-thirds of the planning directors and budget officers indicated they would be involved in some way with decisions in reaction to a disaster, only 15% of governors' office staffs thought the planning and budgeting people would be involved (p. 178). This tells us much, but not who would be involved.

Nevertheless, Being Governor enhances our understanding of operations in the offices of American governors. The publisher is to be commended for yet another title in its policy studies series on state and local issues.

Beyle and Muchmore have a wealth of participant-observation experience with governors. One would hope they would now move from process to outcome questions critical to our beleaguered governors and to the evolving federal system. Does executive reorganization really make a difference? Has the increase in executive branch capacity kept pace with increases in demands on governors? Can gubernatorial performance justify the increases in responsibilities imposed on the states in recent years?

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This is an ambitious and formidable book. It attempts a comprehensive analysis of the current economic crisis in the U.S. which, the authors claim, can account for the productivity slowdown that has puzzled so many conventional economists. The authors go much further. They also develop, in considerable detail, a coherent set of proposals designed to show that "the trade-off between material security and a decent society is not a law of economics...[but] a veil of privilege" (p. 15). They contend that a democratic alternative is the "key to moving beyond the wasteland" (p. 15). In my view, the bold and ambitious project largely succeeds. Readers will
be rewarded with a multitude of insights and new directions to explore.

One of the strongest aspects of the book is the authors' sustained development of a social model of the economy that is grounded in these simple but often forgotten (by conventional and Marxist economists) truths: the "economy is people [and] its basic relationships are social relationships" (p. 5). The rejection of a mechanistic view of the economy is accomplished without sacrificing intellectual rigor or technical sophistication. One should in particular commend the authors for constructing novel measures that reflect the social categories they employ in their analysis. And while one can quibble with the inclusion of one or another factor in the measures, one has to appreciate their determination to not allow conventional accounting procedures to either limit their analysis or condemn them to abstract theorizing.

Bowles, Gordon, and Weisskopf begin their analysis by arguing that U.S. economic growth from 1948 to 1966 was built on three institutionalized power relations between U.S. capital and (1) foreign competitors and suppliers; (2) a large segment of the labor force; and (3) citizens, as mediated by the state. These potentially conflict-ridden relationships permitted profit-led growth because capital was either strong enough to suppress challengers (for example, internationally) or because it bought off certain groups (for example, unionized labor). Beginning in the mid-1960s, the contradictions inherent within each of these three social relationships began to erupt into overt challenges to U.S. corporate dominance. For example, foreign competitors began to penetrate the U.S. market, which, when combined with other developments, began to undermine corporate profitability. Labor, emboldened by historically low levels of unemployment and the cushioning effects of social programs, pushed hard for increased wages, improved working conditions, and lowered intensities of work. Multiple coalitions of citizens achieved legislative victories that constrained the actions of corporations. According to the authors, these challenges to corporate dominance explain the decline in productivity and profitability in the mid and late sixties.

The next 15 or more years have witnessed a two-stage counterattack by capital. In the first stage (1973 to 1979) the primary objective was to weaken the power of labor. To that end management attempted to reassert control in the workplace by increasing supervision, speeding the work process, and by trying to frighten workers by actual and threatened capital mobility. At the societal level, the government engineered a deep recession to assist capital in their attack on labor.

However, while there were signs that labor was weakening, the forces of opposition had achieved such strength in the postwar years that only a further, intensified attack on worker and citizen power could reestablish the conditions for corporate dominance (hence, the Reagan program). But, the authors point out, these kinds of solutions impose immense social costs, built as they are on rules favorable to business and full of so many contradictions. For example, the deep recession of the mid-seventies worked at the same time to increase productivity by frightening workers into intensified work effort and to decrease productivity by reducing capital investment because of the unutilized capacity. According to their estimates, the U.S. economy wasted some $1.2 trillion in useful output in 1980.

Their solution builds on this simple premise: "it costs less to put people in charge than it does to keep them down" (p. 262). Hence, the authors propose a 24-point economic bill of rights and numerous policy proposals to empower citizens and eliminate demand- and supply-side waste. Although some will dismiss the proposals as utopian or too radical, they seem to me to be pragmatic, conceivable workable, and undogmatic. The authors detail the steps needed to get from here to there and are sensitive to the dangers of bureaucratic centralization. Indeed, the book is likely to be controversial not because it is too radical (although it is in the true sense of the word), but because among all the current blueprints for economic restructuring it is the only one unambiguously advocating more democracy as the essential ingredient of the solution.

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The Limits and Possibilities of Congress. By Philip Brenner. (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1983. Pp. vii + 206. $15.95, cloth; $8.95, paper.)

The primary theme of Brenner's book is that Congress has fewer limits and greater possibilities than commonly assumed, although several other themes are also explored. Brenner takes a political economy approach to Congress and posits that environment (especially the ideology of the nation and its productive forces) is more important than member characteristics. Here he is on shakier ground; virtually no evidence is provided for such an assertion. There may be good reason why, as Brenner states, these "Marxist assumptions . . . do not enter traditional studies of Congress" (p. 17).

Brenner debunks constituency and other external and internal influences on legislative behavior and tries to disprove five assertions that he believes have dominated the literature: that con-