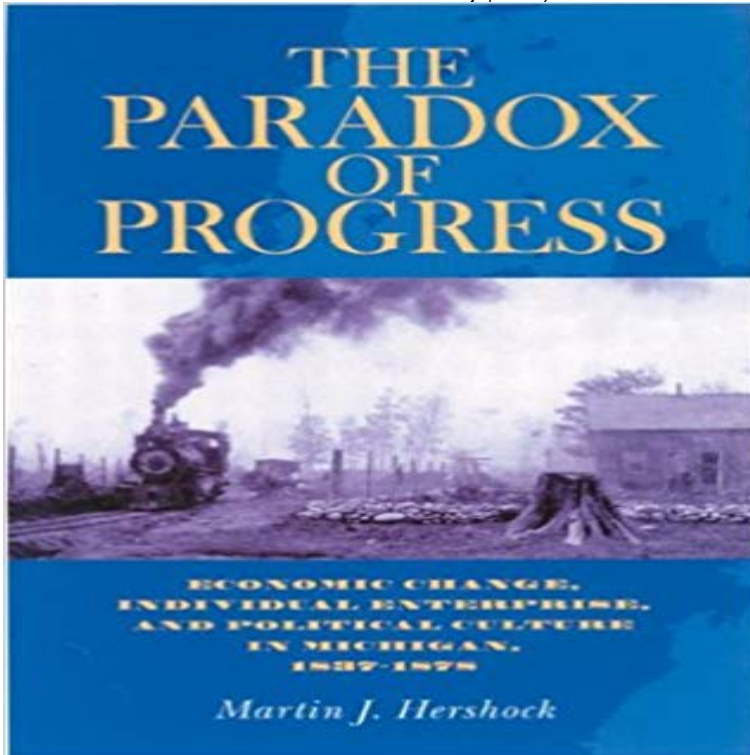


# The Paradox of Progress: Economic Change, Individual Enterprise, and Politic Culture in Michigan, 1837-1878



Americans have long recognized the central importance of the nineteenth-century Republican party in preserving the Union, ending slavery, and opening the way for industrial capitalism. On the surface, the story seems straightforward -- the party's free labor ethos, embracing the opportunity that free soil presented for social and economic mobility, and condemning the danger that slavery in the territories posed for that mobility, foreshadowed the GOP's later devotion to unfettered enterprise and industrial capitalism. In reality, however, the narrative thread is not so linear. This work examines the contradiction that lay at the heart of the supremely influential ideology of the early Republican party. The Paradox of Progress explores one of the most profound changes in American history -- the transition from the anti-market, anti-monopoly, and democratic ideology of Jacksonian America to the business-dominated politics and unregulated excesses of Gilded Age capitalism. Guiding this transformation was the nineteenth-century Republican party. Drawing heavily from both the pro-market commitments of the early Whig party and the anti-capitalist culture of Jackson's Democratic party, the early Republican party found itself torn between these competing values. Nowhere was this contested process more obvious or more absorbing than in Civil War-era Michigan, the birthplace of the Republican party. In *The Paradox of Progress*, a fascinating look at the central factors underlying the history of the GOP, Martin Hershock reveals how in their determination to resolve their ideological dilemma, Republicans of the Civil War era struggled to contrive a formula that would enable them to win popular elections and to model America's acceptance of Gilded Age capitalism.

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