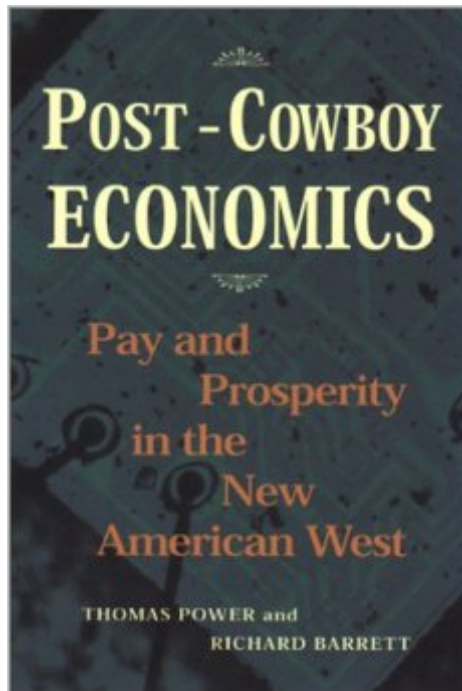


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# Post-Cowboy Economics: Pay And Prosperity In The New American West



## Synopsis

The book is very readable and is accessible to a wide audience of people interested in the American West, its economy, its development options, and the impact of environmental protection measures on the region. However the point of the book is to recast the range of development options considered by local communities and state governments, and it is very policy oriented.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The authors take a sharp needle to the over-inflated myth that the resource extraction industries (e.g., timber, mining, ranching) are the only ticket out of a downward trend in hourly pay in the region. Post-Cowboy Economics does the hard, analytical work that is required to get to the real root cause of why wages are generally lower in the Mountain West. To make its point, the authors focus on labor and demographic data over the years from 1978 to 1998. What you learn from their research:

1. The contracting resource extraction industries in the Mountain West appear to have been driven by a pervasive national pattern in which jobs shifted from good production to services.
2. The decline in average pay was due to downward pressure on pay in almost all industries (i.e., the loss of "good" paying jobs).
3. The declines in pay during the 1980's were largely due to back-to-back national recessions. Although national in extent, the recessions hit the Mountain West hard.
4. During the 80's and 90's technological advances and globalization of the American economy emerged as forces that caused the demand for labor to move from workers with little education and few skills toward workers with greater education and skills. These forces were felt the most in rural

communities. The most interesting revelation for me came about when the authors compared wages to the population of the community. The data clearly shows the largest cities provide the best wages, and as you go down in population, the wages follow. This means that in comparing average pay in the Mountain West and the rest of the country, it's important to consider where people live and work. Residents who live in the Mountain West typically live in smaller communities than other Americans.

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