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THE POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF MIGRATION TO THE ARID LANDS OF THE UNITED STATES

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In a recently published volume, *The Great American Desert*,¹ a western historian traced the various migrations to the arid West² since aboriginal times in an effort to discover what their impact had been on the character of the desert itself and what imprint the desert environment had on the character of desert civilization. In this search for the meaning of desert experience, he found that desert life encouraged settlers to oversimplify complex issues, that it has meant wealth for the few, disappointment for the many, that the politics of the desert states were generally unseemly (dominated by big interests and conservative), and that the people were culturally isolated.

Unquestionably, there are unique features of western life that may be attributed in part to the character of the environment. The most obvious example of adaptation to new and difficult conditions is found in the social organization and the legal structure concerning water in the West. Riparian doctrines and individual use and management of water were rejected in favor of a system which emphasized exhaustive and beneficial use under conditions of cooperation and interdependence. The cattle industry is another example. Over much of the Southwest it developed the unique culture of the cowboy which was primarily influenced by the great distances involved in the foraging and herding of cattle.³

The uniqueness of certain practices in the West, and a general tendency to stress uniqueness of a given region—*any* region—by those most familiar with it should not lead us to conclusions which in effect deny the national culture of which the West is a part. In spite of the strong emphases which Frederick Jackson Turner and Walter Webb placed on the frontier as the dominant influence in the formation of social institutions of the West, it is more realistic to emphasize the pervasive effect of the American national culture on the

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1. W. Hollon, *The Great American Desert* (1966).

2. The terms arid region and the West or Western states are used interchangeably in this paper unless more discrimination is required for differentiating among areas within the Western states.

3. W. Webb, *The Great Plains* (1931).

West and the constant interaction of national and regional forces in the political, social, and economic systems.⁴

I

THE WEST: INFLUENCE OF THE NATIONAL CULTURE

There is abundant evidence of the persistence and pervasiveness of the national culture. The general political structure of the arid regions of the western states is virtually a copy of that found in the humid regions. Voting behavior in the West betrays no singular characteristics other than the fact that voters are somewhat less likely to vote straight party tickets than elsewhere.⁵ Certainly conservatism is found in the West but this appears to reflect more the greater homogeneity of the social and economic system in contrast to the heterogeneous and variegated systems found in the older, industrialized regions. Moreover, the conservatism of the West hardly compares with that found in the South and Mid-West. In agriculture, both in the Great Plains and among the Mormons in the Great Basin, the manner in which settlers brought accepted practices to a relatively hostile environment and made them work is more significant than adaptation or the creation of new styles of life. On the Great Plains the isolated farm settlement exacted high social costs owing to the sheer burden of distance, but this form of settlement persisted.⁶ Mormon patterns of compact settlement (but not its communitarianism) were more successful but were in no sense the product of the arid setting, having been imported from the East.⁷

Not every migration to the arid region was successful, of course. In some instances, the hardships were overpowering. Indians that had formerly adjusted to the severity of the climate and the paucity of many resources found it next to impossible to adapt to reservations. Cultural patterns clearly impeded adaptation to the more severe reservation environment.⁸ Anglos in the twentieth century who were unwilling to adopt a code of hard work and community cooperation found that their pioneering efforts were relatively unproductive.⁹ Descendants of early Spanish colonizers in some in-

4. For a general discussion of this thesis, see Mann, *Political and Social Institutions of the Arid Regions, Aridity and Man*, ch. 13 (C. Hodge & P. Duisberg ed. 1963).

5. But this is true of the humid regions of the West as well as the arid regions. See A. de Grazia, *The Western Public: 1952 and Beyond* (1954).

6. C. Kraenzel, *The Great Plains in Transition* (1955).

7. L. Nelson, *The Mormon Village* (1952).

8. See C. Kluckhohn & D. Leighton, *The Navajo* (1946); Also T. Sasaki, *Fruitland New Mexico: A Navajo Community in Transition* (1960).

9. E. Vogt, *Modern Homesteaders* (1955).

stances were unable to adjust to a modern economic system owing to cultural restrictions peculiar to their own society.¹⁰

At least in part, the attitudinal and institutional differences between the arid West and the rest of the Nation may be explained in terms of the character of the migrants and time of settlement, rather than by geography or aridity. Those who settled the arid regions were thoroughly imbued with American patterns of thought which were relatively intolerant of diversity and therefore suppressive of more adventurous methods of coping with the environment.¹¹ The popular processes of government, the initiative, referendum, and recall—which have a radical flavor about them—were products of the Progressive and Populist movements which fully flowered during the latter part of the nineteenth century when many of the arid states entered the union. Those who transplant themselves to the arid regions today usually bring with them settled patterns of behavior and relatively unchangeable convictions. The conservatism of many Western people today may be attributed to their age, their desire to protect themselves against burdensome taxes, and the conservatism they brought with them from the South and Mid-West.

Even when one carefully examines some policies that do seem peculiarly Western and related to the problem of aridity, they turn out to be manifestations of national behavior patterns or attitudes. For example, the reclamation programs of the national government were designed to meet the engineering, economic, and political needs of the arid Southwest. The organization of the projects and the methods of financing were unique; however, these projects were but extensions of the program of internal improvements which had their beginning in the early days of the Republic. And the booster spirit which led to these projects could have been found in Keokuk, Iowa, as well as in the Salt River Valley in Arizona.

One can reverse the question and ask: Does Western life have a different quality, does it face different problems or the same problems in different degrees than the cities of the East, South, or Mid-West? There is no magical list of indicators for answering a question of this kind, but one can develop an interesting if not comprehensive list of this type. Is life more virtuous in the West? For certain kinds of crime—murder and non-negligent homicide, robbery, and aggravated assault—the Rocky Mountain states were below the median for the United States in 1964; but in others—forcible rape, burglary,

10. J. Burma, *Spanish-Speaking Groups in The United States* (1954).

11. See Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America* (1946 ed.). He first emphasized the sometimes oppressive tendencies of egalitarian societies.

breaking and entering, larceny, and auto theft—the Rocky Mountain states were above the national median for the same year.

Are the skies bluer and purer than in other parts of the country? The evidence is not conclusive. Air pollution is a serious problem, and not only in Los Angeles. Phoenix, for example, rivals New York City in the suspended particulate matter in its air. Denver, Salt Lake City, and Albuquerque all exceed Minneapolis, Atlanta, and Washington, D.C., in suspended particulate matter although they fall below St. Louis and Pittsburgh by a considerable extent.

Are innovations to improve the quality of the environment adopted more readily in the arid region? With regard to fluoridation of water—a technical and political football for a decade—the West appears to show no distinctive pattern. Nationally, 46% of all people using public water supplies in 1965 were drinking fluoridated water. In the West, the percentages ranged from 3.2% in Utah to 84.2% in Colorado.

Are the people of the Western states less dependent on the federal government in supporting necessary services at the state and local levels? The answer is relatively clear. While nationally, state and local governments receive 14.8% of their funds from the federal government, no state in the Rocky Mountain region received a percentage lower than the national median. Colorado received the least in 1965, 18.5%, while Wyoming received the most, 37.8%. The per capita dollar input of federal funds to the state and local governments averaged \$56.90 in 1965. In the Rocky Mountain states Montana received the least—almost exactly the national median. But all of the rest received more, and Wyoming led the rest with \$234.33 per capita in that year.

One category in which the West is distinctive is in the field of education. The Rocky Mountain states led the nation in median years of school completed. The median for the entire region was 12 years and no state fell below 11.2 years. The explanation of this devotion to education is difficult to state, but it almost certainly has nothing to do with the physical environment. The level of education in California, Oregon, and Washington equals that in the Rocky Mountain states, and these states are in large part within the humid zone. Whether this suggests a greater capacity intellectually to grapple with the social problems that arise in a rapidly growing area involves an evaluation which social scientists would be reluctant to undertake for lack of suitable measuring instruments.

Politically there is little indeed that is distinctive about the West. Political parties are highly competitive in most of the Western states,

and each party has a reasonable chance of holding or sharing political power.¹² The only state that has tended toward one-party politics—Arizona—is becoming increasingly competitive. This competitiveness is a characteristic of both the arid and humid regions of the West, however. The policy consequences of high degrees of competition are still somewhat matters of speculation, but some results are clear. Where one party tends to dominate, the minority party can gain power only under exceptional circumstances and then usually only obtains a segment of it. The consequence is often deadlock and inability to act. The trend toward competitiveness should facilitate action. But available evidence does not show that higher degrees of competition result in more liberal policy, at least as reflected by more generous welfare policies. Rather, high degrees of competitiveness and liberal social welfare measures seem to reflect a common political culture.¹³

Historically, then, the evidence suggests strongly that men have imposed their society on a forbidding environment and have bent it to their will. They adapted where the consequences of failing to do so were obviously disastrous; but they were willing to tolerate high social and economic costs to allow themselves the benefits of the national culture with which they were thoroughly imbued. The people of the arid region remain cultural brothers of other regions of the country.

II

THE CHARACTER OF MIGRATION TO THE ARID REGION

The tremendous population growth in the arid region has raised important issues regarding the capacity of men to continue their normal practices in a setting so basically limited in its resources. Massive increases in population are significant disturbances which can seriously threaten the ecological balance, whether in humid or arid regions. The purpose of the remainder of this article is to examine the implications of the population increase for the political environment of the arid region. Although much of what follows is in large part applicable to other regions as well, population movements to the arid region raise the problems in a more acute form.

The most striking fact about population growth in the arid region is its almost exclusively urban character. Both a quest for economic opportunity and a search for amenities associated with a favorable

12. See M. Jewell, *The State Legislatures: Politics and Practice*, 10-11 (1962).

13. See Dawson & Robinson, *Inter-party Competition, Economic Variables, and Welfare Policies in the American States*, 25 *J. Pol.* 265 (1963).

climate appear to dominate the reasons for the innumerable individual choices involved. The following statistics indicate the parameters of this urban surge: The urban areas in the Western states increased 65% in population from 1950 to 1960, the highest overall rate in the nation. The increase in population in standard metropolitan statistical areas was 26.4% for the nation but 115% in Nevada, 96% in Arizona, 80% in New Mexico, and over 50% in California and Colorado.¹⁴ The growth of the metropolitan areas in the states of the arid region—indeed, the dominance of metropolitan areas in several of the states, notably Arizona, Nevada, and California—has challenged the old order of things.

III

THE OLD ORDER: RURAL DOMINATION

The economy of the arid region historically has been oriented strongly toward the extractive industries: agriculture, cattle raising, and mining in particular, with lumbering of some local importance. These industries tended to dictate the public policies of the region and retained the popular image as the chief generators of prosperity in the region. The preferences in the allocation of water rights are indicative of the preferred position of the extractive industries. In Arizona, for example, the highest values for the use of water are domestic and municipal uses, but second and third in importance are irrigation and stockwatering and power and mining uses. Water for wildlife or fish or for recreational purposes has inferior value or is not recognized officially in the Arizona statutes.¹⁵ Taxation laws in these states were often favorable to these interests, particularly to the cattle owner and to the mining companies who in some instances were assessed on extremely rich land as if it were common range land. Various forms of subsidies were provided the farmer in the forms of technical assistance, grants and loans for improvements on their lands, and in some instances support prices for their crops.

The interests of these groups were not always congruent or compensating but there was usually a sufficient harmony of interests for these resource-based groups to establish a working alliance. They consistently dominated state legislatures, resisting adjustments that were required in an urbanizing and industrializing society.¹⁶ They

14. U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *United States Census of Population, 1960: United States Summary*, U.S. G.P.O., 1961, p. XXVII, 1-31.

15. See D. Mann, *The Politics of Water in Arizona*, 38-39 (1963).

16. See F. Jonas ed., *Western Politics* (1961); also T. Donnelly, *Rocky Mountain Politics* (1940).

were able to maintain a fragmented resource structure which permitted isolated treatment of highly complex resource problems, and thus prevented any effectively integrated approach to problem-solving.¹⁷ The conservatism at the state level was notably lacking at the national level. The obvious goal of the extractive industries in the arid land states has been to spread the burden for investment in their region by federal sponsorship of projects which the local citizenry were either unable or unwilling to carry by themselves.

Within the arid states, malapportionment of legislative representation gave rural areas inordinate political power. The extent of this malapportionment is suggested by the fact that in New Mexico 27% of the population could elect a majority of the members of the lower house of the state legislature while a mere 14% could elect a majority in the state senate.¹⁸ Virtually every state, both in the West and throughout the nation, was afflicted with some degree of legislative malapportionment.

The consequence of such malapportionment was to give the entrenched rural interests extraordinary means of protecting themselves against burdens which urban majorities might have wished to impose on them, of ensuring that whatever benefits were granted to the urban areas would be shared by them as well, and of resisting the adoption of measures which the urban areas sought in order to ameliorate their growing social problems. It is frequently alleged that rurally-dominated legislatures, in financing highway or educational programs, gave preferences in their financing formulas to the rural areas, ignoring the incidence of need or the fact that the chief sources of revenue were usually in the cities. There is some basis for the allegation but the phenomenon is certainly not restricted to the West.¹⁹

Systematic investigation of the supposed relationship between malapportionment and discriminatory treatment of urban areas or unwillingness to sustain welfare measures necessary in urban settings has cast some doubts on the consistency of this relationship. Intervening variables such as party affiliation and tradition make correla-

17. Ostrom, *State Administration of Natural Resources in the West*, 47 *Am. Pol. Sci. Rev.* 478 (1953); also M. Garnsey, *America's New Frontier: The Mountain West* (1950); and Lepawsky, *Water Resources and American Federalism*, 44 *Am. Pol. Sci. Rev.* 649 (1950).

18. G. Baker, *The Reapportionment Revolution*, 39 (1966).

19. See Baker, *The California Senate: Sectional Conflict or Vox Populi*; Price, *Florida: Politics and the "Pork Choppers"*; and Crane, *Tennessee: Inertia and the Courts*, in the *Politics of Reapportionment* (M. Jewell ed. 1962); Also W. Havard & L. Beth, *The Politics of Misrepresentation: Rural-Urban Conflict in the Florida Legislature* (1962).

tions of this kind very difficult to demonstrate.²⁰ Moreover, per capita wealth of a state and degree of industrialization explains the support for metropolitan interests even where malapportionment is significant.²¹

Nevertheless, it is clear that malapportionment has resulted in failure to deal with the *special* problems of the urban areas. State aid to local governments has declined during the past two decades, and nearly all of this aid has been for highways, education, and public welfare. Virtually no state aid is found in the fields of special concern to the cities, such as public housing, urban renewal, urban planning, airports, and pollution control. The result has been reliance on federal development programs in which the states have been little involved.²²

IV

THE IMPACT OF SUPREME COURT DECISIONS

The decision of the United States Supreme Court in the case of *Baker v. Carr*²³ making state legislative apportionment a justiciable issue and subsequent decisions such as *Reynolds v. Sims*²⁴ which require both chambers of state legislatures to be apportioned on the basis of population are producing legislatures that will provide fair representation for the urban areas. In some states that have already reapportioned, the consequences are clear. The reapportioned Colorado legislature tackled problems of municipal annexation, increased assistance of schools, fair housing, workmen's compensation, and the dissemination of birth control information. One Denver legislator stated, "We passed things which should have been passed ten years ago. The rural bloc sat on the lid too long—and now the lid is off."²⁵ It seems reasonable to assume that the critical problems facing the urban areas of the arid region—as well as other regions of the country—will receive more sympathetic treatment than they have in the past.

20. Dye, *Malapportionment and Public Policy in the States*, 27 J. Pol. 586 (1965); also Hofferbert, *The Relation between Public Policy and Some Structural and Environmental Variables in the American States*, 40 Am. Pol. Sci. Rev. 73 (1966); and Brady & Edmonds, *The Effects of Malapportionment on Policy Output in the American States*, 1966 (Mimeo, Laboratory for Political Research, University of Iowa).

21. M. Jewell, *Will Baker v. Carr Save the States?*, Nov. 10-12, 1966 (paper delivered at the 1966 annual meeting of the Southern Political Science Association).

22. See R. Martin, *The Cities and the Federal System* (1965).

23. 369 U.S. 186 (1962).

24. 377 U.S. 533 (1964).

25. Quoted in Tydings, *The Last Chance for the States*, 232, no. 1390 Harper's Magazine, Mar., 1960 at 71.

V

THE IMPACT OF URBANIZATION

The impact of urbanization is obvious in the competition for scarce resources in the arid region. Water resources are an example. The rapid population increases—almost exclusively urban—in a state like Arizona have led to much greater pressure on the water resources of the area. The rapidly declining water table is having the effect of pricing agriculture out of many areas as a result of the higher costs of pumping. Urban users, able to pay far more for the same water, can continue to pump.²⁶ The public policy of the state should facilitate, or at least not impede the transfer of water rights from agricultural purposes to municipal and industrial purposes. The legal structure and administrative procedures which govern the disposition of water rights should receive careful scrutiny in this regard.

This competition for water in Arizona has already led to a complete recasting of major developmental works originally designed to overcome limitations on the available supply. The Central Arizona Project, once justified on the grounds that it would “save” valuable agricultural lands in the Central Valley of Arizona, now is justified on the basis of the contributions that it will make to urban water supplies. The sponsors of the project apparently have perceived an unwillingness in Congress to invest the large amounts of money required for this project either to develop or to maintain agricultural lands. However, the CAP would alleviate the competition for water, or arrest it temporarily. Without it, and assuming continued migrations to the urban regions, large-scale agriculture in Arizona will inevitably collapse. Similarly, the California State Water Project is designed to bring water to the arid regions of Southern California from the water-rich north, and the principal beneficiaries will be the urban users in both the San Francisco Bay area and the Los Angeles metropolitan area.

Rapid growth of urban populations in the arid region is leading to competition of another kind also. The new settlers find their livelihoods in industrial, professional, or commercial activities rather than resource-based enterprises. Their attitudes with regard to the resources are markedly different, therefore, than those whose income is dependent upon extraction of minerals or tilling the soil. The city-dweller is looking for amenities, which include both comfort and recreation as a complement to the routine of his daily occupation.

26. Wilson, *Tucson: A Problem in Uses of Water, Aridity and Man*, 483-89 (C. Hodge & P. Duisberg ed. 1963).

Enhanced opportunities for recreation and diversion may take precedence over the desires of some to utilize the resources of a given area in such a way as to destroy their recreational values.²⁷ On the other hand, a concomitant of urbanization is industrialization, which has a counter effect.

Recreation is becoming a major economic activity in the arid region. Those who espouse the cause of conservation of natural wonders against the seemingly more practical and businesslike men of industry can (or at least try to) justify conservation on the basis of the number of dollars earned by the tourist industry. Often these figures are artfully contrived to exaggerate the importance of tourism to the economy of a region, but who can gainsay the importance of Bryce and Zion's National Parks to the economy of Southern Utah, of the Grand Canyon to Northern Arizona, of Lake Mead to Southwestern Nevada? We may agree with Luna Leopold when he says: "For resources that are principally non-economic in value, let us decide whether we want them, but not by assigning a dollar sign to scenery and not by making the sale of hot dogs a measure of the worth of a park."²⁸ Nevertheless, in the competition for scarce resources, the economic argument is becoming a more powerful weapon in the arsenal of those who emphasize protection of resources for recreational purposes.²⁹

Indeed, the politics of the arid region may be transformed under the pressure of largely city-based populations because the resource-based industries will be required to conform to different and sometimes much higher standards. Mining operations may find it contrary to public policy to blight the landscape by excavations which destroy scenic values or disposal of waste which pollute streams or pile up great mounds of unsightly material. The owners and managers of tourist facilities which are attracting increased numbers of people will have to plan carefully for disposal of human wastes. Public agencies responsible for management of forest resources will be, and in fact are, under heavy pressure to manage their properties for production of water and provision of recreational opportunities, with somewhat less emphasis on the maximization of returns from production of trees for lumbering.

27. For a discussion of some aspects of this matter, *see* M. Clawson, *Land and Water for Recreation* (1963).

28. *The Conservation Attitude, 1960* (U.S. Geological Survey Circular 414-C, Washington, D.C.) at 17.

29. But it is clearly a two-edged sword, since the ardent protectionist may find that economic values attributable to recreation may be far greater by the construction of Bridge Canyon Dam than by protecting the Grand Canyon.

The urban character of the growing desert population will place severe burdens on local governments as well as state governments. Disposal of wastes will become a major responsibility of local units of government, since there are no streams to carry off effluent. The cities and counties, as well as states, must provide local and regional recreational facilities for a population that is becoming ever more conscious of amenities. In many areas, flood plains have been occupied. Some policy regarding occupancy of these areas or protection against flash floods needs to be adopted. More effective instrumentalities for planning must be adopted to ensure a balanced approach to resource management. Pressures on wildlife require ever more intensive management to prevent the extinction of species and to permit the legitimate pursuit of wildlife sports.

Fortunately, the cities of the arid region are generally well managed. In most places professional managers have been employed and civil service systems are installed. Some of the most advanced techniques of municipal management have been adopted, as in the Lakewood plan in Southern California and in the creation of advanced planning units such as the one in Phoenix. Moreover, in most areas there is the possibility of avoiding the extreme fractionization of political power which is occasioned by the development of suburban satellite cities which make impossible over-all metropolitan development, planning, and management. Los Angeles is the prize example of fractionization run riot, but elsewhere there is reason to be more optimistic.

This favorable judgment about the technical capacity and political conditions of local government does not mean that there is reason for complacency regarding the local resources available to meet these problems. More than anything else, the challenges of the future will require far-sighted and courageous leadership and a willingness to face and assume new and expanded obligations.

In contrast to the cities, the states of the arid region—like their counterparts elsewhere—are ill equipped to handle their problems. Their administrative structures are clumsy and disjointed, especially with regard to the management of natural resources. Their legislatures tend to be dominated by conservatives who have not recognized the rapidly expanding needs of urban populations. Moreover, in contrast to the federal and city governments, they have been exceedingly timorous in grappling with the basic issues regarding the kind of society which should exist in the desert. By and large the state legislatures have been observers of private and individual development rather than shapers and creators. California is a notable exception in this regard.

VI

THE ARID REGION IN NATIONAL POLITICS

The arid land states have depended for their political strength at the national level on the disproportionate representation in the Senate. The 17 Western states send 34 senators, approximately one-third of the entire membership. In the House of Representatives, the West is much weaker, sending only 15% of the total membership of that body. These Western blocs, particularly in the Senate, have been able to trade favors with other sections of the country in return for support for measures desired by the arid land states. The decentralized character of the political system in Congress has permitted the Western legislators to dominate the committees that consider legislation of direct interest to the region and therefore to dominate Congress on these matters.

A corollary of relative conservatism noted earlier at the state level—low budgets, antipathy toward social legislation—has been liberalism in national representation, particularly liberalism in the extraction of federal money for purposes of local expenditures. It is not just coincidence that a state with a relatively conservative legislature like that of Montana is represented in Washington by liberal Senators like Mike Mansfield and Lee Metcalf, who hold positions of strategic importance for that Western state. Metcalf holds a seat on the Interior Committee, and Mansfield occupies a place on the Senate Appropriations Committee. Of the 16 senators sitting on the Senate Interior Committee, 13 are from the 12 continental public lands states. In the House, representatives from these same 12 states constitute 47 per cent of the membership of the House Interior Committee.

The fact that the states of the arid region are growing rapidly in population should not suggest a dramatic increase in its political strength and therefore in its capacity to bargain for federal benefits. Even with the large increases in population between 1950 and 1960, the net increase in representation in the House of Representatives for the Rocky Mountain states was one seat, hardly enough to obtain increased largesse from legislators equally interested in promoting their own regions. Even if one considers California, with its increase of 8 representatives, during the decade of the 1950's, largely attributable to migration to the arid Southern California area, the increase in political strength is not very remarkable. Moreover, it is not clear to what extent increased strength in California will redound to the benefit of the arid region generally, owing to conflicts of their interests. The West, generally considered, did increase its represen-

tation in the Senate through the admission of Alaska and Hawaii as states, but again, it is not altogether clear that these are distinctively "Western" states, especially in the latter case because of its non-contiguous and island character. Unless there are those who wish to promote a twentieth century version of Manifest Destiny, it does not appear that the political strength of the West will increase markedly because of population growth. The fact is clear, the American population is growing *everywhere* and internal migration changes the picture only very gradually over time.

The fact that the arid region will not increase its political strength *nationally* to any considerable extent suggests the need for greater unity within the region. Recent efforts to develop a "Western" or "arid land" position reveal the difficulty of achieving a unified position which will merit the confidence of the legislators from other parts of the country. In earlier periods, money could be appropriated for the construction of projects whose benefits could be measured either locally or nationally, depending on how best to justify them in economic terms. But the costs were shared nationally through taxation, and therefore were felt only minimally elsewhere, with only a modest share being returned to the treasury through repayment contracts by the direct beneficiaries. The trick was always to expand the range of secondary benefits. Supporters of these projects in each area could and did join together for the benefit of all since individual projects seldom seriously impinged on one another. Unfortunately, we are now approaching the limit of useful and independent local or even regional development projects.

Present and future projects involve designs which will, or potentially can, result in high costs for another region. The seemingly eternal conflict over the waters of the Colorado River is symptomatic of this phenomenon. Proposals to transfer water from Northern California to Southern California were accomplished only over strenuous objections of the potential water-users in the counties of origin and after elaborate measures were taken to guarantee benefits to local interests in the North. The proposition to transport water from the water-rich Northwest to the relatively parched Southwest raises many complex issues, not the least of which is how to ensure that future needs of the Northern region will be safeguarded. The realization of such goals as these will require a degree of unity among the states of the arid region and political finesse of a remarkably high order.

Proposals of this kind lead to a consideration of the political environment in which decisions regarding public investment are likely to be made. It is not the purpose of this article to discuss the tech-

niques of economic analysis, but only to suggest its importance in the deliberations over what will or will not be approved by Congress in resource development. The chief tool of economic analysis has been cost-benefit analysis, in which an effort is made to evaluate the total benefits of a given project against its costs. Under the terms of this kind of analysis, projects would be approved only when incremental net benefits exceeded incremental costs, and when marginal net benefits were zero. Moreover, this kind of analysis suggests that realistic discount rates, more comparable to those prevailing in the private money market, be utilized; that there be made more precise evaluations of demands for services; and finally, that alternative means of supplying the same services be examined.³⁰

It is difficult to estimate the impact that more sophisticated economic analysis has had or will have on public resource investment. The policy enunciated in Senate Document 97 indicates that cost-benefit analysis has achieved a position of some importance in calculations of the federal water-resource agencies.³¹ It is readily recognized that cost-benefit analysis is not a panacea for decision-making, because of such factors as the impossibility of measuring such benefits as scenery and the intrusion of other policy considerations such as anti-cyclical public works programs. Moreover, the administrative judgment that is required in deciding among alternative methods of achieving a single or competing policy goals makes reliance on economic analysis alone a chimera.³² Nevertheless, it appears reasonable to conclude that the climate for discussion of investment of public funds has been altered by more sophisticated economic analysis and those who argue the case for public investment on benefit grounds will have to grapple with the thorny issues of costs and alternative methods of achieving the same ends.

This suggests that the arid region must recognize that it is part of a mature economy and not an isolated region waiting to be developed in order to supply desperately needed raw materials for the nation's manufacturing industry, to secure our borders against the alien, or to provide room for our burgeoning population. The depressed areas legislation suggests that public investment will tend to be concen-

30. See Fox & Herfindahl, *Attainment of Efficiency in Satisfying Demands for Water Resources*, 54 *Am. Econ. Rev.* 198 (May, 1964); for a more comprehensive treatment see O. Eckstein, *Water Resource Development* (1961); also see J. Hirshleiffer, J. DeHaven & J. Milliman, *Water Supply, Economics, Technology, and Policy* (1960).

31. The President's Water Resources Council, *Policies, Standards, Procedures in the Formulation, Evaluation, and Review of Water Plans for Use and Development of Water and Related Land Resources*, S. Doc. No. 97, 87th Cong., 2d. sess. (1962).

32. Hammond, *Convention and Limitation in Benefit-Cost Analysis*, 6 *Natural Resources J.* 195 (1966).

trated in so-called "pockets of poverty," partially on the grounds of human welfare, but partially on the grounds that it is more economical to save and reclaim both human beings and resources that are being used inefficiently than to pour money into establishing new productive resources in a virgin area. It has been argued, for example, that it is far cheaper to reclaim a parcel of Southern cotton land than to invest in cotton land in the Southwest.³³

The maturity of the economies of the arid region states is also affirmed by the sources of income within these states. With the exception of Wyoming, in every arid land state manufacturing has displaced agriculture and mining as the principal sources of income. Moreover, services have become important sources of personal income, challenging the other rural industries. And the trend will undoubtedly continue in these directions. For this reason, the interests of these states or localities will more likely be promoted by policies that are desired by the specific interests in those states or localities in conjunction with similar interests located elsewhere in the country rather than by an arid region approach to these matters.

CONCLUSION

Given the high mobility of the American public, the desire for growth as a kind of measure of worth, the laissez-faire permissiveness about industrial locations, and simple natural increase, it is inevitable that the arid regions of the United States will continue to grow in population, probably at rates exceeding the national average. The great expanses of the West are hardly in danger of filling up, but the vast increases will not spread themselves evenly over the landscape; they will concentrate themselves in metropolitan communities. These city dwellers will dominate the arid region's future and dictate its character. Their very numbers are now forcing changes in the quality of life on the desert.

The questions that confront both the residents of the arid region and national policy-makers are: Will these cities be suitable places of habitation, realizing the promise held out to new settlers? Will they be able to amass sufficient technical capacity and political skill to deal effectively with the problems that urbanism brings in tow? Will they be able to strike a balance in resource use which will provide the amenities desired, while ensuring the enjoyment of these same blessings for future generations? Will public agencies, chiefly national, cooperate to protect the national interest in the arid region

33. Tolley, *Reclamation's Influence on the Rest of Agriculture*, Land Economics 180 (May, 1959).

while helping to solve the more localized problems? Will the states be more effective instruments for dealing with the pressing issues of metropolitan life?

These are questions that communities throughout the nation must ask themselves. While the arid environment does not appear to dictate in any absolute sense the choices that may be made among various alternative policies, the margins of error nevertheless may be narrower and the alternatives fewer. For this reason, the planning must be far-sighted and the decisions must be timely.