

The Arizona Polity: Continuity, Change and an Uncertain Future

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Arizona “is just like hell – all it lacks is water and good society.”¹ Attributed to a member of Congress in 1860, this comment reflected a popular view of the Arizona Territory as a dry, barren land populated by a scattering of misfits. And these, it was said, had fled the civilized East because they were not wanted – or *were* wanted by the law.

A land of lawlessness, moral laxity and instability; a land delivered over to Satan. “Good bye God, I’m going to Arizona” supposedly prayed a girl whose family was moving to the Territory in the 1880s.

In the years since, Arizona has borne a wide variety of other images. In the 1890s and early 1900s, many in the East viewed it as filled with radical Populists and Progressives bent on a range of outlandish reforms. By the 1920s, the image morphed into one of a large mining camp under the thumb of the major copper companies. Twenty years later, the emergence of Barry Goldwater as a national political figure helped fuel an image of wild-eyed conservatism. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, many branded the state racist, largely because of its rejection of a paid state holiday in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr. Since then, the state’s image has been repeatedly battered by scandals and controversial legislation.

This paper seeks to go beyond images and impressions to draw upon theories about Arizona’s political culture and the forces that appear to drive politics and policy making. The concern is not so much with what has been unique about Arizona, but with the important values, beliefs and behavioral patterns that have been reflected in its political life over the years. Political culture helps account for continuity in the life of a polity. It reflects the basic idea that “governments, even revolutionary ones, do not spring full-grown from the air like rabbits from a magician’s hat. On the contrary, every government has a past that goes far to explain its present and to set bounds of probability to its future development.”²

We also look at forces of change, especially including those comparable to the “disrupters” referred to in business and technological studies. These forces challenge the status quo, promote changes in the direction of the state’s politics and policies, and shape what one might reasonably expect in the future.³ Innovation is viewed as coming up with – or elaborating upon -- new ideas and employing them in the service of public policy. The ideas themselves may

reflect progressive, libertarian or conservative thinking or concerns that have little if anything to do with ideology.

Political Culture

Political culture refers to deeply embedded and widely shared political values, beliefs, attitudes and patterns of political behavior. The political culture of a state affects the way its citizens and public officials view politics and regard the role of government. It affects levels of citizen participation, what policies are made and how they are made. Political culture is not the only variable affecting behavior, but has often been found to be an important one.⁴

Political cultures may change over time, but are more fundamental and enduring than political moods or policy changes that come when one political party or regime replaces another. Events may throw a polity off course, but sooner or later its deeply rooted cultural traits are likely to reassert themselves. Cultural elements are likely to survive, while views or ideas inconsistent with them are doomed to failure – unless they can be reshaped to be consistent, or at least appear to be consistent, with dominant values.⁵ Thus political victory normally goes to candidates, officials or political groups that best tap into the dominant political culture or are seen as most consistent with the values of that culture.

Scholars who study the political culture of the American states generally subscribe to the “doctrine of first effective settlement.” This theory presumes that the first European or native-born white population to establish the social-economic-political base of a community or state has a decisive influence on later political patterns.⁶ The doctrine does not ignore the impact of non-Anglos on political institutions generally or in particular places. But it assumes that in most places the general orientation toward politics, political institutions and practices was initially shaped by whites with European ancestry because they were the dominant political force.

The impact of the first effective establishment of a state is, by definition, long term. Agents of political socialization, such as the family, schools, and media, and often later migration patterns, perpetuate basic values and outlooks. The institutions and practices established by the original culture also survive by habit and simple inertia.

Traditionalistic, Moralistic, Individualistic

A well-known work by Daniel J. Elazar examined historic migration patterns and divided the United States up into three types of political culture: traditionalistic, moralistic and individualistic.⁷

The first of these was a hierarchical plantation-centered agricultural system dependent on slave labor. This originated in Southern states and was carried westward by Southern migrants. In this culture, political participation is limited; the general direction of public policy is determined by a small “upper crust” of social and economic leaders. These put considerable emphasis on maintaining existing social and economic relations, and on efficiency and economy in government. There is relatively little social spending, business regulation or reliance on a professional bureaucracy.

In traditionalistic cultures we find relatively low levels of voter participation, limited respect for cultural diversity and a tendency for government to be custodial rather than

innovative in nature. This is especially true when it comes to political reform favorable to greater participation and more expansive social programs. Of the three cultures identified by Elazar, the traditionalistic is the most conservative.

Elazar traces the moralistic culture back to the Puritans of New England. They recognize a duty to become involved in political activity and, as good citizens, an obligation to promote the general welfare. Government officials likewise are expected to place the interests of all above those of groups, political parties or their own personal interests. People in this culture look at government in a positive fashion and feel it is justified in intervening in private affairs when necessary to promote the common good. The public bureaucracy is expected to be a professionally competent meritocracy.

Compared to the other two cultural types identified by Elazar, the moralistic is the most liberal and innovative when it comes to the search for the good society. It in it we find efforts to bring people together in pursuit of the broader public interest.

The individualistic culture in many ways is the direct opposite of the moralistic one. Participation in politics has little to do with a sense of civic duty or concern with promoting the common interest. On the contrary, people generally get involved as voters when they deem it necessary to get something for themselves or prevent something from happening which would be detrimental to their interests.

Politics in a more general sense is the domain of professional politicians who seek to promote themselves economically and socially. They care little about issues. Their focus is upon doing what has to be done to get elected, stay in office and enjoy the benefits winning brings. Politics is a rough and tumble activity, one not regarded an altogether honorable profession and one that often supports a fair amount of corruption. Government's role is largely one of balancing out the demands of various groups so as to maintain equilibrium in the political system.

Beyond this, government has a very limited role. It is not disposed to interfere in private activity – private interests being more important – or to pursuing innovation in the absence of intense public pressure. The individualistic culture, according to Elazar, originated with the settlement in the Middle Atlantic area of ethnic and religious groups from England and the Germanic. This pluralism developed into a greater acceptance of individualism in New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and neighboring states. The culture then spread westward into Midwestern states such as Ohio, Indiana and Illinois, where it continues to be dominant.

Elazar's theory of political culture is not without its critics. They question his accounting for the changes in a state's politics brought on by regional migration and by the arrival of immigrants from other countries since their initial settlement. Critics also dispute Elazar's classification of each state in terms of the cultures he identified. Empirical analyses have shown, however, that state political culture, as defined by Elazar, does correlate with factors such as political participation, policy innovation, and the generosity of social welfare programs.⁸

As far as Arizona is concerned one can find strains of each of the types identified by Elazar in the state's political culture. Elazar's study placed emphasis on the importance of the traditionalistic culture in Arizona, finding that the early migration of Southerners into the Territory and state led to this becoming the dominant culture.⁹ Arizona's traditionalistic culture may help account for the tendency of the state over much of its history to rank relatively low on voter participation, social spending, and business regulation and its lack of appreciation of the bureaucracy. It also may be reflected in Arizona's exclusionary policies, lack of protection of minority rights and relative intolerance of social diversity. The state's governing system has also

at times been characterized as elitist, though coexisting with this elitism has been strong populist anti-establishment sentiment.

Elazar also noted the existence a moralistic cultural strain in Arizona that supports the common good and the implementation of certain shared principles – a strain he attributed largely to the Mormons.¹⁰ Elazar did not initially find much evidence of individualistic strain in Arizona. In a later work, however, he noted that Arizona appears to have acquired an individualistic streak because of the immigration of people from the Midwest and East.¹¹ In theory, the growth of the individualistic culture has somewhat lowered the quality of political involvement, campaigning and governmental service in the state, and encouraged disdain for politics and politicians.¹²

The Influence of Frontier Values

In a broader perspective, the political culture that emerged in Arizona during the settlement period may also be viewed as reflecting not only the values settlers brought with them but also the lessons they drew from conditions on the frontier. As a Western state and among the last in the movement West, Arizona presumably is a place where people strongly identified with the values and practices commonly associated with the frontier. These include individualism, material accumulation, and both social and political democracy.¹³

Individualism encompasses the freedom to think and act as one pleases with little or no governmental restrictions. It also includes the value of self-reliance and personal responsibility. Taken to an extreme, rugged individualism leads to the acceptance of a brutal world of social Darwinism in which nature takes over, the fittest survive and the weakest are rooted out (though, critics, point out, it may not be the fittest who survive but the nastiest, most dishonest and unscrupulous).

The emphasis on material accumulation carries with it a high regard for entrepreneurial freedom, a willingness to undertake risks, an optimistic view of one's chances of overcoming challenges and getting ahead, and an exploitive attitude toward natural resources. Social democracy leads to the evaluation of individuals on their merits rather than on family background – the idea that respect should be earned, not inherited. Political democracy stresses the ability of ordinary people to govern themselves and places high value on the right of self-determination.

Historically, a large percentage of Arizona's inhabitants have been migrants seeking a new start in life. The early settlers of the Territory have been viewed as individualistic, pragmatic, flexible, innovative, people, willing to experiment, optimistic about the future and confident in their ability to control their own destiny. In 1905, an Arizona governor described the settlers as bold, "venturesome, hazard-loving people, unafraid to explore uncharted" territory and willing to experiment, whether it be "in the realms of industry, sociology or in other directions of human endeavor."¹⁴

In 1919, Arizona U.S. Sen. Henry Ashurst offered a similar view. Arizonans, he contended, "are of active enterprise and unbending courage. They are disciples of industry, therefore apostles of success who know that all independence, competence, and all livable conditions of life, come only from constant striving and long-sustained effort."¹⁵

Arizona's ideas of self-reliance and personal responsibility seem deeply rooted. As expressed in one study, a streak in Arizona culture "stresses the claims of the atomized individual against authority. . . It demands maximal freedom and space for the individual. But it

expects the individual to carry his or her weight and not become a dependent.”¹⁶ The spirit of conquest also appears to have survived over the generations. It has contributed to an attack on federal restrictions concerning the use of forests and grazing lands, and complicating the state’s efforts to put together a consistent policy on environmental quality.¹⁷

The democratic values associated with the frontier culture are well represented in the political language of the state. It can also be argued that one reason women fared better in Arizona and other western states in securing the right to vote was because the frontier was inherently more democratic than the more settled areas.¹⁸ Still, in Arizona, as elsewhere in the West, freedom, equality, and democracy emerged in frontier times for white people only. Arizona was a place where those who were not defined as “white Americans” suffered from discrimination affecting nearly every aspect of their lives. The struggle for equality for Native Americans, Hispanics, African Americans and other racial minorities has been a continuing one.

The frontier ethos, though not perfectly implemented, has helped shape the state’s political language and reflects how Westerners have often looked at themselves. To a certain extent, it has encouraged an inclination toward innovation, pragmatism and an optimistic outlook concerning the ability to conquer nature and overcome other problems.

Change Agents, Disrupters, Innovators

Arizona's political history is marked by considerable discontinuity, reflected over the years in general shifts in basic political orientations, party support, the influence of specific groups, and public policy. Occasionally, as Governor Sam Goddard declared in 1965: “There have been times of crisis in our State’s history when Arizona has approached the threshold of a new era in her life – when new ideas, new forces and new energies demand recognition and action.”¹⁹ Sometimes the changes have been proactive, sometimes reactive, born out of necessity.

Political change may come about as the result of dramatic events and broad-scale political movements that cause people to reexamine their political attitudes, and more slowly by the in-migration of people who hold different attitudes from those existing residents. People with different outlooks also may join the electorate following the removal of barriers that prevented them from participating, or simply as a new generation becomes old enough to participate. Widespread political movements, such as the Progressive Movement of the early twentieth century, or the impact of cataclysmic events like the Great Depression of the 1930s are the types of forces that cause many people to change their political values.

Sometimes events and new ideas have brought bursts of policy outputs. These innovative periods may have been preceded and succeeded by periods of stagnation, where lack of leadership, political turmoil or both have stymied effective policy making. Often policy change has stemmed not so much from gubernatorial or legislative leadership, but from court decisions or voter activity through the initiative process – or by the threat of such action. Outside forces, such as acts of Congress, may also be at work.

In Arizona as elsewhere, we find a variety of what researchers refer to as “policy entrepreneurs” or “change agents” in private groups, public offices, universities, foundations and the public at large. These figures call attention to problems and promote various policy ideas. However, proponents of change face an uphill battle when their conclusions or recommendations – in regard, for example, to climate change – conflict with norms in the dominant culture or with

popular beliefs. Still, they may be able to take advantage of an event that produces a sudden change in public opinion favorable to their cause.

As in much of the West, Arizonans have been able to pursue their objectives through the initiative processes. Its inclusion in the state constitution in 1910 reflected a willingness to innovate and experiment with methods of governing. In Arizona, the initiative process has been an important means of furthering consideration of innovative policies or disruptive policies that have substantially impacted the system.

Since the early 1990s, for example, the process has produced term limits on elected state officials, a “supermajority” requirement to raise taxes, public financing of political campaigns, an act to prevent the Legislature from diluting voter-approved measures, and a measure putting the redrawing of legislative and congressional district lines in the hands of an independent commission rather than legislators. Also coming through the initiative process have been a state lottery, a medical marijuana program, and minimum wage increases. The process has given groups or individuals, sometimes known as “ballot warriors,” the opportunity to appeal directly to the voters on behalf of changes opposed by those in power.²⁰

Twists and Turns in Policy Directions

Arizona became a separate territory in 1863. During the first decade of territorial status, its politics was characterized by regional disputes and factional in-fighting among political leaders. However, there was a general consensus on the need for unity in overcoming if not eliminating hostile Native Americans, acquiring various forms of aid from the national government, and attracting private capital so that the natural resources of the territory could be developed. For a time, unity was produced by a clique of federal office holders and prominent Arizona pioneers known as “the federal ring.”

If Arizonans shared anything in the 1880s, it was the desire for economic development, much of which rested on extracting mineral resources. To develop the region, state and local officials requested help from the federal government to subdue Indians, improve mail service, and provide better transportation facilities. On their own, Territorial Legislatures chartered railroads and – unable to directly finance road construction – granted franchises to toll-road companies and allowed them to charge whatever the market would bear. Meanwhile, boosters conducted promotional campaigns through newspapers and books aimed at readers in the more settled parts of the country or in foreign countries. The campaigns offered a continuous flow of information, some of dubious accuracy, about the region’s economic potential. By the 1880s, the developmental and promotional efforts began to pay off: In came the railroads and in came the capital from the eastern United States and Europe necessary for large-scale deep mining operations.

The intrusion of large corporations – often Eastern or foreign owned – into the affairs of Arizonans, however, produced a backlash. Anti-corporate reformers sought to shift a greater portion of the tax burden to the railroads and mining companies, regulate the rates and services of the railroads and other enterprises, adopt measures to protect or advance the interests of the working class, and add reforms such as the initiative, referendum, and recall that would ward off corporate control of the political system. During the 1890s and early 1900s the attack on corporations was accompanied by an attack on drinking and gambling. Territorial leaders hoped that this drive, defended on religious and moral grounds, would make Arizona a more suitable

place for women and children, improve the image of the Territory, facilitate its growth, and pave the way for statehood, a drive that was increasing in intensity.

The major left-leaning era – Arizona's “age of reform” – was short-lived, roughly 1910 to 1916, though it was important because it encompassed the period in which the state's only constitution was framed and adopted. George W.P. Hunt, president of the constitutional convention and the state's first governor, led the Arizona progressives or, as some charged, “the radicals,” during this formative period. Hunt believed in “progressive democracy.” To him, this meant “that this country, its institutions, its resources and its rewards for industry belong to the people who whose labor makes them possible.” It also required, according to Hunt, “the faithful application of Thomas Jefferson's equal rights to all and special privileges to none.”²¹

Hunt intermingled a Western or pioneer outlook with the Progressive ethos – one well reflected in the declaration of one of his fellow reformers: “Arizona is what we make it!” (I-33) Like the pioneers settling the West, the Hunt reformers felt they had the opportunity to start from scratch, to create a paradise on earth. Initially, at least, they were optimistic that this could be done, that they could control the future, and indeed, show the way for the rest of the country (something they felt they had done in the state constitution in 1910).

With Hunt at the helm, Arizona was in the mainstream of Progressive reform from 1910 to 1916. As a constitution-maker and the first governor, Hunt worked to put together what he saw as model state government based on Progressive principles. He felt that Arizona, a pioneer state and one less bound by tradition than many others, was an ideal place to experiment with the latest ideas in government. In building a new state, he wanted Progressivism, in the sense of “modern” or “enlightened” ideas, to undergird every state institution. He especially targeted the penal system, which he sought to make both more humane and more scientific in management. He also wanted justice on the industrial field and stood behind workers in their struggles against mine owners and managers.

Arizona's constitution, framed in 1910 and adopted in 1911, represented the initial victory of the progressive-labor Hunt Democrats. Among the major features of this document were provisions to democratize the political process. In addition to the controversial instruments of direct democracy – the initiative, referendum, and recall – the constitution called for the direct election of many administrative officials and two-year terms of office, thus making frequent elections necessary.

On the regulatory side came a powerful Corporation Commission with a mixture of legislative, executive and judicial powers to oversee business enterprises for the public good. The commission also provided protections for workers in such areas as job blacklisting (punishing those with a record of making trouble for their employers by denying them employment) and employer liability for on-the-job injuries. Hunt's election and re-election as governor led to additional Progressive reforms on such matters as corporation taxation, railroad regulation, labor protection, education, and the penal system. The state's performance early in the twentieth century placed it among the more progressive and innovative states in the union. By one measure, the state tied New York as the 14th most progressive and innovative.²²

As the nation headed toward involvement in World War I, however, Arizonans appeared to lose their appetite for reform of a progressive nature. The major parties controlling Arizona offices during the 1920s generally shunned experimentation and innovation. Hunt and other Democrats who had been inclined toward reform, generally refocused their attention after the war to protecting Arizona's interests in the Colorado River.

The Great Depression had a devastating effect on the mining and farming sectors of the economy; the closing of the mines and decline in property values diminished the revenues of state and local governments. At the same time, governments were faced with increased demands to assist the growing number of unemployed. Arizona lawmakers reacted to the demands by cutting back where they could and, though highly controversial, new revenues from taxes on sales and income. As conditions worsened, Arizona governors and legislators saw no alternative to turning over the major task of providing relief to the federal government.

From the 1930s to the early 1960s, Arizona was, in many respects, a traditional one-party Democratic Southern state and, seemingly, a very traditionalistic one. The Depression and increased Southern migration into the state had ushered in a conservative regime tied to the copper industry and Arizona's two other "C's" (cattle and cotton). In this regime, minorities were kept from the polls largely through the application of a literacy test. There also were segregated schools and other facilities. The influence of organized labor, a major counterbalance to corporate influence in the Progressive years, declined during this era of one party politics. Labor's low point came in 1946, with the adoption of a right-to-work law banning union membership as a condition of employment. Economic development stagnated for a time, as mining companies and their allies in ranching and farming saw little value in attracting more industries and people to the state, fearing that their taxes would go up to pay for the increased growth.

In 1971, a factor analysis of a variety of socioeconomic, political, and policy variables, relying mostly on 1960 Census information, led one scholar to classify Arizona as a Southern state.²³ By the middle part of the century, Arizona had also dropped from 14th to 40th among the states in adopting innovative progressive legislation.²⁴ A related study, incorporating additional information collected in the 1960s and 1970s, ranked Arizona 45th in the nation in terms of progressive innovation.²⁵

The steady growth of the state following World War II, however, began to challenge the control of the rural, conservative, Democratic regime. From 499,261 people in 1940, Arizona grew to 1,302,161 in 1960. The chief beneficiary of this growth was the Republican Party, as many of the migrants were Republicans from the Midwest. The 1960s saw the emergence of slightly less conservative Republicans who were tied to banks, utilities and new industries, particularly in the fast-growing Phoenix area. As in the past, migration and economic changes, though more gradual and less dynamic than in the Great Depression era, help usher in change. In this case, the result was a new two-party regime dedicated to attracting businesses, jobs, and residents.

Liberal Democrats – stronger in urban areas and especially around Tucson – and Republicans were at odds over social programs, civil rights, federal aid, labor issues, and other basic matters in the 1950s and 1960s. Both groups, however, emphasized the need for economic growth and diversification. They also saw the need to modernize Arizona government so that it could undertake new responsibilities. This, in part, required shifting some important functions, such as tax assessment and school financing, from the counties to the state. It also meant streamlining state government and enhancing the governor's ability to manage the entire state.

In 1966, Republicans took control of the state Legislature for the first time. With the election of Republican governors, the new regime proceeded to: 1) reorganize the executive branch, creating a set of super departments run by directors appointed by the governor; 2) reform the property tax system, taking some control away from county assessors who had been known

for their generosity to local economic interests; and 3) increase state spending for education and other social programs.

Since the 1970s, Arizona also has witnessed other spurts of governmental activity. During the early 1980s, for example, despite a divided government – Democrat Bruce Babbitt in the governor’s chair and Republicans dominating the Legislature – the state tackled some difficult problems.

Fear of water shortages led to the adoption of the 1980 Ground Water Management Act that spelled out water conservation goals and the regulations to meet them. One of the most comprehensive groundwater codes in the nation, it became a model for other states. Two years later, Arizona got into the business of indigent health care with the creation of the Arizona Health Care Cost Containment System (AHCCCS), the state’s version of Medicaid. Prior to AHCCCS, county governments assumed the cost of health care services for the poor out of their property tax revenues. By the late 1970s, inflation in the cost of health care had become a tremendous problem for counties, especially rural ones. AHCCCS became attractive as a way of avoiding further county fiscal problems, providing a uniform level of services throughout the state, and securing badly needed federal funds to provide health services. In the case of both ground water and health care “necessity was the mother of invention.” A shortage of water persuaded a *laissez-faire* state to adopting stringent controls, and a shortage of money forced the state to become creative in the social arena.²⁶

While observers differ over whether particular changes have been good or bad, Arizona has shown something of an innovative, pace-setting streak over the past several few decades. Much of this has come from the political right, including charter schools, school vouchers, welfare reform, and legislation regarding voting rights and illegal immigration. The government has also encouraged private-sector innovation through, tax and regulatory incentives, and grants such as those from the Arizona Commerce Authority. On their own, Arizona judges have taken the lead in civil justice reform and reformation of the jury trial system.²⁷ In addition, cities such as Phoenix and Scottsdale have earned high marks for productivity (efficient and effective operations) and innovation. The common use of the council manager form of government and the employment of professionally trained city managers on the local level have been seen as greatly facilitating innovation.²⁸ Universities, too, have broken new ground: Arizona State University has gained recognition as a national leader in innovation.

The Past and the Future: Recurring Drives, Concerns, and Characteristics

Arizona’s political culture reflects the values brought into the area by migrants and the special characteristics of the area itself. While certain consistencies stemming from a deeply embedded political culture are evident, continued migration, economic changes and events have altered aspects of the political character of the polity, often rapidly.

Throughout much of its history, state and local governments in Arizona have demonstrated a strong streak of innovation, in their own affairs and in the private sector. Considerable innovation too has come through the constitution’s initiative process and the efforts of change-makers on the local level. Sharp policy disagreements, however, have brought disputes concerning the use of the initiative process and what limits should be imposed on the ability of local governments to exercise home rule or discretionary powers. Legislators, never altogether comfortable with the initiative process – in principle because it is a rival means of policy making – and often upset with how it has been used, have fought back with measures making it more difficult to use the process.²⁹

The Legislature has also frequently acted to override or preempt the authority of local governments to undertake various activities, including the regulation of such matters as elections, plastic bags, e-cigarettes, fire sprinklers and firearms.³⁰ Defenders of preemption argue it is needed to correct improper moves by local governments which infringe on fundamental rights or interfere with statewide business activities. Critics respond that preemption not only conflicts with local home rule but also discourages innovation and the ability of local governments to function in their historic role as laboratories of experimentation and democracy.

The opportunity for bringing new ideas to the surface may be reduced by further restrictions on the initiative process and local home rule. However, the Arizona political system is likely to continue to feature innovative approaches and adjustments to new conditions. This might well manifest itself in strong drives or pressures for economic development, autonomy, limited government, fiscal conservatism, democracy and better government. Among these, the drive for economic development appears to be the most dynamic and far-reaching force. But there are others, some of which clash with development or, at least, with how development is pursued.

As far back as the Territorial period, Arizona lawmakers have looked upon government as an instrument of economic development and material progress. And since the 1950s, arguably the state's most prominent characteristic has been rapid economic development. A study in the late 1980s, drawing on 1980 Census information, led researchers to reclassify Arizona from a "Southern" state to a "growth" state. The state, along with Florida and Texas, joined California to form a set of states distinguished not by their proximity on the map but by factors generally relating to their growing populations and economies.³¹

Economic development is very highly valued in the modern regime, and this preoccupation strongly influences taxing, spending, and regulatory policies. The goal carries with it important expectations regarding the behavior and performance of public officials. Yet, while officials, state, local or tribal, strive for greater economic growth, seeing their success tied to their political future, many of them also are concerned with how to deal with the multiple repercussions of increased economic activity, including the environmental costs, and the demands of an increasing population. There has also been considerable controversy over what government should do to create a favorable business climate. There has long been considerable opposition, reflective of individualistic-frontier thinking, over using public money and tax incentives to promote business activity. Business incentives in the form of corporate tax cuts have also found opponents from the more progressive side for the cuts' effect on the distribution of the tax load.

Another difficulty in the drive for economic development, as proponents see it, has been trying to avoid, fight off, or correct problems concerning the image of the state. Arizona often shoots itself in the foot through scandals, law enforcement policies and legislation or legislative proposals that many find offensive or that frighten off investors. Arizona from day one has constantly struggled to develop a more favorable business image.

A quest for autonomy or independence is another strong characteristic of the state that somewhat conflicts with the focus on economic development. Resistance to outside influences or meddling in Arizona affairs – be it from out-of-state corporations, the federal government, other states (especially California) the National Football League or Easterners in general – has been a regular feature of Arizona politics. Arizonans have particularly objected to the intrusions of the federal government. Arizonans fought hard for statehood, and since achieving it have worked equally hard to reduce federal interference in their lives. Historically, Arizona has been

something of a loner state, and many Arizonans seem to still like that image. That means that “states’ rights” is likely to remain a keystone of Arizona's policy toward the federal government.

Arizona's status as an independent or contrary state is seen in small things such as its opposition to daylight savings time – despite the urging of business leaders, many of whom have to do business with the East by phone or email. “We'll change our clocks when they pry them out of our cold dead fingers” seems to be a common Arizona sentiment.³² Yet, while many residents value state autonomy and insist on doing things the “Arizona Way,” autonomy has been balanced against the state’s economic needs. Historically, the state has drawn upon – at times even relied on – federal aid. The Arizona economy has become increasingly dependent on national and international conditions, and is likely to become even more so. Generally speaking, modern growth-orientated regimes demand greater sensitivity to the views of people outside the state, such as tourists and potential investors and trade partners.

Back in 1897, Territorial Governor Benjamin Franklin warned the Legislature that the people were not likely to approve “any appropriations that have not been keenly scrutinized, and which have not due regard for the wisest economy.” The governor's call for a barebones budget was coupled with the need for “rigid economy in the administration of the different departments” and the need for avoiding more taxation, if not reducing an already heavy tax burden.³³

A long line of governors have made a similar call. Even Progressive governor Hunt, in keeping with values widely shared in the state, called attention to his success in the business world and his commitment to efficiency, economy, and sound management to government. Overall, Arizona political leaders have expressed their approval of the doctrine of fiscal responsibility, which “urges frugality in public spending, a balanced budget, the liquidation of the public debt, and government as small and as close to the people as possible.”³⁴

The relative unwillingness to support welfare appears to be particularly rooted in the political culture of Arizona and other states in the Mountain West. Empirical data suggest that these states are the most conservative in the nation on welfare.³⁵ This suggests a general acceptance of the ethos of rugged individualism and self-reliance, and, perhaps, the simple reluctance to pay taxes or share one's wealth with someone else. Arizona's answer to poverty historically has rested on the notion that prosperity for those willing to work will come with economic growth. Objections also encompass the “moral hazard” of giving aid to those who could assume responsibility for their own welfare but can get away with refusing to do so.

When it comes to democracy, Arizona has a strong constitutionally based tradition of electing as many officials as possible, as often as possible, and of voting on a large variety of policy questions at election time. Arizonans have plenty of elections and plenty of things to vote on, but relatively few voters. This problem of participation seems deeply rooted in the state’s political culture. One would have expected increased turnout with the transition from a one-party to a two-party state. This did not happen. Indeed, some data suggest that voter participation in gubernatorial elections as a percentage of the total voting age population was higher in 1946-1952 than in 1980-1986.³⁶

To some extent, low participation may reflect the state's legacy of exclusion, as best represented by the state’s application of the literacy test against minorities. The participation rates of previously partially excluded minorities continue to be relatively low. Because of different historical experiences, the participation of Hispanics in Arizona has been lower than that of Hispanics in New Mexico and other places.³⁷

In spite of Arizona’s democratic tendencies, its minorities have had to struggle continually for inclusion in political affairs. Complaints about the suppression of the minority

vote have a long history in the state. Voters have had little choice in legislative elections because of the way district lines are drawn, and citizens complain about a closed policy-making process. Citizens also have had to worry about official corruption and how to keep lawmakers accountable. Along with this, direct democracy continues to be pitted against representative government and alarms those who question the ability of ordinary citizens to make policy choices.

Over the years, Arizonans have spent considerable energy tinkering with the governance system, often demonstrating a progressive or moralistic desire to improve its operation in terms of increased participation, choice, and transparency, and in reducing the influence of special interests. This was a central concern of the framers of the constitution, and the mechanism they put into it, the initiative process, has been frequently used to address these concerns. Arizonans have just never been able to get the system exactly the way they want it. There has been rather persistent belief that state government is broken; one can expect continued efforts to fix it.

Bottom Line

In any given historical period, Arizona government provides examples of the good, the bad, and the ugly. There are likely to be serious and challenging problems ahead. All in all though, one finds strong strands of determination, optimism, resiliency and innovation in the state's political culture. With these forces at work we can say, as Governor Babbitt prophesized some time ago about the state: "I have seen the future – and it's hot and dry – but it works."³⁸

End Notes

¹ Remarks attributed to United States Senator Ben Wade of Ohio who chaired the Committee on Territories. Quoted by Charles D. Poston, *Building a State in Apache Land* (Tempe, AZ: Aztec Press, 1963), 111.

² James W. Fesler, "The Heritage of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," in James W. Fesler, ed., *The 50 States and Their Local Governments* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), 39.

³ This paper draws in part on several of the author's previous works including: *Arizona Government and Politics: The Struggle for Autonomy, Democracy and Development* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1998); "The Political Culture: Change and Continuity, in *Culture and Values In Arizona Life*, Fiftieth Arizona Town Hall, Arizona Academy, 1987: 115-130; "Arizona Government Over Time: The Good, The Bad, and the Ugly," *Pieces of Power, Governance in Arizona*, Seventy-Ninth Arizona Town All, Arizona Academy, 2001: 17-32, and "Regime and Party Change: The Arizona Pattern," in Maureen Moakley, ed. *Party Realignment in the American States* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1992), 35-55.

⁴ John Kincaid, "Introduction," in John Kincaid, ed., *Political Culture, Public Policy and the American States* (Philadelphia, PA: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1982), 6.

⁵ See, for example: Richard L. Sutton, "Cultural Context and Change-Agent Organizations," *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol. 19, No. 4 (Dec., 1974), 547-562.

⁶ See Wilber Zelinsky, *The Cultural Geography of the United States* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1973) and discussion in Raymond D. Gastil, *Cultural Regions of the United States* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 1975), 27-28.

⁷ Daniel J. Elazar, *American Federalism: A View From the States* (New York, NY: Harper and Row, 3rd, edition, 1984). The first edition was published in 1966.

⁸ One study suggests that Elazar's cultural theories have some value in explaining positions taken by Arizona voters early in the twentieth century on issues such as suffrage, prohibition, and direct democracy. This study indicated, for example, that voting districts dominated by voters from moralistic states were more likely to favor those types of reform than were voting districts populated by people from traditionalistic states. Yet, the study also suggested that other factors, including the percentage of European-born citizens in each voting district, may have had as much to do with voting patterns on issues as did Elazar's cultural types. See David R. Berman, "Political Culture, Issues and the Electorate: Evidence From the Progressive Era," *Western Political Quarterly* 41 (March 1988), 169-180. For a further review of the literature regarding Elazar's theories and its usefulness in understanding Arizona policy, especially in the area of education, see: Stephen B. Lawton, "State Education Policy Formation: The Case of Arizona's English Language Learner Legislation," *American Journal of Education*, Vol. 118, No. 4 (August 2012), 455-487. For a broader overview of the usefulness of Elazar's cultural theories see: John Kincaid, ed., *Political Culture, Public Policy and the American States*.

⁹ Following the Civil War, many former Confederate soldiers and displaced southerners came to Arizona. In recounting the history of Arizona's settlement, territorial Governor Myron H. McCord noted in 1897: "It was chiefly from these classes that the early settlers of the Territory were composed." See: *Report of the Governor of Arizona to the Secretary of the Interior* 1897), 8. Though southerners may have been significant in settling the territory, the number of people migrating from that region to Arizona, according to census material for the period, does not appear unusually large. In 1870, for example, the territory drew 12 percent of its population from eastern states, around 7 percent each from Southern and Midwestern states, and about 3 percent from other western states. The remainder, around 70 percent, came from other countries, particularly Mexico. In the 1890s and early 1900s the most common source of domestic migration was the Midwest, especially Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Kansas and Nebraska. On occasion, there were also relatively large movements from other western mining states. From 1890 to 1900, for example, several hundred miners came into the territory from Mountain States, especially Colorado, where labor disturbances had induced them to seek employment elsewhere. There was, however, a significant Southern migration not only in territorial period but later on in the twentieth century.

¹⁰ In 1982 Elazar noted that while the traditionalistic culture still dominated in Arizona, the strength of the moralistic culture had increased because of population changes. See: Daniel J. Elazar, "Steps in the Study of American Political Culture," in John Kincaid, ed., *Political Culture, Public Policy and the American States* (Philadelphia, PA: Institute for the Study of Human Issues, 1982): 223-235.

¹¹ See remarks by Daniel J. Elazar, "Series Introduction," to David R. Morgan, Robert E. England, and George G. Humphreys, *Oklahoma Politics and Policies* (Lincoln, Neb: University of Nebraska Press, 1991).

¹² Though such problems existed as far back as territorial years they seem to be recurring ones reinforced by migration and other factors. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, for example, came a number of political scandals capturing headlines around the nation -- the state had a governor being attacked on various grounds, some criminal, through a recall effort, court action, and eventually impeachment proceedings, another governor indicted by a federal grand jury on 23 felony counts, two United States senators under attack for using improper influence on behalf of a failed savings-and-loan executive, and a police sting-operation known as AzScam that led to the well-publicized indictment of several lawmakers for taking bribes. Citing the national humiliation after AzScam, former Senate President Carl Kunasek noted: "This keeps Arizona in the forefront of the states that continue to shoot themselves in the foot." Quoted by Ed Foster, "Politicians Shocked," *The Arizona Republic* (February 6, 1991), A2.

¹³ See, for example, the list compiled by James Shields and Leonard Weinberg, "Reactive Violence and the American Frontier: A Contemporary Evaluation," *Western Political Quarterly* 29 (March 1979): 84-101.

¹⁴ *Report of the Territorial Governor of Arizona* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1905), 6.

¹⁵ Henry F. Ashurst, "On Arizona, The Old New State, Rich in Scenic Grandeur, Romance, History, and Natural Resources," page 8, printed in the *Congressional Record*, January 14, 1919. Found in Henry Fountain Ashurst Manuscript, SC NAU, Box 1 Folder 1.

¹⁶ Daniel J. O'Neil, "Arizona: Pro-Choice Success in a Conservative, Republican State," in Mary C. Segers and Timothy A. Byrnes eds., *Abortion Politics in American States* (Armonk, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1995), 88.

¹⁷ See, for example, Morris E. Garnsey, *America's New Frontier: The Mountain West* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1950): pp 57-58; Mark Pastin, "Ethics: Pluralism or Conflict," *Culture and Values in Arizona Life* (Phoenix, AZ: Arizona Academy, 1987), 43-54.

¹⁸ See, for example, Mary Aickin Rothschild and Pamela Claire Hronek, "A History of Arizona Women's Politics," in Rita Mae Kelly, ed., *Women and the Arizona Political Process* (Tempe, AZ: Women's Studies Program, Arizona State University, June 1987), 15-37.

¹⁹ State of the State Message, Arizona State Legislature, Samuel P. Goddard, Governor, 1965.

²⁰ The term "ballot warrior" was used to describe Douglas Bruce, the author of several ballot initiatives in Colorado. See Dana Milbank, "Ballot warriors challenge state, local governments," *Wall Street Journal*, May 20, 1997, A-20.

²¹ "The Oration of Governor Hunt, Delivered July 4th at Bisbee, Arizona," *The Miners Magazine* (July 17, 1913), 8.

²² See Jack L. Walker, "The Diffusion of Innovations Among American States," *American Political Science Review* 63 (September 1969), 880-899.

²³ Norman R. Luttbeg, "Classifying the American States: An Empirical Attempt to Identify Internal Variations," *Midwest Journal of Political Science* 15 (November 1971), 703-721.

²⁴ See Walker, "The Diffusion of Innovations Among American States."

²⁵ David Klingman and William W. Lammers, "The 'General Policy Liberalism' Factor in American State Politics," *American Journal of Political Science* 28 (1984), 588-700.

²⁶ David Osborne, "The Poker Player," *The Washington Monthly* (February 1988): 12-24, at 17.

²⁷ See: Shari Seidman Diamond et. al., "Juror Discussions During Civil Trials: Studying an Arizona Innovation," *Arizona Law Review*, Spring, 2003, 45 Ariz. L. Rev. 1.

²⁸ See, for example, David N. Ammons, "Reputational Leaders in Local Government Productivity and Innovation," *Public Productivity & Management Review*, Vol. 15, No. 1 (Autumn, 1991), 19-43.

²⁹ See David R. Berman, *The Past, Present and Future of the Arizona Initiative* (Morrison Institute for Public Policy, May, 2017).

³⁰ Much the same thing has happened around the country reflecting, in part, the policy disagreement one might well expect when Republicans are in control of the state and more progressive leaning officials who are Democrats control many of the cities,

especially the larger ones. See for example: Joel Ebert, "State GOPs use clout to rein in Dems - Republicans 'lash back' at those who will not comply," *USA Today* (Arlington, VA), August 16, 2017, 1A.

³¹David R. Morgan and Robert E. England, "Classifying the American States: An Update," *Social Science Quarterly* 69 (December 1988), 405-417.

³²Lisa Schnebly Heldlinger, "Behind the Times, Not the Clock," *The Arizona Republic* December 8, 1991, C1.

³³Message of the Governor to the Legislature, 1897, p. 5.

³⁴Frederick C. Mosher and Orville F. Poland, *The Costs of American Governments* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1964), 2.

³⁵ See Arthur H. Miller, "Public Opinion and Regional Political Realignment," in Peter F. Galderisi, et. al., ed., *The Politics of Realignment: Party Change in the Mountain West* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1987), 94-97.

³⁶ Kim Quaile Hill, *Democracy in the Fifty States* (Lincoln, Neb: University of Nebraska Press, 1994).

³⁷ See, for example, F. Chris Garcia and Rudolph O. de la Garza, *The Chicano Political Experience: Three Perspectives* (North Scituate, MA: Duxbury, 1977), p. 94; and Rodney E. Hero, "Latinos and the 1988 Elections: Arizona," in Rodolfo O. de la Garza and Louis DeSipio, *From Rhetoric to Reality: Latino Politics in the 1988 Elections* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), pp. 77-83. See also: Marlita A. Reddy, ed., *Statistical Record of Hispanic Americans* (Detroit, MI: Gale Research Inc., 1993).

³⁸Draft of an Arizona Speech April 6, 1986, Bruce Babbitt Collection, 1974-1990 Ms. 246, Northern Arizona University, Series 1, Box 11-1.

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