

New England State Reports

Section Foreword

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In the forward to the last scholarly attempt to bring New England politics to life through essays on each of the six states, the editor, Jerome Mileur, wrote: “We hope this monograph contributes to a better understanding of politics in New England and that, thirty years from now, another group of political scientists will update this work, correcting any errors and extending the study of politics in the states that comprise this very special region” (Mileur 1997, 2). As a testament to the acceleration of progress in the 21st century we are happy to report that such an effort is underway here, a mere six years later. Unlike previous efforts, however, ours will be a continuous and ongoing attempt to wed theory and practice in order to make New England politics intelligible to scholar and practitioner, alike. Also in keeping with our information age environment, ours is a digital effort, one that will exploit the dexterity of cyberspace to produce a scholarly conversation about New England government and politics. We believe that the continuous nature of this conversation will produce special insights, the kind that only emerges through sustained intensity.

In this first issue there are six essays, one on each state in the region. Clyde McKee and Stefanie Chambers compare the development of Connecticut’s suburban regions with the decline of the state capital in the face of gubernatorial promises to make urban renewal a top priority. Jerold Duquette argues for the

primacy of political culture as an explanatory factor in Massachusetts politics. Howard Coty analyzes the growing gap between the “two Maines” in his commentary. Michelle Fistek, who in a previous work asked if “the granite grip” of the Republican Party was weakening, seems to have answered her own question in this volume’s essay on New Hampshire, where the Republicans presently have total dominance. Maureen Moakley links past, present, and future in an analysis of Rhode Island’s politics, which she characterizes as a “modified one party” Democratic state with a political culture that supports individualistic politics. Finally, Paul Petterson describes Vermont as “Contrary Country,” often “marching to a different drummer” than the rest of the nation. His commentary looks at the peculiarities of the Green Mountain state’s politics in recent times.

The section will be a mixture of regular scholarly commentary and guest essays by both scholars and practitioners. We also plan to have “symposia” on specific topics as well, all in an effort to improve our understanding of politics in these states and the political process in general. We invite those interested in contributing to contact us. Above all, we want to be a forum for dialogue, extending the yearly discussion of the NEPSA New England Politics Roundtable to a wider audience. The editors share the belief of Duane Lockard who wrote in his important study of New England politics that focusing on the region is a useful analytic activity, because “...regional comparative analysis of state politics...reduces the uncertainties and variables to more manageable proportions” (Lockard 1959, 7) than is the case when one is studying state politics in general.

We strongly encourage readers who hope to take advantage of our project to look at previous works on the New England region in conjunction with their reading of and hopefully participation in our present endeavor. To that end, we recommend Duane Lockard’s seminal work, *New England State Politics* (1959), Neal Peirce’s *The New England States* (1976), William Sweet and Hoyt Gimlin’s

New England Regionalism and Recovery (1980), Josephine Milburn and Victoria Schuck's *New England Politics* (1981), and John K. White's *The Fractured Electorate* (1983). Of particular usefulness to readers would be the two monographs from the scholarly journal *Polity*, published in 1968 and 1997, respectively. Meanwhile, we look forward to initiating a process of providing useful analysis of the politics of the several New England states in the pages of this journal, now and in future issues to come.

References

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