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## Editorial Foreword

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# The New England Journal of Political Science

## Volume I, Number 1

### Spring 2005

#### **Editorial Foreword**

James T. McHugh  
Editor-in-Chief

This journal represents a scholarly collaboration of the New England Political Science Association. There are, of course, several scholarly journals available to this discipline, especially within this country. Aside from the fact that additional peer-reviewed journals often are welcomed as a venue for scholarship by the ever-growing academic community, this effort is a consequence of a particular motive. It was created to perpetuate the mission of the association, not just as a convenient regional society for the political scientists of a particular part of the country but as an expression of the region, itself, and the tradition of politics that it represents.

Therefore, *The New England Journal of Political Science* had adopted, as part of its mission, the promotion of a regional community of political science and political scientists. The fact that this region happens to be New England provides extremely interesting possibilities in that respect. As the “Cradle of the Revolution,” New England has assumed special place in the science of politics, as well as in the popular imagination of America and beyond. In particular, the region has developed a mystique in relation to the development of political philosophy that continues to inspire political theorists and commentators, today, and contributes to the sense of academic community that inspired the origins of the New England Political Science Association, more than a half-century ago, and continues to inspire its growth and development.

This mystique has been reinforced by the quantity and, especially, quality of the institutions of higher education that have populated this region for centuries. It is particularly notable that these institutions are not confined to the obvious presence of “Research I” institutions of elite reputation, particularly in terms of the Ivy League. Obviously, those colleges and universities are deservedly prominent and have earned the distinction of being well-known, throughout the world, as well as ranked among the very finest institutions of higher education on the planet. But the presence of institutions that fall under other categories of the academy is, in its own way, equally impressive. Teaching-intensive state colleges and universities, private academies, and smaller institutions (including community colleges) from this part of the country have had equally excellent and well-deserved reputations. The proximity of these vast and varied institutions of higher learning have reinforced their quality and the sense of academic community that provides an important contribution to the image of New England as a bastion of profound thought and deliberative political activity.

The New England Political Science Association was created to nurture this regional environment and *The New England Journal of Political Science* is a logical extension of that effort. Coincidentally, one of the more recent factors that have contributed to the strong quality of higher education within New England has, also, motivated this journal. Owing to changes in the academic marketplace, a large output from graduate schools, fundamental shifts in the economy, and changing priorities among colleges and universities, there has been an abundance of scholars and other academicians from all disciplines (including political science) during the most recent couple of decades. This situation may have provided an “embarrassment of riches” for these colleges and universities in terms of the available pool of candidates for academic positions but it also has imposed considerable pressure upon high quality scholars to have their

scholarship published. Furthermore, these scholars cannot afford to have their work published “just anywhere.” The need to provide a venue that reflects the highest academic standards through the peer-review process has increased at the same rate as the quantity of scholarship that is being produced and the benefits for the process of learning that this increased output represents.

Therefore, this journal reflects both a need and an opportunity. As a casual observer from within this discipline will, obviously, note, the quality of its Editorial Board is outstanding, including some of the world’s most distinguished scholars within their respective fields. The fact that this journal is being produced in an electronic format is a further reflection of its commitment to innovation and accessibility. Of course, that format challenges traditional assumptions regarding the superficial standards that are associated with intellectual “quality.” The prejudice that an online venue is a habitat for unregulated expression that is immune from any sort of “quality control” can be difficult to overcome. The introduction of the printing press probably produced a similar reaction among serious scholars who lamented the publication of words and ideas that had become open to anyone with access to such a device, regardless of whether they had been properly vetted by trained monks and other scribes. But, as with the printing press, high quality standards on the internet can be maintained, regardless of the medium. This journal (with its double-blind peer review process under the guidance of its distinguished Editorial Board) offers such an assurance.

Furthermore, this journal is making a commitment to reflect the social and political environment of this region. In addition to being based in this region, the journal also encourages the submission of articles that address the politics of New England and its states. While maintaining the same standards for publication that are applied to other submissions, the journal is dedicated to providing a potential “home” to scholarship that might be considered too

parochial or “esoteric” for other political science publications. The fact that its Editorial Board includes distinguished political scientists who are familiar with the politics of their region and the states in which they live (or, at least, have access to colleagues who do possess that requisite specialized knowledge) facilitates that process. Therefore, it hopes to become a “New England” journal in more than just name or for reasons other than geographic location.

More significantly, this journal includes a special section in each issue that is dedicated to an overview of the politics and political ideas that are occurring in, and emanating from, the six states that comprise New England. This section is particularly rich within this issue. This section has been inspired by (and, indeed, is an outgrowth of) the “New England roundtable” that is a regular feature of the association’s annual conference. While not all issues will be as well represented by this section, the commitment to keeping readers apprised of the recent developments in the politics of the New England states will provide a welcome source of analysis, including for public officials and policy analysts associated with these states. This signature section will, hopefully, make a lasting contribution to the overall mission of this journal.

Despite the fact that it will attempt to provide a “niche” for scholarship relating to the politics of New England and its states, this journal does not aim for any exclusionary publication. Granted, New England is a region that has been associated with profound political thought and, so, it may be natural that its colleges and universities are particularly well endowed with scholarship that reflects a strong tradition of political theory and political philosophy. But all fields of political science are encouraged—again, as reflected by the composition of this journal’s Editorial Board and their diverse specializations and backgrounds. Furthermore, submissions from all areas of this discipline, interdisciplinary efforts, and scholarship from related disciplines will be actively encouraged. *The New England Journal of Political Science* is a comprehensive

publication of this discipline and it reflects, in that respect, the best tradition of political science—a discipline that touches (especially in terms of policies and ideas) all other academic disciplines.

The articles of this issue offer a good example of that mission of academic diversity within the discipline. Howard Cody's excellent comparative assessment, from an institutional approach, of New Zealand's electoral system is indicative of that theme. Christopher Anderson's essay on Hobbes, Locke, and Hume represents the best tradition of the sort of political theory scholarship with which this region is, often, associated. Samuel Hoff offers a monumental study of presidential politics that draws heavily upon the methods and approaches of the related social science discipline of history. Samuel Peleg's fascinating interdisciplinary study of film depictions of terrorism and the relationship of those images to the political culture of the political systems that have produced them is especially notable for its reflection of this journal's scholarly purpose.

Finally, the collection of essays in this issue's "State Reports" section provides an excellent inauguration for this section and for the broader mission that was contemplated when the New England Political Science Association began the process of creating a journal to serve its members and the broader academic community of New England and beyond. It is indicative of this overall goal that we will continue to pursue in subsequent issues of this semi-annual publication. We hope that it will meet those aspirations and become a permanent academic fixture of this region and the scholarly community (as well as the broader community of political scientists, students, public officials, and interested citizens) that it is intended to serve.