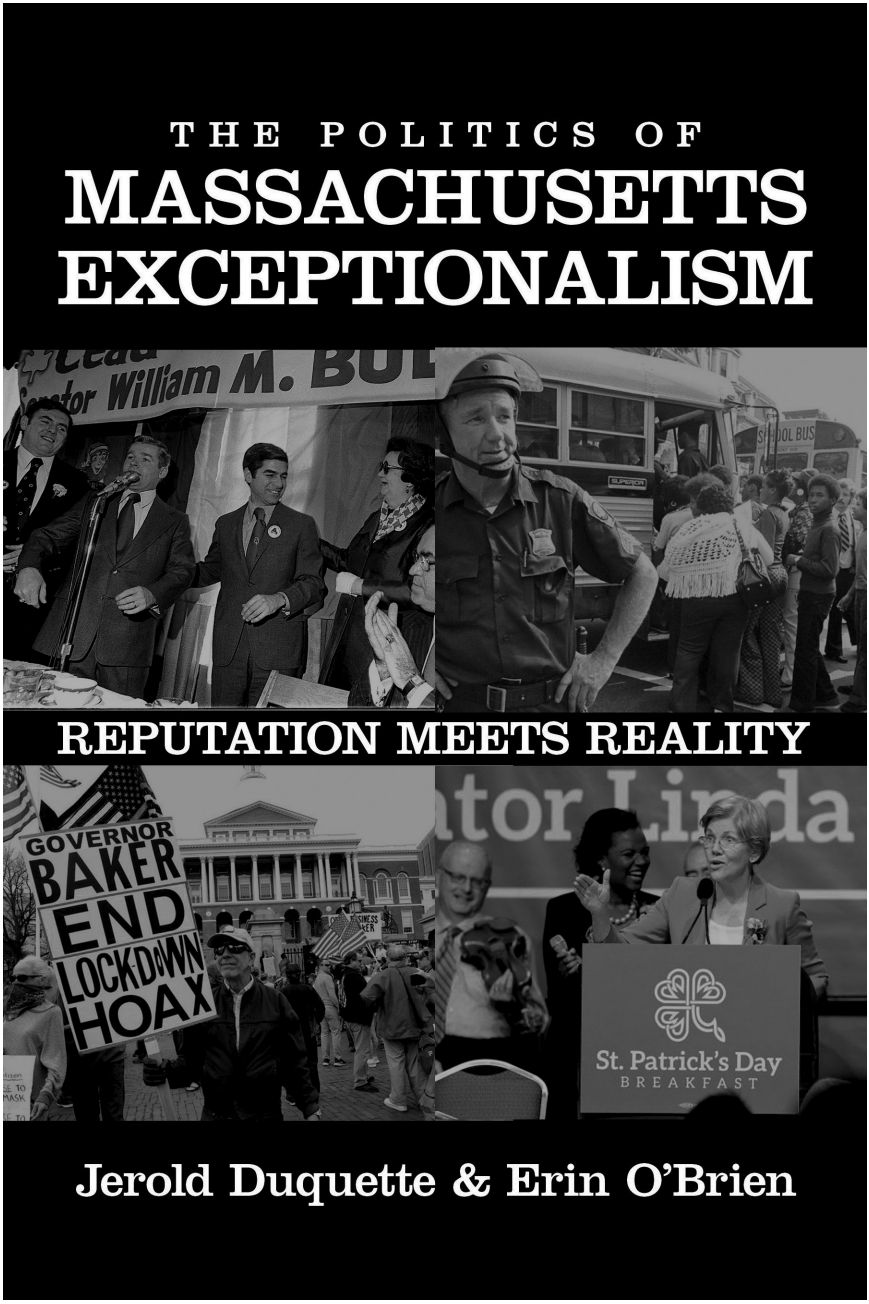

Published by the University of Massachusetts Press, 2022.

Massachusetts Exceptionalism as Identity and Debate

Jerold Duquette and Erin O'Brien

Editor's Introduction: *In this 50th anniversary issue we have endeavored to offer articles that highlight historic events and changes over the past fifty years, along with articles that offer reinterpretations of well-known topics. This article admirably fulfills both of these goals. The concept, or construct, of Massachusetts "exceptionalism" is deeply rooted in the Commonwealth's history and self-identity. Yet to what extent is it merited? Political scientists Jerold Duquette and Erin O'Brien's recent edited volume,* The Politics of Massachusetts Exceptionalism: Reputation Meets Reality *(University of Massachusetts Press, 2022), offers a thought-provoking exploration of the theme as it applies to many facets of the state's politics and public policy, both historical and contemporary. In the following article, excerpted from their introduction, they offer a cogent summary of the key arguments and debates within the field: what is unique about Massachusetts' political history and culture?*

* * * * *

What is so special about state government and politics in Massachusetts? What, if anything, makes Massachusetts politics stand out from that of its forty-nine peers or from national politics? Are the claims of "exceptionalism," of Massachusetts' special and instructive place in American history and politics, justified? If so, does this instructiveness come from the state's example of exceptional virtue or exceptional vice? Is it an example of "how

Historical Journal of Massachusetts, Vol. 50 (1/2), Summer 2022

to" or "how not to"? The animating questions of our volume revolve around *exceptionalism*, an idea of debatable properties but indisputable gravitational pull in Massachusetts and American history and politics. Our contributors are united by a twofold understanding of exceptionalism. On the one hand, we look to institutional arrangements, functioning, and relationships. Here, many aspects of the state's historical and institutional development are exceptional, which is to say "unique" when compared to other American states and to the national government. On the other hand, and more normatively, on the question of whether Massachusetts is "exceptionally virtuous," the case for Massachusetts exceptionalism, is at best a mixed bag.

Taken together, the chapters in our study, *The Politics of Massachusetts Exceptionalism: Reputation Meets Reality,* provide a frank assessment of the commonwealth's exceptionalism from the perspective of institutional dynamics as well as diversity, voice, and policy innovation. Each contributor puts a key element of the commonwealth's political system to the test in order to determine whether Massachusetts' reputation and understanding of itself as exceptionally different or exceptionally virtuous—or both—are supported by the evidence.

The machinery, transactional, and individualistic elements of Massachusetts political culture operate according to the logic and design of the U.S. Constitution more closely than that of any other state, better even than the national government framed by that constitution, which is now the second oldest democratic constitution in the world. (Can you guess which one is the oldest? That's right, "Massachusetts.") Exceptionally durable fidelity to the Madisonian notion of individualistic, self-interested political competition has enabled the Bay State to weather national political transitions and transgressions without destabilizing fallout for centuries. Even now, as bitter partisan culture wars swallow up democratic politics and processes in Washington, DC, and state capitols across America, life on Beacon Hill remains an exceptionally nonpartisan affair. Democrats who dominate at the Massachusetts State House generally work hand in hand with Republican governors. Of course, exceptional stability also has downsides. Several contributors vividly illustrate that avoidance of destabilizing change can also mean avoidance of necessary and positive change. Change-resistant institutions and cultural norms have unquestionably preserved and protected unjustifiable power imbalances in Massachusetts government and politics. In stark contrast to its progressive national reputation, the Bay State is home to many of the most egregious examples of social, economic, and political inequality in America.

Massachusetts exceptionalism then is real, but complicated. Its centrality to the state's founding and understanding of its own reputation today make exceptionalism a powerful analytical lens through which to scrutinize and evaluate government and politics in the Bay State. Exceptionalism is a lens that brings the good, the bad, and the ugly of Massachusetts' government and politics into sharp relief.

Two historical facts provide a springboard for assessments of Massachusetts' exceptionalism in the chapters that follow. Both are facts no other American state can marshal to distinguish itself. Both make comparisons between Massachusetts and American national government and politics irresistible in the present undertaking. First, the concept of exceptionalism itself in American and Massachusetts politics can be traced to the same moment, the same author. Several of the contributors to this volume highlight the significance of John Winthrop's 1630 promise to make the Massachusetts Bay Colony a model of Christian charity for the world and the parallel development of Massachusetts and American political thought. Second, the Massachusetts Constitution of 1780, more than those of any of its peers at the time and alone among them today, served as the principal model on which the framers of the U.S. Constitution relied for their handiwork. This philosophical and constitutional seniority has had an unmistakable impact on Massachusetts' reputation and self-sense of exceptionalism.

Firmly ensconced in the state's identity, exceptionalism attaches effortlessly to the long line of Massachusetts citizens who took for granted their rightful place on the national political stage. Yet the state's reputation for excessive self-regard is well worn nationally as Massachusetts ranks as the "snobbiest" state in the nation (Cote 2021) and as only the thirty-first best state by fellow Americans (Gartsbeyn 2021). They don't call us "Massholes" for nothing! Nevertheless, within the state, exceptionalism provides narrative cover for stubborn contradictions between reputation and reality in the commonwealth even today. In Massachusetts, old-school politics—which is to say wait your turn, establishment-friendly politics—wears a cloak of respectability to many, in part, because it is literally the oldest school of politics in America.

Today, in the wake of Donald Trump's presidency, Americans are more divided, distrustful, and cynical than ever before. By the time Joe Biden took the oath of office on January 20, 2021, following the January 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol by Trump supporters, there was little doubt that American politics had become incredibly toxic. Yet Massachusetts-based pollster and political analyst Steve Koczela took the occasion to highlight evidence pointing to the comparative non-toxicity of Massachusetts' politics:

> POLITICS IS NOT all toxic. Here in Massachusetts, voters hold political leaders in very high regard. The state legislature [sic] has climbed to 65% approval in a poll we released last week, the highest we have seen in our polling going back over a decade. Gov. Charlie Baker sports a 73% approval rating and has been in the 70s and 80s for most of his term. Taken together, we have what may be the most popular governor and the most popular legislature in the country. . . . Putting the two together shows how much of an outlier Massachusetts truly is. Maryland— another blue state with a moderate Republican governor— is the only other state that comes close. (2021)

Massachusetts-based political journalist Adam Reilly, in a Twitter response to Koczela's polling data, theorized that it "reflects both genuine substantive approval, and also *a very Massachusetts tendency to assume things are great just because they're from Massachusetts*" (2021; emphasis added). Koczela's positive assessment and Reilly's rebuttal reflect both the durability and the contestability of the state's long love affair with exceptionalism. Several scholars, via their empirical analyses, find that this admiration for the commonwealth's political institutions and actors is not universally shared even within the state's borders. In communities disproportionally alienated from access to political and economic power in the state, such as people of color and immigrants, this sanguinity, noted by Koczela and subtly mocked by Reilly, is a cruel reminder of the gap between reputation and reality that powers and protects inequality and discrimination in Massachusetts. This tension between reputation and reality runs through all of the analyses in this volume.

Average Bay State voters are not now, nor have they ever been, outraged by career politicians engaging in transparently transactional politics because they want their representatives to be powerful and expect them to use that power on behalf of their constituents (Duquette 2020). Massachusetts voters do not punish politicians for having national aspirations, for political careerism. In the same breath, several contributors to our volume show how the tension between political insiders and outsiders plays when Bay State pols seek higher office.

Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley, Attorney General Maura Healey, State Senator Sonya Chang-Díaz, Boston City Councilor Andrea Campbell, and Boston mayor Michelle Wu are all successful progressive politicians working their way up the political career ladder. They do so by marrying outsider, anti-establishment policy priorities with establishment-friendly résumés that

distinguish them from anti-establishment progressives, such as Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez or Tahirah Amatul-Wadud, the civil rights attorney and activist easily defeated by Congressman Richie Neal on the same day Councilwoman Pressley upset Mike Capuano en route to the U.S. House of Representatives.

Although the commonwealth does have "a [long] tradition of moralistic activism and reform that has made and remade America," the practice of elective politics and public policy making in the state is decidedly individualistic and transactional (Mileur 1997, 77). Bay State politics is passionate, but it is not the passion of the preacher or the prophet; it is the passion of the player, the competitor, engaged on behalf of her constituents in a blood sport, not a holy war.

The political memoir of former senate president William "Billy" Bulger, whose eighteen-year rule of the senate from 1978 to 1996 remains the longest in state history, is filled with colorful stories about his bouts with competitors for power and policy in the blood sport of Bay State politics. In it, Bulger openly celebrates the old-school, nonideological, and transactional nature of Massachusetts politics, as well as the unchecked power of insiders at the statehouse. In Governor William Weld, Bulger had a particularly skilled opponent with whom he fought hard, but never let disagreement come between two of the "big three" who then ruled the statehouse. Speaking at the 1993 St. Patrick's Day breakfast, Governor Weld deftly and humorously illustrated his relationship with Bulger. He assured the crowd he was unafraid to publicly state his position on his frequent nemesis "William Michael Bulger," a position Weld explained in part as follows:

> If you mean the sultan of South Boston, the suzerain of the statehouse, the tyrant who terrorizes the goo-goos and suckles the suspect, the Napoleonic oppressor whose fast gavel denied every citizen a vote on term limits and basic rights, . . . the very man who thwarts everything that is good and right and pure about Massachusetts, then certainly I am against him. . . . But if, when you say "Billy Bulger," you mean the learned leader of his esteemed chamber, the sage whose single words steer his colleagues back from the wayward path, the saint of East Third Street, . . . the champion of the working man and the guardian of the widowed, . . . the brave Latin scholar and philosopher who resists the evils of television and the *Boston Globe*, . . . then certainly I am for him. . . . This is my stand. I will not retreat from it. (Quoted in Bulger 1996, 271– 72)

The relationship between Democrats and Republicans at the Massachusetts State House could not be more different than in Washington or in state capitols around the country. Despite the frequent presence of Republican governors and a Democratic legislature whose veto-proof majority has gone unchallenged for three decades, interparty and interbranch relations on Beacon Hill are far more cooperative than combative. The legislative supremacy included in the designs of both the Massachusetts and the U.S. Constitutions, a distant memory on Capitol Hill, remains alive and quite well on Beacon Hill where the governor is but one of three who set the agenda at the statehouse. The governor, senate president, and Speaker of the house, known as "the big three," steer the ship of state together, an arrangement that gives the legislature two hands on the wheel to the governor's one. Though competitive, twenty-first-century Democratic legislative leaders and Republican governors routinely choose incrementalism over incivility, accommodation over confrontation.

The primary cleavage in Massachusetts government and politics, reflected in the state's economy as well, is between insiders and outsiders, incumbents and challengers, haves and have-nots. Division by party and ideology are subordinated or channeled away from the halls of state government where interest-based bargaining is the coin of the realm. Issues or conflicts that threaten "politics as usual" are routinely deflected away from the day-to-day work on Beacon Hill—much to the chagrin of those perceived to threaten "the way we have always done things." When issues that threaten comity at the statehouse cannot be left to local governments, or kicked down the road, they can be sent directly to the ballot, where opposing pressure groups can duke it out in the public square without putting legislative leaders or the governor in harm's way. Even when they cannot be deflected, potentially disruptive issues can be slowed and moderated.

When the murder of African Americans by police in the U.S. finally found resonance in America's national political narrative in the summer of 2020, pressure to bring urgent and comprehensive change to the commonwealth did not topple "politics as usual" on Beacon Hill. The governor, senate president, and Speaker of the house had little difficulty delaying significant police reform and subjecting it to the same interest-based bargaining approach they use on less urgent and less visible policy-making imperatives. The persistent underrepresentation of people of color, immigrants, and women in the statehouse often allows what most Americans see as the most progressive state in the Union to talk the talk without having to walk the walk.

Our scholarly examination of "Massachusetts exceptionalism" highlights the places where the label is accurate and where it is inaccurate. We name

the tensions that define Massachusetts politics, if not its political rhetoric. The commonwealth was the center of abolition as well as the locale of busing riots. No other state is as dense with institutions of higher learning and medical research, yet the state's initial COVID-19 vaccination rollout was near last in the nation. The first two approved vaccines in the United States were developed by Moderna and Pfizer. "Moderna's headquarters" are literally in the "heart of Cambridge" and "less than a quarter-mile away is an outpost for Pfizer," but the Massachusetts city in which they are located, far too emblematically of Massachusetts, had no vaccination sites ready as both companies delivered their vaccines to states far more prepared to receive them (Krueger 2021).

Massachusetts has and is seeing significant demographic change, as we document, but this has not yet been married with meaningful shifts in political influence. The Bay State is a place where the sweeping rhetoric of the Kennedys, and the state's influence on the national stage, has not translated into another Bay Stater in the White House—despite many recent attempts from Democrats and Republicans rooted here. Massachusetts is a model of bipartisanship between the Democratic state legislature and Republican governors but also a model of old-school, transactional, establishment-protective politics where new blood and new voices are routinely stifled at the state-house. By making these tensions evident, our volume allows the reader to draw informed conclusions about where precisely, if at all, Massachusetts is exceptional. In this volume, the "city on the hill," "the HUB," and "the Cradle of Liberty" get both earned reverence and earned critique. While your "cousin from Boston" may not like the entire ride, your professors from Massachusetts think it is worth the journey.

CHAPTER SUMMARIES & KEY ARGUMENTS

In chapter 1, "Massachusetts Politics: Context and Culture," Erin O'Brien describes the social and economic contexts in which contemporary Massachusetts politics plays out. She argues that "while it is fairly easy to delineate the structural features and conditions that define the commonwealth's political landscape, classifying Massachusetts' political culture is both a popular sport and one where no clear winning take has emerged." O'Brien cautions that debate about whether Massachusetts' political culture is exceptional can conceal as much as it illuminates.

Her statistical portrait provides a clear picture of Massachusetts residents today and their real-life social, economic, and political circumstances. She finds that while the state's knowledge economy is forward looking and has

produced great affluence, its less well-publicized impact has been the increase of economic inequality in the state. O'Brien emphasizes Massachusetts' well-earned reputation for racism and inequality. As one Black Bostonian put it, "When I see stories of police brutality, not just on the news but from personal acquaintances, across the country, I think to myself that despite its liberal reputation, Boston is no different. Perhaps this city is just better at maintaining that illusion. Down South, racism is much more overt and direct. But in the liberal North, it's buried beneath macroaggressions and couched in progressive language" (quoted in Gray 2020).

O'Brien details the impact of shifting residential patterns and demographic changes in the state's population that have accompanied the transition to a knowledge-based economy. An increasingly diverse population means an increasingly diverse electorate, which is transforming the political, as well as the economic, playing field. She rounds out her contextual portrait by factoring in the cultural impact of Democratic Party dominance in the state's politics. Finally, she provides insights into Massachusetts political culture in the voice of political scientists as well as current political practitioners. She introduces the pathbreaking work of Edgar Litt [author of the 1965 classic, *The Political Cultures of Massachusetts*]. Litt's typology of Massachusetts political culture is utilized by several of the contributors to our study, as well as the interstate political culture classification framework of political scientist Daniel Elazar. The work of these two scholars has framed inquiry and discussion of Massachusetts political culture for more than fifty years.

In chapter 2, "Local Government and Regional Politics," Shannon Jenkins calls our attention to one of the paradoxes of Massachusetts' historical consciousness and its contributions to America's philosophical and constitutional foundations. Here in the birthplace of democratic local self-government where the town meeting remains the most common form of local government, local governments have little independent power. Instead, the state legislature jealously guards its turf and its resources, leaving the state's cities and towns little ability to exercise the powers granted to them under the state's home-rule statute. The large concentration of the population in the Boston area contributes to another unenviable element of Massachusetts politics, the significant advantages of the city of Boston and its immediate neighbors when it comes to the attention and resources of state government. The cities and towns of western and southeastern Massachusetts have long been used to fighting an uphill battle for political clout at the statehouse. Although Dr. Jenkins reports some progress, when it comes to local government power and regional political clout, Massachusetts is not walking the exceptionalism walk.

In chapter 3, "Massachusetts on the National Stage," Peter Ubertaccio argues that the sons and daughters of Massachusetts have always made exceptional leadership contributions to American national government and politics but that in recent presidential election cycles campaigns for the nation's top office have not gone well for Massachusetts' politicians. The commonwealth's unique connections to the nation's philosophical and constitutional foundings helped shape the state's very historically conscious political culture, a culture that has always nurtured and rewarded personal political ambition and treated successful politicians like celebrities. Though the now famous Broadway musical lyric was delivered by Virginian George Washington, Ubertaccio's analysis makes clear that "history has its eye on us" is a sentiment that was already deeply embedded in Massachusetts hearts and minds when the first shots of the American Revolution were fired on Massachusetts soil.

The commonwealth's exceptional place on the national political stage, in presidential politics and congressional leadership especially, has survived into the twenty-first century, according to Ubertaccio, because Massachusetts is home to the colleges and universities from which a disproportionate number of America's aspiring presidents, senators, and representatives are graduates. He argues that the state's vibrant intellectual and media culture, along with its proximity to New Hampshire, will continue to light the path between Massachusetts and Washington though the presidency eludes.

In chapter 4, "The Massachusetts General Court: Exceptionally Old-School," Shannon Jenkins argues that the exceptional endurance of legislative supremacy on Beacon Hill explains a great deal about Massachusetts government and politics. The leaders of the state senate and house of representatives in Massachusetts exert enormous control over the policy-making process. While being "exceptionally old school" may evoke nostalgia for some, Jenkins highlights the dangers of putting "going along to get along" above policy innovation. Although the state senate has in recent years become more open to the policy innovations necessary to meet the governing challenges of the twenty-first century, "the exceptional concentration of power in . . . the hands of the Speaker of the house" continues to place the imperatives of electoral politics ahead of effective and responsive governance in the commonwealth.

In chapter 5, "The Governor of the Commonwealth: A 'Not So' Supreme Executive Magistrate," Jerold Duquette traces the history of executive leadership in Massachusetts from Governor John Winthrop to Governor Charlie Baker, demonstrating that the endurance of legislative supremacy in the commonwealth, in sharp contrast to Washington and state capitols across

America, makes the Massachusetts governorship an exceptional example of the road not traveled by presidents and fellow governors alike. For four hundred years, Massachusetts chief executives have navigated the central tension at the heart of America's democratic experiment, the tension between democratic accountability and efficient administration of government. Presidents and governors alike, responding to the increasing complexity of democratic governance in a changing world, gradually became the dominant actors in American government and politics, fundamentally distorting the relationship between executive and legislative power and purpose that was enshrined in the Massachusetts and U.S. Constitutions. The Massachusetts governorship, however, remains squarely grounded in an institutional scheme and a cultural tradition that remain true to the framers' intentions and designs. Massachusetts provides an exceptionally "Madisonian" model of executive leadership that has made occupants of the corner office at the Massachusetts statehouse leaders and innovators without becoming the center of the political universe in the state.

The theme of continuity amid change also animates the study of Massachusetts' Supreme Judicial Court and the state constitution it is charged with interpreting. In chapter 6, "The Courts and the Constitution: Exceptionally Enduring," Lawrence Friedman describes the "provenance, framework, and historical importance" of the commonwealth's constitution as well as the history of the Supreme Judicial Court's role and relationship to the legislature and the governor. The ways that Massachusetts' highest court has mediated the inescapable tensions between itself and the state's political branches mark it as an exceptional model of American constitutional jurisprudence. Friedman finds particular "exceptionalism" in the continuity between John Adams' conception of separated government powers, the design of the three branches of government enshrined in the Constitution of 1780 that he authored, and the prudence with which the Supreme Judicial Court preserves its intended place in and the integrity of the separation of powers in Massachusetts state government.

Litt's typology reappears in Maurice T. Cunningham and Peter Ubertaccio's chapter 7, "Political Parties and Elections," where they use it to delineate the role of political parties in Massachusetts government and politics. They explain that the state's electorate is not quite what outside observers suspect. Although the percentage of registered Democrats has long been more than twice that of registered Republicans, both parties' totals are exceeded by unenrolled voters—those who choose not to register with either party. This comes as a surprise to many outside of Massachusetts. They argue that the recent success of Republican gubernatorial candidates is not a

product of strong party organizations in the state. Neither the Massachusetts Democratic nor its Republican Party organizations enjoy impressive influence over their nomination processes or the behavior of fellow partisans in office. Democratic dominance in the state legislature is aided by an ineffectual Republican state party organization and the hesitance of GOP governors to invest too much energy in increasing Republican ranks in the legislature for fear of threatening the harmony between the corner office and Democratic leaders on Beacon Hill.

They conclude that the real partisan battle in the commonwealth is within the Democratic Party, where progressives have long had a hard time breaking through. Recently, however, the election of young progressive candidates of color in the state suggests that change may be afoot, although, as Cunningham and Ubertaccio stress, establishment political actors have never yielded power easily in Massachusetts and there is little sign that this enduring element of Massachusetts politics will change anytime soon.

In chapter 8, "Voter Access in Massachusetts: From Laggard to Leader," Shannon O'Brien compares the Bay State's performance in administering elections with its state peers, finding that the commonwealth has only recently begun to put its money where its mouth is. Between 2008 and 2018, Massachusetts moved up from "a dismal thirty-second . . . to eleventh" in state rankings. Despite this progress, O'Brien finds that while registration and turnout rates are comparatively high in Massachusetts, they "fall short of the expectations set by high levels of socioeconomic status among Massachusetts residents." The good news is that Massachusetts has been exceptional of late in the area of voter access policy. The bad news is that substantial gaps in registration and voting remain along familiar lines of race and ethnicity. O'Brien concludes that the state's updated election laws and nimble response to the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic indicate that Massachusetts, though "late to the game," is on the comeback trail when it comes to improving voters' access to the ballot box, but important work remains.

In chapter 9, "The Massachusetts Initiative and Referendum Process," Gerald Duquette and Maurice T. Cunningham explain the history and impact of the state's ballot initiative and referendum process, finding that it has long provided a participatory outlet for Massachusetts citizens but that it has also provided elected leaders at the statehouse with a convenient political pressure valve of sorts. Because the legislature has more control over the process by which measures make the state ballot than legislatures in other states, Beacon Hill leaders have been able to channel politically sensitive issues away from the conventional policy-making process and away

from their reelection campaigns. One of the reasons Massachusetts legislative elections are among the least competitive in America is this ability to dispose of controversial issues in an ostensibly democratic way without giving fuel to potential reelection challengers.

Duquette and Cunningham argue that the gap between the commonwealth's liberal vanguard reputation and its exceptionally establishment-friendly political reality is aided and abetted by the ballot initiative and referendum process, which in recent years has increasingly become a venue for well-financed special interests to stage dramatic, misinformation-filled campaigns designed to protect or advance their narrow interests. Thanks to the campaign finance deregulation unleashed by the U.S. Supreme Court's *Citizens United* decision in 2010, ballot measure campaigns have become particularly fertile ground for unscrupulous campaign tactics, including the abundant use of so-called dark money. The ability to finance highly deceptive media campaigns for or against a ballot measure without revealing the identities of the financiers has accelerated and intensified the dangers of the state's century-old ode to direct democracy. This makes an already undeliberate approach to policy making even less deliberative.

In chapter 10, "Latinx in Massachusetts Politics," Luis F. Jiménez describes the history and present place of Latinx communities in Massachusetts government and policy, detailing the dramatic and accelerating demographic changes in the commonwealth over the past half century as well as the diversity among Massachusetts' Latinx population. Jiménez finds that Latinx candidates for public office are more successful at the local level than in statewide elections but that this success has been "slow and halting." He emphasizes the diversity among those placed under the umbrella label of "Latinx," how these communities are often located in different parts of the state, and how they do not necessarily mirror one another in policy priorities.

Jiménez uses statistical data to compare the progress of Latinx communities in Massachusetts to their counterparts in the northeastern region and around the country, finding that while "the lack of descriptive representation has not precluded policies Latinx have demanded," enactment of policy that adequately responds to community needs has been "uneven." He does find progress in the political organization and mobilization of the state's Latinx communities but concludes that the commonwealth is far from the head of the class "in providing Latinx with affordable housing, educating Latinx children, and closing the wealth gap that has developed between Latinx and whites." Many of the "same structural barriers" that make Latinx communities in the state economically vulnerable also limit progress in increasing Latinx representation at the statehouse.

In chapter 11, "Women, Women of Color in Massachusetts Politics: Not So Exceptional," Shannon O'Brien measures the progress of women in Massachusetts government and politics, finding the commonwealth "not so exceptional" in this regard. "When it comes to electing women, Massachusetts is best described as 'exceptionally poor' in New England and 'exceptionally average' among the fifty states." The hard data reveal yet another gap between the state's progressive reputation and its reality when it comes to women in public office. O'Brien explains that the state's poor record on electing women is related to the dominance of the Democratic Party at the statehouse. Single-party dominance is an artifact of uncompetitive elections. Without competitive elections, it is more difficult to elect political newcomers as the party need not reinvent itself, reinforcing the predominantly male and white composition of elective offices.

O'Brien sees this as particularly problematic in Massachusetts, where Democratic supermajorities in the state legislature serve only to increase the level of difficulty for aspiring officeholders. O'Brien concludes that policy changes that would make it easier for women to run for office, such as addressing the high cost of child care, would help "keep women in the [political] pipeline" and that "a Republican Party that is a threat at the ballot box would help substantially" when it comes to electing women and women of color.

Collectively, these scholars offer a comprehensive portrait of Massachusetts government and politics as well as a rich, clear-eyed, and nuanced assessment of where Massachusetts' exceptionalism does and does not match up with reality.

Works cited:

Bulger, William M. 1996. *While the Music Lasts: My Life in Politics.* New York: Houghton Mifflin.

Cote, Jackson. 2021. "Massachusetts Ranked Snobbiest State in the Country; All New England States Land in the Top 10." *MassLive*, April 20, 2021.

Duquette, Jerold. 2020. "Mass Politics in 2020: Still Exceptionally Establishment-Friendly after All These Years." *New England Journal of Political Science* 12, no. 1: 111– 19.

Gartsbeyn, Mark. 2021. "'They're Intimidated by the Accent': Readers React to Middling Ranking of Massachusetts in 'Best State' Poll." *Boston.com*, April 19, 2021.

Gray, Arielle. 2020. "Boston Prides Itself on Its Progressive Image. Let Me Tell You What I Know." WBUR, June 2, 2020.

Koczela, Steve. 2021. "Voters Hold Beacon Hill in High Esteem." *CommonWealth Magazine*, January 19, 2021.

Krueger, Hanna. 2021. "Phase 2 Vaccination Are Set to Begin Monday. But Many Cities and Towns Say They Have No Way to Make That Happen." *Boston Globe,* January 28, 2021.

Mileur, Jerome M. 1997. "Party Politics in the Bay State: The Dominion of Democracy." In *Parties and Politics in the New England States*, edited by Jerome M. Mileur. Amherst, MA: Polity Press.

Reilly, Adam (@reillyadam). 2021. "THEORY: This reflects both genuine and substantive approval." Twitter, January 20, 2021, 8:03 a.m. https://twitter.com/reillyadam?s=11.

A Model of Christian Charity

John Winthrop's famous sermon, "A Model of Christian Charity," was delivered in 1630 while the Puritans were onboard the Arbella on their journey to the New World. In this famous passage Winthrop told his followers that their colony would be "as a city upon a hill." The image comes from the Bible: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid." (Matthew 5:14–15)

This evocative image has come to embody the concept of American exceptionalism. It has been used by presidents as different as John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan to express America's sense of itself as an example to the world. In The Puritan Ordeal, scholar Andrew Delbanco argued that this sermon has been "enshrined as a kind of Ur-text of American literature." Commentary upon it, he noted, "usually includes a nearly ceremonial invocation of its closing image of the 'city upon a hill'" (Harvard University Press, 1989, p. 72). Below is the most commonly-cited portion of Winthrop's sermon:

"Now the only way to avoid this shipwreck, and to provide for our posterity, is to follow the counsel of Micah, to do justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly with our God. For this end, we must be knit together, in this work, as one man. We must entertain each other in brotherly affection. We must be willing to abridge ourselves of our superfluities, for the supply of others' necessities. We must uphold a familiar commerce together in all meekness, gentleness, patience and liberality. We must delight in each other; make others' conditions our own; rejoice together, mourn together, labor and suffer together, always having before our eyes our commission and community in the work, as members of the same body. So shall we keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.

The Lord will be our God, and delight to dwell among us, as His own people, and will command a blessing upon us in all our ways, so that we shall see much more of His wisdom, power, goodness and truth, than formerly we have been acquainted with. We shall find that the God of Israel is among us, when ten of us shall be able to resist a thousand of our enemies; when He shall make us a praise and glory that men shall say of succeeding plantations, "may the Lord make it like that of New England." For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill.

The eyes of all people are upon us. So that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken, and so cause Him to withdraw His present help from us, we shall be made a story and a by-word through the world. We shall open the mouths of enemies to speak evil of the ways of God, and all professors for God's sake. We shall shame the faces of many of God's worthy servants, and cause their prayers to be turned into curses upon us till we be consumed out of the good land whither we are going."

-L. Mara Dodge