

# New England Journal of Public Policy

---

Volume 1 | Issue 1

Article 2

---

1-1-1985

## Editor's Note

Padraig O'Malley

University of Massachusetts Boston, padraig.omalley@umb.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umb.edu/nejpp>



Part of the [Public Policy Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

O'Malley, Padraig (1985) "Editor's Note," *New England Journal of Public Policy*. Vol. 1: Iss. 1, Article 2.  
Available at: <https://scholarworks.umb.edu/nejpp/vol1/iss1/2>

This Editor's Notes is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks at UMass Boston. It has been accepted for inclusion in *New England Journal of Public Policy* by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks at UMass Boston. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@umb.edu](mailto:scholarworks@umb.edu).

# Editor's Note

*Padraig O'Malley*

---

3

Over the years, public policy issues have proliferated, and with proliferation has come the inevitable specialization. The result: fragmentation of effort and problems of communication not only between those who make policy and those who implement it, but between practitioners in general and the academic and research disciplines that complement them. Public policy constituencies have created their own languages, but too often the result is a confusion of tongues rather than a profusion of ideas.

The *New England Journal of Public Policy* is designed to create a profusion of ideas by providing a medium for practitioners, policy analysts, and academics throughout New England to define their problems and to develop approaches to solving them. We hope that the journal will become an important forum for the exchange of ideas on public policy issues that have special significance for New England.

To further this exchange of ideas, the journal will draw on contributors who reflect the diversity of the field itself: elected officials, government managers, members of the business community, journalists, academics, humanists; indeed anyone who has demonstrated in his or her work a unique New England perspective of one kind or another.

But the journal will go beyond that. It will explore the relationships between values and culture and examine how the symbiosis of the two is reflected in public policy. This approach may sometimes call for disaggregating the aggregate, and for a microscopic examination of how the inherited folk wisdoms of history and continuity manifest themselves in the lives of ordinary people.

Thus, in this inaugural issue, we balance the macro-observations of James Howell on the New England economy and of George Masnick on the demography of New England with Donald Hall's almost whimsical reflections on class and culture in rural New Hampshire; I. C. Bupp's micro-analysis of the Seabrook nuclear power plant imbroglio; and Joseph Cronin's timely agenda for Boston public schools.

Common themes emerge: the overriding importance of education as *the* source of economic growth in New England; the need to retrain large segments of our labor force in order to take advantage of the new technologies, especially since the "baby-bust" will lead to tight labor markets that will erode New England's current (if surprising) real-wage cost-differential; the rapid growth of population in the more remote non-metropolitan areas with its attendant impact on their fragile infrastructures; and what might be called, for want of a better phrase, the New England attitude.

Indeed, to understand the place (as distinct from the role) of public policy in a New England context, we must understand the paradox of the New England attitude. The unconventional thinking, which James Howell alludes to as a trademark of the entrepreneurial gene of New England, is equally a trademark of Donald Hall's Rusticus, who prefers to work alone, who may voluntarily work for less money, and who rejects the imperatives of the middle classes: that one will do better than one's father and mother; that one's children will do better than oneself; that "better" includes "education," and education provides the things of this world; and that the things of this world are good.

In the *New England Journal of Public Policy* the emphasis will be on the literate as well as the technical, on bridging the gap between the abstract and the practical, on expanding the range of public policy debate by increasing the number of active debaters, and on enhancing the quality of that debate, mindful always of Thoreau's admonition: "If a man does not keep pace with his companions, perhaps it is because he hears a different drummer. Let him step to the music which he hears, however measured or far away."